



Aquatic Nuisance Species Program

Aquatic Nuisance Species

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Zebra mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*)

- The zebra mussel is a small freshwater mollusk native to eastern Europe and western Asia.
- Zebra mussels were first found in North America in the Great Lakes in 1988.
- Since 1988, they have spread rapidly throughout many of the inland waterways of the eastern United States.
- Zebra mussels are an important threat to surface water resources and water uses because of their high reproductive capacity and their ability to attach to underwater objects and surfaces.
- Problems caused by zebra mussels include:
 - clogging municipal, industrial and power plant water supply systems;
 - causing taste and odor problems in drinking water;
 - damaging boat engines and fouling boat hulls;
 - killing native mollusks, disrupting aquatic food chains and eliminating fish spawning beds;
 - creating foul-smelling eyesores at beaches and other recreational areas.
- It is estimated that the zebra mussel will cost the United States billions of dollars in future years.
- While zebra mussels have not yet been found in South Carolina, they occur nearby (near Knoxville, Tennessee) and threaten to invade our waterways.
- The South Carolina Zebra Mussel Task Force, co-chaired by South Carolina Department of Natural Resources and South Carolina Sea Grant is striving to increase public awareness of the zebra mussel, prevent zebra mussel introduction, provide technical information on zebra mussel biology and control to water suppliers and water uses, and monitor sites throughout the State for early detection of zebra mussels.



IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR JUST NEED MORE INFORMATION OUR INTERNET ADDRESS IS:

<http://www.dnr.state.sc.us/water/envaff/aquatic/>

Email: pagec@dnr.sc.gov or call or write to the address at the top of the page