

Oregon's Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Program 2019 Legislative Report



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Table of Contents

Executive Summary 2

Background 2

 Program Activities 3

 Inspections and Compliance 4

 Decontaminations 4

 Outreach and Education 5

Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Permit 6

 Law Enforcement Activities 7

 Program Financial Statement 7

WRRDA Funds 8

Acknowledgements 8

Program Statutes and Rules 9

Executive Summary

In 2009, the Oregon Legislature passed House Bill 2220 that created an Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention Program and established a new user fee to boaters, (Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Permit) which funds the AIS Prevention Program. The objective of the AIS Prevention Program is to keep Oregon's waters free of new aquatic invasive species and limit the spread of existing invasive species. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and Oregon State Marine Board (OSMB) are partners in managing the AIS Prevention Program. Watercraft inspection staff and AIS monitoring activities are managed by ODFW. Administration of the AIS Prevention Permit and law enforcement coordination are managed by OSMB.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife operated six watercraft inspection stations located near or at Oregon's southern, northern and eastern borders. Ashland and Ontario watercraft inspection stations operated year-round. Watercraft inspection stations in Brookings, Klamath Falls, Lakeview and Umatilla opened in April and closed in September or October (Umatilla). The six Watercraft Inspection Teams (WIT) conducted 26,882 watercraft inspections and watercraft decontaminations, including 16 for quagga or zebra mussels (*Dreissena rostriformis bugensis*, *D. polymorpha*).

In the 2019 fiscal year, revenue generated from AIS Prevention Permit totaled \$890,195. The AIS Prevention Program provided (either partial or full) funding for eight full-time positions, and 12 seasonal or part-time positions. Additionally, these funds supported law enforcement activities such as checking boaters for a current AIS Prevention Permit and enforcing mandatory stops at watercraft inspection stations. State and county law enforcement officers issued 793 warnings; 159 citations for failure to possess an AIS Prevention Permit; 185 warnings and 54 citations for failure to stop at a watercraft inspection station.

We received additional funding from the US Army Corps of Engineers as part of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) in the amount of \$609,053.

Background

In response to the growing threat of an infestation from dreissenid mussels, the 2009 Oregon Legislature approved an AIS Prevention Program. A new user fee (AIS Prevention Permit) was established to owners of watercraft ≥ 10 feet in length. Monies generated from the AIS Prevention Permit are used to fund ODFW and OSMB permanent staff, ODFW watercraft inspectors and supplies, outreach and education materials, and other AIS related activities. Watercraft inspections began in spring of 2010 and in 2011, with the passage of House Bill 3399, roadside watercraft inspections became mandatory. For more detailed information about the AIS Prevention Program, please refer to www.odfw.com or www.oregon.gov/OSMB.

The goal of the AIS Prevention Program is to prevent new introductions of aquatic invasive species and limit the spread of existing ones. Quagga and zebra mussels and hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*) are among the top species of concern, due to their destructive nature and ease of translocation by watercraft. Quagga and zebra mussel populations have spread rapidly in the United States (Figure 1) due their adaptability, lack of natural predators and ease of physical transport. Species like Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) and New Zealand

mudsnails (*Potamopyrgus antipodarum*) already contaminate some Oregon waterbodies. For more information about these and other aquatic invasive species, please visit: [USGS Non-Indigenous Aquatic Species](#).

