



# Whatcom Boat Inspections: 2023 Program Update

Lake Whatcom Policy Group  
December 6, 2023

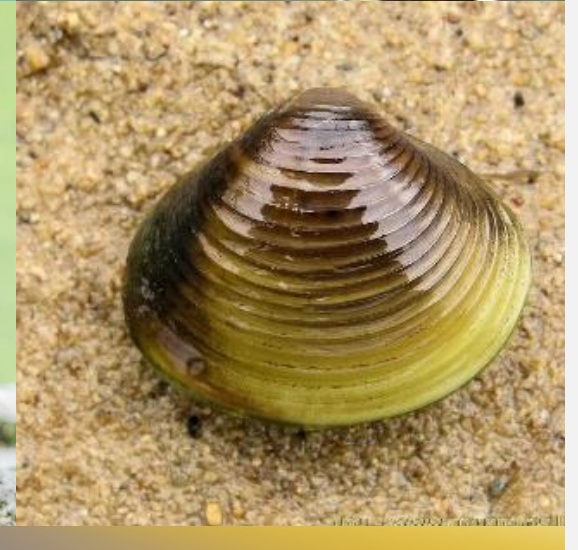


# Outline

- Introduction to AIS
- Program Procedures
- Annual Comparisons
- High-risk Vessels and Decontaminations
- Off-Site Inspections, Wire Seals, Events
- Early Detection and Monitoring
- Regional AIS News- Twin Falls, ID

# Aquatic Invasive Species..

- Are non-native plants, animals, and pathogens
- Live primarily in water and are able to thrive in new environments
- Are capable of causing
  - Economic loss
  - Environmental damage, and
  - Harm to human health.





# Zebra and Quagga Mussels



# Inspector Tasks

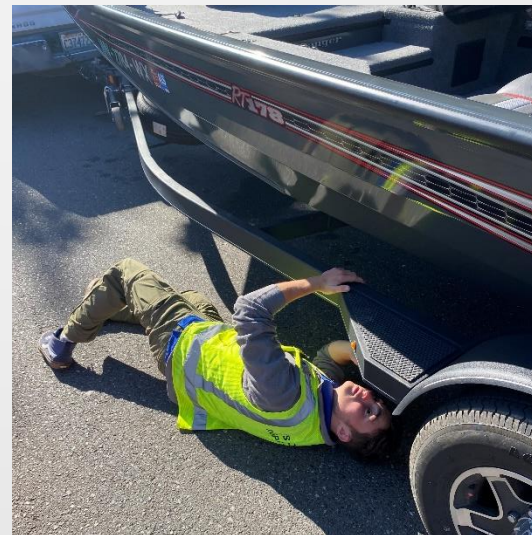
- Being Safe
- Protecting our drinking water!
- Providing excellent customer service (to potentially unwilling customers)

2023 program improvements included 4 days x 10-hour shifts, uniform adjustments for hot days (convertible pants)



# Watercraft inspections

- Mandatory
- Vessel history and risk assessment
- Visual and physical inspection
- Clean, drain, dry
- Decontamination
- Educational opportunity



# Risk Assessment

## Risk Engine

### Score

40 - HIGH RISK

### Details

Used vessel acquired within the last 3 months (+5)

Ballast Tank / Bladder (+3)

Out of State Registration - MN (+2)

Out of State Trailer Plate - MN (+2)

Last Waterbody Horseshoe Lake in Crow Wing County, Minnesota has or is suspected to have Zebra/quagga mussels (+20)

History includes waterbody that has or is suspected to have Zebra/quagga mussels (+5)

Bilge, bait/live wells, compartments, holds, cockpit - NOT Clean (+3)



# AIS Permits and Associated Fees

Vessel Type	Permit Options/Fees
Registered Over 16 feet <b>or</b> over 10 HP	Annual Permit (\$60)- <b>\$50</b> 3-Day Pass (\$20) 1-Day Pass (\$10)
Non-Registered, Motorized Under 16 feet <b>and</b> under 10 HP	Annual Permit (\$30)- <b>\$20</b> 3-Day Pass (\$20) 1-Day Pass (\$10)
Non-Motorized, Hand-Carried	Annual Permit (\$10)- <b>\$0</b>





