



IDAHO FISH AND GAME GOLDSHEET

Date: November 7, 2024

Agenda Item No. 14

Agenda Item: Quagga Mussel Update

Bureau Chief Approval: LH

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Position/Title: Regional Fisheries Manager – Magic Valley

Background:

Quagga Mussel is native to eastern Europe and was accidentally translocated to the US, initially the Great Lakes Region, via the ballast water from large ships. Once established in the Great Lakes, Quagga Mussel have caused a variety of ecological disruptions and economic harm. Ecologically, Quagga Mussel harm fish by filtering nutrients from the water column which reduces phytoplankton and zooplankton populations that many juvenile fish rely on for feeding. Economically, Quagga Mussel form dense colonies on hard underwater surfaces such as water intake structures that requires expensive and continual cleaning and maintenance. After initial establishment, Quagga Mussel have spread throughout the country by hitchhiking on watercraft or other water equipment or infrastructure, despite prevention programs.

As of early 2023, live Quagga Mussel had not been detected in Idaho or any waters of the Columbia River Basin. Unfortunately, the Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) detected juvenile Quagga Mussels in the Snake River near Twin Falls during routine monitoring in the summer of 2023. All public access to the Snake River was prohibited to prevent further spread, and a rapid response was initiated which resulted in the application a copper-based molluscicide. The Department assisted ISDA with the treatment primarily by determining the effects to fish populations. While the treatment was deemed successful, monitoring during fall 2024 by ISDA detected additional live Quagga Mussel upstream of the 2023 treatment area. An additional treatment is planned for mid- to late October 2024. The Department will further assist ISDA by providing information to the public, assisting with access closures, and determining the effects to fish populations.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission administers state wildlife policy through supervision and management of the Department (Idaho Code 36-104).

Public Involvement Process:

This agenda item is for information only.



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Justification:

This presentation is informational for the Commission. It is likely that the Commission will receive an increasing number of questions about Quagga Mussel, their management, the effects of the treatments on fish populations, and access closures.

Staff Recommendation:

This agenda item is for Commission information. No action is required.