

Freshwater mussel/Kakahi

Echyridella menziesii

Native

Declining

Photo: www.mollusca.co.nz

There are 2 species of freshwater mussel found in the North Island of NZ. This is the more common of the two being found throughout the North Island particularly common in Lake Taupo and the Rotorua lakes. It tends to have a rounded shape and curved growth rings. In streams and rivers this mussel is generally found along stream banks and under cover. It tends to be found in silt and clay substrates. Freshwater mussels are unusual in that they have a juvenile life stage called Glochidia that latch onto fish and parasitize for a short time. This is also thought to help in spreading the juveniles around. Not much is known of where the small juvenile mussels live after that but it is probably deep in the sediments or in aquatic plant beds. Once the mussels are 30mm long (approximately 3 years old) they begin to be found at the stream bed.

