

Invasive of the Week Watch: Mystery Snail

By: Tanner Ruechel

Imagine your shore line covered with golf ball size snails to the point where wading barefoot though the water is nearly impossible without stepping or cutting your foot on numerous shells. The Chinese, Japanese, or Banded Mystery Snails could make this a reality. You may have already seen the invasive Banded Mystery Snail at Dutch Hollow Lake along the shoreline or floating on the surface. The recent addition of this invasive snail is believed to have come from an aquarium being dumped into the lake. These snails originated from Asia and are known to cause ecosystem, health and nuisance problems.



Invasive snails threaten the ecosystem by out competing native snails. Mystery Snails grow larger than native snails and have a harder shell that prevents native snail predators from feeding on them, allowing populations to explode. This outbreak of Mystery Snails feed on zooplankton and phytoplankton triggering disruptions in the food chain ultimately causing a low and unhealthy fish population. In addition, Mystery Snails are vectors for exotic diseases/parasites that can furthermore affect fish and other wildlife. Although no cases have been found in the U.S. to date, some of these diseases/parasites are known to infect humans and pets. Of course, there is also the obvious nuisance of shells lining your shores and beaches. Mystery Snails can have a similar effect of Zebra Mussels when it comes to damaging equipment by clogging boat hoses and drainage pipes.

There are NO current effective ways for eradicating the Mystery Snail. Unlike natives, this invasive snail has a “trap door” that it closes preventing chemical treatment and allowing weeks without water permitting them to spread effectively. The best way to stop these damaging Mystery Snail plagues is to prevent their invasion from the beginning.

If you would like to help prevent Mystery Snail and other invasive species from finding their way into Lake Redstone and Dutch Hollow Lake, please offer to volunteer a few hours on a weekend this summer with the Clean Boats Clean Waters by contacting Tanner Ruechel through email ruechelt@gmail.com or phone (920) 621-3282.