

# ➤ New Zealand Mudsnails



2023 Marine Taxonomic Services, LTD., Photo by M.Rydel

## Invasive New Zealand mudsnails are in Lake Tahoe

In September 2023, divers discovered a new aquatic invasive species (AIS), the New Zealand mudsnail, in Lake Tahoe. This is the first time the species has been detected in the Tahoe Basin and the first new invasives species detection since the Lake Tahoe Watercraft Inspection Program began in 2008.

### ➤ Why are New Zealand mudsnails a concern?

AIS can permanently damage Lake Tahoe, one of the highest, deepest, and clearest lakes in the world. Non-native species can overwhelm Tahoe's native species and hurt the clarity of the lake. Once established AIS are costly to control and usually impossible to completely remove.

New Zealand mudsnails were first discovered in 1987 in Idaho and have since spread to 22 states including California and Nevada. They are most likely spread by recreational equipment such as boats or fishing gear that haven't been Clean, Drained, and Dry. Because they are tough, tiny (smaller than a grain of rice!), and can multiply rapidly, their population can grow quickly.

### ➤ How did they get into Lake Tahoe?

We may never know how the snails got into Lake Tahoe. Because New Zealand mudsnails have already been found nearby in the Lower Truckee River near Reno, and the Lower American River near Sacramento, it is likely they were carried to Tahoe on boats, fishing gear, paddlecraft, life vests, and beach toys that weren't Clean, Drained, and Dry.

### ➤ Who found them and where are they?

Agencies regularly monitor Lake Tahoe for new AIS infestations. SCUBA divers looking for aquatic invasive plants offshore of the mouth of the Upper Truckee River in South Lake Tahoe discovered the species. They immediately contacted local agencies and collected specimens to be sent to snail experts for identification and DNA analysis.



Credit: Michigan Department of Natural Resources

## ➤ What is being done?

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and Tahoe Resource Conservation District lead the regional response team. The top goal right now is to stop New Zealand mudsnails from spreading to other parts of Lake Tahoe and other waterbodies by taking these actions:

- **Information Gathering:** The team deployed divers to conduct more surveys to determine the extent of the infestation. These surveys show that the infestation appears to be limited to a 3-mile stretch on the South Shore of Lake Tahoe between the Tahoe Keys and Ski Run Marina.
- **Partner Coordination:** The team is calling upon scientists, biologists, non-profits, and resource managers to gather information and ensure the best available science is used to make decisions.
- **Adding Protective Measures:** The team updated boat inspection program protocols and paddler resources to ensure extra protection for all regional waterbodies and has expanded educational signage.



## ➤ What can I do?

Please be vigilant about keeping your boat, fishing gear, paddlecraft, e-foils, and beach toys Clean, Drained, and Dry to avoid spreading New Zealand mudsnails or other invasive species. Every person who enjoys Lake Tahoe shares the responsibility to protect these treasured waters. Follow the QR codes at right to get specific instructions based on popular activities.

### Learn how to Clean, Drain, and Dry your motorized or non-motorized watercraft and equipment:

- Boats, e-foils, jetskis, and other motorized watercraft: [tahoeboatinspections.com](http://tahoeboatinspections.com)
- Kayaks, paddleboards, dive gear, and other non-motorized watercraft: [tahoekeepers.org](http://tahoekeepers.org)



Photo by: Lake Tahoe Water Trail

### BOATERS



### PADDLERS/BEACHGOERS



### ANGLERS



[trpa.gov/new-zealand-mudsnail](http://trpa.gov/new-zealand-mudsnail)



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