

Our biggest threat is actually **tiny**

Don't let invasive mussels sink our lakes.

What are invasive mussels and why are they such an enormous threat?

Zebra and quagga mussels originate from freshwater lakes in Russia and Ukraine. Outside their natural habitat, and with few predators, they outcompete native species, encrust and corrode hard surfaces and cause serious harm to waters where they become established.

A huge reason we all love the Okanagan is because of the lakes that connect us. They're a destination for recreation, tourism and industry alike. They are also a source of drinking water for Okanagan residents and support a fragile ecosystem. We risk losing it all if we don't stay vigilant.

As far as we know, the Okanagan remains free of invasive mussels. It's up to all of us to keep it that way.

One mussel is too many.

It wouldn't take much for mussels to get established in the Okanagan. A single female zebra or quagga mussel can produce 1 million eggs a year! In warmer waters, like Lake Mead, Nevada, there have been six to eight reproductive cycles a year. The Okanagan's calcium-rich waters give it the beautiful colour. The warmth makes it a popular destination for water recreation and together, they put the region at high-risk!

How do they spread?

Invasive mussels use their byssal threads to swim and attach to things like boats, kayaks, paddleboards, hip waders, tackle boxes, life jackets — any hard surface that has spent time in infested waters. They're stealthy, too! They can live 30 days out of water in a damp space. At their smallest, they are the size of a grain of sand. At their largest, they are around the size of your thumbnail (1.5 to 2 cm).



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Here's how you can help...

Transporting watercraft? Get inspected.

If you, or anyone you know, are transporting watercraft in B.C., it is mandatory to stop at all inspection stations along the route. Failing to stop can result in a \$345 fine. This includes non-motorized vessels, such as kayaks, canoes and paddleboards. **IMPORTANT: Do not launch the watercraft into any B.C. waters until you have received instruction from a Provincial Aquatic Invasive Species Inspector.**

Clean.

Clean off all plants, animals and mud from your watercraft and equipment (boots, waders, fishing gear, even beach toys). If a power washing station is available for your watercraft, use it!

Drain.

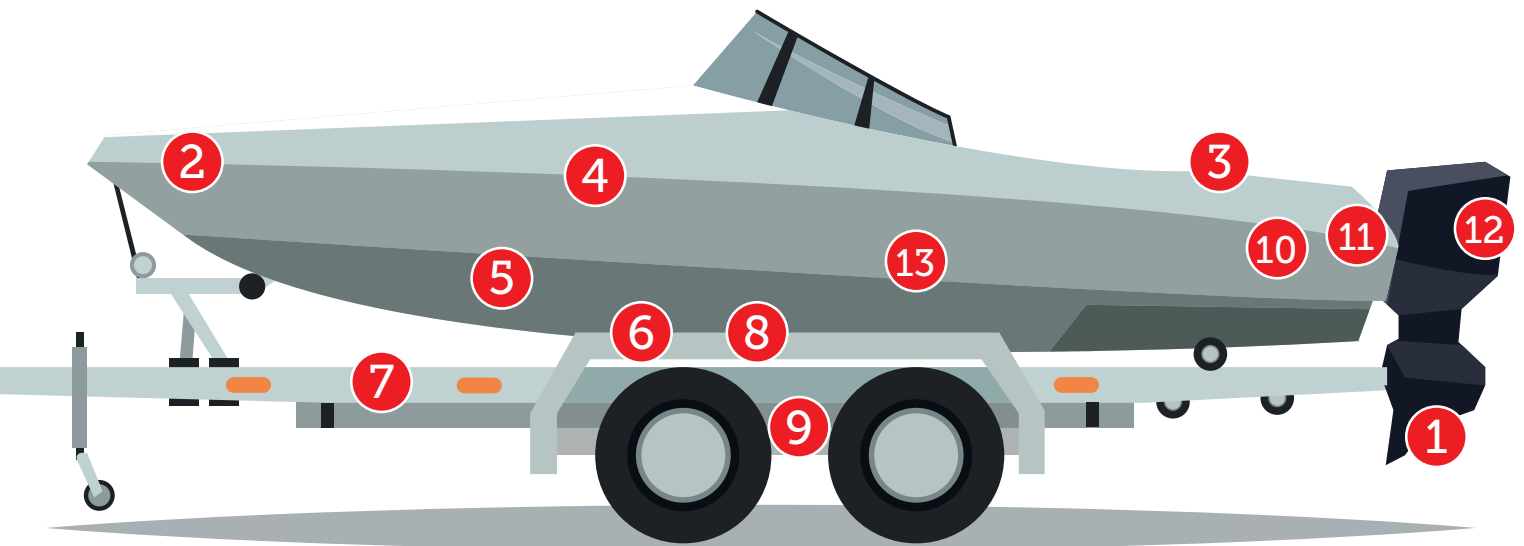
Drain (on dry land) any item that can hold water (buckets, wells, bilge and ballast).

Dry.

Dry all items completely before launching into another body of water.

Invasive mussels are sneaky. Use this checklist to go over some of their best-known hiding spots. Don't stop there because our biggest threat is tiny. Mussels could be hiding in your gear too.

Boat Inspection CHECKLIST



Check these spots for common hiding spots for invasive species.

- ☐ 1 **Prop**
- ☐ 2 **Anchor**
- ☐ 3 **Bait Bucket**
- ☐ 4 **Dock Lines**

- ☐ 5 **Hull**
- ☐ 6 **Rollers**
- ☐ 7 **Trailer**
- ☐ 8 **Bunks**

- ☐ 9 **Axel**
- ☐ 10 **Live Wells**
- ☐ 11 **Bilge**
- ☐ 12 **Motor**
- ☐ 13 **Ballast**

If we do nothing, we risk losing everything.

From declining property values to the loss of jobs and the destruction of our fragile ecology, the implications of zebra and quagga mussels in our valley are huge. Here is where they would hit us hardest:

DRINKING WATER INTAKES and other in-lake infrastructure, including docks, marinas, bridges, would be corroded and weighed down, requiring ongoing maintenance

The **SAFETY OF OUR DRINKING WATER** with the promotion of toxic algae

The **NATURAL ECOLOGY OF THE LAKE**, putting at risk native species including the local fishery

Enjoyment of our **BEACHES** because of razorsharp shells, and the smell of decaying mussels

Motorized and non-motorized **WATERCRAFT** and water recreation equipment (including boats, seadoos, kayaks, paddleboards, fishing gear, float planes, etc.), encrusted with mussels

REAL ESTATE VALUES, especially waterfront property, would be affected

TOURISM INDUSTRY, with fewer visitors because of fouled beaches and harm to the local fishery

Our **ECONOMY**, with the loss of tourism jobs and increased taxes to help manage the impact of mussels on local government infrastructure

Learn more and help spread the message, not the mussel.



Learn more about keeping invasive mussels out of our lakes.

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