# Enforcement

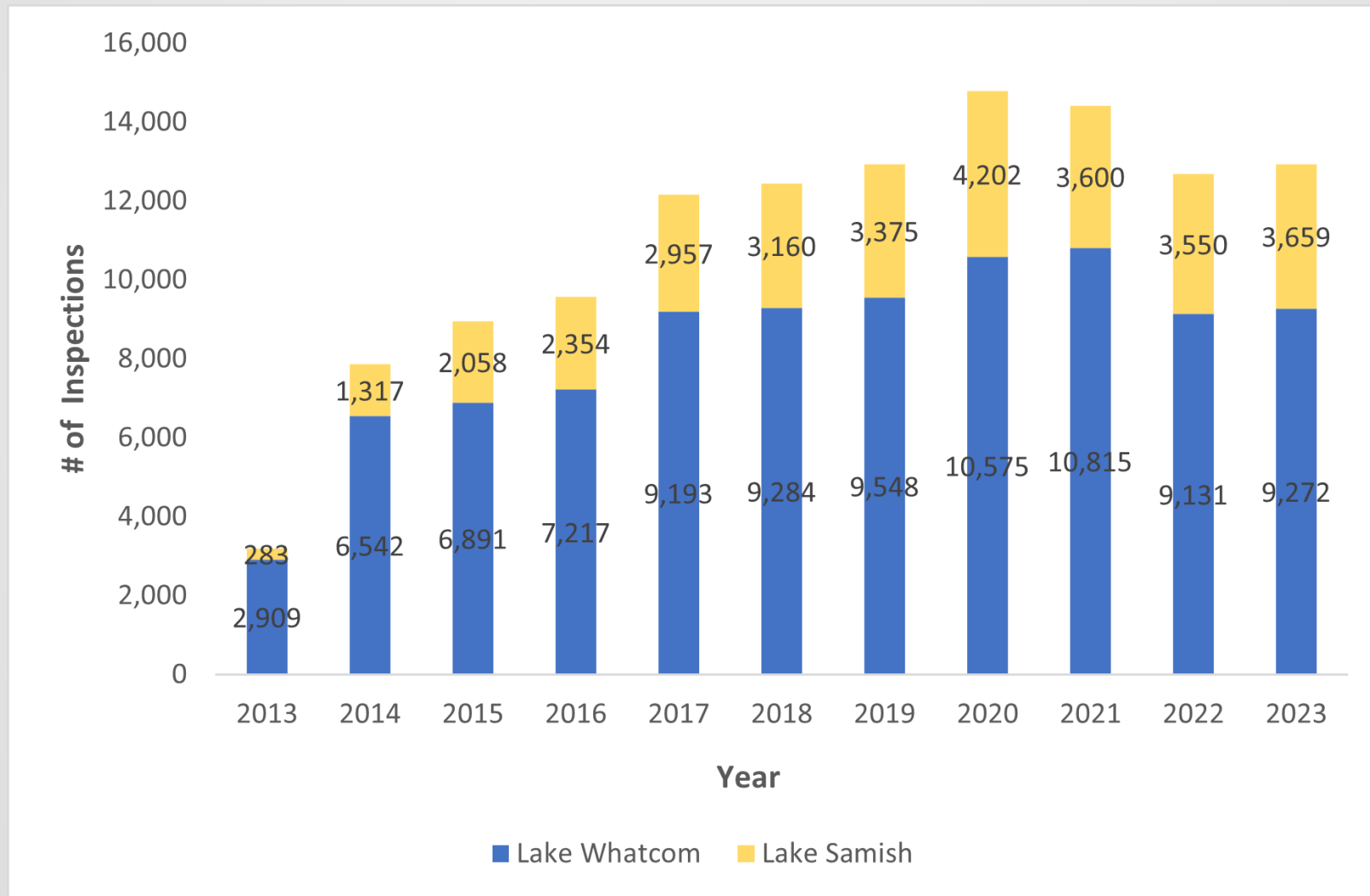
- Whatcom County Sheriff's Office



# AIS Enforcement Patrol 2023 contacts

- 736 written inspections issued
- 37 AIS violations located, and boaters sent to inspection station
  - 5 Motorized Boats
  - 32 Kayaks
- No duplicate AIS violators

