

Invasive Watch of the Week: Zebra Mussel

By Tanner Ruechel

This week marks the beginning of our Invasive Watch of the Week. This series will aim to educate locals that use Lake Redstone of the problems invasive species can create. Hopefully this information will encourage you to volunteer for the Clean Boats Clean Waters program that educates visiting boaters to take the proper steps in preventing the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species.

The infamous Zebra Mussel will kick off the series. Some people think that Zebra Mussels actually help the clarity of the lake, while this may be true, the dramatic change in clarity can have dire effects on your lake. The increased water transparency aids in the ability for sunlight to penetrate deeper into the water column which allows plants such as Eurasian Water Milfoil to grow and spread rapidly. Not only does clarity of the water affect the bottom of the lake but it is also can affect the surface. For example, cyanobacteria, more commonly known as Blue-Green algae, often bloom in clear water. Blue-Green algae can be dangerous via skin contact, ingestion and inhalation, not only for pets but children as well.

Zebra Mussels can clog up hoses, drainage pipes, and boat engines costing property owners and lake users countless dollars. These mussels also decrease the native free floating algae which can lower food supply for larger fish causing a decrease in their population. Preventing Zebra Mussels and other invasive species from spreading into your lake is the most effective step in keeping it clean, safe and healthy. If you would like to help stop the spread of the Zebra Mussel and other invasive species you can volunteer with Clean Boats Clean Waters by contacting Tanner Ruechel by email ruechelt@gmail.com or phone **(920) 621-3282**.