

Zebra Mussels Found in Lake Noquebay

Zebra mussel adults have recently been found in Lake Noquebay near Crivitz in Marinette County. As a result, the DNR has placed Lake Noquebay on its list of zebra mussel infested waters and urges boaters to take precautions to prevent spreading invasive species to other lakes and streams.

An adult zebra mussel was discovered in Lake Noquebay by a fisherman who alerted the DNR of the finding. A subsequent survey by DNR staff revealed adult zebra mussels attached to aquatic plants in two different areas of the lake and the confirmation of larval zebra mussels in samples collected from multiple locations. "These findings indicate that there is a reproducing population of zebra mussels established in Lake Noquebay," said Greg Sevener, DNR's area water resource specialist.

"Because the fisherman reported finding the zebra mussel in Lake Noquebay, DNR was able to inform lake users of the presence of zebra mussels in the lake and of the precautions to take to prevent spreading zebra mussels to other lakes or streams," said Dick Sachs, aquatic invasive species coordinator for DNR's Northeast Region.

DNR has posted "Exotic

Species Advisory" signs at the boat landings on Lake Noquebay to notify the public that zebra mussels are present. DNR will work with local groups and units of government to increase public awareness and outreach efforts to control the spread of zebra mussels. Concerned citizens can help stop the spread of zebra mussels and other aquatic invasive species by becoming involved in "Clean Boats, Clean Waters," a volunteer watercraft inspection program. Contact the "Clean Boats, Clean Waters," a volunteer watercraft inspection program. Contact the "Clean Boats, Clean Waters" Program Coordinator Laura Felda-Marquardt at 715-365-2659 for program information.

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 first arrived in the Wisconsin waters of Lake Michigan in the Racine harbor in 1990 as stowaways aboard foreign freighters entering the Great Lakes. Since then, they

have become established in 71 inland lakes and 19 rivers in Wisconsin. 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 eggs and 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 body of water to another," said Sachs. Mud and water can harbor seeds, microscopic eggs and larvae, and zebra mussels can be attached to aquatic plants.

Everyone can help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species by reporting suspected new infestations to a local DNR or Sea Grant office and by tak-

ing the following simple actions before moving a boat or equipment from one water body to another:

- * Inspect and remove aquatic plants, animals and mud from your boat, trailer and equipment.

- * Drain all water from your motor, live well, bilge, etc.

- * Dispose of unused bait in the trash. Never release live bait into a water body or transfer aquatic animals from one body of water to another.

- * 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.

Video showing the precautions boaters can take is available on the DNR's home page at dnr.wi.gov, by clicking on "Stop the Invaders."

For more information on the discovery of zebra mussels in Lake Noquebay or on how to prevent the spread of zebra mussels and other aquatic invasive species, contact Dick Sachs at 920-662-5187 or Greg Sevener at 715-582-5013.

