

Minuscule clams threaten Lake Tahoe



Sen. Dianne Feinstein shows off a pair of earrings made from invasive clam shells found in Lake Tahoe.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Amy Littlefield, Los Angeles Times

Lake Tahoe is under siege by clams the size of your thumbnail.

The population of the coffee-colored Asian clams has soared in the southeast portion of the lake, threatening to hog food sources and excrete nutrients that foster algae growth, according to an annual Lake Tahoe report by UC Davis researchers.

Scientists worry that calcium in the clams' shells could make the lake more hospitable to invasion by quagga or zebra mussels, which cluster onto boats and anything else that rests in the water. Although the mussels have not been sighted at

Tahoe, authorities at other lakes have spent millions of dollars trying to control them.

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