

Zebra Mussel



WATCH

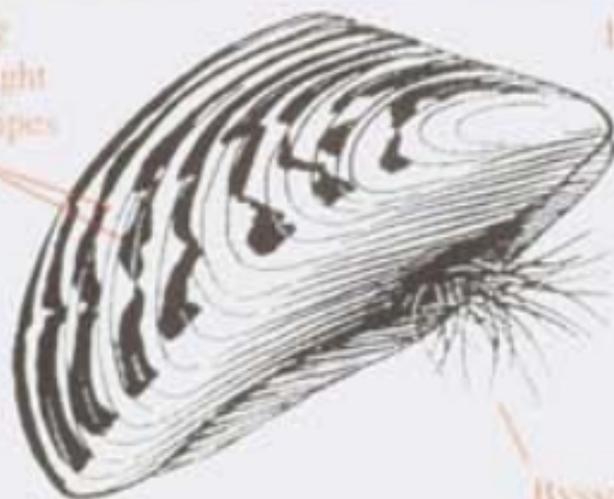
How to Identify Zebra Mussels (adult shown)

Project of the
Great Lakes
Sea Grant Network

Alternating
dark and light
colored stripes

1/4 inch- to 1-1/2
inches long

Black to
brownish
D-shaped
shell



Byssal threads
used for attachment

Illustration: Bell Museum of Natural History



**STOP AQUATIC
HITCHHIKERS!**

Prevent the transport of nuisance species.
Clean all recreational equipment.
www.ProtectYourWaters.net

General Characteristics

- *On smooth surfaces, young zebra mussels feel like fine sandpaper*
- *Juveniles are about the size of peppercorns*
- *Adults can be two inches long, but most are less than an inch*
- *The only freshwater mussel that can firmly attach to hard surfaces*

ZEBRA MUSSELS

Zebra mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*) are prolific invaders that cost the U.S. billions of dollars each year. These small mussels from Eurasia can clog water intakes and damage equipment by attaching to boat motors and hard surfaces. They can damage ecosystems by harming fisheries, smothering native mussels and crayfish, and littering beaches with their sharp shells.

In the late 1980s, zebra mussels spread from Europe to the Great Lakes in contaminated ballast water discharged from foreign ships. From there, they expanded to the Mississippi River, its tributaries, and to inland lakes. Zebra mussels spread primarily by attaching to boat hulls, aquatic plants, nets, fishing equipment, or in water. Adult zebra mussels can survive out of water for days under certain conditions. Your actions are vital to prevent their spread.

What you can do:

- **Learn** to recognize zebra mussels (see back cover).
- **Inspect** and remove aquatic plants, animals, and mud from boat, motor, and trailer.
- **Drain** water from boat, motor, livewell, bilge, and bait containers.
- **Dispose** of unwanted live bait and worms in the trash.
- **Rinse** boat and equipment with high-pressure and/or hot water (104°F), especially if moored for over a day. OR
- **Dry** everything for at least 5 days.
- **Never** introduce fish, plants, crayfish, snails or clams from one body of water to another.
- **Report** new sightings noting the exact location, freeze specimens in a sealed plastic bag or store in rubbing (isopropyl) alcohol; and call the Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant in Zion, IL (847-872-8677); the Illinois Dept of Natural Resources in Topeka, IL (309-968-7531); or the Indiana Dept of Natural Resources in Indianapolis, IN (317-234-3883).

REMINDER: Know the rules!

Specimens are needed to confirm sightings, but some jurisdictions prohibit possession of zebra mussels and other invasive aquatic animals and plants. Contact your local natural resources management agency for instructions. Unauthorized introduction of animals or plants into the wild is illegal.