

# Keeping Yukon Natural

## Recommendations for Boaters and Anglers



Studies indicate that mussels can survive in Yukon waters. Photo: R. Westbrooks, U.S. Geological Survey, [www.Bugwood.org](http://www.Bugwood.org)

### What's the problem?

**Did you know invasive species can be transported to a new lake or river on your boat? Organisms like zebra mussels, spiny water flea, and aquatic plants may be tagging along for the ride as you move from lake to lake. These species can be transferred in surface water moved by your boat through the bilge, motor, live well, and transom wells. Currently, there are very few aquatic invasive species in Yukon. As recreational boating increases in Yukon, chances of transportation and introduction of aquatic invasive species from locations in southern Canada will also likely increase.**

The introduction of aquatic invasive species across North America has severe economic impacts, costing millions of dollars every year to repair the damage done. Invasive species can damage major infrastructure by clogging pipelines and fouling drinking water facilities. Invasive species also

reduce the biodiversity and population of native species in the water bodies they are introduced into. They can degrade or completely destroy native food chains and fish habitat through increased predation, parasitism, and competition for food and nutrient resources.

### Best practices for boaters and anglers

Don't let invaders in your boat, think Clean-Drain-Dry!

- Check out the aquatic invasive species section on the website of [Environment Yukon](http://Environment Yukon).
- Don't move live fish or other species from one water body to another without a permit. It is illegal.
- Never release fish, plants, or other aquatic organisms from your aquarium into open waters or sewers.

*Yukon contains many areas of natural wilderness, and by caring and doing our part, the ecological integrity of the territory can be maintained.*

### CLEAN

- Before leaving a water body inspect and remove plants and animals from your boat motor, anchor, trailer, and equipment including life vests and ropes.
- Clean your boat and all angling equipment with freshwater, power washing equipment is preferable.
- Wash the mud from hip waders before leaving the waterbody.
- Avoid using felt soled waders. Aquatic organisms cling to felt material very well and can easily be transferred to another waterbody. If possible, freeze wading boots solid prior to future use.



**STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!**

Be A Good Steward.  
Clean. Drain. Dry.  
[StopAquaticHitchhikers.org](http://StopAquaticHitchhikers.org)

### DRAIN

- Drain water from the motor, bilge, and wells on land.

### DRY

- Let your boat and equipment dry completely in the sun or use a sponge to remove all remaining water from the inside of your craft.

*Pull the plug! Make sure it is out when you transport your watercraft!*



Avoid transporting aquatic invasive species around by cleaning your watercraft.

## Two high risk invasive species to watch for in Yukon waterbodies

### Zebra Mussels

*Dreissena polymorpha*

Zebra mussels are small, fingernail sized mussels native to the Caspian Sea region of Asia. Zebra mussels were

introduced to North America through ballast waters of shipping boats and are now considered one of the most damaging invasive species introduced to Canada. The mussels have spread rapidly through the Great Lakes and have been reported as far west as Winnipeg and northern Manitoba. These freshwater mussels can easily attach themselves to boats, equipment, vegetation, and other organisms. Newly introduced mussels are extremely difficult to detect as they are only a few millimetres in size. The risk of zebra mussels spreading to Yukon is real: 2 out of 5 boats entering Yukon come from jurisdictions already with mussels.



Didymo algae is a freshwater diatom that can form massive blooms with the potential to impact fish habitat and fisheries. Photo: YG

### Didymo/Rock Snot

*Didymosphenia geminata*

Didymo is a freshwater algae that is commonly found in creeks and streams. Surveys have detected didymo in almost all Yukon watersheds, however it is unclear if didymo is a native or introduced species. It can be brown, yellow, or white and when handled feels like rough wool. Didymo grows in clumps and ropes, smothering rocks and vegetation in the stream bottom. Once established it can form massive blooms on stream beds altering freshwater ecology. High concentrations of didymo can negatively impact stream vegetation, freshwater invertebrates, fish habitat and food chain interactions. Felt-soled waders, fishing gear, boots, and boats are ideal carriers for didymo to spread. Anglers, boaters, kayakers, and canoeists can help mitigate the spread of didymo in the Yukon by cleaning, draining and drying their gear before moving to a new waterbody and avoiding using felt-soled wading boots.

**Report sightings of aquatic invasive species to Yukon Government Fisheries: [fisheries@gov.yk.ca](mailto:fisheries@gov.yk.ca)**

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Report invasive species to [info@yukoninvasives.com](mailto:info@yukoninvasives.com) OR use the reporting form at [www.yukoninvasive.com](http://www.yukoninvasive.com) OR submit your observation to [www.iNaturalist.org](http://www.iNaturalist.org)

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