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B.C. invasive mussel defence program inspected 38,000 boats last year

Steve Arstad





Two conservation officers decontaminate a boat bound for Kelowna from mussel-infested Lake Erie. One officer uses heated water to spray the hull while another measures the temperature to ensure the water is hot enough to kill any mussel larvae.
Image Credit: FILE PHOTO

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The B.C. government's Invasive Mussel Defence Program was busy last year performing 38,000 watercraft inspections.

As part of the 38,000 inspections, the province issued 293 decontamination orders as well as 238, 30-day quarantine periods, according to a report of highlights from the February Okanagan Basin Water Board meeting. Mussels can live for up to 30 days out of water.

Twenty-five watercraft were found to be carrying invasive mussels and three of those vessels were bound for Okanagan waters.

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The local Don't Move a Mussel program provided additional signs for Okanagan boat launches in addition to connecting with 5,300 people, the report said. The Don't Move a Mussel website saw a 25 per cent increase in traffic to the site, most of whom were first time visitors.

The province is considering a Water Board request for legislative changes that would require all incoming watercraft to be inspected before being launched in B.C. waters, a letter received by the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen said.

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