

Information Bulletin:
‘Zebra Mussels and other Alien Invaders’ –
presentation to be given by Education Officer to the
members of Clare County Council’s Environment
and Emergency SPC meeting.



As the angling season begins, the **Western Region Zebra Mussel Control Initiative** is issuing a renewed plea to anglers and boat-owners to stop the further spread of Zebra Mussels. The Zebra Mussel is an invasive freshwater shellfish that has the potential to affect biodiversity, change entire ecosystems and cause considerable economic damage. Water intake points operated by municipal authorities are probably most at risk of economic damage. Boat movement from infested to un-infested waterbodies is now recognised as the main vector in the spread of the Zebra Mussel and indeed many other aquatic invasive species. The Zebra Mussel is spread to new waterways by dropping off boat hulls at slipways. Another entry route for the Zebra Mussel to a new canal, river or lake is by ‘hitch-hiking’ on plants that are caught onto hulls, propellers and parts of boat trailers such as axles, rollers and hitches. Nets may also act as vectors for the nuisance species.

ADVICE TO ANGLERS AND BOAT-OWNERS

The spread of the Zebra Mussel can be avoided if boat-owners take precautions before moving boats from one waterbody to another:

Boats should be thoroughly cleaned with hot water (greater than 60°C) or with saltwater after a visit to any Irish waterway.

Adult thumbnail-sized Zebra Mussels are resilient creatures and must be scraped off boat hulls and disposed of with care.

Any boat that is found to have adult mussels attached should be left out of water for 1 month to ensure that they are dead since they are capable of surviving out of water for more than 18 days.

Bilge water from one waterway should not be dumped into a new waterway.

Nets should be soaked in hot water **or** in saltwater (1% table salt for 24 hours) **or** in 100% vinegar for 20 minutes.

ZEBRA MUSSELS ON THE MARCH

At present, much of the **Shannon-Erne** waterway is infested with Zebra Mussels. They have already been detected in seven individual lakes in Co. Clare: **L. Rosslara, L. Kilgory, L. Cullaunyheeda, L. Doon, L. Avoher, L. Clonlea** and **L. Castle**. Warning signs have been erected to notify the public about the Zebra Mussel. The *Western Region Zebra Mussel Control Initiative* was established to protect Lough Melvin (Co. Leitrim) and the Great Western Lakes: Corrib, Mask and Carra. Protecting the remaining un-infested Clare waterways is also a priority with the Initiative. In 2006, Zebra Mussels were discovered in Lough Conn in Co. Mayo.

PRESENTATION TO CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL'S ENVIRONMENT AND EMERGENCY SPC MEETING

The Education Officer with the Initiative, Dr. Aoife Thornton has been invited to give a presentation on 'Zebra Mussels and other Alien Invaders' to the members of Clare County Council's Environment and Emergency SPC meeting on the 13th March 2007.

WESTERN REGION ZEBRA MUSSEL CONTROL INITIATIVE – USING THE PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

The Zebra Mussel Initiative uses a partnership approach to address the need to create awareness about the issue and to investigate the need for appropriate regulations to control the spread of the nuisance pest. Clare County Council and all the Local Authorities in the Western Region are involved in the Initiative along with the Shannon-, Western- and North Western- Regional Fisheries Boards, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Waterways Ireland, the Office of Public Works, angling and boating organisations and scientists.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you would like further information (map and list of infested water bodies in Ireland, newsletters etc.) please see www.alienspecies.ie. If you would like to receive leaflets or car window stickers, please contact:

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