

ZEBRA MUSSELS IN LOCAL LAKES

SURVEY OF ZEBRA MUSSEL (*DREISSENA POLYMORPHA*) POPULATIONS IN FOURTEEN LAKES OF KOSCIUSKO COUNTY, INDIANA

Zebra mussels are an aquatic invasive species. They filter-feed on green algae but do not consume cyanobacteria (blue-green algae), giving a competitive advantage to the bad kinds of algae.

This can lead to a clearer but less healthy lake!

In 2019, the Lilly Center surveyed the zebra mussel populations of the 14 major lakes using samplers set up on a number of residential piers. (See the images to the right.)

The full study can be found on our website: lakes.grace.edu



All samplers, excluding those that remained installed for the duration of the study, were swapped out with clean samplers once each month from May-August. Samplers were then brought back to the Lilly Center for counting and cleaning.



Zebra mussel spawning is triggered by warm water, a fact evidenced by high colonization numbers in July: 74,006 zebra mussels counted across six samplers, while June counts totaled only 8 mussels.



The amount of summer spawning and colonization varies between our lakes and across them from area to area. Right now, zebra mussels seem to be a lot more prevalent in some lakes than others.



Careful recreation is still super important! As of 2019, two of our major lakes – and maybe more of our smaller ones – are still uninfested!



Here are some ways to prevent spreading zebra mussels:

- Rinse all lake equipment after each use
- Avoid taking your boat to a new lake unless it is completely clean and dry