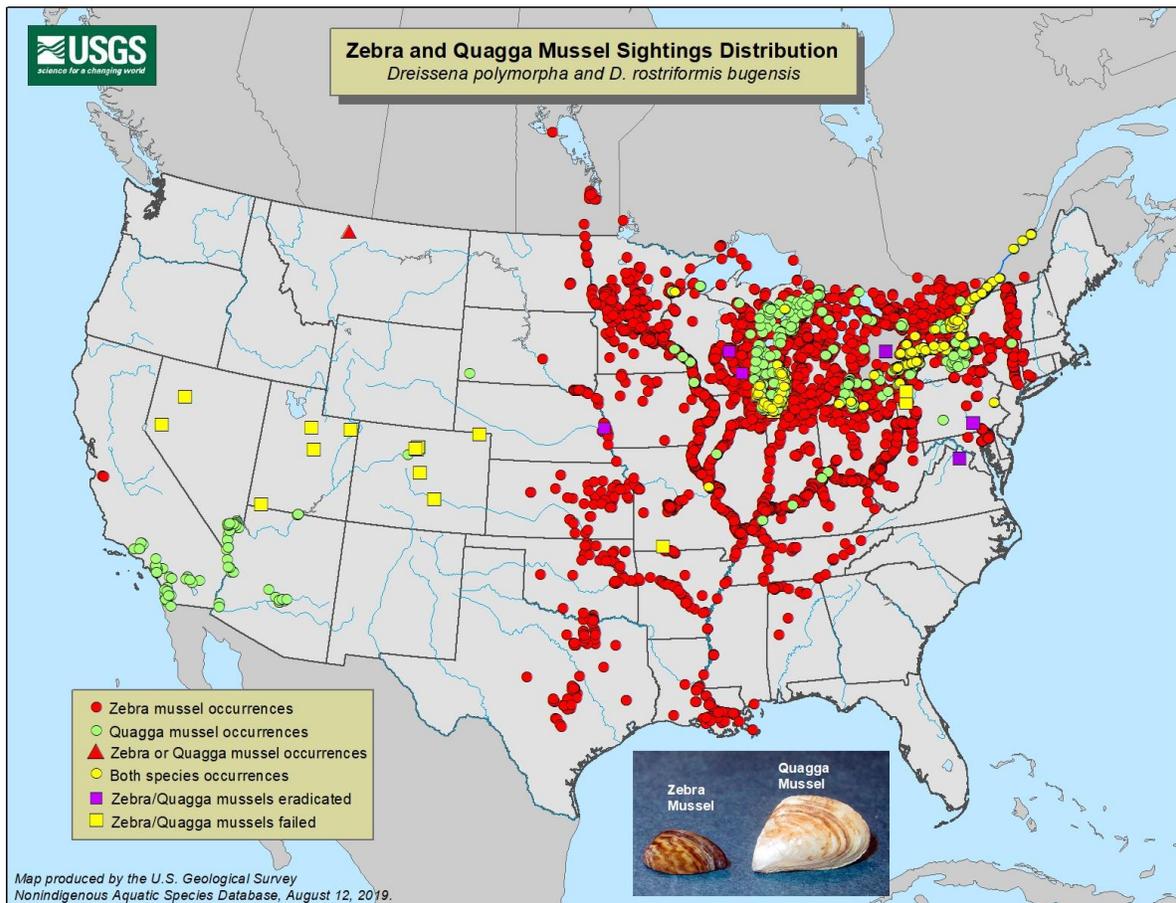


Figure 1. Current zebra and quagga mussel distribution in the United States, map provided by US Geological Survey Non-indigenous Species Database August 12, 2019.

Program Activities

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has the primary responsibility of operating watercraft inspection stations. All ODFW Technicians are trained inspection and decontamination protocols set by “[Uniform Minimum Protocols and Standards for Watercraft Inspection and Decontamination Programs for Dreissenid Mussels in the Western United States III](#)”; additionally, all technicians complete *Level 1 – Watercraft Inspection Training* and *Level II – Decontamination Training*. We divided 16 technicians between six stations (Table 1).

The AIS program coordinators (ODFW and OSMB) and the senior technician are stationed in Salem. These positions have a variety of duties, including:

- Training WIT on procedures and protocols (watercraft inspection and decontamination, data collection and entry and interpersonal communications)
- Providing AIS training opportunities to other agencies, schools, fishing groups, boating clubs, volunteers and concerned citizens

- Developing, purchasing and disseminating invasive species educational material (fact sheets, brochures, signs, risk assessments, etc.)
- Conducting watercraft inspections and decontaminations
- Providing assistance during eradication and control efforts
- Responding to public inquiries and sightings
- Surveying and collecting aquatic invasive species
- Staffing booths at public events
- Selling, processing and oversight of permit sales
- Providing updates to Oregon Legislature
- Contracting and managing interagency agreements
- Serving as members of:
 - [Oregon Invasive Species Council](#), [100th Meridian Columbia River Basin Team](#), [Western Regional Panel for Aquatic Invasive Species](#), [Ballast Water Task Force](#), [Building Consensus in the West](#), [American Boat and Yacht Council](#)

