



NEWS RELEASE

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Northeast Region

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SUBJECT: Zebra Mussels Found in Long Lake in Waushara County

(WBI 191100)

SAXEVILLE, Wis. – The presence of zebra mussels have been confirmed in Long Lake near Saxeville in Waushara County. This is the first lake in Waushara County to have a confirmed reproducing population of zebra mussels.

In early August, a young boy discovered an adult zebra mussel while playing in the water and contacted the Department of Natural Resources. Sampling for zebra mussel larvae (veligers) in both July and August 2002 by DNR Water Resources Biologists verified the presence of zebra mussels in Long Lake.

Zebra mussels are an exotic species that attach themselves to plants and other hard surfaces. They look like small clams with a yellowish or brown “D” shaped shell, usually with dark and light colored stripes. They range in size from one-eighth of an inch to two inches, but most are under an inch or about the size of a fingernail.

“Zebra mussels don’t pose a health risk to divers or swimmers, but their sharp shells can make walking on them hazardous”, said Mary Gansberg, a Water Resources Biologist for the Department of Natural Resources. She said their presence could also damage the ecosystem. “Because they filter plankton (microscopic plants and animals), water clarity may improve. But the long-term effects are not well understood at this time.” Plankton forms the bases of the food chain and any significant decrease may ultimately affect other forms of aquatic life.

Zebra mussels were first discovered in the Wisconsin waters of Lake Michigan in 1990. Their transportation to the inland lakes is thought to be primarily by recreational boat traffic. There are some important things boaters can do to prevent the transport of exotic plants and marine animals from a lake or river to another water body. Department officials advise boaters to:

The following counties are in the Northeast Region: Brown, Calumet, Door, Fond Du Lac, Green Lake, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Marinette, Marquette, Menominee, Oconto, Outagamie, Shawano, Waupaca, Waushara, Winnebago. The Public Affairs Manager for DNR Northeast Region is Tom Turner, (920) 492-5822.

- Remove plants and marine animals from boat, trailer and accessory equipment (anchors, centerboards, trailer hitch, wheels, rollers, cables and axles) before leaving the water access area.
- Drain livewells, bilge water and transom wells before leaving the water access area.
- Empty bait buckets on land. Some bait dealers get their bait from out-of-state and these states may have minnows that are exotic to Wisconsin waters.
- Dry the boat and equipment in a sunny location for at least three days before transferring to a new lake. If drying is not possible, wash boat, tackle, downriggers and trailers with water. Flush water through the motor's cooling system and other boat parts that normally get wet.
- Learn what exotic organism look like.

Remember, clean boats mean clean waters. Signs have been posted at the launch site on Long Lake to alert boaters of the precautions they should be taking to avoid spreading zebra mussels and other invasive species.

If you think you've found a zebra mussel in an inland lake, contact your local DNR office for verification. You can find more information about zebra mussels at the DNR website.

www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/wm/glwsp/exotics/