

Zebra mussels confirmed in Lake Eunice in Becker County



Zebra mussel (bottom) attached to native clam found in Lake Eunice.

Zebra mussels have been confirmed in Lake Eunice in Becker County in northwestern Minnesota, according to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

On June 22, a citizen provided DNR aquatic invasive species (AIS) staff in Fergus Falls a photo of a zebra mussel attached to a freshwater clam that he had collected on the southeast side of Lake Eunice. Following the identification, DNR crews inspected more than 580 objects at six locations,

including rocks, sticks, plants, docks and native clams.

Crews collected eight zebra mussels in four different locations on Lake Eunice. Two zebra mussels were found within 35 yards of the reported location. The zebra mussels ranged in size from one-quarter inch to one inch, indicating there are two different year classes present in the lake.

Lake Eunice will be designated as zebra mussel infested.

The marshy stream that connects Lake Maud upstream of Lake Eunice, and the Lake Eunice outlet stream are already designated waters in the Pelican River drainage. Multiple locations in Lake Maud were searched by DNR staff. No zebra mussels were found, so Lake Maud will not be designated as an infested lake.

The vast majority of Minnesota lakes are not infested by any aquatic invasive species, and less than one-quarter of one percent of Minnesota lakes are known to have zebra mussels. Likewise, most Minnesota anglers and boaters follow aquatic invasive species laws and do their part to prevent the spread of invasive species. Under law, boaters are required to clean weeds and debris from their boats, remove drain plugs and keep them out while traveling, and dispose of unused bait in the trash.

“We appreciate the reports we receive from citizens,” said Mark Ranweiler, DNR assistant invasive species specialist in Fergus Falls. “The DNR, its AIS partners and citizens of the state are working well together to deal with AIS issues.”

When a report is made to the DNR, the first step is to confirm that is an invasive species by obtaining the sample from the individual who discovered it. Once identified, DNR staff immediately survey shorelines and lake bottoms near the reported discovery sites in an attempt to confirm the infestation. Sometimes divers are used to search deeper waters.

Ranweiler offers these suggestions to those who may think they may have made a discovery:

- Place specimen in a bag or other container to keep it intact.
- Take a photo of the suspected invasive species.
- Mark on a lake map or GPS the exact location where specimen was found.

- Contact a local DNR office immediately to arrange transport to the office. DNR regulations allow transport of vegetation and animals to field offices for identification purposes.
- Email a photo and the location of possible discovery to a local DNR office.

Unless it is a sample being transported directly to a DNR office for identification, Minnesota law prohibits the possession or transport of any aquatic invasive species in the state.

Some aquatic invasive species are small and difficult to see at the access. To remove or kill them before moving to another body of water, especially after leaving zebra mussel or spiny waterflea infested waters, the DNR recommends that boaters either:

- Spray boat with high-pressure water;
- Rinse boat with hot water (120 degrees for 2 minutes, or 140 degrees for 10 seconds); or
- Dry boat and equipment for at least five days.

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.