



STATE OF IDAHO

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Quagga mussel added to Idaho's Deleterious Animal List
Species is now illegal to import or possess in Idaho

Boise - The Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) announced Tuesday that Quagga mussel (*Dreissena bugensis*) has been added to the state's Deleterious Animal List. After consultation with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, ISDA determined that this species is dangerous to the environment, agriculture and wildlife of the state. Quagga mussels are in the genus *Dreissena*, which also includes the notorious zebra mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*). Both mussels now are illegal to import or possess in the state of Idaho.

Zebra and quagga mussels are European in origin and range in size from microscopic to the size of a fingernail, depending on the life stage. They are prolific breeders and attach themselves to hard and soft surfaces, fouling freshwater ecosystems and clogging intake pipes that draw water from infested water bodies. They cause significant maintenance challenges for raw-water systems, costing millions of dollars annually to treat. Although populations have been widespread in the Great Lakes for almost two decades, these mussels were found for the first time west of the Continental Divide in the last 15 months, specifically in regions of Nevada, California, Arizona and Colorado.

In addition to the official state listing, a multi-agency effort to monitor Idaho waters for quagga and zebra mussel began last summer and will continue. "The listing of Quagga mussel and the joint monitoring effort by state agencies and Idaho Power underscores the importance of preventing these mussels from becoming established in Idaho," ISDA Director Celia Gould said. "If introduced, these mussels could impact Idaho's water bodies and recreation and likely impose a heavy maintenance burden on irrigated agriculture, power generation and water suppliers."

The state also is seeking the public's help in preventing the introduction of this invasive species. Boats are the primary transporters of zebra and Quagga mussels. Mussels attached to watercraft or trailers can be easily transported to other water bodies. Water in boat engines, bilges, live wells and buckets can carry microscopic mussel larvae (veligers) to other water bodies. Multiple state departments are collectively urging boaters and watercraft users to help prevent zebra and Quagga mussels from entering Idaho.

“Having all boaters aware of this problem and willing to help us is critical” Gould said.

ISDA urges all boaters to take the following steps to prevent the introduction of the mussels to Idaho:

- Inspect all exposed surfaces - small mussels feel like sandpaper to the touch
- Wash the hull thoroughly, preferably with high pressure/hot water
- Remove all plant and animal material
- Drain all water and dry all areas
- Drain and dry the lower outboard unit
- Clean and dry all live-wells
- Empty and dry any buckets
- Dispose of all bait in the trash
- Wait five days and keep watercraft dry between launches into different fresh waters

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