

Granite Reef Apple Snail Challenge 2017

The Three Step Challenge:

1. Plan a paddle in the Granite Reef area that includes taking some of your time to seek out and knock down pink Apple Snail egg masses.
2. Send the date and number of egg masses you knock down to: LowerSaltRiver@gmail.com. The date and count information will be tallied and forwarded to AZFGD.
3. Spread the word and challenge others to do the same by sharing pictures and this link on your favorite social media: <https://tinyurl.com/LSRsnails>

Repeat 1-3 whenever you can.

Hints:

- *Be creative. Make it a game out of finding them.*
- *The egg masses can be found on aquatic vegetation (mostly cattail reeds) just above the waterline.*
- *Use your paddle blade, a knife, or flat stick to knock the egg masses into the water (the eggs must remain dry to survive).*
- *It is recommended to avoid direct contact with young or mature apple snails (they may carry rat lungworm parasites) and to wash hands with soap and water if you do.*



Why the challenge:

- Apple snails are overtaking a stretch of the Lower Salt River between Coons Bluff and the Granite Reef Dam near Mesa Arizona.
- Apple Snails are on a top 100 list of globally most invasive species
- Apple Snails have no known natural predators in Arizona. By outcompeting and decimating native populations, they can disrupt whole food chains dependent on those species
- The exposed pink egg masses are a vulnerability that the paddle community is uniquely positioned to exploit. Snail reproduction is most active during the summer months when the paddle community is also most active.
- AZFGD does not have the resources to defeat the snails alone. A sustained community effort is critical.



If you have questions or would like to do more, send email to: LowerSaltRiver@gmail.com.

For an electronic copy of this brochure go to: <https://tinyurl.com/LSRsnails>

Last update 8/16/2017

Some Apple Snail Information:

- Apple Snails are commonly sold as pets for aquariums. The source of these snails at Granite Reef is likely the result of someone dumping their aquarium into the wild.
- During the Summer months, adult females can lay new egg clutches every two weeks, up to 15,000 eggs a year. Each egg cluster may contain as many as 500 eggs and take 2 weeks to hatch.
- Since snails can live up to 4 years, this will be a long uphill battle that will require a continuous effort by the public to keep new eggs from hatching.
- Snail eggs contain a unique chemical that makes them toxic and unpalatable. The bright pink color is thought to be a warning to deter predators.
- <https://tinyurl.com/AIS-SnailRisk>
- <https://tinyurl.com/AZFGDNews>

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