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For immediate Release

Vermont officials conduct zebra mussels survey on Lake Memphremagog

August 31st, 2018-In response to the discovery of zebra mussels in Magog Bay, Quebec in July, 2018, the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (VTDEC) surveyed the U.S. portion of Lake Memphremagog for zebra mussel adults and veligers, the microscopic zebra mussel juveniles.

Zebra mussels are an invasive species. They are a small freshwater mollusk that attaches to firm surfaces and can clog pipes and other underwater infrastructure. They are also filter-feeders, consuming microscopic aquatic life that is the base of the food web for our lakes. Their feeding habits can impact the native species that also consume those food sources.

On Monday, August 13, VTDEC snorkelers surveyed areas with suitable habitat in multiple locations in the American waters of the lake looking for adult zebra mussels. Rocky areas in 1 to 8 feet of water were examined closely. No adult zebra mussels were documented at any of the locations surveyed using this method.

VTDEC also sampled for zebra mussel veligers at five locations on the U.S. side of the lake – three locations close to the border with Canada and two locations adjacent to Newport. Samples were taken using multiple diagonal tows of a Wisconsin zooplankton net at each location, and then combined into one collection bottle per location and preserved with ethanol.

The veliger samples were analyzed under a microscope using a cross-polarized lens (using methodology from Johnson 1995) by VTDEC staff on Friday, August 17th. No zebra mussel veligers were detected.

Although zebra mussels have not been confirmed in U.S. waters of Lake Memphremagog, the lake will still be classified as positive for zebra mussels by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources.

“It is extremely important that all users of the lake clean, drain, and dry their watercraft, trailers, and gear when leaving Lake Memphremagog,” Says Kendall Lambert, Administrative Director of the Memphremagog Watershed Association, “We do not want to spread zebra mussels to our other waterbodies.”

The Newport City dock boat washing and greeter station will be open through the end of the season for the public to clean, drain, and dry watercraft and trailers.

Please contact Kendall Lambert at klambert@mwavt.org or Josh Mulhollem at Josh.Mulhollem@vermont.gov with questions or visit <http://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/lakesponds/aquatic-invasives/gallery> for more information on specific invasive species.

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Johnson, L.E. 1995. Enhanced early detection and enumeration of zebra mussel (*Dreissena* spp.) veligers using cross-polarized light microscopy. *Hydrobiologia* 312 : 139-146.