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## **Zebra mussels confirmed in Big Cormorant Lake in Becker County**

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has confirmed zebra mussels in Big Cormorant Lake in northwestern Minnesota's Becker County.

A three-day search by DNR staff and the Becker County Soil and Water Conservation District found three live zebra mussels in different areas of Big Cormorant Lake. The zebra mussels were adults about three-quarters of an inch in size.

"Although low in numbers, zebra mussels are present and distributed around Big Cormorant Lake, not localized in one area," said Mark Ranweiler, DNR assistant invasive species specialist. "Because zebra mussel discoveries were made in various locations in the lake, treatment does not appear to be an option."

The search was conducted following an initial report July 15 from a property owner who saw suspected zebra mussels. DNR aquatic invasive species (AIS) staff searched the area and found the shells of about 60 dead zebra mussels on a pontoon lift.

DNR staff, the property owner and the lake service provider determined the lift was taken out of Crystal Lake in Otter Tail County last fall and had been out of the water for at least eight months before being placed in Big Cormorant Lake.

While the source of the introduction of zebra mussels cannot be confirmed, it is obvious that the lift was not the source. The presence of dead zebra mussels on the pontoon lift is still an important reminder to lakeshore property owners. Anyone who purchases water-related equipment must

carefully inspect the equipment for all aquatic invasive species before putting it in any body of water.

The DNR offers these tips:

When removing boats, docks, lifts, or other water-related equipment from lakes and rivers, carefully inspect everything to make sure there are no invasive species such as zebra mussels, Eurasian watermilfoil or New Zealand mudsnails attached. Examine posts, wheels and underwater support bars of docks and lifts, as well as boats, pontoons and rafts that have been in water for an extended period.

For more information on AIS prevention and how to report a suspected infestation, visit [www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/aquatic](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/aquatic).