

New Zealand Mudsnail

Potamopyrgus antipodarum

Iowa Aquatic Invasive Species Fact Sheet

Description: The New Zealand mudsnail is a small crustacean that averages 1/8 inch long, but can be smaller. The shell is in a spiral shape that comes to a point at the top, with an opening at the bottom for the foot.

Distribution: As its name suggests, New Zealand mudsnails originate from freshwater lakes and streams of New Zealand. In the U.S., they were first found in the 1980's in the mid-Snake river, Idaho. Since then, it has spread to the waters of Montana, Wyoming, California, Arizona, Oregon, and Utah. They have even found their way in the streams of Yellowstone National Park. The only known population in the eastern U.S. is in Lake Ontario, where a population was discovered in the early 1990's.



Threats: Mudsnail densities of over one-half million per square meter square in western streams are cause for concern. The biggest threat posed by the mudsnail is its ability to compete for food and space from native invertebrates. Research is still being done on how destructive the mudsnail are on the native species, such as aquatic insects and snails. Mudsnails can also clog industrial water intakes. Idaho power has reported that every day they remove 15 tons of mudsnails that are as small as a grain of sand from their trash racks to prevent clogging the Middle Snake River Dam. The snails can survive several days out of water, can withstand a wide range of temperatures and are small enough to be inadvertently spread by many types of water users. All waters are vulnerable, from silted river bottoms to clear mountain streams. Since the snails reproduce asexually, it only takes one attached to fishing gear, watercraft, pets, clothing or anything else that came in contact with water to spread them.

Control: Since this species is so hard to control once it is in established, the best control is to prevent its spread. Anglers and others who recreate around water are asked to take some simple precautions. Make sure waders and other equipment have been completely dry for an extended amount of time before visiting other waters. Wash equipment that has been in contact with water with a bleach solution to kill any possible exotics that may have attached themselves. Inspect boats and watercraft, drain all water from livewell and bilge areas, and remove all vegetation from the boat and trailer before putting into new waters

Law: Iowa law makes it illegal to 1) possess, introduce, purchase, sell, propagate, or transport aquatic invasive species in Iowa, 2) place a trailer or launch a watercraft with aquatic invasive species attached in public waters, and 3) operate a watercraft in a marked aquatic invasive species infestation. The scheduled fine is \$500 for violating any of the above regulations. The law also requires the DNR to identify waterbodies infested with aquatic invasive species and post signs alerting boaters. The DNR may restrict boating, fishing, swimming, and trapping in infested waters.