# Annual Total Watercraft Inspections 2013-2023



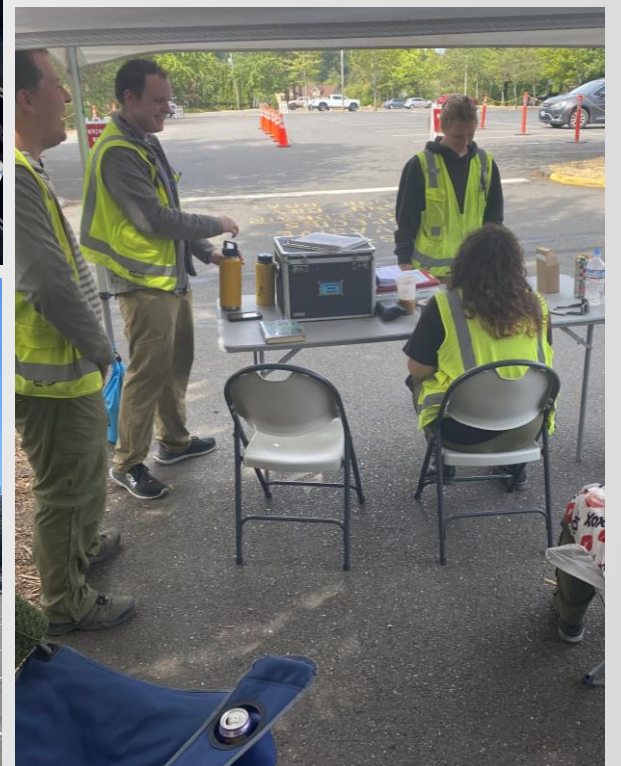


# Whatcom Boat Inspection Locations



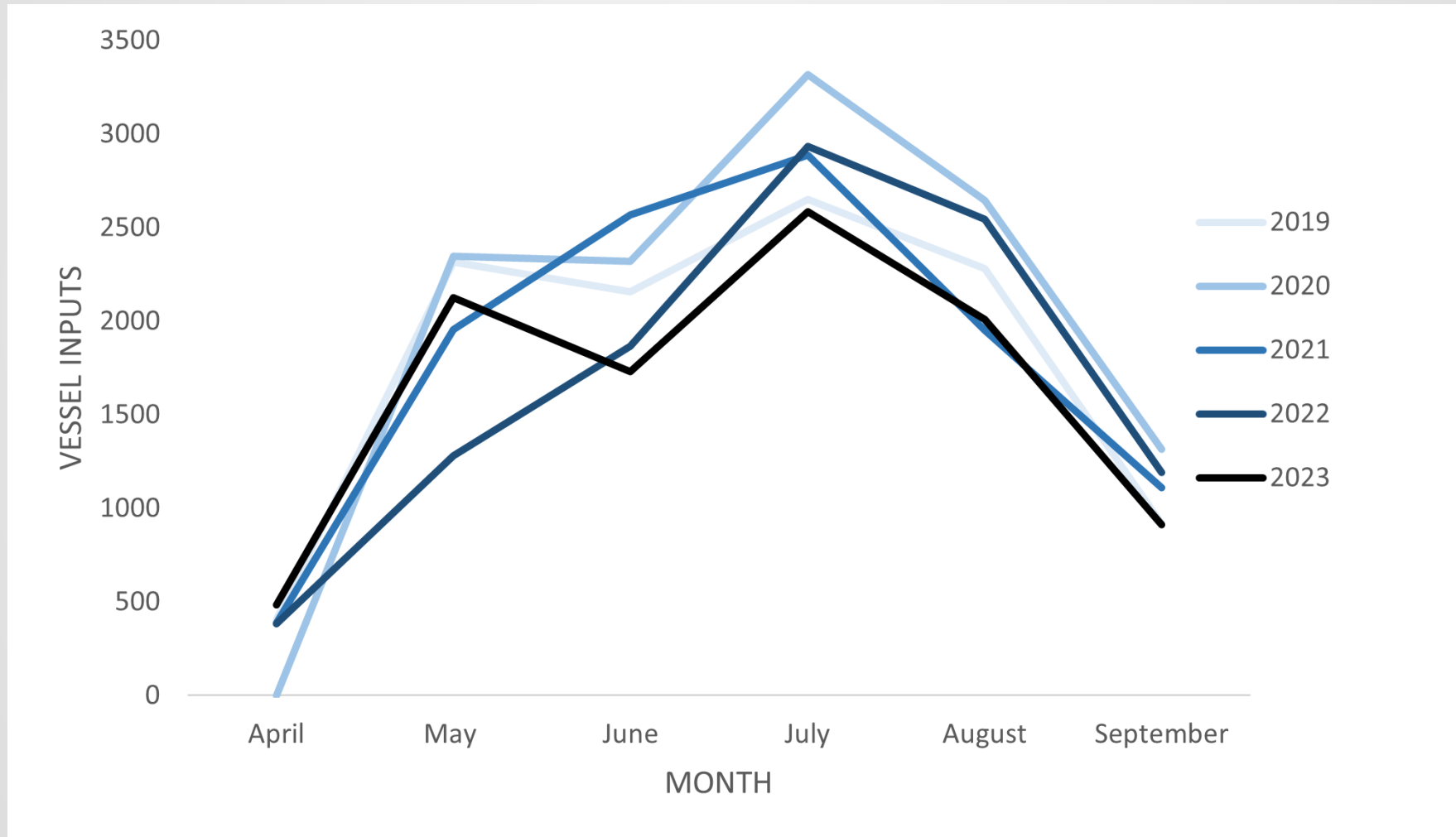
# Bloedel Donovan

- Opened  
4/22/2023
- 7 days a week
- Dawn to dusk
- 7788 inspections
