

Clean Your Boat, Protect Your Lake, Win Free Gear

Every day, boaters and anglers unknowingly introduce harmful invasive species into their favorite lakes. These plants and animals hitch a ride in boat hulls, propellers, muddy boots, and other equipment.

Because invasive species such as zebra mussels and round gobies aren't native to our waters, they are safe from the predators and diseases of their native habitat. As a result, they reproduce exponentially and outcompete native fish and wildlife. They can also ruin boat engines, affect human health, and reduce property values. At least 185 aquatic invasive species are already established in the Great Lakes, with a new one discovered every seven months.

Each year, the United States spends \$9 billion trying to control the spread of aquatic invasive species. If detected early enough, it may be possible to eradicate them. But in most instances, it is too late. That's why it is important for boaters and anglers to inspect and clean their boats every time they leave the water. This keeps invasive species from spreading to new waters.

To learn how to properly clean your gear, visit www.cleanboats.org. There, you can enter to win the ultimate \$2,500 boater's shopping spree and other great prizes.