

[Kelowna](#) posted August 17, 2015 by [Lauren Hjalmarson](#)

Zebra Mussels Found on Boat in Kelowna



Invasive mussels were found in Kelowna on Monday morning attached to this boat from Ottawa. (Photo Credit: KelownaNow.com)

Zebra mussels were found on a boat that was driving through the Okanagan on its way to Vancouver Monday morning.

The boat, belonging to Richard Gratton of Ottawa, is being transported because he and his wife are moving to Vancouver.

Gratton pulled over at the Alberta border for an inspection at Dunmore, where the mussels were initially discovered. Although the boat had been out of the water for more than 30 days, and after that length of time mussels are generally no longer viable, it was decontaminated using hot water. Hot water is the standard treatment for zebra mussels, because it kills them instantly. The expertise of an inspection crew was then employed in removing treated mussels from the boat.



Mussels were taken off of this boat at the Cook Road boat launch. (Photo Credit: KelownaNow.com)

Rain was pouring from the sky that day in Dunmore, however, and a few mussels were missed. It is known that this can happen, so Gratton was instructed to stop over in Kelowna for a second inspection, during which a few more mussels were found on his boat. The vessel is currently quarantined and will be released after a second hot water treatment is applied at a gravel location in Kelowna.

Although it is likely that no live mussels crossed into British Columbia on Richard Gratton's boat, it is impossible to tell without a lab test. The mussels removed in Kelowna are being sent for just such a test.



These zebra mussels were removed from the boat. (Photo Credit: KelownaNow.com)

“If live mussels got into the BC waters, they would attach themselves to vessels . . . and once they populate it's just about impossible to get rid of them,” Sgt. Lockwood of BC's Conservation Service said Monday morning. “They're also devastating to the beaches, because once they do die they wash up onshore and they're razor-sharp.”

“They're little, they're razor-sharp, and all of a sudden you don't go to the beach without wearing water shoes.”



Inspectors were careful not to miss any mussels. (Photo Credit: KelownaNow.com)

If zebra mussels invaded Western Canada, they would also put local lakes' ecologies at risk. They would have detrimental effects on fish, they could stimulate toxic algae blooms, and they would clog up boat motors and water intakes.

To learn more about invasive mussels and how to ensure you don't move them, visit Don'tMoveAMussel.ca

