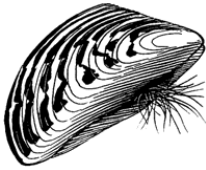


# Zebra Mussel Watch – Block Zebra Mussels



Zebra mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*) are invasive mussels from Eurasia.

These thumbnail sized mussels can damage ecosystems by harming fisheries, smothering native mussels and crayfish, filtering out the plankton at the base of the food web, and littering shores with their sharp shells. Introduced to the US in the late 1980s, zebra mussels now reach from California to Massachusetts, and from the Great Lakes to the gulf coast. Zebra mussels spread primarily by attaching to boat hulls, aquatic plants, nets, or fishing equipment, and can survive out of water for days. We need to monitor to know where they are to help prevent their continued spread.

## How to identify Zebra Mussels

- Zebra mussels are small, with a yellowish or brownish “D”-shaped shell, usually with dark and light-colored stripes (hence the name “zebra”)
- Most are small, less than one inch in size, although sometimes are up to two inches long. Juveniles are about the size of peppercorns, and young mussels feel like sandpaper.
- Zebra mussels usually grow in clusters, and are generally found in shallow water (6-30 feet).
- Zebra mussels are the only freshwater mollusk that will firmly attach to solid objects such as submerged rocks, dock pilings, boat hulls, and water intake pipes.

## Monitoring for Zebra Mussels – Drop a Block

- Tie a rope around a block or a brick and suspend it in the lake **a foot or two above the sediment**. Try to place the block or brick about 6 feet deep. Since zebra mussels often hitch-hike on boats, if possible put the block near or under a boat dock.
- Leave your block in all year, or take it out for the winter. If you take your block out for the winter, put it back in the spring before lake temperatures reach 55 degrees F.
- Even if you don’t have any indication of mussels, report back at the end of the season. It is very important to know where zebra mussels are being monitored and where they have not been found.



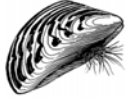
## Yikes - what’s on the block?

- Check your block regularly throughout the summer. If it feels grittier or you see something that looks suspicious, email a photo to Scott Kishbaugh at [sakishba@gw.dec.state.ny.us](mailto:sakishba@gw.dec.state.ny.us)
- If, from the photo, Scott thinks that the sample needs further investigation, he will contact you and ask you to send a sample to a research lab. You should send a sample of the mussel in a small plastic jar with your contact information and location to:

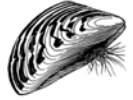


Denise Mayer  
Assistant Director and Research Scientist  
New York State Museum  
Field Research Laboratory  
51 Fish Hatchery Road  
Cambridge, NY 12816

- **Do NOT send in the brick, do NOT send the mussels with the CSLAP water samples.**
- Check around the brick to see if boats, piers, or footings seem to have a similar mussel. Try to estimate the number of mussels you see.



# “Block Zebra Mussels”



## Volunteer Monitoring Program

Use this page to report that you monitored for zebra mussels

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Lake, bay, town, and place you are monitoring:

\_\_\_\_\_

Depth of Block: \_\_\_\_\_ feet GPS location: \_\_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of monitoring: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

**If you find zebra mussels on your block, please contact Scott Kishbaugh and email a photo of the mussels as soon as possible to him at [sakishba@gw.dec.state.ny.us](mailto:sakishba@gw.dec.state.ny.us)**

If you don't find any evidence of zebra mussels, it's still important to know where monitoring occurs.

If you are in the CSLAP program, please send this form in with your last CSLAP sample.

If you are not part of the CSLAP program, please send this report by November 1 each year to Nancy Mueller at:

NYS Federation of Lake Associations (NYSFOLA), PO Box 84, LaFayette, NY 13084

or email a copy to [nysfolanancy@verizon.net](mailto:nysfolanancy@verizon.net)

**Please do NOT send bricks or mussels with the CSLAP water samples.**

GPS of monitoring locations are helpful. If you don't have a GPS, try this trick. Find the spot on google maps: <http://maps.google.com> Place your cursor on the spot, right click and select “directions to here”. The GPS coordinates will show up in the “to” location on the map page.