Inspections and Compliance

In 2019, ODFW completed 26,875 watercraft inspections (Table 1). Watercraft inspected included boats from nearly every US state and Canadian province, Mexico, San Salvador and Guatemala (Figure 2). Salem staff performed seven additional special inspections. In addition to watercraft inspections and decontaminations, our WIT track watercraft-inspection compliance. Inspectors record the number watercraft that bypass an inspection station, time of day, number of watercraft and watercraft type. We compared the number of bypassed watercraft to the number of inspections each day to get an estimate of watercraft-inspection compliance rate. Compliance rates varied between stations, the overall compliance rate was 79%, which was a 1% decrease from 2018.

Table 1. Summary of Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife’s Watercraft Inspection station information: station location, number of inspectors, dates of operation, total number of inspections, number of inspections from states with quagga or zebra mussel populations and watercraft inspection compliance rates, 2019.

Station	Number of inspectors	Inspection dates	Inspections (N)	Inspections from contaminated states (n)	Compliance rate (%)
Ashland	4	Year-round	10,455	5,510	87
Brookings	3	4/16 – 9/3/19	2,907	1,150	59
Klamath Falls	3	4/13 – 9/4/19	2,226	1,820	72
Lakeview	1	4/18 – 9/4/19	365	298	95
Ontario	4	Year-round	7,164	1,444	81
Umatilla	2	4/17 – 10/29/19	3,758	448	69

Decontaminations

During the inspection process if an inspector observes a vessel to be contaminated with any aquatic invasive species, a decontamination is immediately performed on-site. Four hundred of the vessels were contaminated with aquatic vegetation, marine or freshwater organisms, or other biofouling, we were able to perform a simple decontamination on the majority of these vessels; However 16 vessels were contaminated with quagga or zebra mussels, where we performed a

full decontamination (hand removal, followed by hot-water high-pressure) on-site (Figure 3). These vessels originated from Arizona, California, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Texas and Utah. If the vessel was remaining in Oregon, a follow-up inspection/decontamination was performed at the owner's residence before the vessel was launched.

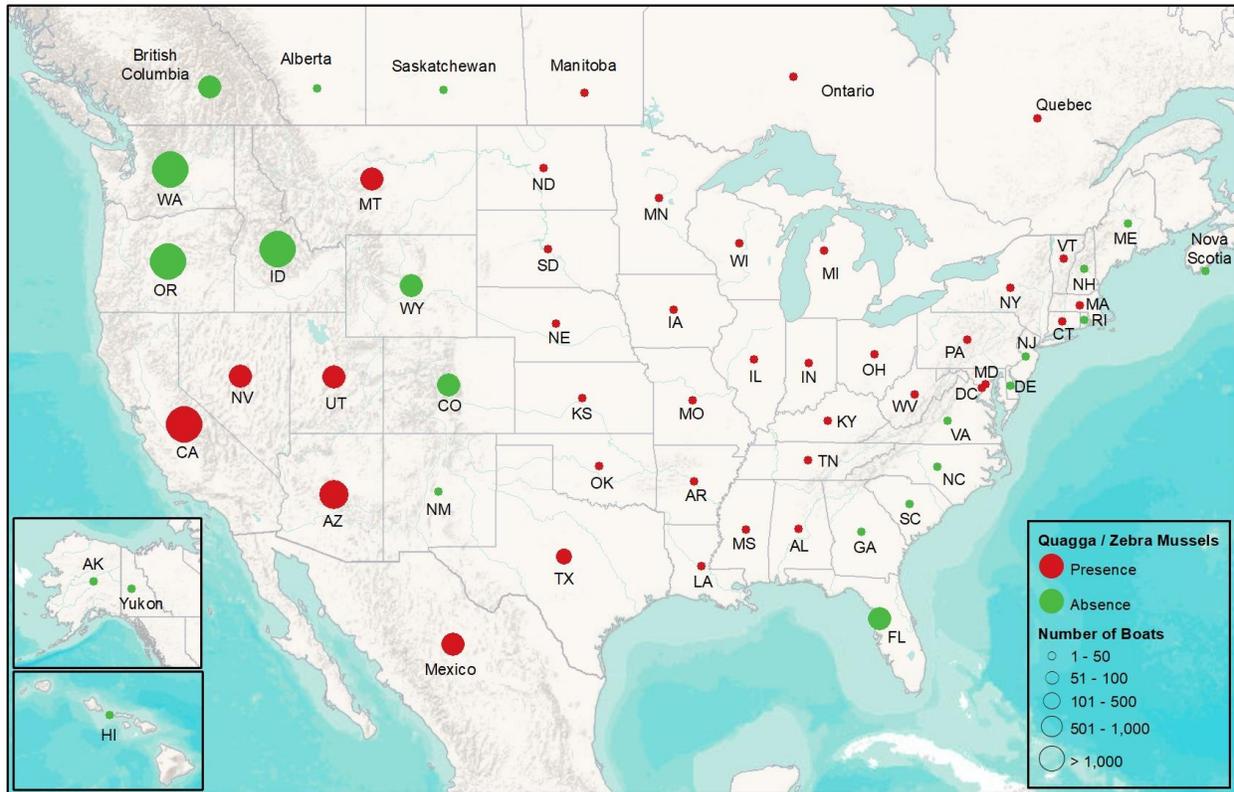


Figure 2. North American map of locations with quagga or zebra mussel presence, and the number of watercraft inspections from each location performed at Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Watercraft Inspection Stations in 2019. Basemap provided by ODFW, ESRI, NOAA, and USGS.

Outreach and Education

Education and outreach is a key component of the AIS Prevention Program. Outreach occurs at the inspection stations, special events and requested trainings. These contacts enable face-to-face opportunities to explain the program and its benefits and the impacts of invasive species in Oregon. Additionally, ODFW and OSMB provided printed materials at all inspection stations, AIS trainings, public meetings and special events.

Since 2009, the AIS Prevention Program has offered a special training course to the public and government agencies upon request. Level I – Watercraft Inspection Training is a half-day class based on the 100th Meridian Initiative curriculum. The Level I instructors teach basic AIS biology and behavior and explain Oregon laws and regulations associated with the AIS Prevention Program. All ODFW and OSMB Level I instructors have completed the 100th Meridian Initiative Level I and Level II – Watercraft Inspection trainings.

In 2019, the AIS Prevention Program provided information to a variety of Oregonians, including:

- Canyonville Fish Release and Education days
- Portland Boat Show

- Pacific Northwest Sportsman’s Show
- Oregon State Fair
- Keizer Water Festival
- Bureau of Land Management, other ODFW programs, US Forest Service
- Mt Hood Community College
- Marine Law Enforcement Training Academy
- Central Oregon Conservation Summit
- Bethany Charter, Kingsview Christian, NW Academy, Swegle and Kennedy elementary schools and First Free Methodist Church after school program
- Facebook Live “Invasive Species Week”



Figure 3. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife technician performing a watercraft decontamination for quagga mussels, boat was previously in Lake Powell at the Ashland inspection station, June 2019.

Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Permit

The Oregon State Marine Board has the lead role to implement the AIS Permit Program. This permit program is the funding mechanism that supports activities outlined in this annual report. Permit revenues are deposited into a dedicated AIS Prevention Fund. Operators of motorized watercraft and non-motorized watercraft are required to purchase and carry an AIS Prevention Permit when in Oregon waters. Oregon registered motorized watercraft owners (regardless of length) pay a \$5 fee every two years when they renew their registration. Current registration decals serve as proof of payment into the AIS Prevention Program. Operators of non-motorized watercraft ≥ 10 feet in length (residents and non-residents) are required to purchase a permit and carry it onboard while boating (\$5 per year). Non-motorized permits are transferable between watercraft within this category. Out-of-State motorized watercraft owners are required to

purchase a permit (\$20 annually). These permits purchased by non-resident boaters (motorized) are also transferable to use within their respective category. Additionally, businesses that rent watercraft (liveries) or river guides using non-motorized watercraft are offered permits at a discounted price through the OSMB; the price varies with the number of watercraft owned.

Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Permits are available for purchase at OSMB and ODFW offices, retailers selling hunting/fishing licenses and some boating retailers. Tyvek[®] and out-of-state permits are available for purchase at OSMB Headquarters, [online](#) and at [approved retailers](#) (\$5 for one year or \$10 for two years).

Law Enforcement Activities

One of the main avenues to interact with boaters when they are recreating is through the contacts made by law enforcement officers (County Marine Patrol Deputies and the Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife Troopers). When officers contact boaters on the water or at boat access sites, they are able to enforce boating laws and act in an education and outreach capacity. They commonly answer questions and explain the AIS program details on a daily basis. The OSMB provides yearly trainings to these officers and program updates as they occur so they have the most up-to-date information to share with boaters. During 2019 officers documented contacts with 29,030 boaters.

Law enforcement officers are encouraged to focus on education and issue warnings to boaters that lack an AIS Prevention Permit rather than issuing citations. In 2019, law enforcement officers issued 159 citations and 793 warnings. Reports from officers indicated that while permit compliance has risen each year, they suspect there are a number of boaters that have not purchased AIS permits. Law enforcement will continue focusing on permit compliance, during target weekends.

Program Financial Statement

The funds collected from the sale of permits are deposited directly into the AIS Prevention Program Fund established in the State Treasury, which is separate and distinct from the General Fund. These funds are used for activities directly related to the program that are outlined within this report. The OSMB administers this fund and distributes monies to ODFW, law enforcement agencies and other partners via intergovernmental agreements and contracts for services (Figure 4).

During the 2019 fiscal year, (July 2018 – June 2019) revenue collected from permit sales totaled \$890,195 which is the highest amount since the Program's inception in 2010. The sale of non-motorized permits was the largest increase we saw, from 60,758 (2018) to 69,348 (2019). Other permit sales: Oregon motorized 72,813 (2018 75,095); Out-of-State motorized 5,066 (2018 6,390); Oregon liveries and guides 3,820 (2018 4,330).

