



# STATE OF IDAHO



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Early season watercraft inspection station intercepts two mussel-fouled boats**

The Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) announced that mandatory watercraft inspection stations are now open in Idaho. The stations are concentrated at the state line and many are open from 7 a.m.-7 p.m., seven days a week.

Stations began opening in early February, and the program has already intercepted 2 mussel-fouled boats at the I-90 station near Wallace, Idaho.

Idaho has had a watercraft inspection program in place since 2009. More than 100,000 boats have been inspected to date. Thirty eight mussel-fouled boats have been intercepted and decontaminated before they launched into Pacific Northwest waters.

The program aims to inspect boats that are entering the region from mussel-infested states. Two mussel-fouled boats from the Great Lakes were intercepted the first 12 days of station operation on I-90. This indicates that potentially infested boats are being transported outside of the traditional boating season. This is of concern to the Pacific Northwest states.

"Idaho's watercraft inspection program underscores the importance of preventing these mussels from becoming established in Idaho's waters," said Agriculture Director Celia Gould. All of Idaho's waterbodies have tested negative for these species, but they have been found in waters of other western states, and are causing severe economic and environmental harm in other regions of the country. "We continue to work with our regional partners to prevent these fouled boats from launching in Pacific Northwest waters. Catching two mussel-fouled boats so early in the season is a real wake up call. The more the public is educated about these invaders, the more enthusiastic and vigilant they are in joining efforts to keep them out of the Pacific Northwest."

**Boaters should expect inspections!** All boaters must stop at the stations. Watercraft inspectors are looking for high-risk boats that have been in quagga mussel- and zebra mussel-impacted waters such as Lake Mead, Lake Havasu and Lake Pleasant.

*If you have launched in a mussel-infested waterbody in the last 30 days, you must have an inspection before you launch in Idaho. For a complete list of infested waters, see:  
[www.invasivespecies.idaho.gov](http://www.invasivespecies.idaho.gov), Call 1-877-336-8676 to schedule a free inspection.*

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**It is important that boaters arrive in Idaho with a clean, drained and dry watercraft**

Zebra mussels and quagga mussels are invasive species. They are European in origin and range in size from microscopic to the size of a fingernail, depending on the life stage. They are prolific breeders and attach themselves to hard and soft surfaces, fouling freshwater ecosystems and clogging intake pipes that draw water from infested waterbodies. They cause significant maintenance challenges for raw-water systems, requiring millions of dollars annually to treat.

ISDA urges all boaters to take the following steps to prevent the introduction of the mussels to Idaho:

- Inspect all exposed surfaces - small mussels feel like sandpaper to the touch
- Wash the hull thoroughly, preferably with hot water
- Remove all plant and animal material
- Drain all water and dry all areas
- Drain and dry the lower outboard unit
- Clean and dry all live wells
- Empty and dry any buckets
- Dispose of all bait in the trash
- Wait five days and keep watercraft dry between launches into different fresh waters

For more information about Idaho's invasive species program go to [www.invasivespecies.idaho.gov](http://www.invasivespecies.idaho.gov) or call Matt Voile, Noxious Weed and Invasive Species Manager at 208-863-1559.

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