



NEWS RELEASE

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Northeast Region

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CONTACT: Mary Gansberg, DNR Water Resources Biologist, 920-662-5489
SUBJECT: Zebra mussels confirmed in Pigeon Lake in Manitowoc County
Boaters called on to prevent further spread of this invasive species

VALDERS, Wis. – Zebra mussel larvae and adults have been found in Pigeon Lake in Manitowoc County. Zebra mussels are an invasive aquatic species that causes numerous problems from blocking water intake pipes to crowding out native species to colonizing shoreline rocks and formations and presenting sharp shells that cut swimmers' feet. As a result, the Department of Natural Resources has added this lake to its list of zebra mussel infested waters and urges boaters to take precautions to prevent spreading invasive species to other lakes.

Zebra mussels were detected in samples collected as part of routine monitoring by DNR staff on Pigeon Lake. Adult zebra mussels were later found attached to rocks and piers.

“The numbers are fairly low right now as is common with an early infestation,” notes Mary Gansberg, DNR’s area water quality biologist. “However, the presence of both larval and adult zebra mussels indicates that there is an established zebra mussel population that is reproducing in Pigeon Lake.”

DNR has posted an ‘Exotic Species Advisory’ sign at the boat landing on Pigeon Lake to notify the public that zebra mussels are present. DNR staff will work with local groups and units of government to increase public awareness and outreach efforts to control the spread of zebra mussels.

Citizens can help stop the spread of zebra mussels by becoming involved in the voluntary watercraft inspection program known as “Clean Boats, Clean Waters.” To participate, contact the Program Coordinator at 715-346-4978.

Zebra mussels attach to hard surfaces and form dense clusters. They can decimate native mussel populations, decrease the oxygen that fish and other aquatic species need, and worsen algae blooms. They can clog boat engines and intake pipes for utilities and industrial facilities. In addition, their sharp shells can cut the feet of swimmers and beach walkers.

Zebra mussels can be transported to new waters by “hitching a ride” on boats and equipment, either as adults attached to such items or as microscopic larvae that may be transported in water.

“The key to preventing the spread of zebra mussels and other aquatic invasive species is to not transport anything – plants, animals, mud, or water – from one water body to another,” says Brenda Nordin, aquatic invasive species coordinator for DNR’s Northeast Region. Mud and water can harbor seeds, microscopic eggs and larvae, and zebra mussels can be attached to aquatic plants.

People can help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species by taking the following simple actions:

1. Remove all plants, animals, mud, and debris from your boat, trailer and equipment;
2. Drain all water from your boat’s live wells, bilge, motor, etc.;
3. Dispose of unused live bait in the trash. Don’t take it to another body of water to use there, and don’t dump bait into a lake or river;
4. Dry the boat and equipment thoroughly for five days, or spray/rinse the boat and equipment with high-pressure and/or hot water. Washing should be done before transporting boats or equipment that were moored in any water body for more than a day.

For more information on the discovery of zebra mussels in Pigeon Lake or on how to prevent the spread of zebra mussels and other aquatic invasive species, contact Brenda Nordin at 920-662-5435 or Mary Gansberg at 920-662-5489. You may also wish to see the DNR’s web site at <http://dnr.wi.gov/invasives/action.htm>.