

COLORADO DIVISION OF WILDLIFE

Boater's Guide to Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Inspections



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Why Inspect Boats?

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

—Benjamin Franklin

Preventing the introduction and spread of Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) is critical! ANS are a significant and rapidly growing threat to Colorado's water supply and to boating and fishing recreation. ANS are invasive animals, plants, and disease-causing pathogens that are "out of place" in Colorado's rivers, lakes, streams, and wetlands. They are introduced accidentally or intentionally outside of their native range. Because they are not native to Colorado habitats, they have no natural competitors and predators. Without these checks and balances, the invaders are able to reproduce rapidly and out-compete native species. Once introduced, most invasive species cannot be eradicated and cost millions of dollars to manage.

Because ANS are primarily spread by recreational boating and angling, Colorado has implemented a large-scale watercraft-inspection program to contain existing ANS and prevent the introduction of others.



PHOTO BY MICHIGAN SEA GRANT

When does my boat need to be inspected?

You should inspect your own boat between every use and make sure it is clean, drained, and dry. The State of Colorado **REQUIRES** your boat to be professionally inspected if:

- The boat has been in any water body that is positive or suspect for ANS.
- The boat has been in any water body outside of Colorado.
- The boat will be entering any water body where inspections are required.



PHOTO BY BRAD HENLEY

Where are watercraft inspection and decontamination stations located?

Please check the Colorado Division of Wildlife web site or call ahead for important details, including hours of operation, ramp closures, fees for access or services, and reservoir-specific boating policies:

<http://wildlife.state.co.us/Fishing/MandatoryBoatInspections.htm>

For detailed information about Watercraft Inspection and Decontamination Stations operated by Colorado State Parks, please visit:

www.parks.state.co.us



PHOTO BY TOOTH MERIDIAN



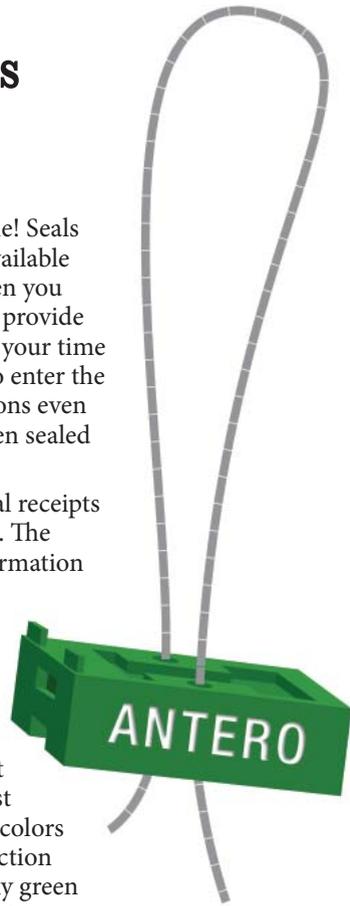
Go Green! Boat Inspection Seals Explained

Green Seals

Green seals can save you time! Seals are free to boaters and are available at the inspection station when you exit a lake or reservoir. Seals provide documentation that reduces your time waiting in inspection lines to enter the water. Some inspection stations even open an express lane for green sealed boats on busy mornings.

Boat inspection seals and seal receipts are proof of prior inspection. The seal and receipt provide information about the last water your boat was at and the type of inspection performed there. Boat seals temporarily attach the boat to the trailer so that the inspector knows the boat has not launched since its last inspection. Several different colors are being used by boat inspection stations in Colorado, but only green seals are used across jurisdictions.

If you have a green seal, you must still stop at the inspection station to have the seal and receipt verified. In order for the seal to be valid, it must have a fully filled out receipt with a matching serial number. You will quickly be granted access if you are returning to the same location or if your boat has been out of the water for more than 30 days. If you are not returning to the same location or you have not been out of the water for more than 30 days, the inspector may give your



ILLUSTRATIONS BY COLORADO STATE PARKS



boat a quick check to ensure it is clean and dry. If the boat is not clean and dry, you will get re-inspected. Keep your boat clean and dry and get on the water fast!

Boats are given green seals following an inspection or decontamination upon exiting a lake or reservoir with an inspection station, by request at the Denver or Grand Junction CDOW Offices or at one of the many marinas or marine dealers certified to do inspections. If one is not offered to you when you leave the lake or reservoir, be sure to ask for it!

What do yellow, blue, clear, and red seals mean?

Yellow, Blue, and Clear seals mean the same thing—they identify a boat that has exited a specific body of water and plans to return to that same body of water, such as overnight campers or permit holders. These other colored seals are **only** valid at the body of water in which the seal was applied. State Parks use yellow seals, the City of Aurora use blue seals, and the City of Westminster use clear seals to identify their returning boaters. If your boat has one of these seals and it doesn't return to the same water, it will be fully re-inspected at a different lake or reservoir.



