

# QUAGGA MUSSELS

*(Dreissena rostriformis bugensis)*

**Oneida Lake Status:  
Abundant**



*A Quagga Mussel -NYDEC*



*Quagga mussels found in Oneida Lake attached to a native extirpated clam -CBFS*



*Quagga mussels found in Oneida Lake -CBFS*

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- Discovered in Oneida Lake in 2005
- A close relative of the zebra mussel
- Began displacing zebra mussels in 2008
- Prefers to attach to soft substrate

Zebra mussels and Quagga mussels are both found in the *Dreissena* genus, so they are closely related. Like zebra mussels, Quagga mussels are native to the Ponto-Caspian Sea in Eastern Europe. However, unlike zebra mussels, Quagga mussels prefer to attach to softer substrates, but can attach to harder substrates if necessary. Also, Quagga mussels can go deeper into the water than zebra mussels because Quagga mussels prefer colder temperatures. Quagga mussels were first found in Oneida Lake in 2005.

Quagga mussels eat algae and phytoplankton. Since the arrival of Quagga mussels, the amount of phytoplankton in Oneida Lake has decreased.

Quagga mussels compete with zebra mussels and zooplankton for food. The number of zebra mussels in the lake greatly decreased as Quagga mussels become more abundant. Quagga mussels are now more common than zebra mussels in Oneida Lake.

Quagga mussels are typically pale in color near the hinge, and have a rounder shape than zebra mussels. Also, Quagga mussels do not filter water as quickly as Zebra do in warmer water.

Quagga mussels are generally larger than zebra mussels. Quagga mussels also have ring-like patterns, as opposed to the “stripes” on zebra mussels (see left).



*Zebra mussel (left) and Quagga Mussel (right) -USGS*