

An estimated 800,000 people visit Rathbun Lake each year for fishing, water skiing, boating and camping. The lake has a reputation for tremendous walleye, crappie and channel catfish fishing and draws anglers from Illinois, Wisconsin, Missouri and Nebraska as well as all over Iowa.

"I hope we dodge this bullet," Flammang said. "But we won't know for a few years."

The incident remains under investigation.

Stopping Spread of Zebra Mussels

With such a mobile society, it will take a constant effort to get the word out to anglers and boaters to help prevent the spread of zebra mussels, said Kim Bogenschutz, aquatic invasive species coordinator for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Zebra mussels were first documented in the Mississippi River in Iowa in 1992. There were no reports of zebra mussels from interior waters until 2005 when

they were found in Clear Lake. The next example of zebra mussels on the move in Iowa occurred in 2006 when zebra mussels were discovered in Lake Delhi.

Bogenschutz has been working with individual boaters about inspecting their vessels, and will be stepping up her efforts to work with boat dealers and marinas on education.

"For boats that are put in and taken out daily, the critical thing is to drain the live well and other water from the boat, because it would be more likely those vessels would collect veligers in their live well, than have adult mussels attached to their hull," Bogenschutz said.

She said each time boaters pull their boat from the water, there are a few easy things they can do to protect other water bodies.

- Remove any visible plants, animals, or mud before transporting equipment.
- Drain water from all equipment (motor, live well, bilge, transom well)

before transporting.

- Clean and dry anything that comes into contact with water (boats, trailers, equipment, boots, clothing, dogs). Before transporting to another water-body either:

Rinse your boat and equipment with hot (104 degree) water; or Spray your boat and trailer with high-pressure water at a carwash; or Dry your boat and equipment for at least 5 days.

- Never release plants, fish, or animals into a water body unless they came out of that water body and empty unwanted bait in the trash.

Zebra mussels are one example of an aquatic invasive species that has hitchhiked its way into Iowa. More information about aquatic invasive species and a list of infested waters can be found in the Iowa Fishing Regulations booklet and on line at www.iowadnr.gov/fish then click on Aquatic Nuisance Species in the left hand column under the programs section.

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