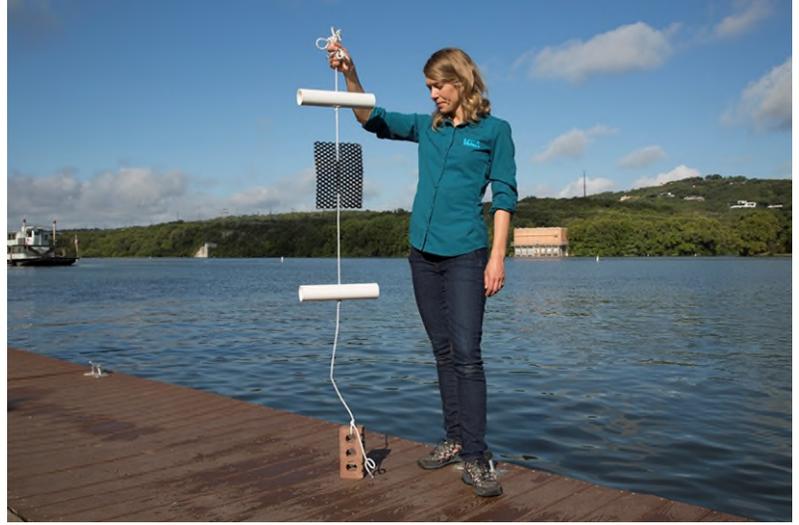


How to Build a Zebra Mussel Settlement Sampler

Materials

- One brick with holes in it
- One 1/4-inch polypropylene rope
- A piece of 1/4-inch plastic mesh screen (about 6 by 12 inches)
- Two 1-foot sections of 1 1/2-inch or 2-inch PVC pipe
- Two washers with a 1/4-inch center hole
- Carabiner or snap link (optional)



A zebra mussel settlement sampler provides an easy, inexpensive way to monitor for zebra mussels, a small invasive species that attaches to solid surfaces in the water. Samplers can be hung from docks, barges or other structures in the water, and should be about 6-8 feet long, if the water is that deep at the deployment site.

Construction

1. Cut the rope to the desired length (6-8 feet, if the water is at least that deep at the deployment site, plus enough rope to reach the attachment point plus 1 foot).
2. Drill a 3/8-inch hole through the center of each PVC pipe.
3. Tie one end of the rope to the brick.
4. Tie an overhand knot in the rope approximately 1 foot above the brick.
5. Slide washer onto the rope until it touches the knot.
6. Thread the rope through the holes in one of the PVC sections and push down to the washer.
7. Thread rope through the top and bottom of the plastic mesh to form a U-shape.
8. Push the mesh to about 6 inches above the PVC pipe section.
9. Tie an overhand knot 2 feet above the PVC section on the rope.
10. Slide the second washer onto the rope until it touches the knot.
11. Thread the rope through the holes in the second PVC section and push it down to the washer.
12. Center the plastic mesh between the two pieces of PVC.
13. Tie a loop into the free end of the rope.
14. Use the carabiner/snap link or a square knot to secure the sampler to a structure so the top piece of PVC is about 1 foot below the surface of the water.

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Adult zebra mussels have triangular shells and distinctive striped markings. They grow to a maximum of about 2 inches.

Monitor

Check the settlement sampler at least monthly. Adults can grow to about 2 inches long, but younger mussels are much smaller – about 1/8 of an inch or less. Adult mussels have striped markings on two symmetrical valves, but younger mussels are brown and without stripes.

Report

Report any zebra mussel findings to www.texasinvasives.org. For more information about zebra mussels in the Highland Lakes, see www.lcra.org/zebramussels. Clean, drain and dry your boat after use, as required by Texas law.