

Keep Zebra Mussels Out of Riding Mountain National Park

What Are Zebra Mussels?

Zebra mussels are small, clam-like aquatic animals native to Eastern Europe and Western Asia. They are 1-3 cm (0.4-1.2 inches) long, have triangular or “D” shaped shells, and most have light and dark brown bands on their shells.

They have caused millions of dollars in damage in eastern Canada and will cost the North American economy billions of dollars to control. They were first confirmed in Manitoba in Lake Winnipeg in 2013 and there is a high threat of them spreading to other lakes in the province. They do not have any natural predators in Canada.

Once they enter a body of water, it is nearly impossible to control them.



Photo credit: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Aussi disponible en français



Photo credit: USGS Amy J. Benson

Why Are They a Problem?

- **Aggressively invade new areas and reproduce quickly.** Females produce upwards of one million eggs per year.
- **Colonize almost any hard surface** including watercraft, hulls, or anything immersed in the water and can interfere with engine cooling systems.
- **Negatively impact key infrastructure** by clogging intake structures in power stations, water treatment plants, and cottages.
- **Threaten native fish and wildlife** by reducing species of algae and microscopic aquatic animals important to the food chain.
- **Costly nuisance** to boaters, commercial fishers, anglers, and beach-goers. They can reduce recreational potential by littering beaches with numerous sharp shells and producing foul odours from decaying, dead zebra mussels.



Photo credit: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



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Report a Sighting

In RMNP, call 204-848-7275
In Manitoba, call 1-87-STOP AIS-0
or visit www.manitoba.ca/StopAIS

Protect Our Waters...

1. CLEAN
2. DRAIN
3. DRY
4. DISPOSE

...because once they are here,
they are here to stay.



Resilient Out of Water

Adult zebra mussels can survive out of water up to 30 days depending on temperature and humidity. Zebra mussel veligers (larvae) are not visible to the naked eye and can survive in very little water. They are transported on boats, kayaks, canoes, diving and snorkelling gear, children's beach toys, and anything that can hold water.



How Do I Ensure I Don't Carry Zebra Mussels into RMNP?

Before launching or entering any of RMNP's water bodies:

- 1. CLEAN** and inspect watercraft, trailer, aircraft, and all water-based equipment and gear. Remove all plants, animals, and mud. Rinse using extremely hot tap water—must be higher than 50°C (120°F).
- 2. DRAIN** all water from watercraft, equipment, and gear including, but not limited to, the motor, livewell, bilge, bait buckets, and totes before transporting.
- 3. DRY** watercraft, trailer, and all water-based gear and equipment for at least eight days in July/August and 30 days in the spring/fall, or freeze for three days.
- 4. DISPOSE** of unwanted live bait and worms in the trash. It is prohibited to dump bait and water from bait buckets in the Park.

Mandatory Watercraft Inspections Now in Effect

Riding Mountain National Park is putting new rules into place for boaters and recreational users in RMNP. As a result, it may take more time than usual before you are able to launch your boat.

Starting in 2015, all watercraft entering Park waters must undergo a free mandatory inspection at Boat Cove by Parks Canada boat inspectors.

Boaters will be issued a permit and decal that remain valid as long as the boat is used only in Park waters. If a watercraft is used in waters outside of RMNP after the permit and decal have been issued, boaters must advise inspectors and may be subject to an additional inspection. Inspections can be scheduled outside of weekends and high activity hours by calling 204-848-7275. A boat decontamination station will be located in the vicinity of Boat Cove.

The Boat Cove will receive several upgrades including expanded parking and new boat launches to enhance visitor experience and safety.

