



FRONT

Zebra Mussel WATCH

Photo courtesy of U.S. Geological Survey




Actual size is 15 mm




- "D"-shaped shell
- Sits flat on its ventral side
- Color patterns vary, but it has obvious striping

Zebra Mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*)

Quagga Mussel (*Dreissena bugensis*)





Actual size is 20 mm

- Rounder in shape
- Does not sit flat on its ventral side
- Usually has dark, concentric rings
- Paler in color near the hinge

Photo courtesy of U.S. Geological Survey

Quagga Mussel WATCH

BACK

Zebra Mussel & Quagga Mussel

The **zebra mussel** and **quagga mussel** are small fingernail-sized bivalves native to Eastern Europe and Western Asia.

Zebra and quagga mussels are established in several waterbodies in northwestern Pennsylvania, including Lake Erie, Edinboro Lake, Conneauttee Creek, Sandy Lake, Conewango Creek, and in the upper Allegheny River. Zebra mussels are also present in the lower Allegheny, Monogahela and upper Ohio rivers near Pittsburgh and in a diving quarry near Bethlehem.

During the microscopic veliger (planktonic) stage, zebra and quagga mussels float in the water for up to four weeks before they settle to the bottom and attach to a solid surface. Veligers are too small to be seen with the naked eye.


Zebra and quagga mussels are filter feeders that remove large amounts of plankton from the water. This decreases the food available for other aquatic species, including the young of all species of game fish. The zebra and quagga mussel can clog water intake structures as well as colonize on native mussels, docks, buoys, boats, and beaches. Their shells are sharp which makes it painful to walk barefoot on a beach.

How to Identify Zebra Mussels and Quagga Mussels


Zebra and quagga mussels can be distinguished from North American freshwater mussels by the presence of a cluster of "byssal threads", fibers they grow to attach to solid objects.

What Can You Do To Stop the Spread?

- Adult mussels attach to boat hulls, trailers and aquatic vegetation. Veligers may be carried in livewells, bilge water, or bait buckets. To prevent the spread of these species, remove all visible plants, fish, animals and mud. Drain all water from the boat, trailer, and all other fishing and boating equipment before leaving the water body.
- Use a power washer to clean your boat and trailer before traveling to a new water body. Alternately, allow the boat, trailer and other gear to thoroughly dry for a minimum of five days.
- If you spot an invader, record the date and exact location where the mussel was found. If possible, take the mussel with you and store it in rubbing alcohol to aid in identification. In Pennsylvania, contact **Pennsylvania Sea Grant at 215-806-0894**.



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"Funded by a grant from the BoatU.S. Foundation"