PHOTO BY BRAD HENLEY

Red seals identify boats that are currently in a mandatory quarantine. Keeping a boat out of the water for a certain length of time based on temperature and humidity (usually more than 7 days) is an acceptable form of decontamination for ANS (zebra or quagga mussels can live out of the water for up to 30 days). However, the ANS must still be removed from the boat following the quarantine. Red seals are used by the City of Aurora, City of Boulder, and City of Westminster. These municipalities opt to use red seals to identify quarantined boats to protect their waters from ANS. If you go to a different water body with a red seal, your boat will be fully re-inspected and possibly decontaminated.

Tips for a Speedy Boat Inspection



The better prepared you and your boat are for an inspection, the faster it will go!

What can you do to help make the *entrance* inspection go faster at the ramp?

- Have a green seal receipt ready to present to the inspector.
- Remove any tarps and straps prior to entering the inspection site.
- At the inspection site, **turn off the vehicle**, set the parking brake, get out of the vehicle and assist the inspector with the inspection.
- Make sure the bilge plug is removed and available to be replaced at the end of the inspection.
- Open all compartment hatches including but not limited to: live/bait wells, bilge areas, anchor compartments, equipment compartments and any other compartments that hold items that have come into contact with the water body.
- Have the battery switch turned on so that the engine can be lowered or pumps can be activated.
- Have the anchor and ropes out of their compartment for inspection.
- If using live aquatic bait, please have the bait receipt out and available for the inspector.
- Be Clean, Drained, and Dry and get on the water fast!



What can a boater do to help make the *exit* inspection go faster at the ramp?

- At the inspection site, **turn off the vehicle**, set the parking brake, get out of the vehicle and assist the inspector with the inspection.
- Remove the bilge plug.
- Lower the motor.
- Open/drain all compartments including but not limited to: live/bait wells, bilge areas, anchor compartments, equipment compartments and any other compartments that hold items that have come into contact with the water body.
- Activate all pumps (bilge, live well, ballast tank, etc.) to insure drainage.
- Have the anchor and ropes out of their compartment for inspection.
- Place all unused bait in the trash.
- Ask for a green seal and receipt to make the next inspection go faster.
- Remember to dry all equipment at home prior to the next launch.
- Stay Clean, Drained, and Dry.



What Happens During a Boat Decontamination?

Boats are decontaminated using hot water greater than 140° Fahrenheit to kill mussels and other ANS. The exterior of the boat and trailer are sprayed with a high pressure rinse to remove the mussels or ANS from the boat. The interior compartments and the engine/motor flushed or rinsed with low pressure hot water.

When Will Decontamination Be Required?

Most inspections will not result in a decontamination being performed. However, these circumstances may result in a decontamination being performed:

- If zebra or quagga mussels are found attached to a watercraft
- If any other ANS is positively identified or suspected on a watercraft

- If suspect unidentifiable bumps are detected on a watercraft
- If the watercraft is from a positive water and has any water in it
- If the watercraft is unable to be fully drained
- If the watercraft has more than 5 gallons of standing water in it after draining
- If the watercraft has more than 2 ballast tanks with unverifiable water in them
- If the watercraft or trailer has plants attached that can't be removed by hand
- If the watercraft has live aquatic bait without a valid receipt.



PHOTO BY BRAD HENLEY



What's the Big Deal with Standing Water?

Zebra and quagga mussels start off life as microscopic, free-floating organisms that are too small to see with the naked eye. They can be transported to new locations in standing water in live wells, bilge areas, and other compartments on boats. Mussels aren't the only unseen invasive species. Others, such as the spiny water flea (pictured right), are also microscopic and transported in the water from the lake or reservoir. Small plant fragments that get sucked up in water onto the boat could start a new infestation in another lake if flushed out there. To prevent the movement of invasive species through standing water on boats, the lake or reservoir water must be fully drained out of the boat in between each use. If the standing water cannot be fully drained, the boat may need to be decontaminated.



PHOTO BY JEFF GUNDERSON, MINNESOTA SEA GRANT



PHOTO BY CHRIS EVANS, RIVER TO RIVER CWMA

What's the Big Deal about Bait?

Live baitfish can harbor diseases that can be spread when they are transported. For this reason, the transport of live baitfish is now prohibited. Live baitfish must be used in the same body of water from which they are taken, except for those fish captured within the Lower Arkansas River Basin (below Pueblo), which may be transported and used in other counties within that same area.



PHOTO BY JOHN WOODLING

Anglers using live baitfish purchased from an authorized Colorado dealer should keep their receipt with it to show the inspector. If the receipt is less than 7 days old, and the species listed on the receipt matches what is in the container, the angler will be permitted to use that bait east of the Continental Divide. If there is no receipt, the live baitfish will not be permitted for use and will be disposed of in the trash.

Use of live baitfish remains prohibited above 7,000 feet on the east slope and in all areas west of the Continental Divide, except Navajo Reservoir.

