

The goal of the Invasive Mussel Defence Program (IMDP) is to mitigate the risk of introducing zebra, quagga and golden mussels into British Columbia.

The program consists of three main components: watercraft inspections, lake monitoring, and public outreach and education. The program is delivered through the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Parks Conservation Officer Service (COS).

The IMDP would like to recognize funding provided by Columbia Basin Trust, Columbia Power Corporation, BC Hydro, and Fortis BC. For more information about the IMDP, please visit www.gov.bc.ca/invasivemussels. Suspected invasive mussels should be reported to the COS Report All Poachers and Polluters (RAPP) hotline at 1-877-952-7277.

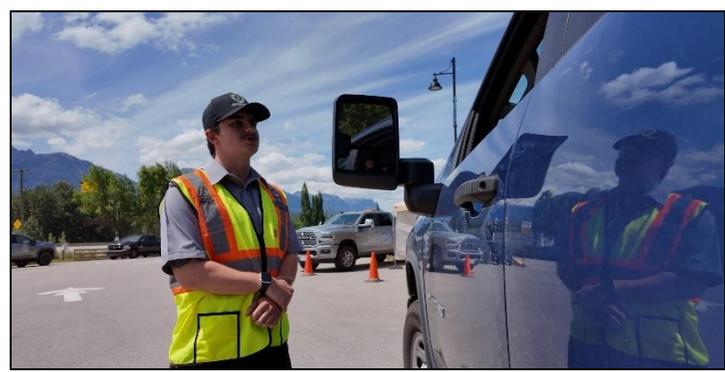
Watercraft Inspection Stations

For the 2025 season, inspection crews completed approximately 27,100 inspections and interacted with more than 50,700 people to promote “Clean, Drain, Dry” practices – a preventative step all boaters should take when moving between lakes in B.C.

During the inspections, 319 watercraft were identified as high risk, 142 decontamination orders were issued, and 84 watercraft were issued quarantine periods to meet the required drying time. The COS Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) inspectors completed 170 decontaminations. Six watercraft were confirmed to have invasive mussels. These watercraft came from: Ontario (5) and North Dakota (1). The watercraft were destined for: Thompson-Okanagan (3), Lower Mainland (1), Vancouver Island (1) and Alaska (1). B.C. works closely with neighboring jurisdictions to both send and receive notifications of mussel-fouled boats. B.C. received notification from another jurisdiction about three of the six mussel-fouled boats and notified Alaska of the mussel-fouled boat intercepted in B.C.

In addition to the six mussel-fouled boats intercepted, another two watercraft were identified as being mussel-fouled by another jurisdiction and were decontaminated prior to arrival in B.C. Upon inspection by the IMDP, these additional two boats were confirmed to be “Clean, Drain, Dry” compliant. This highlights the effectiveness of the perimeter defence approach through the ongoing collaborations with neighbouring jurisdictions across western Canada and the United States.

Most inspection stations were operational from early April to late October. COS field officers also provided enforcement support throughout the year to address blow-bys at inspection stations and responded to watercraft notifications.



Left image is showing a highway sign at one of the mandatory watercraft inspection stations and the image on the right shows a B.C. Aquatic Invasive Species inspectors interviewing a boater to determine if the boat is coming from a high risk jurisdiction and could be transporting invasive mussels into B.C.

Program Effectiveness

In 2025 the average compliance rate across all inspection stations was 92.2%, which is an increase from the 2024 season (90.7%).

The IMDP also tracks compliance at the inspection stations for the “Pull the Plug” requirement. 88% of watercraft with drain plugs were compliant with having the drain plug removed upon arrival at the IMDP inspection station. This represents a slight increase from 2024 (85%).

Lake Monitoring

In 2025, grants were administered by the [Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation \(HCTF\)](#) to partner organizations to sample in priority waterbodies across the province.

