

BE ON THE LOOKOUT!

Invasive axe-head mussel seen in California



The axe-head mussel (*Xenostrobus securis*) has been found in the Dominguez Channel near Carson and at the mouth of the Los Angeles River. They may be in other locations, possibly co-occurring with the non-native Mediterranean mussel (*Mytilus galloprovincialis*).

- The axe-head mussel inhabits brackish waters. It can be found in the lower reaches of tidal creeks and rivers, as well as the upper reaches of bays and inlets where salinity is low for a considerable part of the year (1-31 ppt).
- The axe-head mussel creates dense colonies that can cause habitat alteration and disrupt local food webs.
- The axe-head mussel may also co-occur with the recently introduced invasive golden mussel (*Limnoperna fortunei*) which has a lower but overlapping salinity range (1-23 ppt).



Axe-head mussel key identifying traits include:

- Outside of shell (periostracum) smooth shining blue to brown color
- Small size ~ $\frac{3}{4}$ - 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches (20 – 30 mm), maximum size observed ~1 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches (47 mm)
- Outside of shell on bottom (dorsal margin) near hinge usually straight
- Shell is elongated

Image on left shows five axe-head mussel (bottom) below two Mediterranean mussels (top).



Report any sightings to
<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Invasives/Report>

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