

“DON’T MOVE A MUSSEL”

What it really means

By Kami Silverwood, AIS Specialist

-Arizona Game and Fish Department

Now that hot weather and Arizona’s boating season is upon us, it’s time to remember our roles in preventing aquatic invasive species (AIS) from spreading. The “DON’T MOVE A MUSSEL-Now it’s the Law” message will be out in full force again this summer. You may hear it on the radio, a passing billboard, a sign at the lake or you may encounter a Game and Fish employee inspecting boats on a boat ramp at one of our states lakes.



The mussel we are referring to is the quagga mussel, cousin to the zebra mussel. This prolific non-native invasive species has many detrimental impacts to our state both economically and environmentally. These invasive mussels clog up dams, water treatment facilities, and irrigation systems.

The lower Colorado River from Lake Mead down to the Mexican border and over to Lake Pleasant (due to Central Arizona Project pulling our water supply from Lake Havasu) is infested with quagga mussels, while Lake Powell and the Verde and Salt River River systems (e.g., Bartlett, Saquaro, Roosevelt, Canyon and Apache lakes) are not currently infested...but keep your fingers crossed.

Due to the fact that these lakes are within a few hours of one another, there is elevated concern regarding the spread of these invasive mussels and all other aquatic invasives into new waters in Arizona.

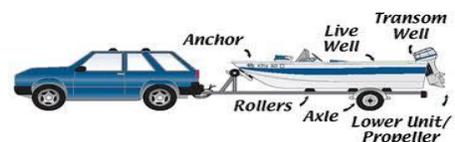
For all citizens of Arizona, concerns regarding continuing AIS invasions should be directed to the possibility of seeing increasing water and electric bills

for maintenance costs in keeping dams and facilities from becoming clogged.

Watercraft users should be concerned on a more personal level, as these insidious invasives can clog up boat engines.



Many of you ask what “NOW IT’S THE LAW” actually means. For Day Users who have been in or on infested AIS waters for 5 days or less, you need to clean, drain and dry your watercraft and equipment. This means that AFTER pulling your boat out of the water and BEFORE you leave the vicinity, remove all clinging material, remove your plug, and ensure watercraft and all equipment is dried completely. However, if you have had your watercraft/equipment in an AIS affected water for more than five days (long term Marina-moored watercraft) there are additional decontamination and desiccation procedures that must be followed; please refer to the Department’s website (www.azgfd.gov/ais) for those details. In essence, all long term or moored watercraft must follow a desiccation regime that will kill any and all adult mussels that will be attached on or within the hull and engine prior to hauling. These designated dry times (desiccation) are as follows: May through October-watercraft must be dry and out of the water for a minimum of 7 consecutive days; November through April-watercraft must be dry and out of the water for a minimum of 18 consecutive days. Dry time begins when the boat is completely dry, not when the boat is pulled from the water.



Even though our message is about preventing invasive mussel movement, there is a whole plethora of other invasive species out there ready to hitch rides with you.

