

ZEBRA MUSSEL

Dreissena polymorpha
Dreissenidae, the freshwater mussel family

Amy Benson, U.S. Geological Survey, Bugwood.org

FACTSHEET INFORMATION

Summary of Invasiveness

- Zebra mussels have been identified as the most aggressive freshwater invader worldwide.
- These mussels are so successful due to their prolific reproduction. Once introduced, they can reproduce to the point that their biomass is 10 times the biomass of native species.
- Attaches to substrate and infrastructure in prolific numbers via byssal threads.

Diagnostic Characteristics

- Small freshwater bivalve with a triangular shape.
- Striped and zig-zag shell with colors that vary from dark to light to none.
- Stable flattened ventral side; allowing it to sit flat, unlike Quagga mussels.
- Byssal threads protrude from shell.

Introduction and Movement

- Native to the Black, Caspian, and Azov seas. Introduced to the Great Lakes in the 1980's via ballast water.
- Has spread across the nation to the point that only 5 states are free of suspect or confirmed infestation.
- Spreads easily to new areas via watercraft, water related construction equipment, and has been documented in the aquarium trade as a hitchhiker.

Prevention Strategy

- To prevent accidental introductions, ensure that your watercraft and water related equipment is thoroughly cleaned, drained, and dry.
- When passing inspection stations during their hours of operations, make sure to stop for an inspection and decontamination.
- After visiting waters that are out of state, especially states with infested waters, ensure that your boat has been inspected or allowed dry time of at least 30 days prior to launching in Idaho waters.
- Always Remember To: **CLEAN & DRAIN & DRY**

DON'T LET IT LOOSE

Sources

- CABI Invasive Species Compendium: <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/85295>.

