



Invasive mussel inspection (photo courtesy of the Okanagan Basin Water Board)

INVASIVE MUSSELS

By Liam Verster

No invasive mussels added to Okanagan waters

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The Okanagan Basin Water Board is reporting no cases of invasive mussels entering local waters this summer.

In its monthly board meeting highlights, the OBWB said a total of 19,400 watercraft were inspected by B.C.'s Invasive Mussel Defence Program between April and September 28.

Of the inspected vessels, 12 were found to be transporting adult invasive mussels, including four that were bound for the Okanagan.

Five of the vessels were headed to the Lower Mainland, two were going to the Thompson-Nicola area and one was destined for Vancouver Island.

The invasive mussels were identified on 10 watercraft coming from Ontario, as well as one on a vessel from Manitoba and another on a watercraft from Quebec.

The OBWB reports that recent water testing suggests no mussels were introduced into Okanagan waters this summer.

In June, the OBWB requested additional support for the Invasive Mussel Defense Program from B.C.'s Budget 2023 consultation committee, which has now reportedly recommended establishing 24/7 inspection facilities at all major border crossings.

A 2013 OBWB study found the cost of an infestation to the Okanagan would be at least \$42 million annually to manage, taking into account the impact on fisheries, tourism, aquatic infrastructure and more.

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