

GOLDEN MUSSELS' THREAT TO CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURE



In October 2024, the golden mussel (*Limnoperna fortunei*), a highly invasive bivalve, was discovered in the Port of Stockton, San Joaquin County. This detection marks the first known occurrence of golden mussels in North America.

Golden mussels were likely introduced to the Port of Stockton by a ship traveling from an international port. They are likely to spread throughout the interconnected Delta, upstream into Delta tributaries, as far west as the Suisun Bay, and southward via the State Water Project (SWP) and federal Central Valley Project (CVP) that draw water from the Delta. Golden mussels were also discovered at O'Neill Forebay, a joint-use facility of the SWP and CVP in Merced County.

Golden mussels are similar in appearance to quagga and zebra mussels and can have similar impacts. However, golden mussels can tolerate brackish water and lower calcium levels, making more waterbodies vulnerable to golden mussel infestations.

HOW TO REPORT

If you observe golden mussels in California, immediately report your sighting to the CDFW Invasive Species Program at wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Invasives/Report, by email to Invasives@wildlife.ca.gov, or by telephone to **(866) 440-9530**.

Please take clear, close-up photos that include something (such as a pencil or hand) to show size.

HOW GOLDEN MUSSELS CAN AFFECT CALIFORNIA GROWERS

Golden mussels can rapidly colonize surfaces, clog pump equipment, irrigation systems, and canals, which can reduce pumping capabilities and increase maintenance costs. This could pose significant and costly challenges to California agriculture.

HOW TO IDENTIFY GOLDEN MUSSELS

- Size: Adult mussels range from 3/4 inch to 2 inches.
- Shell color: Light golden to darker yellowish-brown to brown color.
- Firmly attach to hard surfaces (e.g. irrigation infrastructure, large woody debris, etc.). They can also latch onto underwater plants and soft substrates if they are packed together tightly enough.
- Found in fresh and brackish-water lakes, rivers, creeks, wetlands, bays, and canals.



Photos by Jeb Bjerke/California Department of Fish and Wildlife



Scan the QR code
for more information

