

Introduction

This Activity Background Information includes a description of the habit, habitat and distribution of other bivalve species with ecological and economic importance in the Atlantic Area.

The COCKLES team recommends using these sheets to teach students and facilitate Activity 4 execution.



Photo by: feathercollector

- **Clams, e.g. *Ruditapes philippinarum***

General features:

Clams are bivalves from the Veneridae family, composed of two sub-triangular valves with distinct ribs and variable colours and patterns. They are filter-feeding organisms that can reach up to 8 cm in length.

Habitat and distribution:

Clams live buried (≤ 20 cm) in the sediment (from mud to coarse sand) in shallow water ecosystems. They are found all along the coastlines of the northern hemisphere.



- **Cockles, e.g. *Cerastoderma edule***

General features:

Cockles are bivalves from the Cardiidae family, composed of two yellowish-brown, rounded valves with numerous radial ribs. They are filter-feeding organisms that can reach up to 5 cm in length.

Habitat and distribution:

Cockles live buried (≤ 5 cm) in the sand and mud bottoms of estuaries and sheltered bays. They can be found along the northeast Atlantic coast.



- **Mussels, e.g. *Mytilus galloprovincialis***

General features:

Mussels are bivalves from the Mytilidae family, composed of two rounded and smooth valves and have a black/ dark blue-violet colour. They feed on suspended particles and can reach up to 14 cm in length.

Habitat and distribution:

Mussels live on rocky substrates, close to the coast, in the intertidal zones of estuaries and oceans. They can be found from the United Kingdom to Morocco.



- **Oysters, e.g. *Crassostrea gigas***

General features:

Oysters are bivalves from the Ostreidae family, compose of two valves that differ in size and shape, one is larger and round with great rough and sharp spikes while the other is smaller and flat. They feed on suspended particles and can reach 40 cm in length.

Habitat and distribution:

Oysters live attached to rocky or hard substrates, in estuarine ecosystems. They can be found along the Atlantic coastline but are native from the Pacific.



- **Razor clams, e.g. *Solen marginatus***

General features:

Razor clams are bivalves from the Solenidae family, composed of two long, smooth and narrow valves, reaching 12 cm in length and with a brownish-yellow colour. These organisms are very sensitive to small environmental disturbances.

Habitat and distribution:

Razor clams live buried (≤ 60 cm) in the sandy or muddy sediments of estuaries. They can be found along the Atlantic coast and the Mediterranean Sea.

Photo by: weshopalgarve

