

BANDED MYSTERY SNAIL

(*Viviparus cf. georgianus*)

In 1867, the Banded mystery snail made its way into the waterways of North America when it was released into the Hudson River. Since then, they have spread throughout southern Ontario.

In the Severn Sound area, they are known to occur in Bass Lake, in Oro-Medonte.

Banded mystery snails can be identified by the dark bands on their shells that is their namesake



Banded mystery snails have a "trap door" called an operculum at the opening of their shells



During prolonged heat waves, Banded mystery snails may die in large numbers, covering shorelines with their shells



Adult Banded mystery snails. Photo: SSEA

IDENTIFICATION

- Banded mystery snail adults grow up to 3.5 cm (1.4") long
- Yellowish to greenish brown in colour with 3 or 4 reddish-brown bands that follow the spirals on the shell
- Operculum or "trap door" at the opening of the shell is not present on native snails
- The Chinese mystery snail, which is also invasive, is larger and its shell is solid brownish to olive green in colour

IMPACTS

Banded mystery snails resist predation by using their operculum to seal their shells. Their populations can grow to large numbers that out-compete native snail populations for resources. This can lead to a decline in populations of native snail species, which can affect the wildlife that depend on them for food, such as birds and fish. Banded mystery snails may feed on fish eggs¹ which can have a negative effect on local fish populations.

This species can also be a threat to human health and infrastructure:

- they can carry and transmit parasites to people and wildlife
- their large shells can clog water intake pipes when in large numbers.

¹ Ontario's Invading Species Awareness Program: Invasive Snails. Downloaded from www.invadingspecies.com/invasive-snails/ on 18-Aug-2020

² DiGasparro, Mackenzie (Invasive Species Centre), personal communication, August 2020



Banded mystery snail shells at Bass Lake, Oro-Medonte. Photo: SSEA

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Prevent invasive species from spreading and establishing in new places.

- Banded mystery snails can be spread by boats and trailers and be found inside of live wells, ballasts, motors, bilge, and transoms. Always drain your boat on land and wash any water equipment with high pressure hot water or let it dry in the sun for 5 days before taking it to another body of water.
- Never dump aquarium plants, fish, or animals like Banded mystery snails into the natural environment.

If you find invasive snails, wear gloves when handling them, take photographs of them at different angles and with a size comparison, and then report them. Do not release them back into the wild – the best practice is to bag them tightly and put them in a freezer; once frozen, dispose of them in the trash².

Prevention

- Before moving to another waterbody, wash your boat, trailer, and water equipment with hot pressurized water OR dry it in the sun for at least five days

Reporting

- Report sightings to SSEA and/or the toll-free invading species hotline (1-800-563-7711) or online to www.eddmaps.org/ontario

Eradication

- Tightly bag any collected snails and freeze them; once frozen, dispose of bags in the trash²

To learn more about the Banded mystery snail and other invasive species, watch videos on [SSEA's YouTube channel](#).

To report an invasive species in the Severn Sound area, email us at:
InvasiveSpecies@SevernSound.ca

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