

Report

Report suspected sightings of invasive mussels to Colorado Parks and Wildlife Invasive Species Program. Reports should include:

1. Name and Contact Information
2. Exact Location
3. Photographs of Species & Location

To Report, Request Inspection, or For More Information Contact:

COLORADO PARKS & WILDLIFE
INVASIVE SPECIES PROGRAM
(303) 291-7295
Invasive.Species@state.co.us



**Thank you for protecting Colorado's water resources
from the harmful impacts of invasive species!**



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UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED



2/2026-5,000

COLORADO PARKS & WILDLIFE

What Landowners and Irrigators Need to Know About Invasive Mussels



Help Stop the Spread of Invasive Species



cpw.state.co.us

Help Stop the Spread of Invasive Mussels

The Colorado River and several small ponds sourced from the river are infested with zebra mussels. All water users, including irrigators, are at risk of economic impacts to their water systems. Aquatic nuisance species (ANS) like zebra, quagga, and golden mussels impact everything, from fisheries to infrastructure. Prevention is the most cost effective strategy to avoid irreversible impacts. Arm yourself with knowledge and help combat the spread of invasive mussels into new waters.

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Impacts of Invasive Mussels

- Exponentially accumulate on infrastructure impeding flow and clogging pipes.
- Outcompete native species for resources such as food and space.
- Collapse fisheries by filtering out phytoplankton and zooplankton, altering water chemistry, and increasing light penetration.
- Reduce water quality and increase potential for toxic algae blooms.

How You Can Help

Clean, Drain and Dry boots, waders, gear and equipment between different bodies of water, including rivers, streams, ditches, canals, ponds, and reservoirs. Invasive mussels have microscopic life stages which can survive in small amounts of standing water. Drain ponds over the winter when possible.



Inspect Ponds, Infrastructure and Water Related Equipment:

- Inspect headgates, pipe intakes and outlets, trash racks, ditches, and dewatered ponds for the presence of invasive mussels. Mussels live below the water line, in dark or shaded areas, and are frequently found in cracks and corners that give them abundant surface area to attach.
- Inspect heavy equipment for ANS before entering waterways and clean off and dry any water or mud after project completion.
- Inspect used pipes, fittings, pumps, and other irrigation equipment before installation, especially if purchased out of state.
- Pond and equipment sampling and inspection may be requested through the Invasive Species Program.

How To Distinguish Invasive Mussels From The Common Corbicula Clam:

Corbicula clams are a common non-native species in Colorado. Both invasive mussels and Corbicula clams are bivalve (two-shelled) mollusks that are typically less than two inches in length. Corbicula are often mistaken for mussels but there are several ways to tell them apart. Most notably, invasive mussels have byssal threads that attach to surfaces. Removing one by hand feels like pulling on a loose tooth. Use the comparison table below to help distinguish the species.



Zebra Mussel

Dreissena polymorpha

- D-Shaped
- Asymmetrical Shells
- Smooth Shells
- Attach To Surfaces



Corbicula Clam

Corbicula fluminea

- Rounded
- Symmetrical Shells
- Ridges On The Shell
- Buried In Sand/ Silt