



SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF GAME, FISH AND PARKS

523 EAST CAPITOL AVENUE | PIERRE, SD 57501

Dear Slipholder,

The summer boating season has arrived, and with it comes a big change for boaters who keep their watercraft in Lakes Francis Case and Sharpe. In late 2019 zebra mussels were discovered in both lakes, which led to their listing as “containment” waters by the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (SDGFP). As a result, all watercraft that are moored for 3 or more consecutive days in either Lake Francis Case or Lake Sharpe are required to undergo a decontamination before they can launch in a non-containment waterbody.

For example, if you want to take a day trip up to Lake Oahe and your boat has been moored in Lake Sharpe or Lake Francis Case for 3 or more days, you will need to decontaminate that boat before you launch it on Lake Oahe.

What does a decontamination require?

1. Boat exteriors will be rinsed with hot water at 140°F to kill and remove attached mussels.
2. Hot water flushes of 120°F for at least two minutes will be performed on any component that holds water, such as boat motors, ballast tanks, or livewells.

How do I get my boat decontaminated?

Trained staff from SDGFP will be operating watercraft inspection and decontamination stations at locations across the state, including locations near Lakes Francis Case, Sharpe, and Oahe. Once your watercraft has been decontaminated, you will be able to launch into any waterbody in the state.

If you have planned trips in advance, please set up a time for a decontamination by calling the SDGFP office near you.

- Lake Francis Case boaters, call the Chamberlain office at 605-734-4530.
- Lake Sharpe boaters, call the Ft. Pierre office at 605-223-7700.
- If you need an inspection and decontamination station on short notice, you can call either of the office numbers above or the Wild Info phone line at 605-223-7660.

Decontaminations are crucial to preventing the spread of mussels to new waterbodies.

Zebra mussels attach to hard surfaces, which allows them to cover any part of the boat’s exterior which was in infested water for multiple days. Larval zebra mussels called veligers are microscopic (smaller than a human hair), meaning hundreds of juveniles can be pumped into internal watercraft components. A recent study at Lewis and Clark marina found a 5-gallon bucket of water collected in July contained an average of 900 zebra mussel veligers! Veligers can live in damp environments for up to a month, making it very easy to transport them to new waters. Additionally, as veligers develop, they will attach to the exterior of boats but cannot be seen, and watercraft moored multiple days in a zebra mussel infested waterbody will likely have these settlers attached to their hull, making them easy to move between waters.





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Why is it important that you help stop the spread?

Zebra mussels:

- Clog and damage water infrastructure like hydropower, irrigation, and domestic supplies
- Damage boats, motors, and docks
- Increase toxic blue-green algae blooms
- Cover shorelines with razor sharp shells
- Foul the taste and smell of drinking water
- Remove large amounts of food for native mussels, bait fish, and young sport fish

Please help prevent the spread of zebra mussels by making sure your watercraft receives a decontamination before it is launched away from Lakes Francis Case and Sharpe!

Where can I find more information?

Get in the loop by sharing your email address! Send a note to Chris.Hull@state.sd.us to receive updates and reminders on the laws and regulations you need to follow on South Dakota waters. You can also visit sdleastwanted.sd.gov for more information on Aquatic Invasive Species.