

September 3, 2021

NOTICE: Detection of Zebra Mussels in Cedar Lake

This notice is to inform you that Zebra Mussel veligers (larval stage) were detected in water samples taken from Cedar Lake through the Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Unit's monitoring program in 2021 for the first time in six years.

Zebra mussel veligers were first found in Cedar Lake in 2015 however, at that time, only two (2) single veligers were detected. This time, three (3) single veligers were detected. Environmental DNA (eDNA) samples also were positive for zebra mussels. As such, we are increasingly concerned that Zebra Mussels may be establishing or established in the lake.

In Manitoba, Zebra Mussels are designated as an aquatic invasive species (AIS). They are a concern to Manitoba because if they establish in a water body they can:

- negatively impact aquatic ecosystems and native fish populations;
- clog water intake systems increasing costs to communities and industries;
- litter beaches and shorelines with sharp shells;
- block watercraft engines cooling systems possibly causing engine damage.

Following the initial detection in 2015, Cedar Lake was designated as part of the Saskatchewan River/Cedar Lake Control Zone. This designation adds specific legal requirements for water users to prevent the spread of Zebra Mussels and other AIS. This detection serves as an important opportunity to remind all water users to do their part to ensure they are not spreading AIS to new water bodies. Details on the legal requirements are below.

Legal Requirements for Water-Users

When using conveyances such as watercraft (e.g., power boats, canoes, kayaks), water-based aircraft (e.g., float planes) and water-related equipment (e.g., fishing gear, bait buckets and ropes), there are important legal requirements to follow to prevent spread of AIS to new water bodies.

General Provisions (required for ANY water body in Manitoba):

Before placing a watercraft or water-related equipment into any water body in Manitoba:

- watercraft must be:
 - free of AIS, aquatic plants (i.e., weeds and algae) and mud
 - drained of water (i.e., from motor, live well)
- water-related equipment must be:
 - free of AIS, aquatic plants (i.e., weeds and algae) and mud
 - drained of water (i.e., totes, bait containers etc.)
 - dried completely

Control Zone Provisions (required for all waterbodies designated as Control Zones):

In *addition* to the above general provisions above, the following provisions apply to water users using Control Zone water bodies:

- decontamination of watercraft and water-related equipment *before* these items are placed into *another* water body
- disposal of bait that:
 - is live
 - has been handled (i.e., hooked)
 - has come into contact with surface water from a control zone

Note: Commercially-supplied dead bait that has not come into contact with surface water from a water body in an AIS Control Zone can be retained by anglers for future use.

Future Management of AIS in Cedar Lake

The AIS Unit is developing an AIS management plan for Cedar Lake which includes:

- communicating to parties of interest, such as yourself, to notify you of the detection and remind you of the legal AIS requirements to prevent the spread;
- ensuring the water body has updated AIS signage that serves as a visual reminder of the legal requirements pertaining to AIS; and
- further monitoring to confirm the status of the population and track the spread and establishment of zebra mussels and other AIS within the lake.

Need more information?

The Manitoba government has several resources such as the open-water checklist that can help you comply with the AIS requirements. For more information please visit www.manitoba.ca/stopAIS.

Please be part of the solution by communicating this detection within your community or organization as the human spread of aquatic invasive species is preventable.

Thank-you for your assistance.