



STATE OF IDAHO



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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IDAHO STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE INITIATES INVASIVE MUSSEL ALERT

"HELLO" boat located and detained in Spokane, Washington

BOISE – Acting on a report from a keenly observant citizen, the Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA), in conjunction with Washington and Utah state officials, were able to track and detain a mussel-fouled 26-foot cabin watercraft, named "HELLO." The vessel originated at Lake Mead, Nevada. A Utah resident spotted the vessel traveling north towards the Idaho state line on Interstate 15.

"This citizen report set into motion a series of contacts to authorities and marina operators in the tri-state area, which resulted in the successful interception of the boat in Spokane, Washington," said Celia Gould, director of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture.

These actions helped avert a serious environmental and economic threat by enabling authorities to keep the fouled boat from launching into any Pacific Northwest waters. Quagga and zebra mussels are not known to occur in Idaho, Montana, Oregon or Washington.

The ISDA is implementing measures to greatly reduce the chances of introducing these aquatic invasive species to Idaho. Once the mussels become established in a water body, control and eradication will be difficult, if not impossible. The new program requires all trailered boats entering Idaho to be inspected for aquatic invasive species, including quagga and zebra mussels. Inspectors also will look for the new Idaho Invasive Species Sticker, which now is required for both in-state and out-of-state boats launching and operating in Idaho water bodies.

If introduced in Idaho, it has been estimated that the fouling mussels could cost taxpayers \$100 million annually. Mussels can rapidly colonize a water body and live for several days out of the water. They clog pipes, foul infrastructure and damage recreational equipment. To eliminate the risk of accidental introduction, boat owners must clean, drain and dry boats and equipment before moving a vessel from one water body to another.

For more information on how to report a sighting of an aquatic invasive species, learn more about the Idaho Invasive Species Program or purchase an Idaho Invasive Species Sticker, log onto www.agri.idaho.gov

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