



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

What to Do If You See an Invasive Mussel

Identification Guide

Description

The three freshwater mussel species at right are two-shelled (bivalve) invertebrates. They grow attached to hard surfaces and form colonies.

Shell Morphology

Mussel shells are generally D-shaped and triangular. They are smooth or shallowly ridged.

Color and Patterns

These mussels' shells range from a light cream or yellow color to dark brown. Zebra mussels and quagga mussels can look similar, as both have alternating light and dark stripes. Golden mussels, particularly smaller ones, typically have a light yellow golden color ranging to brown.

Size Range

Adult mussels in these species range in size from 1-3 cm, reaching a maximum size of around 4 cm. Smaller juveniles or young mussels can be only a few millimeters in size and may be difficult to detect without magnification.



Golden Mussel (*Limnoperna fortunei*)



Zebra Mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*)



Quagga Mussel (*Dreissena bugensis*)

Report Sightings!

Photograph and keep the mussel (refrigerate/freeze).

Email photos to:
mussel@water.ca.gov
invasives@wildlife.ca.gov

SWP-O&M Field Staff:
Call/Text Tanya Veldhuizen
(916) 820-7843

Other Non-Native Bivalves (No Concern)

The Asian clam, introduced to California in the early 20th Century, is common in the Bay-Delta and the State Water Project. Its shell is fan-shaped and symmetrical, with thick, deep ridges. This clam does not attach to surfaces. Sightings do not need to be reported.



Asian Clam (*Corbicula fluminea*)