



Zebra mussels reinforce need to invest in Lake Winnipeg

News

LWF

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This zebra-mussel-encrusted rock was found on Sept. 26, 2015 near Balsam Harbour (Photo: Greg Armstrong).

Oct. 26, 2015, Winnipeg – Zebra mussels continue to spread in Lake Winnipeg. Adult mussels and their microscopic larvae (known as veligers) have been detected throughout the south basin of the lake and in the Red River. More recently, the invasive species has also been discovered in the north basin of Lake Winnipeg and in Cedar Lake, just west of Lake Winnipeg.

Today, Manitoba's Conservation and Water Stewardship Minister Tom Nevakshonoff announced that the province plans to double its investment in future inspections, enforcement and public education to help limit the spread of zebra mussels. To date, approximately \$500,000 has been spent on such efforts.

In addition to more resources for detection and monitoring, the province also plans to create a special research fund for science specific to Manitoba's waters.

Speaking at the press conference, LWF's executive director Alexis Kanu stressed the need to invest in long-term adaptive management for Manitoba's waters:

"As LWF's Science Advisory Council recognizes, zebra mussels are a complicating factor in our ongoing challenge to address the spread of harmful algae blooms in Lake Winnipeg. Because zebra mussels preferentially feed on other algae, they can increase the presence of harmful blue-green algae - this renews LWF's focus on addressing the root causes of nutrient loading through our [Lake Winnipeg Health Plan](#).

"In a recent report on Lake Erie, the International Joint Commission reiterated the importance of addressing excess nutrient loading in that great lake. Their report concluded that 'the single most important solution' for Lake Erie restoration is the reduction of phosphorus inputs. We should take heed as well in our efforts for Lake Winnipeg."

"Manitobans should not underestimate the resilience of our lake systems. Lake Winnipeg will change, yes. It is our responsibility to learn about those changes, and to make a long-term commitment to manage the lake for its ecological health, and for the many benefits it provides for us."

We continue to receive many questions from LWF members and supporters about zebra mussels and the developing situation in Lake Winnipeg. In response, we've created a [zebra mussel information page](#) on our website.

People who boat and/or use other water-related equipment can help prevent the spread of zebra mussels to other water bodies by remembering to "clean, drain, dry and dispose":

- **Clean** watercraft with hot water – preferably 50°C (120°F) – and high pressure for two minutes or longer
- **Drain** water from all gear
- **Dry** equipment for at least five days in the hot sun during summer (and for 18 days in spring and fall)
- **Dispose** of unwanted live bait and worms in the trash, and dumping all water from bait buckets away from any water body

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