All crayfish caught west of the Continental Divide must now be immediately killed by removing the head from the thorax and taken into possession, or immediately returned to the water from which they were taken. The same restriction applies to Sanchez Reservoir on the East Slope due to the invasive rusty crayfish found there in 2010.



PHOTO BY PHIL MYERS, MUSEUM OF ECOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *Isn't trying to stop the spread of zebra mussels and other ANS a lost cause, similar to stopping the spread of the pine beetle?*

A: No. Unlike the native pine beetle, most ANS cannot spread over land on their own. Most are spread overland by human activities, such as boating and angling. If boaters and anglers always Clean, Drain, and Dry their boats and equipment, they will prevent the spread of ANS to new locations. States with aggressive watercraft inspection and education programs have significantly slowed or even stopped the spread of invasive species.



PHOTO BY MICHIGAN SEA GRANT

Q: *Why are watercraft inspected at some locations but not others?*

A: There will never be enough money to have inspections everywhere. Inspectors and inspection stations are placed at locations based on risk of introduction from recreational activities. Ultimately, preventing the spread of ANS relies on boaters and anglers acting responsibly. Boaters must inspect their own vessels when inspections are not available. Anglers should clean gear between each use.

Q: *Is Colorado over-reacting to the discovery of a few zebra and quagga mussels? Shouldn't we wait and see what happens over the next few years?*

A: No. States that have waited to act found that zebra and quagga mussels spread rapidly. These destructive and costly invaders out-compete native species for food and habitat, foul boats and engines, and damage and clog water infrastructure. Every precaution must be taken to ensure these invaders remain confined to their current locations.

Q: *Can we get rid of zebra and quagga mussels in Colorado lakes and reservoirs?*

A: Like most ANS, zebra and quagga mussels are nearly impossible to eradicate. No large waters have ever been able to get rid of them, even with a draw down. Preventing the spread of zebra and quagga mussels and other ANS through education and boat inspections is the best tool we have to keep boating and fishing waters open and beautiful for now and the future.



PHOTO BY DAVID K. BRITTON, PH.D., U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE



Protect our Rivers and Streams too!



Five Options to Keep Your Angling Gear Free of ANS

Keep all angling gear free of mud and organic debris in between each and every use. Unknowingly moving a species from even one stretch of the river to another can start a domino effect of invasion, causing irreversible ecological damage. It is especially important to keep waders clean.

Anglers should scrub the bottom of boots or waders with a wire brush and remove all mud, plants, and organic materials in between each and every use. Anglers should then perform **ONE** of the following disinfection recommendations before going into the next body of water:

OPTION 1

Submerge waders and gear in a large tub filled with 50% Formula 409 and water for at least 10 minutes, scrubbing debris and visually inspecting waders and gear for snails before rinsing. Rinse water must be from a New Zealand mudsnail-free source (to avoid re-infection) and the chemical bath must be properly disposed of away from the water body.

OPTION 2

Submerge waders and gear in a large tub filled with 1:15 of Sparquat 256 institutional cleaner (3.1% concentration) and water for at least 10 minutes, scrubbing debris from the gear, and visually inspecting the gear for snails before rinsing. Rinse water must be from a New Zealand mudsnail free source (to avoid re-infection), and the chemical bath must be properly disposed of away from the water body.



OPTION 3

Spray or soak waders and gear with water greater than 140° Fahrenheit for at least 10 minutes.

OPTION 4

Dry your waders and equipment completely for a minimum of 10 days in between each use (remember that mudsnails can survive several days out of water).

OPTION 5

Place waders and boots in a freezer overnight between use.

You Can Make a Difference!

You can help stop the spread of Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) in Colorado and the West! Before entering and when leaving any waters always:



**STOP AQUATIC
HITCHHIKERS!™**

Clean: Remove all plants, animals, and mud. Thoroughly wash everything: boats, trailers, vehicle hitches, and motors. Aquatic plant fragments and animals can hide in mud and survive many days out of water. Be sure to clean all fishing equipment including waders and boots.

Drain: Completely drain every space or item that could hold water, including live wells, bait containers, ballast and bilge tanks, and engine cooling systems.

Dry: Allow sufficient time for boats and equipment to dry completely before launching in other waters.

Dispose: Properly dispose unused live bait into trash containers, not into the water. Properly dispose of aquarium or classroom animals or plants, do not place them in any body of water or natural setting.

Report: If you find anything that you think is an invasive species on your boat or in a water body, report it to the DOW by calling (303) 291-7295 or emailing ReportANS@state.co.us.

For more information on ANS, please visit:

- <http://www.100thmeridian.org>
- <http://www.protectyourwaters.net>
- <http://www.habitattitude.net>

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Keeping Colorado Wild

The Colorado Division of Wildlife is the state agency responsible for protecting and managing wildlife and its habitat, as well as providing wildlife-related recreation. The Division is funded by hunting and fishing license fees, federal grants, and Colorado Lottery proceeds through Great Outdoors Colorado.

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