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Contact: Tom Nunes  
Public Affairs Officer  
Eleventh Coast Guard District(S)  
(480) 759-5548  
tnunes1@cox.com

## Press Release

### **INVASIVE MUSSELS FOUND LAKES IN 3 WESTERN STATES**

PHOENIX, AZ -- Divers have found Quagga mussels in Lake Havasu (both in the California and Arizona sides), Lakes Meade, Powell, and Mohave. Officials from Arizona, California and Nevada fear this invasive mollusk could spread to other waterways.

“Quagga mussels could spread into Lake Pleasant, if they haven’t already. These prolific invaders pose a significant, multimillion-dollar threat to our lakes, rivers, streams and water systems,” says Larry Riley, fisheries chief for the Arizona Game and Fish Department. Bob Barrett, a spokesperson for the Central Arizona Project, emphasized that Quagga mussels do not pose a threat to the public health or to the water supply. “We’ll do whatever it takes to keep the water flowing. If they begin to build up, we’ll scrape them off.

During the last few weeks since their discovery at Lake Mead on January 6, 2007 Quagga mussels have been confirmed at Lakes Mohave and Havasu, including some adjacent to the structure that pumps water from Havasu to parts of southern California. The invasive mussels have also been found at a fish hatchery in Nevada that provides trout to Lake Mead and Lake Mohave. Fish deliveries from that hatchery have been suspended until new procedures are in place to avoid the spread of these mussels. Efforts are continuing to determine the extent of the spread so far.

The Dreissena species of mussels includes two closely related mussels, the Zebra and Quagga that are less than an inch long and extremely prolific. A single mollusk is capable of producing up to a million microscopic larvae a year.

Quagga mussels can be found in much deeper water than Zebra mussels; not good news for the deep reservoirs found in the West. These rapidly-spreading invaders can clog pipelines; damage machinery, such as boat engines; harm fishery resources and befoul bodies of water with waste. In time, they can permanently alter a lake’s ecosystem.

The U. S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, Arizona Game and Fish Department, National Park Service, California Department of Fish and Game, and the Nevada Division of Wildlife are urging boaters and other water sports enthusiasts to take positive action to avoid spreading this aquatic invasive species. Boaters (including personal watercraft, canoe and kayak users), divers and anglers should do the following:

- **Drain** the water from your boat motor, live well and bilge on land before leaving the lake.
- **Flush** the motor and bilges with hot, soapy water or a 5-percent solution of household bleach.
- **Inspect** your vessel and trailer, removing any visible mussels, but also feel for any rough or gritty spots on the hull. These may be young mussels that can be hard to see.
- **Wash** the hull, equipment, bilge and any other exposed surface with hot, soapy water or use a 5-percent solution of household bleach.
- **Clean** and wash your trailer, truck or any other equipment that comes in contact with lake water. Mussels can live in small pockets anywhere water collects.
- **Air-dry** the boat and other equipment for at least five days before launching in any other waterway.
- **Remove** any mud or vegetation from your boat or trailer – mussels can hide and hitchhike in this material.
- **Do not** reuse bait once it has been in the water.
- **Clean** sensitive gear (diving and fishing gear) with hot water (140 degrees F) or a soak in warm saltwater (1/2 cup of iodized salt per gallon of water) and air-dry before use elsewhere.

These small invasive mussels hail from Eastern Europe and have caused multimillion-dollar problems in the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Basin. The Colorado River is 1,000 miles farther west than any previously known colonies of these mollusk invaders.

For additional information on this invader species and others, visit the Arizona Game and Fish Department Web site at [azgfd.gov](http://azgfd.gov), [protectyourwaters.net](http://protectyourwaters.net), [100thMeridian.org](http://100thMeridian.org), and the U.S. Geological Survey [http://cars.er.usgs.gov/Nonindigenous\\_Species/Zebra\\_musselFAQs/Dreissena\\_FAQs/dreissena\\_faqs.html](http://cars.er.usgs.gov/Nonindigenous_Species/Zebra_musselFAQs/Dreissena_FAQs/dreissena_faqs.html). The California Department of Fish and Games has established a public toll-free number that will be available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., at 1-866-440-9530.

California authorities plan to establish inspection teams at agricultural checkpoints to help examine watercraft that may carry the mussels. DFG wardens and staff from the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) will check vehicles towing a watercraft at the Yermo check station, on Highway 15 east of Barstow in San Bernardino County; at Highway 40 at Needles, and at Vidal Junction, west of Parker, AZ. State agencies may seek legislation for additional inspection authority.