- Busiest day:  
5/13/2023
  - 167 boats





# Bloedel Donovan by Month, 2019-2023



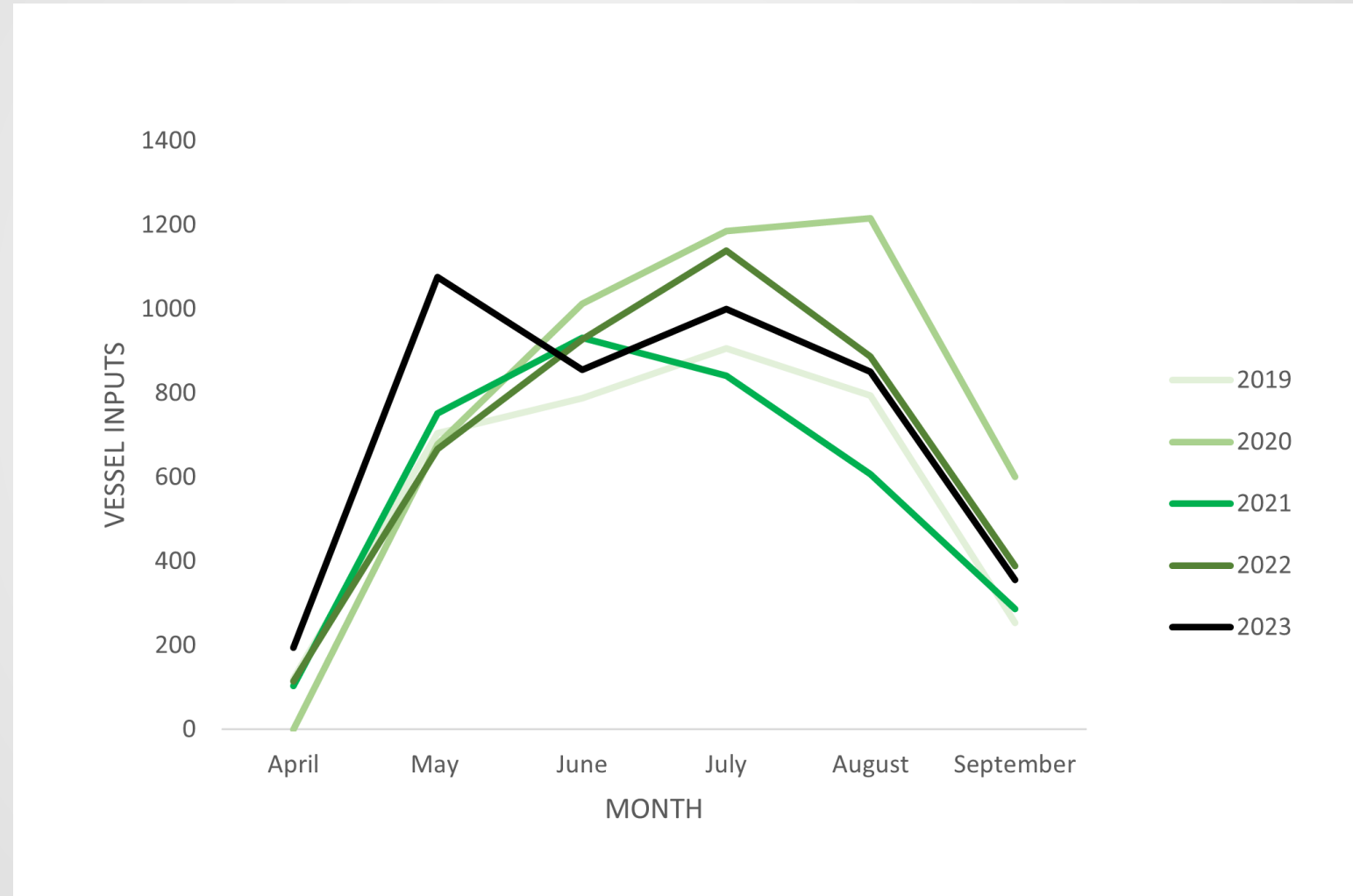


# Samish WDFW Launch

- Opened 4/22/2023
- 7 days a week
- Dawn to dusk
- 3595 inspections
- Busiest day: 5/13/2023
  - 83 boats



