

## **Zebra mussels found in Sand Lake, Little Sand Lake in northern Itasca County**

A citizen report of adult zebra mussels attached to a dock removed from Sand Lake last fall has been confirmed by a Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) aquatic invasive species biologist. Preliminary searches of connected waters have resulted in the confirmation of additional zebra mussels in Little Sand Lake.

Sand Lake and Little Sand Lake, in northern Itasca County, are part of Bowstring chain of lakes that eventually flow into the Bigfork River. Additional searches of connected waters are being performed to determine the scope of the infestation.

“The homeowner took personal responsibility to inspect their equipment before placing it in the water, and did the right thing by reporting the discovery right away,” said Rich Rezanka, DNR aquatic invasive species specialist.

Sand Lake (DNR public waters inventory number 31-0826) and Little Sand Lake (DNR public waters inventory number 31-0853) will be designated as infested waters and signs will be posted at public accesses to alert recreationists.

Connected waters being investigated for infestation include:

- Bowstring Lake, 31-0813.
- Rice Lake, 31-0876.
- Portage Lake, 31-0824.
- Bird’s Eye Lake, 31-0834.

Recreationists on this chain of lakes should look for infested waters signage at public accesses. Signage will allow recreationists and other resource partners to be aware of the finding and take additional precautions to prevent the inadvertent spread to other lakes. Bait harvest and transport of water for any purpose is prohibited in infested waters.

Anglers, boaters and other recreationists are reminded to remove all aquatic plants, zebra mussels, and other prohibited invasive species, drain water from all water equipment including portable bait containers, and drain bilges and livewells by removing the drain plug before leaving the boat landing.

More information about zebra mussels, how to inspect boats and other water-related equipment, and a current list of designated infested waters is available on the DNR website at [www.mndnr.gov/ais](http://www.mndnr.gov/ais).