

## **Invasive mussels were bound for Okanagan Lake**



*Zebra mussel*  
Image Credit: SOURCE/ Wikimedia Commons

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KELOWNA - An invasive mussel nearly made an unwanted debut in the Okanagan last week.

The Okanagan Basin Water Board issued a release Wednesday afternoon saying what looked to be zebra and/or quagga mussels were found Mar. 12 on a large pleasure craft boat crossing the Osoyoos border from the U.S.

According to the release, a Canada Customs official notified the B.C. Conservation Service, which brought in a decontamination unit to clean the vessel the following day.

The Canadian Border Services Agency currently has no legislative authority to refuse entry, however, the commercial transporter was co-operative.

The boat, which originated from Texas, was headed to the Central Okanagan to be moored in Okanagan Lake.

The Okanagan Basin Water Board has been urging the federal government to pass legislation to allow border guards to stop and inspect watercraft and prohibit entry of contaminated vessels. It has also been urging the province to follow-up on its legislation (introduced in December 2012 which makes it illegal to transport live or dead invasive mussels in B.C.) and implement a B.C. inspection program that will help prevent the spread of these mussels and other invasive species.

There are concerns that if the mussels invade Okanagan lakes, water quality, ecosystems and the economy will suffer.

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