

Citizens for Protecting Our Northern Waterways Inc. (CPONW)

<https://www.zebramusselprevention.com/>



Year in Review – 2024

Once again, our volunteer committee had a busy year. Here is a summary of our activities and other important information for 2024.

Status of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) in Northern Manitoba

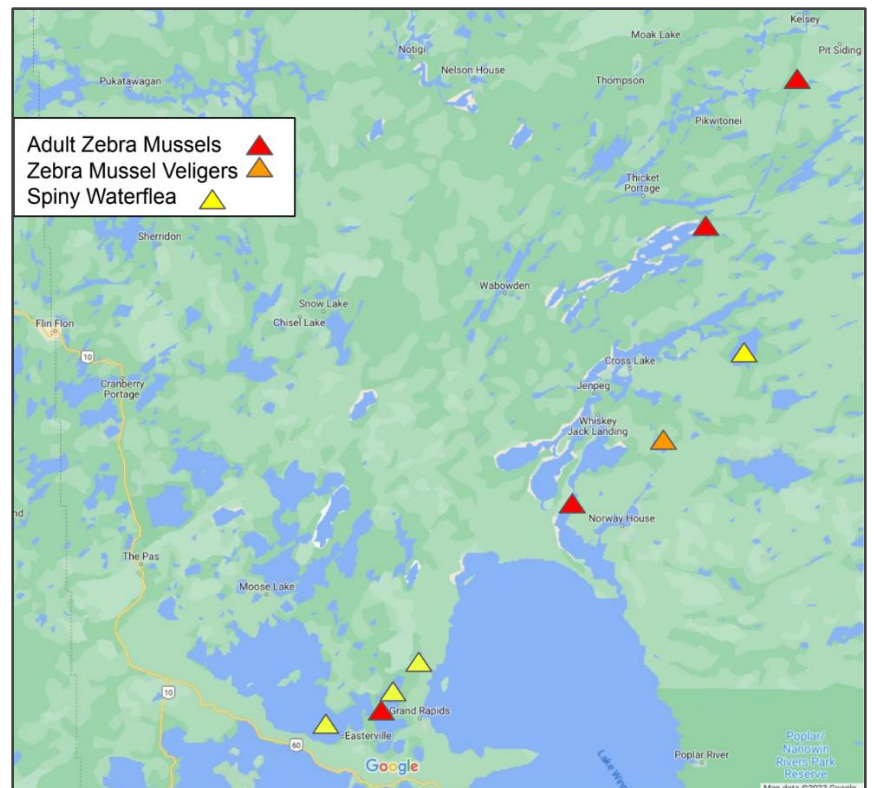
Each year we interact with the Provincial AIS Unit who coordinates and undertakes monitoring of numerous lakes and rivers across Manitoba to determine the presence/absence of zebra mussels and other AIS.

Results from the **2023** lake testing did not find any **new detections** north of the 53rd parallel which is encouraging! As a general statement, as of last year, most waters upstream of infected waters remain AIS free (see map).

This year (**2024**) government-led sampling was extensive with 33 waterbodies in the north sampled over the open water season.

CPONW Lake Monitoring

To augment the provincial AIS unit program, for the third year in a row, we undertook our own lake monitoring for presence/absence of adult zebra mussels.

