

California Mussel Clam



Description: Mussel clams form in large colonies. To eat, the mussel opens its shells tiny hairs, or cilia, draw in water carrying tiny particles of food. The California mussel attaches to rocks by fibers called byssal threads. These threads are produced in liquid form by the byssal gland. A large mussel moves by breaking old threads, then attaching new ones to another spot; a small mussel creeps around on its foot.

Defense: Mussels take over in tidepool areas and areas where they can use their strong byssal threads, like near crashing waves. They form large groups and out compete for space. However, lobsters, crabs and sea stars eat them in areas where waves don't pound as hard.

Where they are Found: California mussels can be found from Alaska to Baja California.

Diet: California mussels love to eat detritus, or plant and animal waste, and living plankton.

WOW!!! It takes three years for a California mussel to grow to full size, about 5 inches.