



ENVIRONMENT

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Inspection catches dead invasive mussels in B.C.



By [Megan Turcato](#)

Reporter Global News



The Ministry of Environment says a provincial inspection in Penticton on May 29 of a boat that had been in Lake Winnipeg turned up dead invasive mussels.

B.C. was given the heads up about the boat by Alberta authorities. The watercraft was originally inspected in that province.

“But because the boat was heavily wrapped for transport... they got all the details from the driver [and] they provided us with a notification about where the boat is going and when it is coming,” says Matthias Herborg, an aquatic invasive species specialist with the Ministry of Environment. “We followed up with the owners and we arranged to inspect the boat in Penticton last Friday. We found a couple of mussels on them, which based on the history of

the boat we are very certain are all dead, but we still conducted a full decontamination on that boat.”

Because the boat had been in Lake Winnipeg, Herborg believes the mussels were zebra mussels. However, he says zebra and quagga mussels are difficult to tell apart when they are very small, as these ones were.

For Herborg the story about the boat from Lake Winnipeg is an example of the system working. He told the anecdote during an interview where he was responding to statements put out by the Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) earlier this week.

The board wants the province to set up five permanent inspection stations for traffic heading into B.C. from Alberta.

Read More: [Water Board wants permanent inspection stations for invasive mussels](#)

“In B.C. we have three roving stations, yet we have five roads in from Alberta that really need to be covered. We are taking chances there that we are very concerned about,” says Dough Findlater, chair of the OBWB.

Herborg says those three inspection crews are “well located to intercept traffic coming into the Okanagan.” One inspection team is based in Nelson and another is Penticton based.

“One crew will solely focus on the different entrance ways. We are working very closely with our colleagues in Alberta who have inspection stations along those highways as well,” he says. “Our provincial program is ramping up. The province has \$1.3-million dedicated over the next two years for that.”

The inspection teams will also be doing public education.

Herborg says anyone who believes their boat or someone else’s might be carrying invasive mussels should call the conservation officer hotline at 1-877-952-7277.