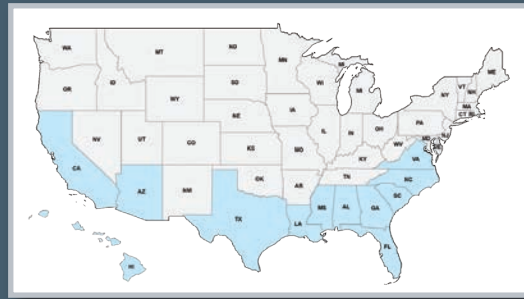




# ↑ APPLE SNAIL EGGS

Apple snails spend the majority of their lives under the water, but lay their eggs above the water line. Egg clusters are bright pink, and can be seen on vegetation and other hard surfaces like pilings or culverts. Each cluster contains between 500 and 700 eggs. Females are able to lay a new cluster every five to 14 days.



# ← APPLE SNAIL RANGE

A popular aquarium snail, irresponsible aquarium dumping is believed to be the main means of apple snail introduction into the United States. First reported as early as the 1970s in Texas, they have spread to many other states, including Louisiana. They were first found in Louisiana in 2006 in a drainage ditch near New Orleans. Following their introduction, they have been spread by flooding, vessels and wildlife. Apple snails are currently found in almost 30 parishes across southern Louisiana.

# APPLE SNAIL SHELLS →

They have heavy golden-yellow to dark brown shells with dark banding and are typically found between 2 and 4 inches tall. The largest shells can reach 6 inches, about the size of a baseball or human fist.



Photo by Pest and Diseases Image Library (forestryimages.org)

# FACTS

- ▶ Apple snails (*Pomacea maculata*), also known as giant or island apple snails, are among the largest freshwater snails.
- ▶ Native to South America, apple snails prefer well-oxygenated, slow-moving waters with low salinities. They are found in Louisiana in freshwater lakes, rivers, streams, marshes, ponds and ditches.
- ▶ Like other invasive species, they are highly adaptable and able to survive drought and low oxygen conditions by burrowing in the mud in a dormant-like state.
- ▶ Described as voracious herbivores, they feed on a wide variety of native and introduced aquatic plants.

# MANAGEMENT

Management options for apple snails are limited to physical removal and destruction of the snails and their egg masses. Removal reduces the abundance and size of the snails, but is unlikely to result in total eradication from an area unless caught during the early stages of their introduction. Chemical treatments are available but may negatively impact native snail and crawfish species, and long term use can negatively impact the local environment. Apple snails have few predators in the United States. Native wildlife like raccoons, otters and alligators have been found to prey on them, but in limited numbers that have little effect on population reduction.



Photo by Jess Van Dyke, Snail Busters (forestryimages.org)

## WHY SHOULD I CARE?

The introduction of apple snails to an area can lead to a number of impacts to the local environment, economy and human health.

Apple snails reproduce quickly and can easily overpopulate areas by out-competing native species and destroying aquatic vegetation.

Apple snails have been found to feed on young rice plants still submerged in flooded fields in Asia. It is possible that their presence in the Louisiana rice fields may result in damaged crops and blocked drainage/irrigation pipes. This could also impact crawfish production in south Louisiana.

Apple snails are also known to be an intermediate host to rat lungworm, *Angiostrongylus cantonesis*; a parasite that can infect humans through the consumption of raw or undercooked snail meat or contaminated produce. Most cases are mild and people fully recover, but severe cases can cause chronic nerve damage or even death. Some apple snails collected in Louisiana have tested positive for rat lungworm, but no human cases have been identified in Louisiana.

People should also avoid handling the egg clusters as they may contain a neurotoxin that irritates the eyes and skin.



Photo by Jess Van Dyke, Snail Busters (forestryimages.org)



**For more information  
or to report a possible  
apple snail, contact:**

**Louisiana Department of  
Wildlife & Fisheries  
Office of Fisheries**

**Aquatic Nuisance Species Coordinator**

**P.O. Box 98000**

**Baton Rouge, LA 70898-9000**

**225-765-3977**

**[www.wlf.la.gov](http://www.wlf.la.gov)**

**To report any  
Aquatic Invasive Species  
24-hours a day:**

**ANS Hotline: 225-765-3977**

**ANS Email: [AquaticInvasives@wlf.la.gov](mailto:AquaticInvasives@wlf.la.gov)**

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# BE ON THE LOOKOUT



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## APPLE SNAIL

*Pomacea maculata*