



STATE OF IDAHO



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Idaho Watercraft Inspection Stations Successful in Preventing Invasive Species

Idaho continues to work to protect Idaho's waters from aquatic invasive species. Idaho's watercraft inspection and decontamination stations performed over 47,000 watercraft inspections during the 2011 season, intercepting 24 watercraft that were carrying invasive mussels into or through the state. The invasive species sticker has provided the funding to conduct nearly 100,000 inspections since 2009.

The highly invasive quagga mussel was first discovered in the West in the Lake Mead National Recreation area in 2007. They have not been found in Idaho's waters to date and state inspection programs aim to keep it that way. If introduced, the mussels can quickly spread through rivers and lakes, impacting native species, recreation, and infrastructure for power generation, irrigation, municipalities and industrial use.

Of the 24 mussel-fouled watercraft that were intercepted this year, nearly half originated from federal waters in Nevada and Arizona. "The Lower Colorado River system is known to be heavily infested with quagga mussels, and we know that many Pacific Northwest boats spend extended periods of time there. Given the proximity to Idaho, boats that have been in those waters are considered extremely high risk," said Idaho State Department of Agriculture Director Celia Gould.

Most other western states also have initiated prevention programs in an effort to keep these species from being introduced on trailered watercraft. "Mussel-fouled boats continue to leave infested waters without proper decontamination. The federal government needs to do a better job of containing infestations in their waters and preventing the spread of these species to the Pacific Northwest states," said Gould. "We need all hands on deck as we work to protect our waters."

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Idaho-bound boaters are reminded that they must submit for an inspection from the Idaho State Department of Agriculture if they have been in a mussel-infested waterbody in the previous 30 days. Examples of mussel-infested Western waters are: Lake Mead, Lake Mojave, Lake Havasu and Lake Pleasant. For a complete list of impacted Western waters see: http://nas.er.usgs.gov/taxgroup/mollusks/zebramussel/maps/southwest_quagga.pdf.

“It is always important to ‘Clean, Drain and Dry’ your boat,” said Gould. ISDA urges all boaters to take the following steps to prevent the introduction of the mussels to Idaho:

- Inspect all exposed surfaces – small mussels feel like sandpaper to the touch
- Wash the hull thoroughly, preferably with hot water
- Remove all plant and animal material
- Drain all water and dry all areas
- Drain and dry the lower outboard unit
- Clean and dry all live wells
- Empty and dry any buckets
- Dispose of all bait in the trash
- Wait five days and keep watercraft dry between launches into different fresh waters

To arrange for a watercraft inspection, call the Idaho State Department of Agriculture at 1-877-336-8676.

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