

NEW ZEALAND MUD SNAILS Have reached Colorado waters

**Unknowing anglers help to spread them
Please sanitize your fishing gear!**



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Adult New Zealand mud snails on a penny

With the help of unknowing anglers, the New Zealand mud snail is spreading rapidly among Western watersheds, most recently into Colorado. In January 2005 the Colorado Division of Wildlife closed a 2.5-mile stretch of South Boulder Creek and a nearby private trout hatchery after confirming an infestation. (Details: <http://wildlife.state.co.us/news/press.asp?pressid=3344>)

New Zealand mud snails threaten Western river life by consuming the aquatic insects need to sustain themselves and native fish populations. The tiny creatures (adults are 1/8 inch), they have been known to cover entire stretches of streambed in densities up to 500,000 snails per square yard. They offer trout little nutritional value as substitute food. They have no natural predator in the U.S. waters, and resist eradication once established in a watershed.

These pests reach new watersheds with the help of unknowing anglers and boaters. They can hitchhike unnoticed on boot laces and soles, waders, nets and boats. Out of water, they can survive many days attached to any moist surface.

Please don't be part of the problem. Before moving from one watershed to fish in another, please sanitize your boat, net and wading gear, using one of the methods described below. HELP SPREAD THE WORD, NOT THE SNAIL

HOW TO SANITIZE YOUR FISHING GEAR

FIRST: Field-rinse and clean waders, boots, nets, float tubes, boats and other equipment to remove all river mud and debris.

LATER: DO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING BEFORE FISHING A NEW WATERSHED:

- ▶ **Kill them with hot water:** Immerse equipment in a bucket or sink with 120-degree water (under running hot tap water) for five minutes. Be sure to soak all crevices. **OR:**
- ▶ **Kill them with dry heat:** Dip waders, boots, nets and other gear in soapy water and let them dry completely in hot sun and at low humidity for several hours. **OR:**
- ▶ **Kill them with extreme cold:** Freeze equipment for 6 hours or longer. **OR:**
- ▶ **Kill them chemically:** Immersing your equipment in either of the following solutions for five minutes has been proven effective. (Spraying on these solutions is NOT a reliable substitute for immersion)
 - Clorox bleach (a 10% solution in water) for five minutes. Can degrade cotton or rubberized materials.
 - Grapefruit Seed Extract (two teaspoons per gallon of water) for five minutes GSE is available from health stores and feed suppliers. It is organic, biodegradable, non-persistent, virtually non-toxic and won't degrade equipment. Only effective in solutions above 45 degrees Fahrenheit.

FACTS ABOUT MUD SNAIL INFESTATION

- In the laboratory, these snails have lived 50 days clinging to a moist surface.
- They prefer slow, cold, muddy water, but can populate any stream.
- Watersheds in at least eight Western states have infestations. In addition to Colorado, these include the Bighorn River, Lees Ferry on the Colorado River, parts of the Green River, parts of the Yellowstone, Madison, Missouri and Beaverhead rivers, Idaho's Snake River and parts of the Henry's Fork drainage. California, Oregon and Washington also have infestations.
- **A mud snail infestation cannot be reversed. Every angler has a stake in preventing their spread to new watersheds. Please pass the word about the reason to sanitize equipment after fishing any watershed.**