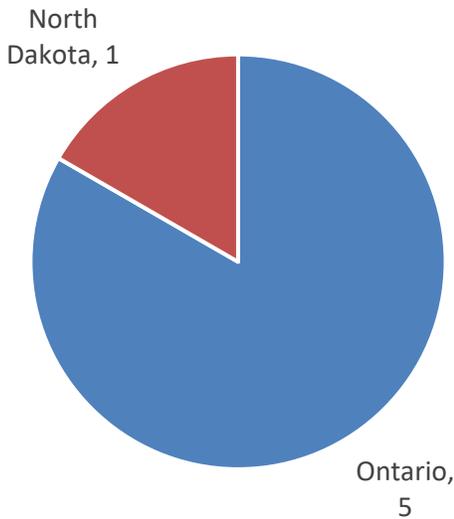
From June to October, partner organizations and ministry staff carried out plankton tow sampling following the [Provincial lake monitoring protocol](#). All samples are analyzed by a Ministry-designated lab to look for invasive mussel larvae.

A total of 880 plankton tow water samples were collected from 91 priority waterbodies across the province. All plankton tow samples tested negative for invasive mussels.

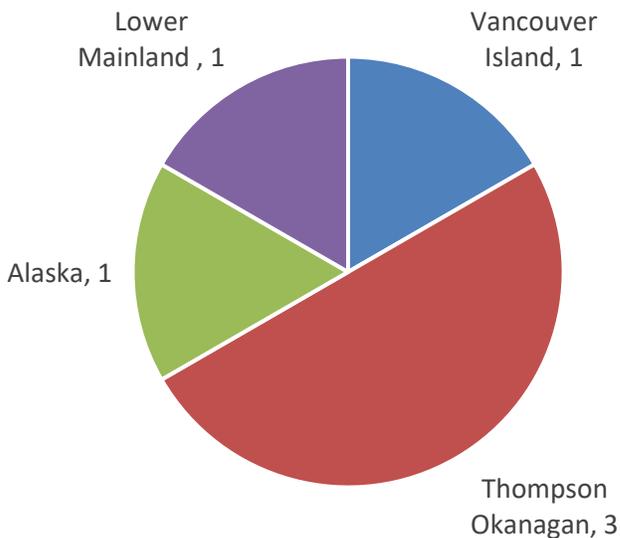
In 2025, the Province continued to pilot the use of environmental DNA (eDNA) as another detection tool for invasive mussels. The Province has been working closely with other jurisdictions to take a consistent approach on how eDNA should be used for invasive mussel monitoring. The following consensus statement was developed by western provinces and states, “The detection of dreissenid environmental DNA (eDNA) does not, in and of itself, constitute proof of detection that a water body contains live dreissenids, but rather an indicator of likelihood that a water body was exposed to some level of live or dead dreissenid eDNA (biological matter). Detections of dreissenid eDNA, in and of itself, is insufficient to meet detection standards for classifying a water body for the presence of dreissenids.”

For the 2025 eDNA pilot, 22 sites across five priority waterbodies were sampled (Shuswap, Osoyoos, Okanagan, Skaha, & Christina Lakes). All eDNA samples tested negative for invasive mussels.

To date there have been no confirmed detections of live zebra, quagga or golden mussels in B.C. waterways.



The pie chart on the top shows which jurisdictions the six mussel fouled boats came from. The pie chart on the bottom shows what regions in B.C. the mussel fouled boats were destined for.



Notable Updates

In August the COS partnered with a local First Nation to deliver Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) training to their guardians. The training took place over two days. It focused on outreach and education, and the foundations of the inspection process. AIS outreach materials were shared with the guardians as a resource to share when conducting their regular patrols.

In 2025 the IMDP partnered with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) to conduct several joint inspections at the Canada-U.S. border. Fisheries Officers were trained by COS AIS inspectors on watercraft inspection. A total of 8 joint watercraft inspection shifts were conducted at the Douglas and Pacific border crossings between June and August. This provided an opportunity to increase awareness about the IMDP with federal partners (DFO and CBSA).

The IMDP operations were impacted as a result of the BCGEU job action that took place in September/October as the season was coming to an end. The duration of the job action varied by the station location and any available program staff responded to watercraft notifications from other jurisdictions when possible.



First Nation guardians performing a decontamination of a watercraft at one of the inspection stations as part of the AIS training with the COS.

By the Numbers	2024	2025
Total Watercraft Inspected	20,900	27,100
Number of People Interacted with to Promote Clean, Drain, Dry and AIS awareness	45,400	50,700
High-risk Inspections	199	319
Decontamination Orders Issued	63	142
Quarantine Periods Issued	37	84
Mussel-Fouled Watercraft	12	6