

## **Zebra mussels discovered in 2 Crow Wing County lakes**

Adult zebra mussels have been found in Gilbert and North Long lakes in Crow Wing County, resulting in both lakes being designated as infested, according to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The lakes are located near Brainerd.

The initial discovery was reported by the parents of two young boys who retrieved a plastic container with attached zebra mussels while snorkeling in Gilbert Lake. A few days later, children swimming in North Long Lake found zebra mussels and their parents reported this discovery to DNR. Following the positive identification of the zebra mussels, DNR aquatic biologists searched both lakes and found additional specimens to confirm the diagnosis.

“These young people and their parents saw something that looked out of place, reported it right away and assisted us in making a swift diagnosis of the problem,” said DNR Invasive Species Specialist, Dan Swanson. “It’s another good reminder to be informed about what invasive species look like, save a sample and report it as soon as you can. Early detection and slowing the spread is still our best means of control.”

Gilbert Lake (DNR public waters inventory number 18-0320) and North Long Lake (DNR public waters inventory number 18-0372), are now designated as infested and signs will be posted at public accesses to alert recreationists.

People 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.

Anglers, boaters and other recreationists are reminded to remove all aquatic vegetation, drain water from all water-related equipment, and remove the drain plug from boats before leaving the boat landing.

Lake residents should take appropriate precautions when purchasing used water-related equipment or allowing their guests to launch watercraft from backyard boat ramps.

According to Minnesota law, docks and boatlifts must be dried for 21 days before placing in another water body.

Zebra mussels pose serious ecological and economic threats to Minnesota’s lakes and streams. Heavy infestations can kill native mussels, impact fish populations and interfere with recreation.

Minnesota currently has more than 175 water bodies designated as infested with zebra mussels. Designation does not mean each body of water is confirmed to be infested, but that zebra mussels have been detected in a lake accessible by boat, and spread is likely between connected waters.

Preventing the spread of invasive species takes personal responsibility. Before leaving a lake, boaters must remove all aquatic vegetation and animals including zebra mussels or other prohibited invasive species, drain all water by removing drain plugs and keep drain plugs out while transporting watercraft.

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