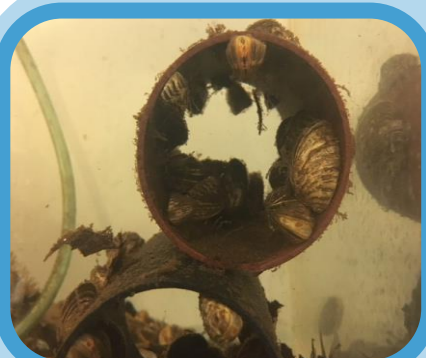


Invasive non native species: Zebra

Mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*)

Zebra Mussels are smaller than marine mussels and grow up to 40mm long. They form dense colonies attached to hard substrate in fresh and brackish water and are happy in either still or flowing water. The larvae can float downstream for 4 weeks and up to 300km before attaching and starting a new colony. However, humans are responsible for most introduction to new sites



Environmental impact: Zebra Mussels are filter feeders and one adult can filter over a litre of water a day removing nutrients and oxygen that native species rely on. Their high phytoplankton consumption clears the water, but leaves little for native mussels and other filter feeders.

Health and social impact: they are a nuisance when growing on recreational boats

Economic impact: Zebra Mussels cause major problems for water treatment works and power station intakes as they clog up pipes, filters and turbines. They also impact on fisheries, growing on cages and changing population structures, as well as attaching to hulls and navigational infrastructure

Treatment of Zebra Mussels currently costs Yorkshire Water £120,000 a year (they affect just one or two reservoirs). This compares favourably to Thames Water's £4M a year spend to control them in their region.

Biosecurity: you can help stop the spread of invasive non native species, which can cause problems and are expensive to treat, through the following actions:

CHECK your equipment, clothing and footwear
CLEAN everything thoroughly, use hot water if possible

DRY everything, as some species can survive for up to two weeks in damp conditions



Image credits: RPS Group PLC, Stephanie Bradbeer, Stephanie Bradbeer



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