

Invasive Species Highlight

Chinese Mystery Snail

The Chinese mystery snail (*Cipangopaludina chinensis*) is native to Asia and commonly imported and sold by the aquarium trade, leading to the illegal release into the wild. First populations in Minnesota were found in the early 2000's. Chinese mystery snail is a regulated invasive species, making it illegal to release into public waters. They graze on the lake and river bottom material. They are called "mystery" snails because females give birth to young, fully developed snails that suddenly and "mysteriously" appear.

Environmental Impact

Chinese mystery snails harm Minnesota waters by disrupting recreation, damaging the economy, and altering ecosystems

- Large die-offs can occur, leaving beaches and shorelines littered with shells
- Can transmit human intestinal flukes
- Can be a carrier of trematode parasites that affect native mussels



Identification

- Large, smooth, brown to olive colored shell that can grow 2-3" long
- Shell lacks banding and can have 6-7 whorls
- Opening is located on the right when shell is pointed up and has an operculum (structure that functions much like a lid or "trapdoor") with distinct growth rings
- An operculum is not likely to be present in dead specimens



Look-alikes

Banded mystery snail (invasive)

Faucet snail (invasive)

New Zealand mudsnails (invasive)

There are many snail species native to Minnesota.

Clean all invasive species from boats, trailers, and other equipment.
Drain water from boats, ballast tanks, motors, and live wells before leaving.
Dry boats and equipment to ensure young mussels are not transported.

Visit our website for additional Invasive Species Highlights - winonaswcd.org

For any questions, call Abbi Hoffman - 507-523-2171 x113

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References and Resources

“Chinese mystery snail” Gupta, et al. *University of Minnesota*. <https://extension.umn.edu/identify-invasive-species/chinese-mystery-snail>

“Chinese Mystery Snail (*Cipangopaludina chinensis*)” *Minnesota Department of Natural Resources*. <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/aquaticanimals/chinese-mystery-snail/index.html>

“Chinese Mystery Snail (*Cipangopaludina chinensis*)” ERSS—Ecological Risk Screening Summary. *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*. February 2011. <https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Ecological-Risk-Screening-Summary-Chinese-Mystery-Snail.pdf>