

Mussel-tainted boats caught

19 mussel-contaminated boats stopped from entering BC this year

Colin Dacre · Nov 13, 2019 · 10:20 am



Photo: Contributed

The provincial government says 19 vehicles contaminated with zebra or quagga mussels have been prevented from entering B.C. this season, three of which were headed to the Okanagan.

The Okanagan Basin Water Board released the figures as part of its November board report, which outlined the results of the provincial program that completed more than 50,000 inspections between late April and Sept. 15.

The 19 contaminated vessels had travelled from Ontario (14), Michigan (2), Utah (2) and North Carolina (1) and were headed for the Lower Mainland (8), Vancouver Island (4), Okanagan (3), the Kootenays (2), Skeena (1) and Alaska (1).

The OBWB has been calling on the provincial government to increase funding for its inspection program, which this year saw 64 officers stationed at 12 stations across B.C. Just one of the stations operates 24 hours a day, while the majority, like one in Osoyoos, is open just 10 hours a day.

"There is no requirement to get an inspection when a station is closed. We need to tighten things up," OBWB chair Sue McKortoff said in July.

The OBWB is also asking the province to pass legislation requiring all watercraft entering B.C. be inspected before being allowed on the water.

It's estimated a mussel infestation could cost the Okanagan at least \$42M a year just to manage. The invasive mussels can outcompete native species and block infrastructure such as water intakes.



Photo: BC Gov