

## *Dreissena* (Bivalvia: Dreissenidae) – Systematics, Autochthonous and Anthropogenic Areas

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**Abstract:** The dreissenid mussels originated in the Late Miocene as a branch of genus *Congeria* in the region of the Middle Danube to the Aegean, Black, Azov, Caspian and Aral Seas. Nowadays the genus *Dreissena* includes 3 subgenera and many species and subspecies. Dreissenids reached a maximum autochthonous area at the end of the Pliocene. Under the influence of glaciations they retracted in the Caspian and Aral Seas, in the oligohaline zones of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov and some basins on the territories of the Balkan Peninsula and Asia Minor. After the last glaciation, dreissenids colonized again the lost territories. In Bulgaria *D. polymorpha* has been established in the rivers of the Black Sea and the Aegean Sea catchment areas.

**Key words:** *Dreissena*, history, systematics, native range, Bulgaria.