

ENVIRONMENTAL BRIEFING No 1

Quagga Mussel Invasive Species

Recent press articles report that the Quagga Mussel has been found in the Wraysbury River near Egham in Surrey – the first recordings of the species in the UK. The Wraysbury River is a tributary of the River Colne and there is a real risk of spread to the tidal Thames. This note provides information about the Quagga Mussel and what you can do to help prevent the spread of it and other non-native invasive species.

What is it?

Quagga mussel is a relative of the Zebra mussel (also an invasive species). It has spread rapidly through Europe. As a prolific breeder and water filter it could significantly impact the ecology through competition for food and habitat. Shell fish populations may be specifically affected.

Where does it live?

Quagga mussel live in lakes, rivers and estuarine habitats (like the Thames), attaching to hard substrata (rocks, wood, pipes) and to native mussel shells. Larvae are produced in abundance and are invisible to the eye so any water in proximity must be assumed to contain these larvae.

Why is it a problem?

- Smothers native species
- Blocks pipes
- Alters ecosystems by filtering out nutrients
- Fouls boat hulls
- Sharp shells may cause injury



Quagga Mussel (GB NNSS [Species alert](#))



Boat Propeller covered in Quagga Mussel (© Utah Division of Wildlife Resources)

What can I do?

- Undertake good biosecurity (see GB NNSS [Check Clean Dry](#)):
Check equipment and clothing for presence of adult mussels, remove and dispose of safely.
Clean thoroughly, if possible by immersing in 45°C water for 15 mins or hot pressure wash for at least a minute. Contain wash water and dispose safely.
Dry for at least 48 hours before using elsewhere.
When leaving an anchorage, wash off both the anchor and chain before stowing.
When recovering watercraft, drain water from every part and from all equipment.



- Report sightings by email with a photo and location details to alernonnative@ceh.ac.uk

See attached Invasive Species Alert

Further information available on the GBNNS website at [GB non-native species secretariat](#)

- For **users of watercraft** (boats, canoes, kayaks and all watercraft)
- For **anglers**
- For **management of structures** (removing / transferring submerged structures including pontoons, buoys, posts, chains, ropes, hulls, engines, anchors and cages)

Further information is also available on the Green Blue website: [GreenBlue](#)