WAKE BOATS AND BALLAST SYSTEMS

AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES PREVENTION PRACTICES

The recent gain in popularity of ballast systems and wake boats has led to increased concerns about their potential to spread aquatic invasive species (AIS) amongst waterbodies. Wake boats have the capacity to hold large volumes of water within their ballast systems, and some wake boats are also designed in a way which can make complete draining difficult. This can result in a potential risk of transporting AIS between waterbodies via any residual water that may be present.

Following the prevention practices outlined below can help in minimizing the risk of potential AIS transport via residual water:

- INSPECT your boat, trailer, and equipment.
- REMOVE any attached aquatic plants or animals (before launching, after loading and before transporting on a public highway).
- DRAIN water from boat, live wells, bilges, ballast systems and pumps. If possible, position the boat on an inclined slope to maximize water drainage from ballast systems.
- If possible, manually remove the ballast bags from the boat and drain water (only applicable for soft ballast bags that boaters can access).
- Rinse exterior components with high pressure, hot water (140° F). Rinse interior components with low pressure, hot water (120° F).
- Perform a low-flow flush of hot water (120° F) into and out of the ballast system for 3-5 minutes or according to owner's manual.
- Access the Water Sports Industry Association's Boat Decontamination Database to learn about your boat model so decontamination can be performed effectively and safely. View the Ballast Tank Decontamination video produced by Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission for an example.
- Allow sufficient time for boats and equipment to dry before moving to a new waterbody to minimize the risk of transporting AIS.
- Avoid chemical decontamination due to potential concerns with equipment damage and the potential for large amounts of chemical decontaminants to be discharged into the environment.