

Asian clam *Corbicula fluminea*

*High priority AIS not yet present in
Lower Wisconsin River basin as of January, 2012*

What is it?

Asian clams are small light-colored clams with shell ornamented by distinct, concentric rings.

Where is it?

The Asian clam is native to the temperate and tropical regions of southeastern China, Korea, and southeastern Russia. From its native range, it has spread around the world.

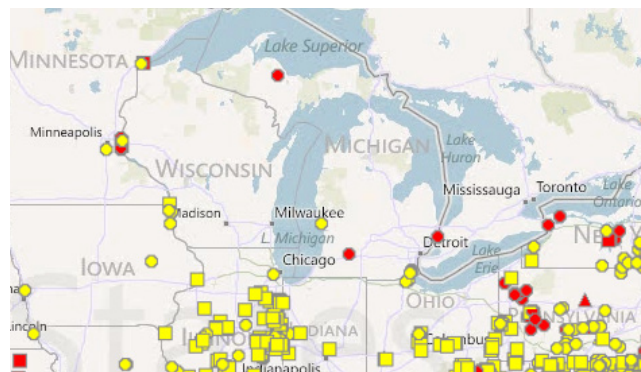
It was first reported in the St. Croix River in 1977 and in the Mississippi River in 1981. Populations have been found in the Mississippi River near Prairie du Chien and La Crosse.

How does it spread?

The main vector for the spread of Asian clam is human movement and activities. It is believed that they first were brought to North America for food, and have since been introduced to new areas through bait bucket releases, ballast water transport, aquarium/water garden releases, as hitch-hikers with imported aquaculture species, and intentional introductions for food.

Why do we care?

Due to their voracious filter feeding, Asian clams tend to out-compete both native mussels and juvenile fishes for food. Food competition coupled with competition for space has led to decreased abundances and diversity of native mussels and clams in waterbodies where Asian clams are introduced.



Asian clam Midwest regional distribution as of January, 2012. Red=established population, yellow=specimen(s) collected. (USGS, 2011)

The Asian clam can have large economic impacts on industrial and power plants that intake water from rivers and lakes. Alive and dead clams clog the intake pipes and it is costly to remove them; an estimated one billion US dollars each year is spent removing clams from industrial and power plant pipes.

What can we do?

There are many different techniques to remove Asian clams from industrial pipes. However, these methods are not very suitable for natural areas. A labor-intensive approach for removing isolated populations is to scrape the clams from the substrate, but this does not remove the floating veligers (larvae), which will quickly re-colonize.

Prevention of new introductions is really the key in limiting the spread of the Asian clam. Since humans are the primary vector, public education on not transporting adult specimens, and the necessity of emptying live wells and drying out boats and equipment is essential. Waterfowl hunters and anglers who move between the Mississippi River and the Lower Wisconsin River should be targeted.

STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!

Wisconsin law requires you to:

- **Inspect** boats, trailers, and equipment.
- **Remove** all attached aquatic plants and animals.
- **Drain** all water from boats, vehicles and equipment.
- **Never move** plants or live fish away from a waterbody.

If you suspect that you have found an invasive species call 1-888-WDNR-INFO (1-888-936-7463) to report it.



Asian clam, with scale in inches (Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute)