



# Aquatic Invasive Species Newsletter

1420 East Sixth Ave • Helena, MT 59601 • 406-444-2440 • [CleanDrainDryMT.com](http://CleanDrainDryMT.com)

**September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

Note from the AIS Bureau:

It has been a busy summer and it is good to see things slowing down as we move into the fall. Many watercraft inspection stations are now closed. Other stations on high risk corridors will remain open through October. Crews are still out there surveying for AIS, but they will be wrapping up as water temperatures cool. To date, no evidence of invasive mussels has been detected this season. Great news. But small populations can be easy to miss and it is important to remain vigilant. Thank you to all the dedicated partner and FWP staff who work hard to make this program successful.

As a reminder, the **Montana AIS Summit** will be held **December 4-5<sup>th</sup>** at Carroll College in Helena. It will be a great opportunity to identify needs and discuss strategies to ensure the best AIS program possible in 2020. Keep an eye out for more information in the coming weeks.

## Watercraft Inspections

- Over 110,000 watercraft inspected this season in Montana by partner and FWP staff.
  - 14 watercraft intercepted transporting zebra / quagga mussels into the state.
  - Over 100 watercraft intercepted transporting aquatic weeds.
  - Over 11,000 inspections conducted at Glacier National Park.
- Watercraft inspection data from this season can be found here: [Inspection Data](#)
- FWP enforcement staff conducted over 250 AIS related traffic stops and issued over 100 citations this season.
- If no evidence of invasive mussels is found on Canyon Ferry this season, FWP will initiate the process to remove quarantine requirements for the 2020 boating season.



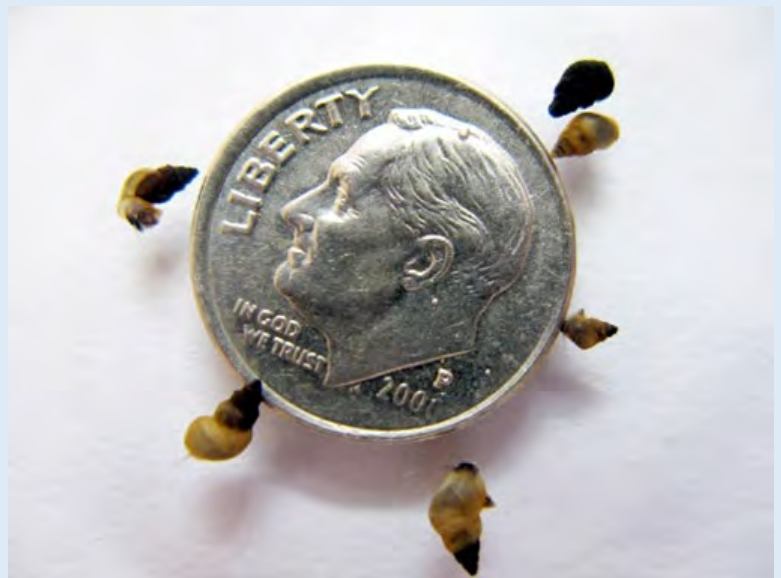
*Boat inspection at Clearwater Junction Watercraft Inspection Station*

## Early Detection Monitoring

- Over 1,700 mussel veliger early detection samples have been collected.
- No evidence of invasive mussels has been found in Montana this season.
- FWP AIS laboratory is still analyzing high risk samples within a two-week period of receiving them.
- FWP coordinated with the Flathead Biological Station to conduct a detailed survey on Tiber Reservoir utilizing environmental DNA and microscopy analysis. No evidence of invasive mussels was detected.
- US Fish and Wildlife Service divers surveyed Tiber Reservoir in August. No evidence of invasive mussels was detected.
- New Zealand mudsnails (NZMS) were detected at a private hatchery facility near Hamilton. The facility was quarantined, and eradication will soon be initiated. Survey efforts in the area are ongoing. NZMS are found in a number of locations east of the Continental Divide, but this is the first detection west of the Divide. The press release can be found here: [NZMS at Hatchery](#).  
For more information on NZMS go to: [NZMS Info](#)
- Early detection monitoring data can be viewed here: [2019 Early Detection Monitoring Data](#)



