

Welcome to the first status report for the 2020 season of the BC Invasive Mussel Defence Program (IMDP) for the period of May 11 to July 23, 2020. The IMDP is a shared delivery between staff from the B.C. Conservation Office Service (COS) and the Environmental Sustainability & Strategic Policy Division (ESSPD) within the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (ENV). The Program would like to recognize the ongoing funding provided by BC Hydro, Fortis BC, Columbia Power Corporation, and Columbia Basin Trust to support the delivery of the program. For more information about the Program please visit www.gov.bc.ca/invasivemussels. Suspected invasive mussels should be reported immediately to the Conservation Officer Services Report All Poachers and Polluters: 1-877-952-7277 (RAPP).

Program Operations

COVID-19 Adjustments

The 2020 IMDP season was met with some significant impacts to program delivery resulting from COVID 19. Due to public health restrictions implemented to mitigate the spread of COVID 19, the program start-up was delayed to May 11, 2020. The program was able to safely on-board 38 returning staff who were fully trained in previous years.

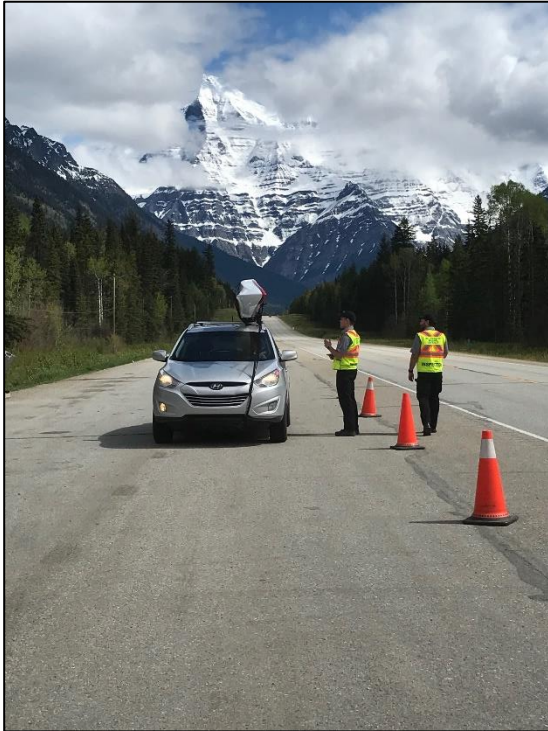
As a result of the continued US border closure staffing at the southern inspection stations have been reduced due to the limited number of watercraft crossing into B.C.. The program continues to work with Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) to receive and follow up on notifications of watercraft coming through any of the southern border crossings.

AIS Inspectors were also utilized from April 13, 2020 to June 20, 2020 to perform COVID 19 screening at various US/Canada border ports of entry as part of the Province's strategy to educate the public and ensure compliance with the Federal Quarantine Act, ensuring that travelers were completing their self-isolation compliance forms. AIS staff were instrumental assisting in this capacity and enjoyed the opportunity to work with full time Conservation Officers at the borders.



AIS inspector conducting COVID-19 screening at the Boundary border crossing (above) and (left) conducting watercraft inspection at the Olsen (Fernie) station on Hwy 3.

Watercraft Inspection Stations



Spectacular views from the Mt. Robson inspection station on Hwy 16 (above) and below is a comparison of watercraft inspection totals as of late July for the 2019 and 2020 seasons.

Watercraft inspection stations opened on May 15, 2020 and auxiliary conservation officers are now operational across seven inspection stations and two roving crews. Stations started in mid-May; three stations operating from dawn to dusk and the remaining stations are operating at 10hrs/day.

As of July 23, ~12,800 inspections have been completed and crews have interacted with approximately 23,500 people to promote Clean, Drain, Dry. Of the total, 74 were identified as high risk, 6 Decontamination Orders have been issued, and 6 watercraft were issued quarantine periods to meet the required 30-day drying time.

Of ~12,800 inspections, 10 have been confirmed to have adult invasive mussels. These came from Ontario (6), Arkansas (2), Wisconsin (1) and Manitoba (1) and were destined for the Okanagan (5), Vancouver Island (3), Lower Mainland (1), and the Thompson (1). The Program received advanced notification on 7 of the 10 mussel fouled boats either from another jurisdiction (e.g., AB, MT, Idaho, WA) or by Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) agents.

As the summer is progressing the program is seeing the majority of watercraft being transported from within BC and from Alberta. Travelers can still expect to see K9's Kilo and Major at our watercraft inspection sites throughout the season inspecting various watercraft.

Lake Monitoring

In 2020 a total of 12 grants are being administered by the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation with funding provided by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy and Fisheries and Oceans Canada for the collection of water samples and deployment of substrate samplers. The purpose of the lake monitoring is to sample priority lakes across the province for invasive mussels. All sampling is conducted following the [British Columbia Dreissenid Mussel Lake Monitoring Field Protocol](#) which outlines provincial standards for the collection and preservation of water samples. All samples are analyzed by a designated lab for the presence of invasive mussel larvae. In addition, artificial substrate samplers are deployed and checked regularly for adult invasive mussels.

For the 2020 season, sampling started in early June and to date 227 plankton samples have been collected, and all samples have tested negative for the presence of invasive mussels.

	July 31 2019	July 23 2020
Total Inspections	31,000	12,800
People Interacted with	57,000	23,500
High Risk Watercraft	810	74
Decontamination Orders Issued	52	6
Quarantine Periods Issued	52	6
Mussel fouled watercraft	14	10