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British Columbia

10 boats entering B.C. since April found with invasive mussels











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The board says the need for tighter regulations is of 'paramount importance'



16 comments (=)

The shells of thousands of zebra mussels line the shores of Lake Winnipeg. (Bartley Kives/CBC)

The Okanagan Water Board is renewing its call to the province to implement stronger inspection



chair Sure McKortoff in a statement.

at least \$42 million a year to manage.

programs for boats coming into B.C., after discovering that between April 1 and July 5, there were 10 vessels intercepted carrying the adult invasive species. Currently, B.C. has two mussel detection dogs and 12 provincial inspection stations but only one

to get an inspection, but not if the station is closed. "We need to tighten things up. This is of paramount importance," said Okanagan Water Board

of which, near Golden, B.C., is open 24 hours a day. Boats coming into the province are required



entering any provincials bodies of water. Zebra mussels flex reach, threaten northern Lake Winnipeg and Manitoba Hydro stations

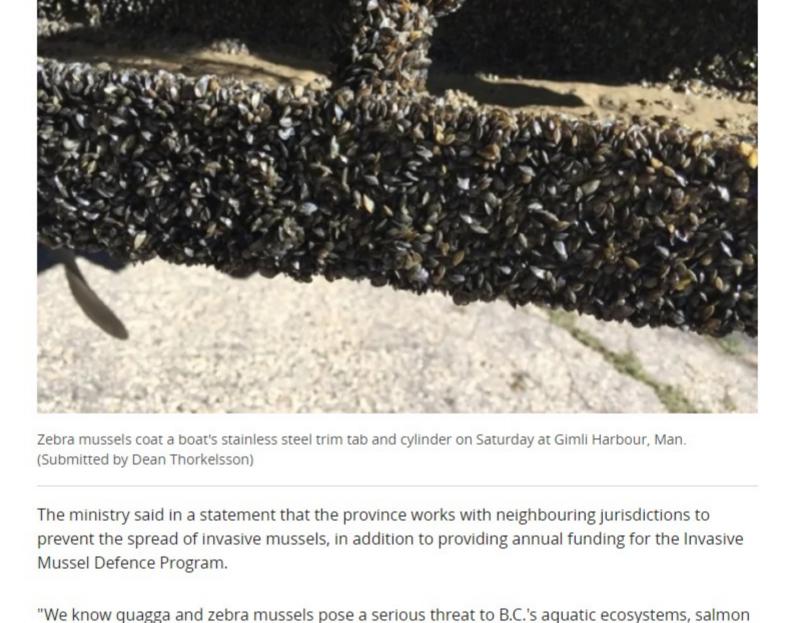
the outreach campaign Don't Move a Mussel, makes a number of recommendations, including

the request for legislation requiring all watercraft coming into B.C. to be inspected before

The board's letter also states that an infestation of invasive mussels in the Okanagan would cost

This would mean that even if a vessel enters the province outside of an inspection station's

operational hours or in the off season, it would still need to be inspected.



populations, hydro power stations and other infrastructure facilities and we are working to ensure appropriate protections are in place."

Lake Winnipeg problem While B.C. may not have an invasive mussel problem yet, many lakes in Eastern Canada have had to deal with mussels taking over their ecosystems, such as the Laurentian Great Lakes and Lake

So far, the province says there haven't been any invasive mussels detected in B.C. waterways.

in the Experimental Lakes Area in western Ontario.

Mussels send us a dire message about the health of our water, researcher says

Both zebra and quagga mussels can be found in densities of 10,000 individuals per square metre

said Scott Higgins, a research scientist at the International Institute for Sustainable Development

"The challenge is once zebra mussels are in a lake, it is almost impossible to get rid of them,"

at the bottom of the lake, he told Radio West host Sarah Penton.

Zebra mussels have taken over Rideau River, study finds

"This is really huge and this is where Lake Winnipeg is heading."

The invasive mussels often attach themselves to boats, and can live up to two weeks out of the water, making it easy for them to travel. When they do, they have the ability to change the ecosystem of a new lake affecting everything from the sediment bacteria to the fish, said Higgins. They also have sharp shells that can cut people's feet when they walk on them.

Melting snow reveals millions of dead zebra mussels at Victoria Beach

"Their ability to change food webs and the things that we enjoy about lakes is among the highest." of any invasive species."

boats and trailers as they travel between water bodies.

To stop this from happening in B.C., Higgins says we need to be more vigilant about inspecting

"In my opinion, the resources to put at inspection stations now are well worth it, because it is much cheaper to try to stop their establishment in B.C. than it is to deal with them once they're there."

With files from Radio West

Winnipeg.