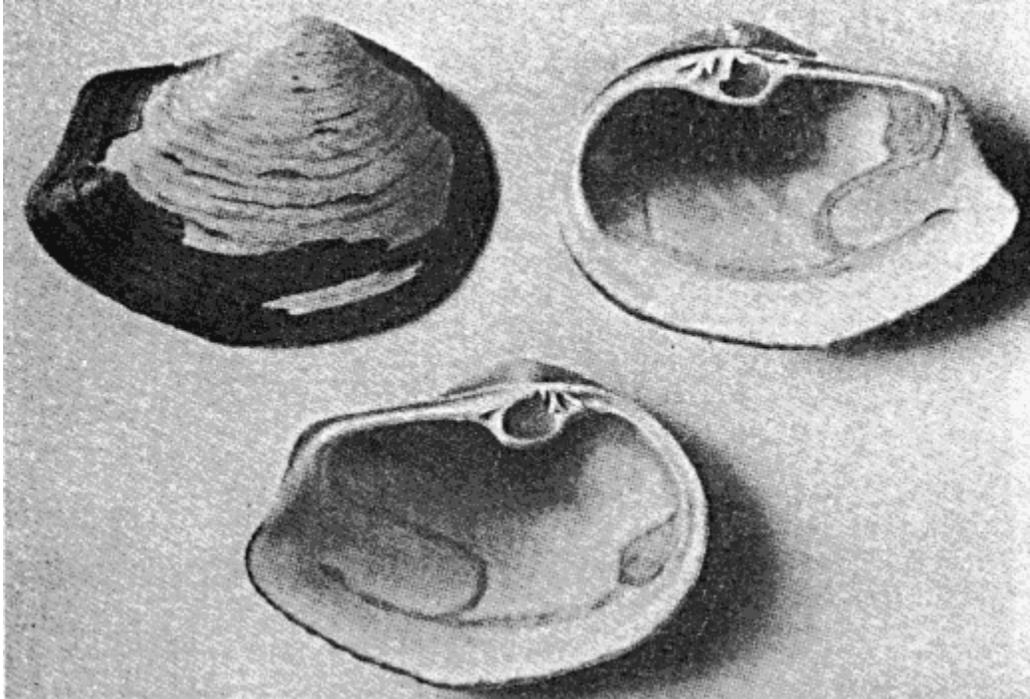


HORSE CLAM

Tresus capax



TAXONOMY

Phylum: Mollusca

Class: Bivalvia

Order: Veneroida

Family: Mactrinae

ECOLOGICAL DATA

Distribution: common in sheltered coastal areas.

Habitat: mud, gravel and shell beaches; common in eelgrass beds; associated with butter clams; burrows to 1 m; planktonic larvae dispersed by currents; adults remain in same burrow for life.

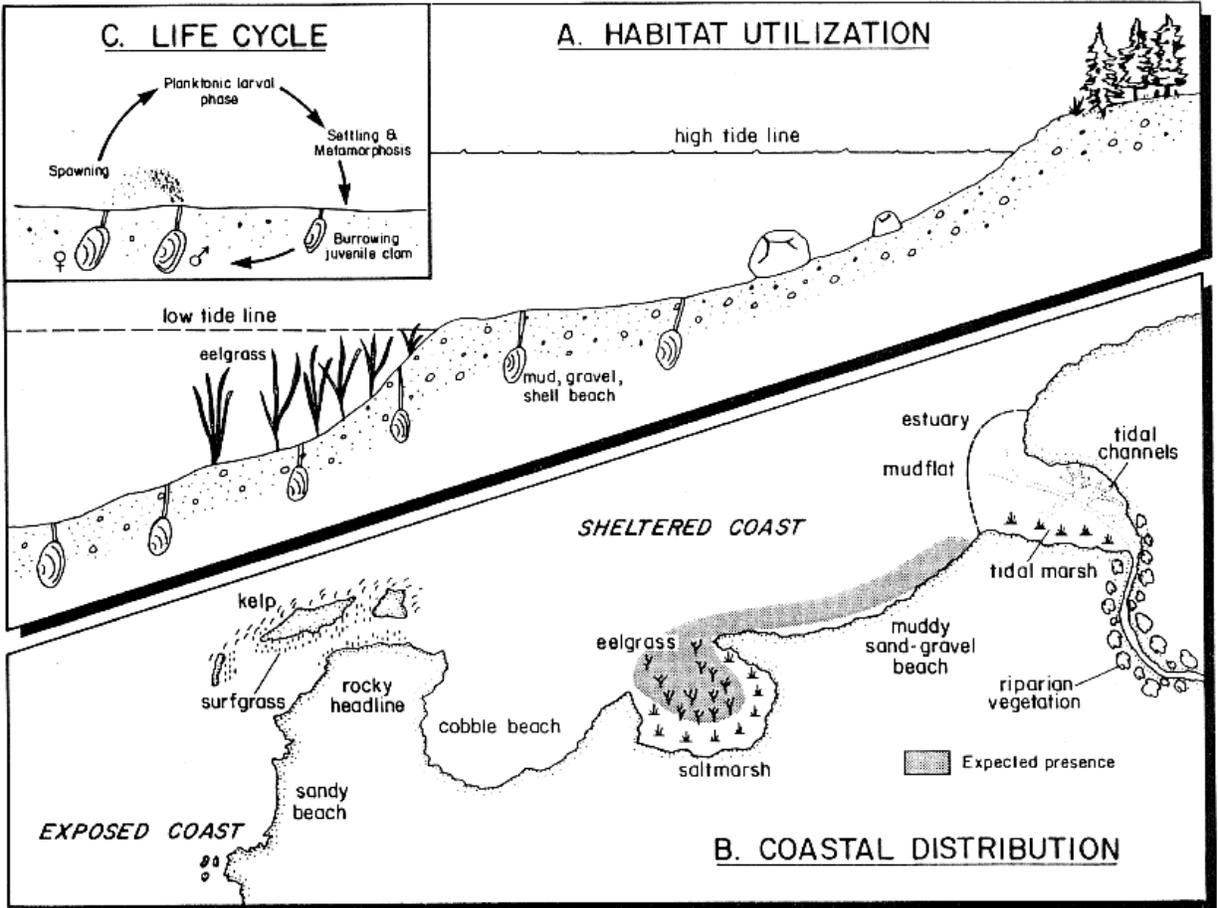
Tidal elevation: lower one third of intertidal zone to 20 m subtidal depth.

Food: suspension feeder; feeds on planktonic organisms and detritus.

Predators: birds, moon snail, sea stars, crabs, and fishes.

GROWTH RATE

Fairly rapid; sexually mature at 70 mm, after 3 yr in Strait of Georgia and 4 yr in Queen Charlotte Strait; reach 100 mm after 5 yr in Strait of Georgia and 6 yr in Queen Charlotte Strait; large adults (20 cm) can weigh up to 1.8 kg.



Generalized life cycle of the horse clam: Male and female clams spawn in late February or early March in the Strait of Georgia, later in north coast. Mass fertilization occurs in water column. Fertilized eggs develop rapidly into ciliated, motile larvae. Larval phase includes several stages (i.e. trochophore, veliger and umbone), during which time the larvae drift in the plankton and are dispersed by water currents. The larval phase ends when larvae settle from the plankton and attach themselves to gravel or broken shell by byssal threads, referred to as spatting. The spat or juvenile clam creates a permanent burrow where it remains for life. Adult clams may live to 25 years and reach a maximum shell length of 20 cm.