

Chinese mystery snail

Cipangopaludina chinensis

Description

Sold in Chinese food markets in San Francisco in the late 1800s; by 1965, established on both coasts; introduced into Great Lakes in 1940s.

Identification

Large (up to 2 1/4 inches); light brownish to olive green shell has 6-7 tightly wound whorls without banding; very fine growth rings; a round or oval black lip; camouflages itself with a dark green covering similar to moss.

Habitat

Native to eastern Asia. Prefers shallow, quiet waters of ponds, marshes, lakes, canals, ditches and slow-moving rivers; on vegetation or soft, muddy and sandy-bottomed areas.

Reproduction

Viviparous, giving birth to fully developed juveniles. Females continuously release small numbers of juveniles, reportedly producing in the order of 65 live offspring per year.



Impact

May transmit parasites and diseases. Can also clog the screens of water-intake pipes. Achieves very high densities and adversely affects aquatic food webs. Competes with native snails for food and may contribute to their decline.

Similar

Japanese mystery snail (*Bellamya japonica*), is closely related and biologically similar.

Monitoring and Rapid Response

Specific control methods have not yet been developed. Increasing the predator fishes and turtles that eat snails may be beneficial but snailicides and dessication (drying) has shown to be not effective.

Credits

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