

By: Sandi Faber Routley, ISCM Invasive Species Technician

The Invasive Species Council of Manitoba is developing a new Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) program. In the past few weeks we have received 3 EDRR alerts on new invasive species: Curly leaf pondweed, Zebra mussel, and Kudzu vine. Kudzu vine has been found on the edge of Canada in southern Ontario, and considered a level 2 priority alert or lower risk for entering Manitoba in the immediate future. Curly leaf pondweed and Zebra mussel, however, have been found on the edge of Manitoba across the US border and therefore are considered **level 1 priority alerts**.

CURLY LEAF PONDWEED

North Dakota Game and Fish staff have recently confirmed the presence of curly leaf pondweed (*Potamogeton crispus*) in the US side of Lake Metigoshe in southwest Manitoba. This invasive aquatic species has, to date, not been listed for waterways in Manitoba. A fragment of the plant was found on October 1st during the hauling of a gill net gang from the lake. The specimen was fresh, so it was probably dredged up by the net. The closest population of this invasive species is in the Missouri River just south of Lake Metigoshe, likely the original source.

Lake Metigoshe is located in the Turtle Mountain area of southwestern Manitoba. Closest towns are Deloraine and Boissevain. Curly leaf pondweed can cause significant environmental impacts by reducing aquatic biodiversity, interfering with boating and recreation, increasing algal blooms, and contributing to fish decline.



Zebra mussel infestation impeding the movement of a native crayfish. Photo credit: Ontario Department of Natural Resources



Curly leaf pondweed (*Potamogeton crispus*). Photo credit: L. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, www.bugwood.org

ZEBRA MUSSELS

(Information provided, in part, by Manitoba Water Stewardship)

The threat of zebra mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*), invading Manitoba's waters has become increasingly real in recent weeks. On September 13, 2009, zebra mussels were found in Pelican Lake, Minnesota approximately 50 km south east of the Fargo-Moorhead area. This is the first known incidence of zebra mussels in the Red River Basin and the Hudson Bay Drainage Area. All water that originates in the Red River Basin eventually flows into Lake Winnipeg.

Zebra mussels were likely transported into Pelican Lake by unsuspecting boaters who previously launched their boat in zebra mussel infested waters.

Boaters' Checklist

CLEAN your watercraft, all equipment and gear. Remove all visible plants, animals or mud.

RINSE with hot tap water (>40 °C) and/or spray with high pressure water (250 psi). Scrape off grainy' surfaces (they could be young zebra mussels).

DRAIN water from your boat including motor, livewell, bilge and bait buckets. Dispose of unused bait and water on land and never release live bait. (Please Note: It is illegal to bring live bait into Manitoba and normally illegal to use or possess live bait).

DRY your boat for at least 5 days in the sun before moving it to another waterbody. Zebra mussels can survive out of water for several days.

Since the initial introduction in Lake St. Clair in the mid-1980s, zebra mussels have infested the Hudson River and the Mississippi and the Laurentian Great Lakes drainage areas and have cost the North American economy billions of dollars to control – there is no method to eliminate them. Heavy infestations can kill native mussels, impact fish populations, interfere with recreation, and increase costs for industry, including power and water supply facilities.

The Province of Manitoba has been preparing for the arrival of zebra mussels since 1989. With this new discovery, it will now accelerate monitoring of the Manitoba-portion of the Red River, increase public education, expand its summer boat and trailer inspection program at the Canadian / United States border crossings and points within the

Whiteshell. The Province will continue to work with Minnesota and North Dakota to put in place all reasonable measures to help delay the arrival of zebra mussels into the province.

Experience from the Laurentian Great Lakes has found, once zebra mussels are established, they cannot be eradicated. The best method of control is to prevent accidental introduction of zebra mussels from one water body to another. Taking a few extra precautions before leaving or before launching any watercraft and /or using any equipment coming from infested waters can help stop the spread.

To report zebra mussel sightings in Manitoba immediately call Water Stewardship at (204) 945-7095, toll free (800) 282-8069 (ext 7095).

The Invasive Species Council of Manitoba is a non-profit organization committed to raising awareness about invasives and working with partners to stop new species from invading Manitoba. More information is available on our new website: www.invasivespeciesmanitoba.com or 204-232-6021.