

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. Help protect our precious lakes, rivers, and wetlands by taking a few important precautions when moving watercraft, trailers, aircraft, or before moving any water-based 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-based equipment and gear.**

Remove all plants, animals, mud. Rinse using high pressure (>2500 psi) and extremely hot tap water - 50°C (120°F) for at least two minutes; or 60°C (140°F) for at least 10 seconds.

### 2. DRAIN

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

### 3. DRY

**Dry watercraft, trailer, and all water-based gear** and 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 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 by filtering water to the point where food sources such as plankton are removed, altering the foodweb; 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.
- They can be moved from one waterbody to another unnoticed in bait buckets, totes, livewells, bilge, or on any fishing equipment, nets, and water-based gear and equipment such as docks and anchors.
- Unlike adults, young zebra mussels, called veligers, in their larval stage are free-swimming and microscopic; they are difficult to see with the naked eye.
- 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](http://manitoba.ca/StopAIS)**

Note the exact location and provide GPS co-ordinates, if possible.  
Take pictures and submit to [fish@gov.mb.ca](mailto:fish@gov.mb.ca)