

# THE DAILY COURIER

## Boat weeds lake bed

FRIDAY, 10 JANUARY 2014 02:00 KELOWNA DAILY COURIER

Winter work is underway to ensure Kelowna's beaches are free of weeds next summer.

A rototilling boat owned by the Okanagan Basin Water Board was plying the waters off City Park on Thursday.

One of three such machines owned by the OBWB, the craft yanks Eurasian water milfoil weeds out by the plant's roots through the winter. "It's the most efficient way we have of removing the weeds from Okanagan Lake," water board spokesperson Corinne Jackson said.

The de-rooted plants are left in the water, where they rot away before the summer growing season.

During warmer months, control measures concentrate only on cutting the weeds back. Native to Europe, Asia and Africa, Eurasian milfoil spread to western North America in the 1960s and became noticeable in Okanagan Lake by the mid-1970s.

The weeds grow only in water of between 46 centimetres and 5.5 metres of depth; farther out, not enough sunlight reaches the base of the plant.

At the height of the infestation, before ongoing mechanical control methods were initiated, there might have been as many as 1,000 weedy tentacles in a square metre of water.

Now, many areas that were heavily infested are free of weeds, and others have as few as 10 branches of the plant in a square metre of water.



Ducks take flight as a rototilling boat owned by the Okanagan Basin Water Board pulls up Eurasian water milfoil weeds from the lake bed offshore from Kelowna's Hot Sands Beach on Thursday afternoon.