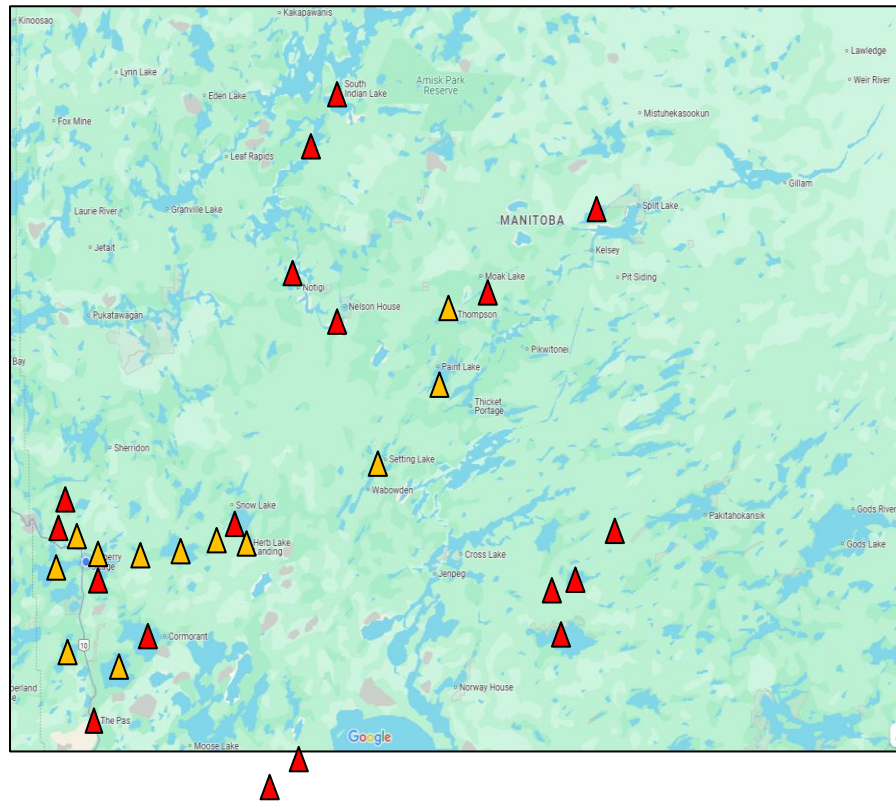


Northern waters invaded by AIS - 2023

Waterways monitored include the Burntwood River, Paint Lake, Setting Lake, Kississing Lake, Bakers Narrows, Neso Lake, 1st Cranberry, Rocky Lake, Clearwater Lake, Reed Lake, Wekusko Lake, Snow Lake, Tramping and Barbe Lake. This monitoring entails suspending what is called a “substrate sampler” off the end of a dock or offshore near a boat launch for the open water season.

These samplers are plates or small pipes made of PVC that provide zebra mussels with a hard surface to attach to. When retrieved these plates are inspected for the presence/absence of small zebra mussels.

The assessment of these samplers is now complete and so far, no zebra mussels have been detected!



Waterways sampled in 2024 – yellow are sites sampled by both the government and CPONW

When we receive the results of the government samples early in 2025 we will have a comprehensive assessment of the AIS in northern Manitoba. We will report on these results when they become available.

Awareness and Prevention

This year, we set up our information booth at several public events and trade shows including the Flin Flon, Snow Lake and The Pas Trade Shows, and the Cranberry Portage Markets (2). CPONW information was also handed out at the Thompson Trade Show.

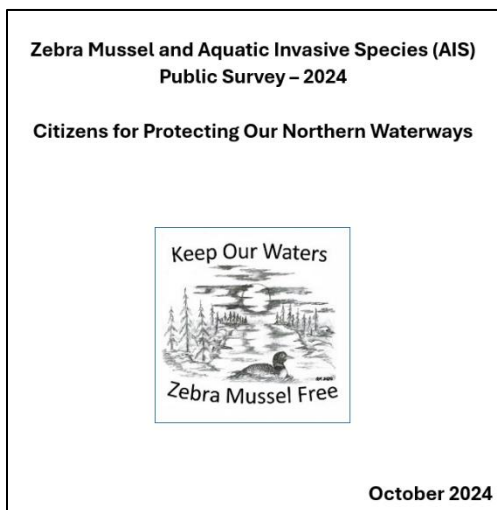
We also worked with organizers of the Jimmy Jackfish winter fishing derby and the Cranberry Portage Trout Challenge to provide participants important “Know Before You Go” information on what they must do prior to participating in these competitive fishing events. Click on this [link](#) to learn more.

To help us understand the public knowledge of zebra mussels and other AIS we prepared a survey that was made available for people to fill out at the various events we attended.



This survey consisted of 9 multiple choice questions designed to determine:

- the type of water-based activities people are engaged in
- their general knowledge of zebra mussels and other AIS
- knowledge of prevention methods including Clean-Drain-Dry (CDD)
- views about the most effective methods to further inform the public about zebra mussels and other AIS



In total 184 surveys were completed and when evaluated results revealed some important information. In summary:

- next to fisherman, most people go to the beach
 - 95% of people know about zebra mussels and the majority (79%) are very concerned
 - a surprising number of people do not know to pull the plug when transporting their watercraft
 - 33% did not know the extra steps required when transporting watercraft from an infected waterway to areas not yet infected
- the top 2 suggestions identified to better inform the public about zebra mussels and AIS were - more inspection stations and, more information provided when purchasing a fishing license.

