

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Check your aquariums – dangerous invasive mussels discovered in aquarium plants in BC**

(March 8, 2021 – Williams Lake, BC) Aquarium owners across BC are being advised to immediately check the plants in their aquariums for invasive species after deadly Zebra mussels were found in moss balls in Terrace and Washington State. The Invasive Species Council of BC (ISCBC) is reminding British Columbians that everyone needs to be vigilant to prevent invasive species from causing damage to BC waters and lands.

“It is alarming to know that Zebra mussels are hiding in aquarium plants, because if they take hold in BC waterways, they threaten native species and fisheries and could cause damage to hydropower, agricultural irrigation, municipal water supplies and recreational boating of more than \$43 million a year,” says Gail Wallin, Executive Director of ISCBC. “Every aquarium owner should check their plants today to be sure they don’t have any invasive species in their aquariums.”

Invasive mussels were first discovered in moss balls sold at a major pet chain in Washington state, and then late last week were also found in a home aquarium in Terrace. If you find moss balls in your aquarium, the BC Conservation Officer Service advises to either:

- Place the moss ball into a sealable plastic bag and freeze for at least 24 hours, or
- Place the moss ball in boiling water for at least one full minute.

After this, place the moss ball and any of its packaging in a sealed plastic bag and dispose in the trash. Do not flush moss balls down the toilet or dispose of them in the compost. Never dispose of aquarium pets, plants or water into any residential water system or BC waterway.

To date, there has been no reported introduction of live Zebra mussels into BC lakes or waterways, but other invasive species have caused serious damage. Some of the most serious invasive species were originally sold as pets or plants for water gardens and aquariums. For example, goldfish released by pet owners have caused serious damage in BC lakes. For more information on preventing the spread of invasive species like these, visit [bcinvasives.ca/play-your-part/dont-let-it-loose/](https://bcinvasives.ca/play-your-part/dont-let-it-loose/).

“We all have a role to play in understanding the effects of invasive species in our province, and we all need to do our part to prevent invasive species from spreading,” adds Wallin. “In both Washington and Terrace, the invasive mussels were found by informed individuals, so it shows how important it is to learn more about preventing invasive species. Please talk to your friends and local aquarium stores to help find other high-risk moss balls and report them immediately.”

For more information, visit [bcinvasives.ca](https://bcinvasives.ca).

## **About the Invasive Species Council of BC**

The [Invasive Species Council of BC](#) (ISCBC) is dedicated to keeping our landscapes and communities free of invasive species. It provides a coordinated, province-wide approach to reducing the impact of invasive species in B.C. ISCBC unites efforts across the province and collaborates with a variety of partners to develop unique solutions for the wide variety of ecosystems across B.C. For more information visit [bcinvasives.ca](http://bcinvasives.ca).

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Media contact:

Gail Wallin  
[gwallin@bcinvasives.ca](mailto:gwallin@bcinvasives.ca)  
250-305-9161