*Monitoring crew on Tiber reservoir*



*New Zealand Mudsnails*

## Outreach and Education

- Teachers have applied to attend an AIS curriculum workshop at the [Montana Learning Center](#) on Canyon Ferry Reservoir next month. Science teacher and MLC staff member Kate Mattern will lead teachers through lesson plans developed by the [Flathead Lake Biological Station](#) and the [Watershed Education Network](#). This workshop is funded by a DNRC-AIS grant and is co-hosted by the Lewis & Clark Conservation District.

- Monica Boyer, Yellowstone Regional Coordinator for the Central Eastern Montana Invasive Species Team (CEMIST) is sending AIS information postcards to agriculture stakeholders in the Yellowstone River region.



**AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES PREVENTION IN THE YELLOWSTONE RIVER IS WORTH IT**  
**AN ATTACHED MUSSEL IS AN INVASIVE MUSSEL**

Aquatic invasive species pose huge risks to Montana water and our way of life by:

- Increasing agriculture costs**
  - Mussels choke off irrigation systems and degrade water supplies which impacts crop and livestock production
- Loss of recreational opportunities**
  - Mussels cause boat damage, harm fisheries, and can decrease access to waterbodies
- Increasing utility costs**
  - Mussels clog public water systems, intakes, and dams
- Degrading habitat and water quality**
  - Mussels can cause algae blooms and impact native species

**ZEBRA MUSSEL**  
**QUAGGA MUSSEL**

Central Eastern Montana Invasive Species Team (CEMIST)  
 Working together to strengthen and support invasive species prevention

To request more information please contact:  
 Yellowstone River Regional Coordinator  
 monica.boyer@mt.usda.gov  
 406-346-7333 ext. 8023

- A new population of Asian clams were discovered in Lake Elmo (Billings) this summer. FWP is working with the Billings Bench Water Association to inform their members about the discovery and to be on the lookout for other populations in the area. Survey efforts are ongoing to determine clam distribution in the area.

# Invasive Asian Clams (*Corbicula fluminea*)

## What are they?

- Asian clams are a freshwater mollusk usually found slightly submerged in sandy or muddy bottoms of streams, rivers and lakes.
- Shell is less than 1 inch, light tan or brown, but colors can vary. Shell has thick elevated concentric growth rings.
- Not native to North America. First detected in Washington in the 1930s and now found in many waterbodies throughout the U.S. including Lake Elmo.

## Why are they a problem?

- Large numbers of Asian clams, dead and alive, can clog water intake pipes. Pipes and screens can become clogged with shells that are drawn into water systems. **Asian clams do not attach to objects like quagga and zebra mussels do.**
- Asian clams can displace native species by taking over their food and habitat. They can live in polluted water better than native species.
- One clam can start a new infestation because they can reproduce by cloning.

## How do they spread?

- Mud and standing water in boats and on water-based gear and equipment are the primary ways they spread. To prevent the spread of Asian clams and other aquatic invasive species always clean, drain and dry boats, waders and gear.



### Learn the Difference

Asian clams can be mistaken for Montana's native pea clams or fingernail clams. Learn to identify invasive species at [CleanDrainDry.mt.gov/fieldguide](http://CleanDrainDry.mt.gov/fieldguide).

Native	Invasive
	
Pea Clam	Zebra Mussel
	
	Asian Clam



- Broadwater County Conservation District found a unique way to get the Clean-Drain-Dry message in front of boaters by adding a colorful stencil to the Toston boat ramp. This project was funded by a DNRC-AIS grant.



- A new outreach rack card for Anglers will soon be available from FWP and UC3.

**ANGLERS: WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT AIS?**

Montana has some of the best fishing in the nation. An invasion of aquatic invasive species (AIS) can ruin these opportunities and impair our fisheries.


