

Invasive Mussel Defence Program 2018 Interim Report

Welcome to the interim report for the 2018 season. The Invasive Mussel Defence Program (IMDP) is a shared delivery between staff from the B.C. Conservation Office Service (COS) and the Environmental Sustainability & Strategic Policy Division (ESSPD) within the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (ENV). The Program would like to recognize the ongoing funding provided by BC Hydro, Fortis BC, Columbia Power Corporation, and Columbia Basin Trust to support the delivery of the program. For more information about the Program please visit www.gov.bc.ca/invasivemussels. Suspected invasive mussels should be reported immediately to the Conservation Officer Services Report All Poachers and Polluters: 1-877-952-7277 (RAPP).

Program Operations

Watercraft Inspection Stations

Invasive mussel inspection stations opened on April 1, 2018. For the 2018 season just over 41,400 watercraft were inspected and crews interacted with approximately 78,000 people to promote Clean, Drain, Dry.

Of the total watercraft inspected, 1,700 were identified as high risk, 293 Decontamination Orders were issued, and 238 watercraft were issued quarantine periods to meet the required 30-day drying time. A total of 450 decontaminations were performed by provincial inspectors.

Of the 38,000 watercraft inspected, 25 were confirmed to have adult invasive mussels. These came from Ontario (16), Arizona (3), Manitoba (2), Michigan (2), Utah (1) and Nevada (1) and were destined for the Lower Mainland (11), Okanagan (3), Thompson-Nicola (5), Vancouver Island (4), and the Kootenays (2). The Program received advanced notification on 20 of the 25 mussel fouled boats either from another jurisdiction (e.g., AB, MT, ID, WA) or by Canada Border Services Agents (CBSA).

Between May 15 and October 27, 391 watercraft were inspected at night (10 p.m. to 5 a.m.) at the Golden inspection station on Hwy 1. Of those, 22 were identified as high risk and two of the mussel fouled watercraft were intercepted between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m.



Watercraft inspection station on Hwy 93 near Radium.

	2017 End of Season	2018 End of Season
Total Watercraft Inspected	35,500	41,400
People Interacted with to promote CDD	73,300	78,000
High Risk Inspections	2,071	1,700
Decontamination Orders Issued	286	293
Quarantine Periods Issued	200	238
Mussel fouled watercraft	25	25

Comparison of watercraft inspection totals for the 2017 and 2018 seasons.



Valemount inspectors completing a decontamination on a high-risk boat.



Marine blue mussels attached to a boat inspected this season coming from the ocean. These mussels do not survive in fresh water, but they attach onto boats and can be mistaken for invasive mussels when they are smaller in size.

Lake Monitoring

For the 2018 season, sampling ran from early June to October and efforts doubled this year with 812 samples analyzed to date. All samples have come back negative for invasive mussels. The complete results from the 2018 sampling season will be released in the year-end report in spring 2019.

Program Effectiveness

To date, of the boaters whose watercraft were inspected, approximately 60% had previous knowledge of [Clean, Drain, Dry](#) and/or aquatic invasive species. A total of 190 people without boats voluntarily stopped at the watercraft inspection stations to get more information about invasive mussels and other aquatic invasive species (AIS). The Program also received 87 inquiries from members of the public about bringing their boat into BC and to learn more about the watercraft inspection stations.

Average compliance at the inspection stations for the 2018 season was 81%. Of the watercraft that failed to stop at the inspection station, 79% were non-motorized watercraft such as canoes, kayaks, and paddleboards which pose a much lower risk than motorized watercraft. For 2018, a total of 82 violation tickets and 50 warnings were issued by Conservation Officers to motorists for failing to stop at inspection stations.

The Program continues to work with the CBSA to receive notifications of high-risk watercraft at the southern border crossings. During the 2018 season, CBSA sent 300 notifications to the Program from the southern border crossings.

Public Reports

This summer the Program received reports of suspected invasive mussel shells floating on a lake in the Okanagan. Provincial inspectors were able to collect the shells and confirm with a taxonomic expert that they were dead marine blue mussels (see picture to the left). Just like invasive zebra and quagga mussels the blue mussel can attach onto boats. Blue mussels do not survive in fresh water, but it is still important to practice Clean, Drain, Dry when moving your boat from salt water to freshwater.

If you observe any suspected invasive mussels contact the Provincial inspectors immediately by calling the Report All Poachers and Polluters Hotline 1-877-952-7277 (RAPP). This allows our trained inspectors to respond quickly and take the appropriate steps to identify the mussels and prevent any unnecessary concern.

Highlights

K9 Major and his handler Sergeant Cynthia Mann just completed their training and will be joining Kilo and his handler Sergeant Josh Lockwood for the 2019 season touring the inspection stations. Major is trained to detect invasive mussels, firearms and bear gall bladders. Major is also trained to human scent track. His full biography is below.

Full Name: Major Von Haderhof

Age: 1 year

Date of Birth: Nov 16, 2017

Breed: German Shepard

Next Steps

Staffing/hiring:

Ecosystems branch is currently in the process of hiring an Aquatic Invasive Species Specialist to join the science team and hope to have the position filled early in the new year. The Conservation Officer Service (COS) is in the process of hiring an administrative coordinator for the Program and hoping to have this position filled early in the new year. In addition, the COS is in the process of hiring an additional Sergeant (supervisor) position to enhance operational oversight to staff at inspection stations.

The AIS inspector job postings for the 2019 season will be posted on the [BC Government Job site](#) in mid-December. Please stay tuned for this!

Planning for 2019:

As part of the annual review, Program staff are reviewing the 2018 inspection data, feedback from staff and partners, as well as lessons learned from other jurisdictions across western Canada and the US. This will inform adjustments to program operations for the 2019 season. BC will also be meeting with AB, SK, MB and YK this winter to coordinate inspection programs across western Canada and further strengthen the perimeter defence.



Sergeant Cynthia Mann and K9 Major who just completed their AIS detection training.

