

Quagga mussel

(*Dreissena bugensis*)

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

What is it?

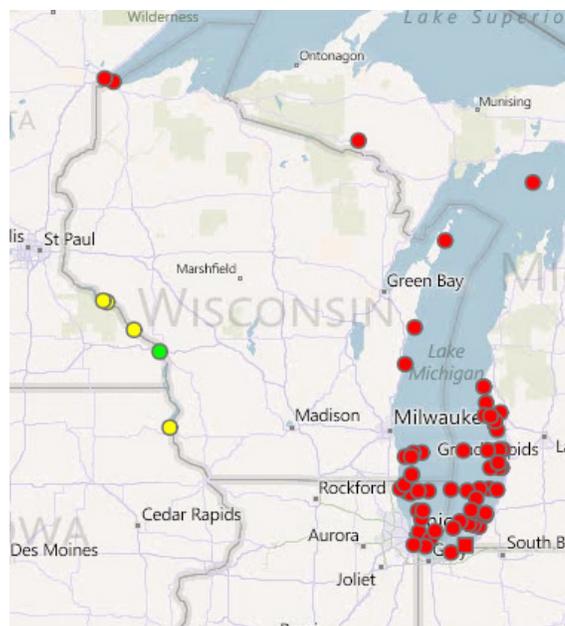
The quagga mussel is a close relative of the zebra mussel. Quagga mussels are similar in size to zebra mussels; the shells of quagga mussels are rounder and without ridges. They have dark concentric rings on the shell and are pale in color near the hinge. A single female mussel can produce more than 1 million eggs per year.

Where is it?

The quagga mussel was first sighted in the Great Lakes in September 1989, when one was found near Lake Erie. In 2005 the first quagga mussel was confirmed from Lake Superior in Duluth-Superior Harbor. The first reports of quagga mussels in the Mississippi River basin were in 2004. Quagga mussels have been found in the Mississippi River near Prairie du Chien, near La Crosse, and in Lake Pepin.

How does it spread?

Quagga mussels are primarily spread by boaters. Their eggs hatch into a larval form, called veligers, which are free-floating, unlike any of the native mollusks found in the Great Lakes. This larvae can be unintentionally transported in the live wells or bilge water of recreational boats, and they easily attach to boat hulls and trailers. Quagga mussels also cling to vegetation or any other object taken from water where they are present.



Wisconsin distribution of quagga mussel.
Red=established population, yellow=specimen(s)
collected, green=population unknown. (USGS, 2011)

Why do we care?

Quagga mussels tolerate a wider range of extremes in temperature, water depth and substrates than the zebra mussel. Quagga mussels are extraordinary water filterers, able to remove large amounts of phytoplankton and suspended particulates from lakes and streams. This ability decreases food sources for native species altering the delicate balance of the aquatic food web.

Quagga mussels clog water structures such as pipes and screens, which reduces pumping capabilities for water treatment and power plants—creating huge problems for industries and communities burdened with removal and clean-up costs. Recreation and industry may also be negatively impacted by quagga mussels when docks, buoys, boats, beaches, and breakwalls are heavily colonized by the species.

What can we do?

To prevent spreading this invasive mussel, boaters should drain water from boat motors, live wells, bilges, and transom wells and any other areas of boats and recreational equipment while on land before leaving a lake or waterbody. Take time to clean vegetation from boats, trailers, and motors, and thoroughly dry all objects including swimsuits and wet suits before entering uninfested waters.

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.



Quagga mussel (Michigan Sea Grant Institute)