

PROTECT MANITOBA'S WATERS AND RESOURCES

STOP AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

Zebra mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*) are a Prohibited Species under *The Fisheries Act*. Possession and release of zebra mussels in Manitoba is illegal.

Zebra mussels were confirmed in Lake Winnipeg in 2013, and the Red River and Cedar Lake in 2015. Help protect our precious lakes, rivers, and wetlands by taking a few important precautions when moving watercraft, trailers, aircraft, or before moving any water-related equipment and gear such as docks, nets, bait buckets, ropes, buoys, life jackets, anchors and totes between waterbodies.

BEFORE LAUNCHING AND BEFORE LEAVING:

1. CLEAN

Clean and inspect watercraft, trailer, aircraft, and all water-related equipment.

Remove all plants, animals, mud. Rinse using high pressure (>2500 psi) and extremely hot tap water - (>50°C /120°F).

2. DRAIN

Drain all water from watercraft and water-related equipment including the motor, livewell, bilge, bait buckets and totes before transporting.

3. DRY

Dry watercraft, trailer, and all water-related equipment for at least five days in the hot sun, 18 days in the spring/fall, or freeze for three days (if rinsing is not available).

4. DISPOSE

Dispose of unwanted live bait and worms in the trash, and dump all water from bait buckets and totes on land away from any waterbody.



Photo credit: Ohio Sea Grant



Photo credit: Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

What do adult zebra mussels look like?



Photo credit: Michigan Sea Grant

- usually 1 to 3 centimetres (0.4 to 1.2 inches) long
- triangular, or “D”-shaped shell
- most have light and dark brown bands on shells
- adult shells have very strong tufts of hair-like filaments, called byssal threads
- usually grow in clusters containing numerous individuals

Zebra Mussel Facts

- Zebra mussels and quagga mussels are the only freshwater mussels that firmly attach to solid objects, including rocks, watercraft hulls, motors, docks, water intake pipes, etc. Native mussels will bury into soft substrates on lake and river bottoms.
- They aggressively invade new areas and reproduce quickly. Females can produce upwards of one million eggs per year.
- They deteriorate aquatic ecosystems, alter the foodweb, and impact fish and wildlife by increasing toxic algal blooms. Large colonies affect fish spawning areas.
- They are capable of heavily colonizing hard and soft surfaces including docks, boats, motors, break walls and beaches.
- They negatively impact key infrastructure by colonizing anything immersed in the water such as clogging intake structures in power stations, water treatment plants, and cottages.
- They are a costly nuisance to boaters, commercial fishers, anglers, and beach-goers. Zebra mussels can reduce recreational potential by littering beaches with sharp shells and producing foul odours from decay.
- Unlike adults which have a shell, young zebra mussels, called veligers are free-swimming and microscopic; they cannot be seen with the naked eye.
- Veligers can be moved from one waterbody to another, unnoticed, wherever water is present, for example, in bait buckets, totes, livewells, or bilge.
- They cannot be eradicated once they become established, so it is extremely important to stop their spread.

**For more information, or if you find zebra mussels
or any other aquatic invasive species call (toll free):**

1-87-STOP AIS-0
(1-877-867-2470)

or visit: manitoba.ca/StopAIS

Note the exact location and provide GPS co-ordinates, if possible.
Take pictures and submit to fish@gov.mb.ca