

## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## ZEBRA MUSSELS FOUND IN HILLSDALE RESERVOIR

*Invasive, sharp-shelled mollusks are among the state's most unwanted species*

**TOPEKA, Kan.** – The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWP) has confirmed the presence of invasive zebra mussels in Hillsdale Reservoir in Miami County. On Wednesday, June 15, an alert angler found an adult zebra mussel at the Wade Branch of the reservoir and took it to the Hillsdale State Park Office. KDWP aquatic nuisance species staff subsequently found more zebra mussels on rocks and trees in the same area. The population appears to be low density at this time, however, there is no known method to completely rid a lake of zebra mussels.

Hillsdale Reservoir is managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and KDWP manages the fishery. The lake consists of 4,580 surface acres and has a maximum depth of 57 feet. The state park and the lake are popular destinations and offer a variety of recreational activities such as boating, skiing, swimming, fishing, camping and hiking.

Everyone using the lake plays a key role in stemming the spread of mussels to uninfested lakes. "Since zebra mussel larvae, or veligers, are microscopic and undetectable to the naked eye, all users of Kansas lakes need to be aware that transfer of water between lakes can lead to further infestations," said Jeff Koch, KDWP Aquatic Research Biologist.

Prevention is the best way to avoid spreading ANS. They often travel by "hitchhiking" with unsuspecting lake-goers. "We encourage anyone who recreates on Kansas lakes to clean, drain, and dry their boats and equipment before using another lake. Additionally, don't transfer lake water or live fish into another body of water, as this is a main transport vector of all aquatic nuisance species," Koch said.

Hillsdale Reservoir and Bull Creek from the reservoir south to the Marais des Cygnes River will be added to the list of ANS-designated waters in Kansas, and notices will be posted at various locations around the reservoir. Live fish may not be transported from ANS-designated waters. The sharp-shelled zebra mussels attach to solid objects, so lake-goers should be careful when handling mussel-encrusted objects and when grabbing an underwater object when they can't see what their hands may be grasping. Visitors should protect their feet when walking on underwater or shoreline rocks.

Zebra mussels are just one of the non-native aquatic species that threaten our waters and native wildlife. After using any body of water, people must remember to follow regulations and precautions that will prevent their spread:



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- Clean, drain and dry boats and equipment between uses
- Use wild-caught bait only in the lake or pool where it was caught
- Do not move live fish from waters infested with zebra mussels or other aquatic nuisance species
- Drain livewells and bilges and remove drain plugs from all vessels prior to transport from any Kansas water on a public highway.

For more information about aquatic nuisance species in Kansas, report a possible ANS, or see a list of ANS-designated waters, visit [ProtectKSWaters.org](http://ProtectKSWaters.org).

### **ABOUT ZEBRA MUSSELS**

Zebra mussels are dime-sized mollusks with striped, sharp-edged, two-part shells. They can produce huge populations in a short time and do not require a host fish to reproduce. A large female zebra mussel can produce 1 million eggs, and then fertilized eggs develop into microscopic veligers that are invisible to the naked eye. Veligers drift in the water for at least two weeks before they settle out as young mussels which quickly grow to adult size and reproduce within a few months.

After settling, zebra mussels develop byssal threads that attach their shells to submerged hard surfaces such as rocks, piers, and flooded timber. They also attach to pipes, water intake structures, boat hulls, propellers, and submerged parts of outboard motors. As populations increase, they can clog intake pipes and prevent water treatment and electrical generating plants from drawing water. In 2012, two Kansas communities, Council Grove and Osage City, experienced temporary water shortages from zebra mussel infestations before water intake structures could be cleaned up. Removing large numbers of zebra mussels to ensure adequate water flow can be labor-intensive and costly.

Zebra mussels are native to the Black and Caspian seas of western Asia and eastern Europe and were spread around the world in the ballast water of cargo ships. They were discovered in Lake St. Clair and the Detroit River in 1988 and quickly spread throughout the Great Lakes and other rivers including the Mississippi, Illinois, Ohio, Tennessee, Arkansas and Hudson. They were first discovered in Kansas in 2003 at El Dorado Reservoir. Despite public education efforts to alert boaters about the dangers of zebra mussels and how to prevent spreading them, the species continues to show up in new lakes every year. Moving water in boats and bait buckets has been identified as a likely vector.

For information about Hillsdale Reservoir, visit <http://ksoutdoors.com/Fishing/Where-to-Fish-in-Kansas/Fishing-Locations-Public-Waters/Northeast-Region/Hillsdale-Reservoir> or the USACE site at <http://www.nwk.usace.army.mil/Locations/District-Lakes/Hillsdale-Lake/>

-30-

**Editors:** an image of the zebra mussels at Hillsdale Reservoir is attached. Credit: Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism