

NOT WANTED



ZEBRA MUSSEL

ALIAS: *DREISSENA POLYMORPHA*

Distribution: Native to freshwater lakes of southeast Russia. Zebra mussels have spread from their introduction in the Great Lakes to the Mississippi, Hudson, St. Lawrence, Ohio, Cumberland, Missouri, Tennessee, Colorado, and Arkansas rivers. They recently have been found in the Susquehanna drainage.

Size: Adults range from 1/4 to 1 1/2 inches long.

Description: Have tiny stripes down their shells, hence the name Zebra Mussels. Zebra Mussels have a D-shaped shell.

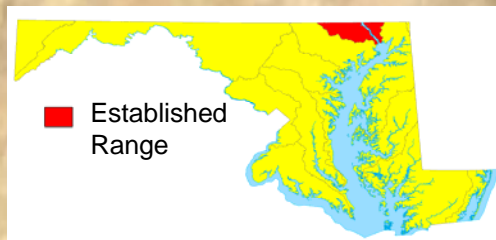
Look Alikes: Similar in appearance to the related Maryland native species *Mytilopsis leucopaeta*, or dark false mussel. Generally zebra mussels prefer freshwater while the dark false mussel occurs in brackish waters, although there is potential for overlap at the lowest

salinities (0.2-3.0 ppt). As the name implies, the dark false mussel is usually uniformly dark colored, rarely with some whitish splotches. However, younger specimens sometime have stripes similar to zebra mussels. Internally, the shell of the dark false mussel possesses a small tooth (apophysis) located near the beak or narrow, pointed end of the shell; this is absent in the zebra mussel. Dark false mussels reach a maximum size of about 3/4 inch, or about half the maximum size of zebra mussels

Impacts to Aquatic Ecosystem: Adult zebra mussels colonize all types of living and non-living surfaces including boats, water-intake pipes, buoys, docks, piers, plants, and slow moving animals such as native clams, crayfish, and turtles. Zebra mussels have disrupted ecosystems, killing the local unionid mussels, (primarily by out competing native species for food) and have damaged harbors, boats, and power plants by latching onto them. Water treatment plants were initially hit hardest because the water intakes brought the microscopic free-swimming larvae directly into the facilities. They can also grow so close together that they block off pipelines, impacting water intake pipes used by cities for their water supply, or by hydroelectric companies for power generation. They are successful invaders, because they live and feed in many different aquatic habitats, breed prolifically (An adult female zebra mussel may produce between 30,000 and 400,000 eggs per year), and young zebra mussels are so small (invisible to the naked eye) they are spread easily by water currents and can drift for miles before settling. As filter feeders, they have the ability to greatly increase the clarity of water. Unfortunately, the material removed from the water consists of other live animals and algae that supply food for larval fish and other invertebrates. Once zebra mussels become established in a water body, they are impossible to eradicate with the technology available today.

Means of Introduction: It is believed they were inadvertently introduced into the Great Lakes in the ballast water of ocean-going ships traversing the St. Lawrence Seaway.

Status in Maryland: Discovered for the first time in the Maryland portion of the lower Susquehanna River in November 2008. Previously found in the New York and Pennsylvania portions of the Susquehanna drainage.



Legal Standing: Prohibited from import, transport, sale, purchase and possession in Maryland.

*Special provisions for delivering specimens to authorities, visit www.dnr.state.md.us/invasives. For more information on invasive species in Maryland visit www.dnr.state.md.us/invasives.