Aquatic invasive species are non-native plants, animals, and pathogens that cause harm to the environment, the economy, and human health.

Preventing the spread of AIS is important because, once introduced, AIS can disrupt ecosystems, reduce biodiversity, and cost time, money, and resources. *Once established, AIS are nearly impossible to eradicate. Prevention is our best defense against AIS!* **CLEAN, DRAIN & DRY every time you use watercraft or equipment, regardless of destination.**

**AIS threatens recreational fishing.** AIS compete for food, reduce spawning habitat, feed on young, and impact water quality. Some species can become a nuisance to anglers by fouling fishing lines and stealing bait. Aquatic invasive plants impact fishing because they invade aquatic habitats, limit access to fishing spots, and make navigation difficult.

**TIPS FOR ANGLERS**


To prevent AIS from spreading to new locations anglers must take action to remove any aquatic "hitchhikers" from their equipment, boots, nets, clothing, and other gear used in the water while fishing.



Learn more at  
[CleanDrainDryMT.com](http://CleanDrainDryMT.com)

**CLEAN. DRAIN. DRY.**

**PROTECT OUR WATERS**



**ANGLERS: CLEAN YOUR GEAR. STOP AIS.**

When anglers travel to fish at different lakes and streams, they can unintentionally transport aquatic invasive species (AIS). Montana's biggest threats are boaters and anglers using Montana's waters after fishing in another state or province. Some AIS are so tiny—such as fish diseases, parasites and invasive mussel larvae—you can only see them under a microscope.

Take these simple steps every time you fish to be sure you're not moving invasive species from one waterbody to another.

**CLEAN**  
all plants, mud and debris from fishing gear, waders and boots before leaving the water. Use a scrub brush if needed.

**DRAIN**  
any standing water from gear. A sponge can help.

**DRY**  
everything before using it again. Gear should be dry to the touch. When possible use different waders for different waterbodies.

**DISPOSE**  
of unwanted bait in the trash, not on land or in the water.

**NEVER**  
transport plants, fish or animals into a different body of water.



In addition to the steps above, anglers should:

- Use non-felt soled boots to further reduce the risk of spreading AIS.
- Completely dry waders before moving to a different waterbody.
- Always stop at inspection stations if transporting watercraft—including rafts, belly and drift boats.

**PROTECT OUR WATERS**

**CLEAN. DRAIN. DRY.**

[CleanDrainDryMT.com](http://CleanDrainDryMT.com)

## In the News

- How AIS can impact agriculture. [Information for landowners and irrigators](#)
- Boat season slowing down and AIS highlights. [Stations reduce hours](#)
- Watercraft inspection and education in Anaconda / Butte. [The fight is on](#)
- AIS Monitoring Workshop. October 4<sup>th</sup> at Georgetown Lake. A great opportunity for partners to learn more about AIS and how to survey for them. Hosted by the Upper Columbia Conservation Commission and presented by the Flathead Biological Station and the Whitefish Lake Institute. Contact Phil for more information: [phil.matson@flbs.umt.edu](mailto:phil.matson@flbs.umt.edu) 406-872-4519.
- **October 9-11:** Western Regional Panel of the Aquatic Nuisance Species Taskforce Meeting in Missoula. [WRP](#)
- **December 4-5: SAVE THE DATE:** The Montana AIS Summit at Carroll College in Helena. More details to follow.



# MONTANA AIS SUMMIT

## SAVE THE DATE

Dec 4-5, 2019  
Carroll College | Helena, Montana

**Bringing together Aquatic Invasive Species partners from across the state to discuss progress made and the next steps needed to continue advancing the Montana's AIS program.**

Significant changes have been made to the AIS program following the 2016 detection of invasive mussels in Tiber Reservoir. Issues and strategies discussed at the Summit will help inform updates to Montana's AIS Strategic Plan.

**Registration Coming in October**



**MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS**