MUSSELS

These are animals with a bilaterally symmetrical body structure. They lack a head in their anatomical structure, including jaws and radula. The shell they produce consists of two parts, left and right, which are connected by a ligament made of conchiolin. Both parts of the shell are also connected by a calcareous system of ridges, called a hinge. Some mussels have a developed foot with a sole, but most have a wedge-shaped structure. The foot is strongly muscular. In some sedentary species, the foot is absent. The mouth opening, equipped with ciliated flaps, is located in the vicinity of the foot.

Distribution and Habitat

These are animals that live exclusively in aquatic environments, with the vast majority living in seas and oceans. They are mainly found in shallows, but specimens have been known to be caught from depths of up to 10,000 meters.

Mussels exhibit minimal activity and lead a sedentary lifestyle. Some species can crawl, others can jump, and still others can swim. Mussels produce pearls. A mussel forms a pearl when a small foreign body gets trapped between the shell and the mantle. The mantle then surrounds it and creates a pearly mass around it. Pearls of gemstone value are produced only by pearl oysters. Sedentary species can form massive beds. There are known cases of some mussels living to be 100 years old.

Are Mussels Edible?

Yes, the most commonly edible mussel is the marine mussel. Many species are eaten as seafood, including scallops, oysters, mussels, and many others, including even the giant clam. Some of the most delicious mussels are razor clams, commonly known for their characteristic shell shape.

Are Mussels Snails?

No. Mussels constitute a separate class of invertebrates. Together with snails and cephalopods, they belong to mollusks.

Mussel or Mussels?

"Mussel" is of masculine gender, so it's "mussel."