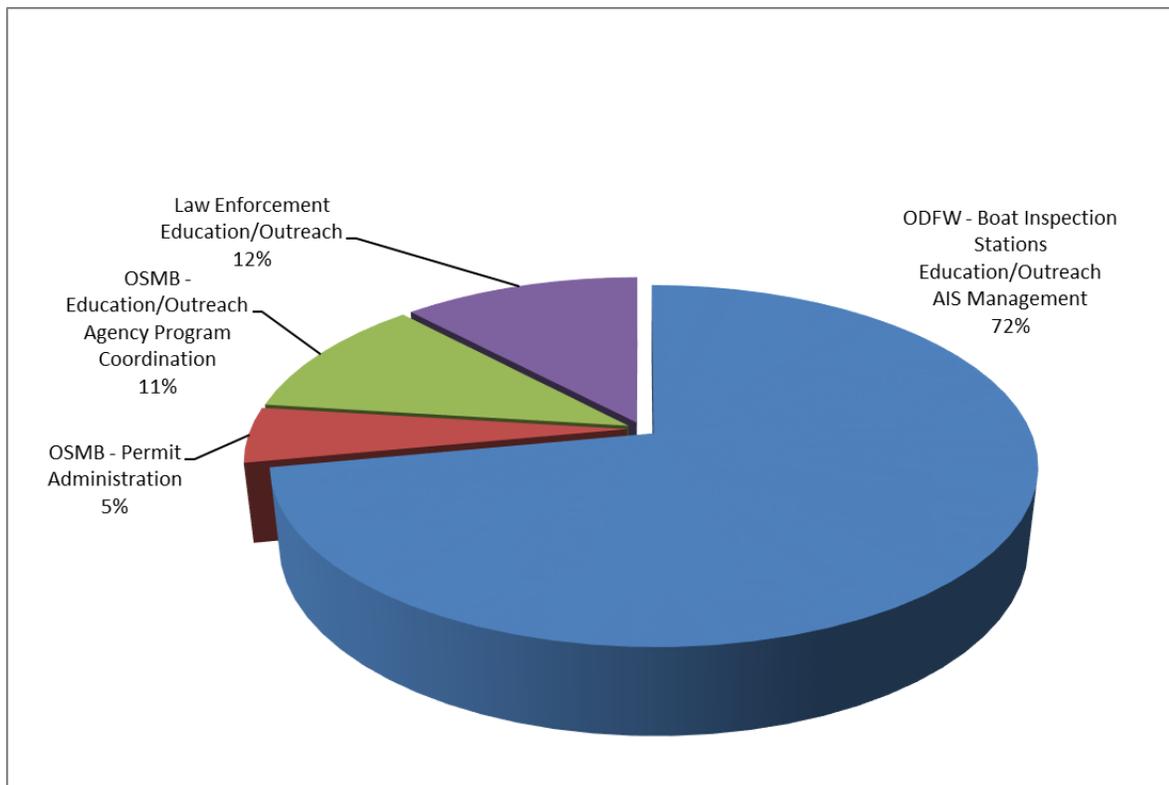


Figure 4. Allocation of Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Program funds for fiscal year 2019, Oregon State Marine Board (OSMB) and Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW).

WRRDA Funds

As part of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act, we received (\$609,053) federal funds from the US Army Corps of Engineers. These federal grant monies are designated for protection of the Columbia River Basin against aquatic invasive species and require matching funds; therefore, we used AIS Prevention Permit revenue as match. During 2018-2019, we used this grant money to fund additional watercraft inspectors and increase hours of operation. Grant monies are currently available for 2020, however with ever increasing operating costs we are forced to reduce staff at some inspection stations. Beyond 2020, funds are not secure and we may have to look for other grant monies or we may have to consider further staff reductions.

Acknowledgements

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife would like to thank many folks for a successful inspection season. First thank you to our AIS technicians: **Ashland staff:** Tim Bower, Alex Loubere, Rita Kivett and Chris Shelton; **Brookings staff:** Danny Cotton, Amy Olsen and Jessie Richter; **Klamath Falls staff:** Michael Gaglianese, Zach Leininger, Zachary McClelland and Jon Jackson; **Lakeview staff:** Leah Gamble **Ontario staff:** Morgan Johnson, Nathan Richey, Thomas Shenk and Rod Willet; **Umatilla staff:** Nakiska Johnston, James Mele and Rebecca Wolf. Thank you to ODFW district staff for providing guidance and assistance throughout the season. Thanks to ODOT (especially Dan Roberts, Kevin Pang and Lloyd Pratt and his amazing staff) for allowing us to have inspection stations at the Ashland, Brookings and Umatilla ports-

of-entry. Thanks to Oregon Travel Experience Dave Patton and Sean Price for granting us permission to set up inspection stations at their rest areas (Ontario and Klamath Falls).

The Oregon State Marine Board would like to thank the Oregon Invasive Species Council and its members for their continued support and guidance for implementing this AIS Prevention Program.

New Legislation

[House Bill 2076](#) requires boat operators to drain water from a boat after leaving Oregon waters and before transporting the boat within Oregon. Additionally, it authorizes law enforcement officers to require the person transporting the boat to return to a watercraft inspection station. Lastly, it allows for additional sources of funding for the Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Fund.

[Senate Bill 47](#) changed the existing non-motorized AIS Prevention permit to the “Waterway Access Permit” which still includes the AIS Prevention permit; however, it adds an additional fee to aid in the development of specific non-motorized boating access projects. In addition, it eliminated Tyvek® style permits, and now individuals must print their Waterway Access Permit or save it on a smartphone.

Laws and Statutes

OSMB and ODFW program statutes and rules related to the AIS Prevention Program include:

[OSMB ORS 830.560 thru 830.999](#)

[OSMB OARs 250-010-0650 thru 250-010-0660](#)

[ODFW OARs 635-56-0050, 635-056-0070, 635-056-0075 & 635-059-0000 thru 0050.](#)