



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Zebra mussels found in Lost Island Lake

Ruthven, Iowa - The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) recently confirmed that zebra mussels are in Lost Island Lake near Ruthven in Palo Alto County.

The DNR collects water samples and deploys settlement samplers in lakes across the state each summer to monitor for the invasive zebra mussel. Young zebra mussels (called veligers) were found in an August water sample, and further investigation discovered low numbers of juvenile and adult zebra mussels around the lake. DNR staff will conduct additional surveys at Lost Island Lake this fall and next summer to monitor the abundance and distribution of zebra mussels.

The documentation of zebra mussels in another lake highlights the spread of aquatic invasive species in Iowa waters.

“The zebra mussels in Lost Island Lake probably arrived on or in a boat that had picked up the mussels from an infested water body, like the Spirit/Okoboji chain of lakes or Storm Lake,” said Kim Bogenschutz, Aquatic Invasive Species Program coordinator for the DNR.

Zebra mussels look like small, D-shaped clams that have alternating light and dark bands. Most are less than one inch long. They are filter feeders that can form dense clusters as they attach to hard underwater surfaces. Large infestations may interfere with aquatic food chains, kill native mussels, clog water intakes, increase algae blooms, and cover beaches with dead shells. Currently there is no effective treatment to control zebra mussels once they have infested a lake.

Young zebra mussels are microscopic and can be unintentionally transported with water in live wells, bilges, ballast or bait buckets. Adult zebra mussels can attach to boats, trailers and aquatic vegetation.

It is illegal to possess or transport prohibited aquatic invasive species, such as zebra mussels, in Iowa. Boaters must also drain all water from boats and equipment before leaving a water access and must keep drain plugs removed or opened during transport.

“Boaters and anglers can unintentionally spread zebra mussels and other aquatic invasive species if they do not take the proper precautions - clean, drain, dry - after each time out on the water,” said Bogenschutz.

- CLEAN any plants, animals or mud from boat and equipment before you leave a water body.
- DRAIN water from all equipment (motor, live well, bilge, transom well, bait bucket) before you leave a water body.
- DRY anything that comes into contact with water (boats, trailers, equipment, boots, clothing, dogs). Before you move to another waterbody either:
 - Spray your boat and trailer with hot, high-pressure water; or
 - Dry your boat and equipment for at least 5 days.
 - Never release plants, fish or animals into a water body unless they came out of that water body and empty unwanted bait in the trash.

“Draining all water is a critical step in preventing the spread of zebra mussels,” said Bogenschutz.

Find more information about aquatic invasive species and a list of infested waters in the 2018 Iowa Fishing Regulations booklet or on the DNR’s website at www.iowadnr.gov/ais.

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