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Autore	Haag Wendell R.
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Nota di contenuto	1. Introduction to mussels and mussel ecology -- 2. Catching the mussel bug : a history of the study of mussel ecology in North America -- 3. Diversity and biogeography -- 4. Aquatic habitats and mussel assemblages -- 5. Host use and host infection strategies -- 6. These are very different animals : life history variation in mussels -- 7. Mussel population biology -- 8. Putting it all together : explaining patterns of mussel assemblage structure -- 9. Human exploitation of mussels -- 10. The decline of the North American mussel fauna : chronology and causes -- 11. Mussel conservation : the challenge of protecting a fragmented resource -- Appendix A. Values for life history traits of representative North American mussel species -- Appendix B. Sources for mussel assemblage data.

This well-illustrated book highlights freshwater mussels' fabulous diversity, amazing array of often bizarre ecological adaptations and their dire conservation plight. Summarizing and synthesizing historical and contemporary information as well as original research and analysis, the book describes the diverse array of mussel life history strategies and builds a cohesive narrative culminating in the development of explicit frameworks to explain pervasive patterns in mussel ecology. The fascinating and colorful role of mussels in human society is also described in detail, including the little-known pearl button industry of the early 1900s and the wild and often violent shell harvest of the 1990s. The final chapter details humans' efforts to save these fascinating animals and gives a prognosis for the future of the North American fauna. The book provides the first comprehensive review of mussel ecology and conservation for scientists, natural resource professionals, students and natural history enthusiasts.
