

Faucet snail

(*Bithynia tentaculata*)

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

What is it?

The faucet snail (*Bithynia tentaculata*) is a small invasive snail, native to Europe that is dark-brown to black in color, up to ½" in length, and features 4-6 whorls. It has a cover or 'operculum' on its shell opening with concentric circle markings in adults and spiral markings in juveniles.

Where is it?

The faucet snail can be found in shallow lakes, ponds, canals, or sloughs. It prefers shallow, near-shore habitats featuring submerged vegetation or other structure such as rocks, gravel, and other coarse substrates.

Near to the Lower Wisconsin River basin, it has been found in the Mississippi River from Lake Pepin to the Wisconsin/Illinois border, with particularly robust populations being found near La Crosse. The snail has also been found in Shawano Lake, in the Wolf River basin.

How does it spread?

The faucet snail can spread by attaching to aquatic plants, boats, anchors, and other recreational gear and equipment. It may also spread to new waterbodies via migrating waterfowl that have ingested infected snails, and potentially by the downstream movement of submerged vegetation to which they've attached in high flows. The gear and equipment of waterfowl hunters are also a potential vector of transport and spread, particularly between the Mississippi River and Lower Wisconsin River sloughs.

Why do we care?

The environmental impacts of the faucet snail are

significant. The snail has been linked to the deaths of an estimated 75,000-100,000 waterfowl in the Upper Mississippi Wildlife Refuge since 2002. It can also out-compete native snails that are a critical food source for fish, birds, and other wildlife.

The snail can also cause negative economic impacts. The Lower Wisconsin and Upper Mississippi regions are hot spots for waterfowl hunting, and could be negatively impacted if the faucet snail continues to spread. In 2006, 66,000 Wisconsin waterfowl hunters spent an estimated \$19 million on trip expenditures and equipment, and contributed to a total output of approximately \$26 million associated with waterfowl hunting, including 444 jobs.

What can we do?

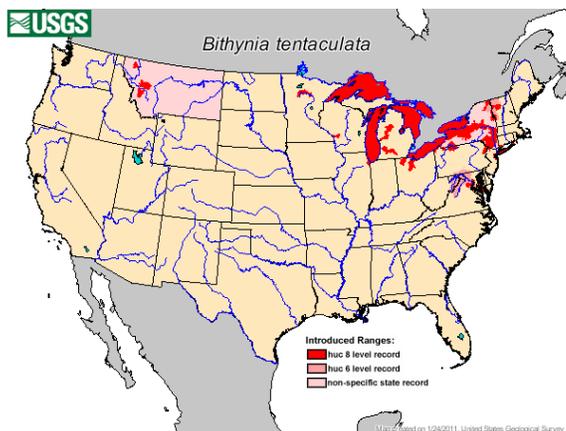
Recreational users, including waterfowl hunters, of waterbodies infected by the faucet snail must learn to identify the snail, and inspect and remove it from all of their gear upon leaving a waterbody. The snail can be killed by exposure to 125°F water for five minutes.

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.



Nationwide *Bithynia tentaculata* distribution (USGS, 2011)



Faucet snail (USGS)