



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE – BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY
LESTER SPELL, JR., D.V.M., COMMISSIONER
BUTCH ALPE, DIRECTOR

PRESS RELEASE-

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Invasive Apple Snails Discovered in Southern Mississippi Lakes

Lester Spell, Commissioner of Agriculture, announced today that the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) will implement a plan to prevent the spread of the invasive apple snail, which was positively identified in two privately owned lakes in south Mississippi.

In cooperation with the Mississippi Department of Health, Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, and homeowner associations, MDAC will conduct surveys, post signs, and utilize check points to limit transport and the possible spread of apple snails and their eggs to uninfested areas.

Infestations of apple snails can be caused by the release of aquarium life into natural bodies of water. Spell warns that organisms harbored in aquariums are often exotic and pose serious threats to the environment and agricultural industry.

The transportation of eggs, immature snails, or water from infested lakes by boat, livewells, or ice chests serve as other possible means of spreading snails.

Apple snails are aquatic snails from South America, which overpopulate and disrupt natural ecological processes by stealing resources from native species. The snails have become a serious rice pest in Asian countries and have been known to harbor harmful parasites.

The apple snail can be identified by its golden-brown to dark brown shell, which can grow to the size of a softball. Its pink, finger-size masses of eggs typically are attached to vegetation, boat docks, or piers above the water surface.

Snails should not be consumed or handled with bare hands. Suspect snails should be reported to the Bureau of Plant Industry so efforts can be instituted to control and/or eradicate the infestation.

For more information, contact the Bureau of Plant Industry at (662) 325-3390, or call toll-free at 1-888-257-1285.