

# Zebra Mussel

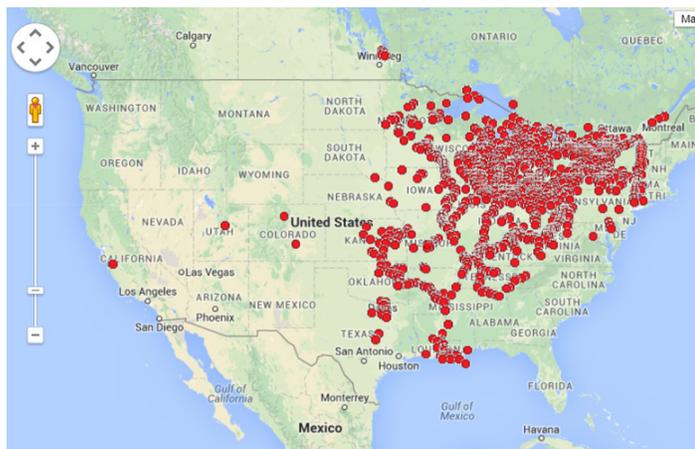
## *Dreissena polymorpha*

### Identification

Striped, D-shaped shell; 1/4 to 1 1/2 inches long; typically found in dense clusters. Flat underside.

### Similar Species

Zebra mussels are striped like a quagga mussel (also invasive), but typically smaller and less rounded than a quagga or dark false mussel.



### Range/Habitat

Since being introduced to the Great Lakes, zebra mussels have spread to a number of waterways, including the Mississippi, Hudson, St. Lawrence, Ohio, Cumberland, Missouri, Tennessee, Colorado, and Arkansas Rivers. They have recently been found in the Susquehanna and upper Chesapeake Bay.

### Why is it a Problem?

Zebra mussels disrupt ecosystems by outcompeting native bivalves, altering aquatic communities and affecting nutrient cycles. They damage harbors, boats, and power plants by attaching themselves in dense clusters, clogging water intake pipes, and sinking navigational buoys.

### Control and Prevention

Thoroughly clean boats and angling equipment, particularly when moving between bodies of water or when coming from an area known to be infected with zebra mussels, such as the Susquehanna River and the upper Chesapeake Bay.

### Method of Introduction

Introduced into the Great Lakes in the ballast of ocean-going ships.

### Legal Status

Prohibited from import, transport, sale, purchase or possession in Maryland

