Zebra Mussel Update

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Several mature Zebra Mussels (ZMs) were found in Bay Lake in Summer 2018 and DNR detected microscopic ZM veliger larvae in water samples. We expected to find more in 2019 and that has come to pass.

Almost 200 MN lakes are now ZM infested and lake users are learning how to live with them. We are working with other lake associations, DNR, and the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) on what to expect in coming years and how we can prepare for a larger infestation.

What We Know

- This September, we found ZMs on detectors in all areas of the lake.
- Several Bay Lakers have reported finding ZMs on equipment and boats.
- Bay Lake water composition and conditions are ideal for ZM propagation.
- Although much research is being conducted on how to suppress and eliminate ZMs, currently no large-scale treatment is available.

About ZM's

- Each ZM can release up to 500,000 veligers when water temperatures are ideal, usually in July.
- Veligers are delicate and, once released, they float around seeking hard surfaces or plants to attach to. Most die.
- ZMs survive Minnesota winters if in lakes. They die within 5 days once out of water.
- ZMs do not release their grip on equipment or boats when dead. They must be scraped or power washed to remove.
- ZMs smell bad when dead.

What We Can Expect

- A ZM infestation typically starts slowly and then ramps up quickly.
- Next year we expect see an expansion in their numbers.
- Equipment and boats sitting in the lake will likely become home to ZMs.

What's Next

Over the winter, we will provide more information; how to protect equipment and boats, how to remove and dispose of ZM's, and updates on pertinent research. Depending on member interest, we may schedule workshops in late spring, so Bay Lakers can hear from experts on these issues.

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Residents on other lakes, such as Mille Lacs, Gull and the Whitefish Chain, have been living with ZMs for years. Cabin owners there have found ways to minimize the impact of ZMs, as I'm confident we will. And I'm hopeful research will find ways to suppress and manage, and perhaps even eliminate ZM's and other invasives.

Stay tuned……

For info on ZMs, Google "MN DNR Zebra Mussel"

BLIA provides financial support to the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center; visit their website for more info: https://www.maisrc.umn.edu.