



Invasive Mussel Monitoring Recommendation

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Invasive Species Program

August 2026

Examining surfaces for the presence of adult invasive mussels is the most efficient and effective way to make a first detection where invasive mussels are not already known to be present. Surfaces include those already present, as well as those deployed to create or supplement existing surfaces ("artificial substrates"). Monitoring for veligers (the planktonic, larval life stage) is only recommended when invasive mussels are already known to be present upstream/in hydrologically connected waters.

Invasive Mussels <u>Not Known</u> to be Present Upstream/in Hydrologically Connected Water(s)	Invasive Mussels <u>Known</u> to be Present Upstream/in Hydrologically Connected Water(s)
Adult Monitoring Locations: • At/near every boat launch. If there are no boat launches, at the highest-use access point(s), and • At/near the inflow(s) if public recreation occurs upstream of the inflow, and • At/near the outflow(s) Frequency: Monthly CDFW Protocols: Surface Survey Artificial Substrate	Adult Monitoring Locations: • At/near every boat launch. If there are no boat launches, at the highest-use access point(s), and • At/near the inflow(s) if public recreation occurs upstream of the inflow, and • At/near the outflow(s) Frequency: Monthly CDFW Protocols: Surface Survey Artificial Substrate
Veliger Monitoring None	Veliger Monitoring Locations: • At/near the inflow(s), and • At/near the outflow(s) Frequency: Every 14 days when surface water temperature is 61°F to 86°F CDFW Protocol: Plankton Tow

Invasive Mussel Monitoring Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What resources are available to agencies implementing mussel monitoring?

A: Contact your respective [CDFW regional scientist](#).

Q: Why is CDFW no longer recommending veliger monitoring where invasive mussels are not known to be present upstream or in hydrologically connected waters?

A: CDFW has conducted veliger monitoring for more than a decade. Over these years, every new population of invasive mussels in California was the result of finding adult mussels. Veligers have only been detected before adults in waters hydrologically connected to a location where adults were already known to be present.

Q: Will CDFW continue to analyze plankton samples collected from waterbodies where invasive mussels are not known to be present upstream or hydrologically connected waters?

A: No. The only exception is for agencies monitoring under a Division of Boating and Waterways Quagga and Zebra Mussel Infestation Prevention grant signed in 2024 or 2025.

Q: Can agencies conduct plankton tow monitoring at their waterbody?

A: Yes. However, if samples are collected in waters where invasive mussels have not already been detected upstream or in hydrologically connected waters, CDFW will not analyze the samples. Agencies will need to analyze the samples at their own expense either in-house or send them to an external laboratory. CDFW laboratory staff are available to train qualified agency staff to analyze plankton samples and genetically identify suspect veligers to species. A list of laboratories that offer services to support invasive mussel monitoring is available at [Western AIS](#).