

Invasive Apple Snails Now Confirmed in North Carolina

Snails Damage Aquatic Habitat and Present Human Health Risks

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Apple Snails, an invasive, aquatic species, have been found in the Lumber River in Lumberton. This photograph and another are available for download at the links below.

RALEIGH, N.C. (Oct. 2, 2023) – The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) announced today that Apple Snails, a harmful invasive aquatic species, have been identified along the Lumber River in Lumberton. Native to South America, this is the first known population of [Apple Snails](#) in North Carolina. Globally, Apple Snails are a problematic invasive species and have been introduced in Europe, Asia, and multiple states within the U.S.

A concerned citizen sent photographs of suspected Apple Snail egg clusters to the NCWRC. An NCWRC biologist inspected multiple sites along the Lumber River and collected additional egg masses for submission to the [N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences](#), which confirmed the identification of Apple Snail eggs. Subsequent surveys by an NCWRC biologist detected adult snails and eggs near the I-95 bridge crossing of the Lumber River, at the High Hill Boating Access Area, and in Fivemile Branch, a tributary to the Lumber River.

Apple Snail grazing habits can damage plants used by many native aquatic species and they have even been observed feeding on amphibian eggs. Additionally, Apple Snails can present human health risks. They may carry rat lungworm, which can cause a potentially fatal disease in humans if the snails are eaten raw or undercooked. The snail's egg masses also contain a toxin which can cause skin and eye rashes.

Apple Snails are most easily recognizable by their distinctive large, bright pink egg clusters, which are laid on solid surfaces, such as tree trunks, concrete, or other vegetation, above the waterline along the edges of streams, rivers or ponds. When the eggs hatch, the young snails drop into the water, where they grow into fully aquatic adults, reaching 2 to 6 inches in size (much larger than any of our native aquatic snails). Female snails lay eggs as often as once a week, which allows populations to grow and spread rapidly once established.

Because of their destructive impact, it is unlawful to transport, purchase, possess, sell or stock apple snails in North Carolina. Please report suspected apple snail or an egg mass online via the [Aquatic Nuisance Species Reporting Tool](#) and include a photograph and location where they were found. After documenting the location, egg masses can be destroyed by crushing them and scraping them into the water with any implement such as a stick or a boat paddle, making sure the eggs sink, while avoiding touching them with bare skin. Adult snails can be destroyed by crushing or freezing.

To prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species NCWRC offers the following [guidance](#):

- **Clean:** Equipment of all aquatic plants, animals and mud.
- **Drain:** Water from boats, live wells, bait buckets and all equipment.
- **Dry:** All equipment thoroughly
- **Never Move:** Fish, plants or other organisms from one body of water to another.

Visit the NCWRC's [aquatic nuisance species](#) webpage for more information on apple snails.

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Photographer: Please credit photographs with N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission