



Quagga Mussel

Dreissena rostriformis bugensis

History

- * Native to Ukraine
- * Initial introduction believed to be the result of ballast water discharge from transoceanic ships
- * Since being first discovered in Great Lakes in 1988-89, the species has spread widely into freshwater habitats across North America
- * Slowly dominating over zebra mussel in US and Europe

Characteristics

- * Bi-valve up to 1.5 inches (4 cm)
- * Shell usually has dark concentric rings; color is paler near the hinge
- * When laid on edge, quagga shell topples over whereas the zebra shell is stable
- * Valves (shell halves) are asymmetrical forming a curved line when valves are closed

Habitat

- * Lakes, estuaries, streams
- * Can colonize both hard and soft substrata
- * Tolerate salinity to 6 ppt, temperatures to approximately 29 degrees C
- * Quagga mussel can live at greater depths than zebra mussel

Known Distribution

- * New York, Massachusetts, and the St. Lawrence River as far north as Quebec City

Impacts

- * Voracious filter feeders, removing microscopic plants and animals from the water, reducing food available to other aquatic animals
- * May cause declines in fish populations
- * Clog intakes for power plants, industrial facilities, and public drinking water supplies
- * Heavily colonize both hard and soft surfaces including beaches, boat hulls, docks, etc.
- * High potential for rapid adaptation to extreme environmental conditions
- * Economic impacts in the billions of dollars



Quagga mussels

Credit: J. E. Marsden



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