The results of this survey will be used to improve our outreach efforts and messaging, and the report was shared with the government AIS Unit for their information and use. Click [here](#) to access the entire report.

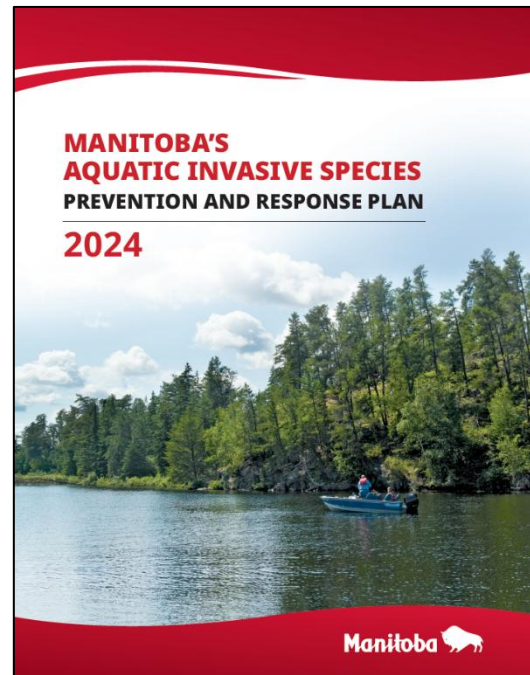
Government Liaison and Advocacy

In addition to the ongoing liaison with the AIS Unit on lake monitoring, we are also represented on the government “Aquatic Invasive Advisory Forum” (AISAF) which was established in 2023. This group, which is also represented by several other non-government associations, met in the spring to work on Manitoba’s Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention and Response Plan.

This plan, which was released in July provides a detailed overview of AIS in Manitoba, prevention methods, and how to respond when AIS invades a waterway.

CPONW provided considerable input with an emphasis on previous recommendations including:

- the need for increased public awareness and outreach
- expanded watercraft inspection and decontamination capacity, including contract services
- expanded hours of operation at inspection stations



To review or download a copy of this plan, lick on this [link](#).

Signs

Our sign projects this year included the placement of our second highway sign located south of Ponton on highway #6. In addition, for the first time, thanks to the support of the Northern Neighbors Foundation we arranged to have multiple digital “signs” displayed in a rotating fashion in Flin Flon at the corner of Main Street and 4th Avenue.



These signs provided messaging specific to the **Clean – Drain – Dry** process to prevent the spread of zebra mussels and other AIS.

With the generous financial support from the RM of Kelsey, boat launch signs with specific messaging on what Clean-Drain-Dry means. These signs were placed at 2 launch sites at Rocky Lake and launch sites in Cranberry Portage on Lake Athapap and First Cranberry Lake.

Financial Support

We are fortunate to continue securing financial support from the R.M. of Kelsey/LUD of Cranberry Portage and the Kelsey Watershed District. In addition, we were successful in securing a grant from the Northern Neighbors Foundation and received our final payment from the Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Fund for completing the activities associated with this grant.



CPONW AGM

On October 27th we held our AGM in Wanless where we reviewed the activities of the past year including our financial status, confirmed our Executive and discussed plans for next year.

The following is our executive and regional representatives for the forthcoming year:

Executive

President - **Chris Smith**; Vice President - **Craig Asselstine**; Secretary - **Marilyn Meyer**; Treasurer - **Richard Gibbons**; Ex-Officio - **Wayde Roberts**

Regional Representatives

Thompson - **Don Macdonald**; Rocky Lake - **Don Gamache**; Clearwater Lake - **Jim Lorden**; Opaskwayak Cree Nation – **Diane Ballantyne**; Chemawawin – **Vacant**; Snow Lake/Wekusko - **Tony Brew**; Sherridon/Kississing Lake – **Debi Hatch**.



The presentation and draft minutes of the AGM can be found [here](#).