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Mark-Recapture Sampling to Assess Populations of the Endangered James Spinymussel (*Pluerobema collina)*

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Determining the viability of freshwater mussel populations is necessary in developing and implementing conservation plans. However, data regarding population sizes and parameters such as survival and recruitment are lacking. Mark-recapture sampling allows for estimation of these parameters, while also accounting for variable detection probabilities. The federally endangered James spinymussel (Pluerobema collina) is predominately found in the James River Basin in Virginia and West Virginia and a significant population was discovered in Little Oregon Creek, Craig County, VA, in 2010, allowing for mark-recapture sampling. Population estimates in 2010 using program MARK and CAPTURE ranged from 1,769 – 1,909, with quadrat estimates not significantly different. Detection probabilities varied by section and date from 10% – 30% and were similar to those determined from quadrat sampling. Sampling will continue through 2015 in Little Oregon Creek and at six additional locations.

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