



Photo: N. Macelko

# NEW ZEALAND MUDSNAIL

New Zealand mudsnail (NZM), *Potamopyrgus antipodarum*, is a native species of the freshwater streams and lakes in New Zealand and associated small islands. It was first discovered in the U.S. in 1987 in the Snake River in Idaho. It has since spread to freshwater habitats in at least 22 states in the U.S. Invasion in Delaware was very recent, with several NZMs found in September of 2021 in the Brandywine River near the zoo by a scientist conducting a survey.

NZMs are tiny, measuring an average of 4mm-6mm (1/8 inch) in length, although in their native habitat they can grow up to 12mm (1/2 inch). They have elongated shells with 5-6 spirals separated by deep grooves. Color varies from gray and dark brown to light brown. As with many snails, NZMs have an operculum, a retractable cover that allows the snail to seal itself inside the shell for protection.

The invasion of this species into non-native habitat, such as in Delaware, can have negative environmental impacts. Their ability to rapidly reproduce and form dense populations can displace native snail species and alter the aquatic food web. NZMs provide little nutrition to fishes that eat them.

The most important step the public can take to prevent the spread of this species is to clean all gear, boots, waders, and equipment of visible debris before leaving a waterbody. All of these items need to completely dry out before using them again at another site. NZMs can easily 'hitchhike' from one site to another because they can survive for several days out of water.

Members of the public are key to preventing the invasion and spread of aquatic invasive species. Reports can be submitted via: [DNRECFisheries@delaware.gov](mailto:DNRECFisheries@delaware.gov) or call (302) 739-9914. Please include date, specific location, and a photo to confirm species identification.

## QUICK FACTS

- U.S. populations are primarily self-cloning females
- They are nocturnal grazers feeding on detritus, algae, and diatoms
- They are capable of living in brackish water
- They can survive passing through the digestive system of fish
- They are a 'right-handed' snail, meaning their spirals run counterclockwise



Photo: USGS NAS



## STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!

Prevent the transport of nuisance species.  
Clean all recreational equipment.  
[www.ProtectYourWaters.net](http://www.ProtectYourWaters.net)

### When you leave a body of water:

- Remove any visible mud, plants, fish or animals before transporting equipment.
- Eliminate water from equipment before transporting.
- Clean and dry anything that comes into contact with water (boats, trailers, equipment, clothing, dogs, etc.).
- Never release plants, fish or animals into a body of water unless they came out of that body of water.

