



Mercenaria mercenaria*, *Venus mercenaria

American hard-shelled clam, little-neck clam, quahog, cherry stone clam

Threat scores

1. Ecological impact
 - “British population has increased since 1950's, possibly due to occupying the niche of the soft-shelled clam *Mya arenaria*, which was eliminated from the estuary by the cold winters of 1947 and 1962/3. *M. mercenaria* filled the niche left by the cold weather die-off of *M. arenaria* and thus prevented their re-establishment. Digging and dredging for this clam has a significant effect on the environment, particularly eel grass *Zostera* beds” (Molnar 2008).
2. Invasive potential
 - “Originally imported as eel bait. Spread through UK via larval dispersal on water currents. Elevated estuarine temperatures through heated industrial discharges are likely to favour the spread of this species in British waters, especially where the temperature required for reproduction is reached. Dumping and deliberate introduction attempts by fishermen and fishery scientists also influence its spread” (Molnar 2008).
3. Geographic extent
 - Locally pervasive
4. Management difficulty
 - The species is not controlled although the population has been severely depleted by the fishery.



Geography and Habitat

1. Origin: East coast of North America (Nova Scotia, Canada to Yucatan, Mexico)
2. First introduction: 1864
3. 1st live specimen found in Humber (England) in 1864. This was a deliberate commercial introduction of live clams imported from the USA as eel bait (Molnar 2008).
4. Marine, estuaries/bays, aquaculture

Invasion Pathways

1. Stocking in Open Water
 - Intentional known
 - Cause- Mariculture/food source
 - Imported for mariculture. A much-esteemed edible species. Commonly known as the Quahog and used to make clam juice (Molnar 2008).
2. Other Animal Trade
 - Intentional possible
 - Cause- Medicinal/pharmacological use
 - Possibly important in pharmacology: the liver and the crystalline style contain a substance capable of acting with good selectivity on cancerous cells (Molnar 2008).

3. Bait Industry

- Intentional known
- Cause- Used as eel bait in commercial fishery (circa 1864)
- 1st live specimen found in Humber (England) in 1864. This was a deliberate commercial introduction of live clams imported from the USA as eel bait.

Non native locations

1. 57- OR, WA, Vancouver Coast and Shelf

Sources

1. Molnar, Jennifer, et al. 2008. "Assessing the global threat of invasive species to marine biodiversity." *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*. 6 (9), pp. 485-492.
2. <http://conserveonline.org/workspaces/global.invasive.assessment>
3. http://www.wallawalla.edu/academics/departments/biology/rosario/inverts/Mollusca/Bivalvia/Veneroida/Veneridae/Mercenaria_mercenariaDLC2007-3s.jpg