# Samish WDFW launch by Month, 2019-2023



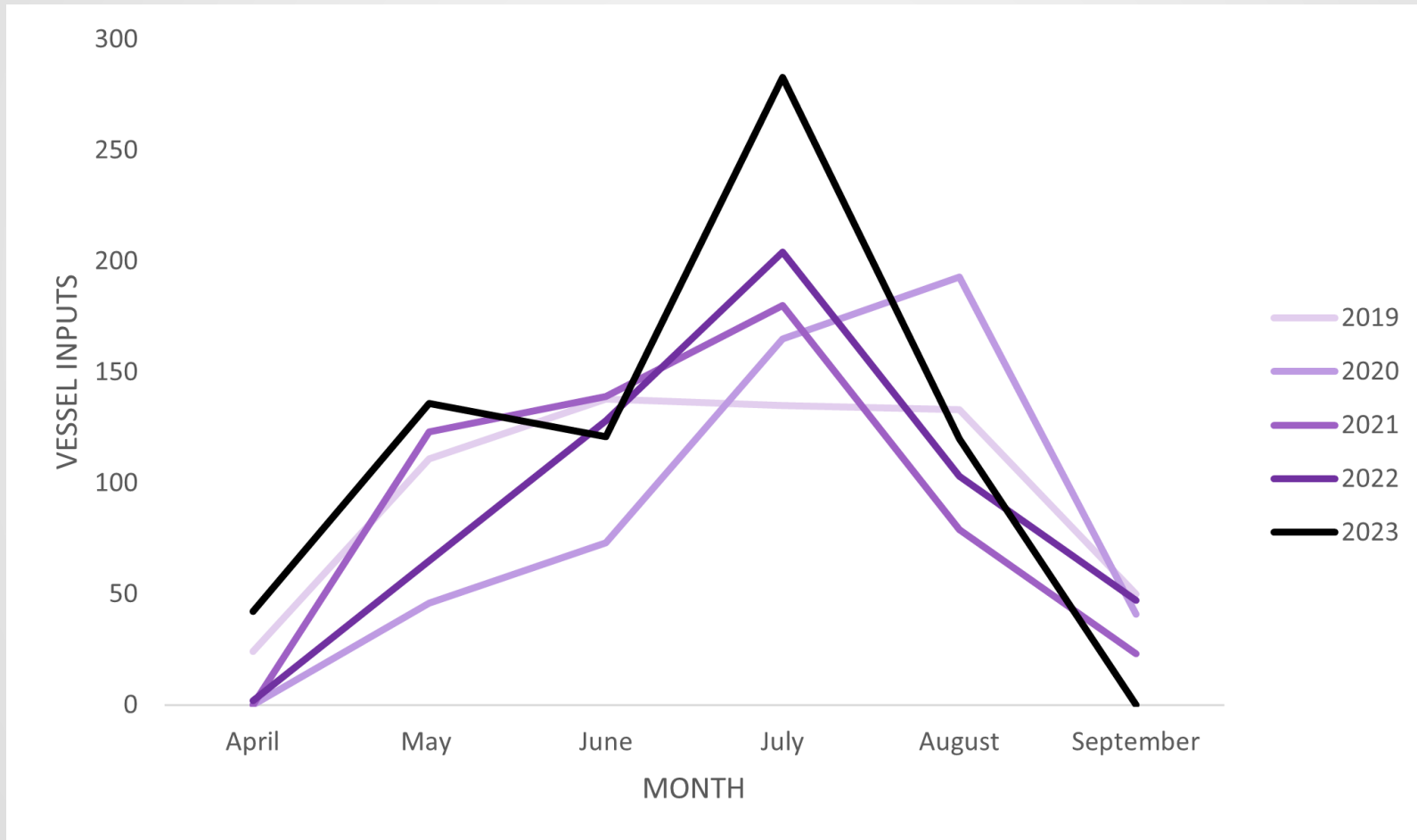
# South Bay WDFW Launch

- Open 4/22/2023-8/21/2023 (closed for construction)
- Weekends and holidays
- 9am-6:30 pm
- 635 inspections
- Busiest day: 5/13/2023
  - 37 boats





# South Bay WDFW launch by Month, 2019-2023

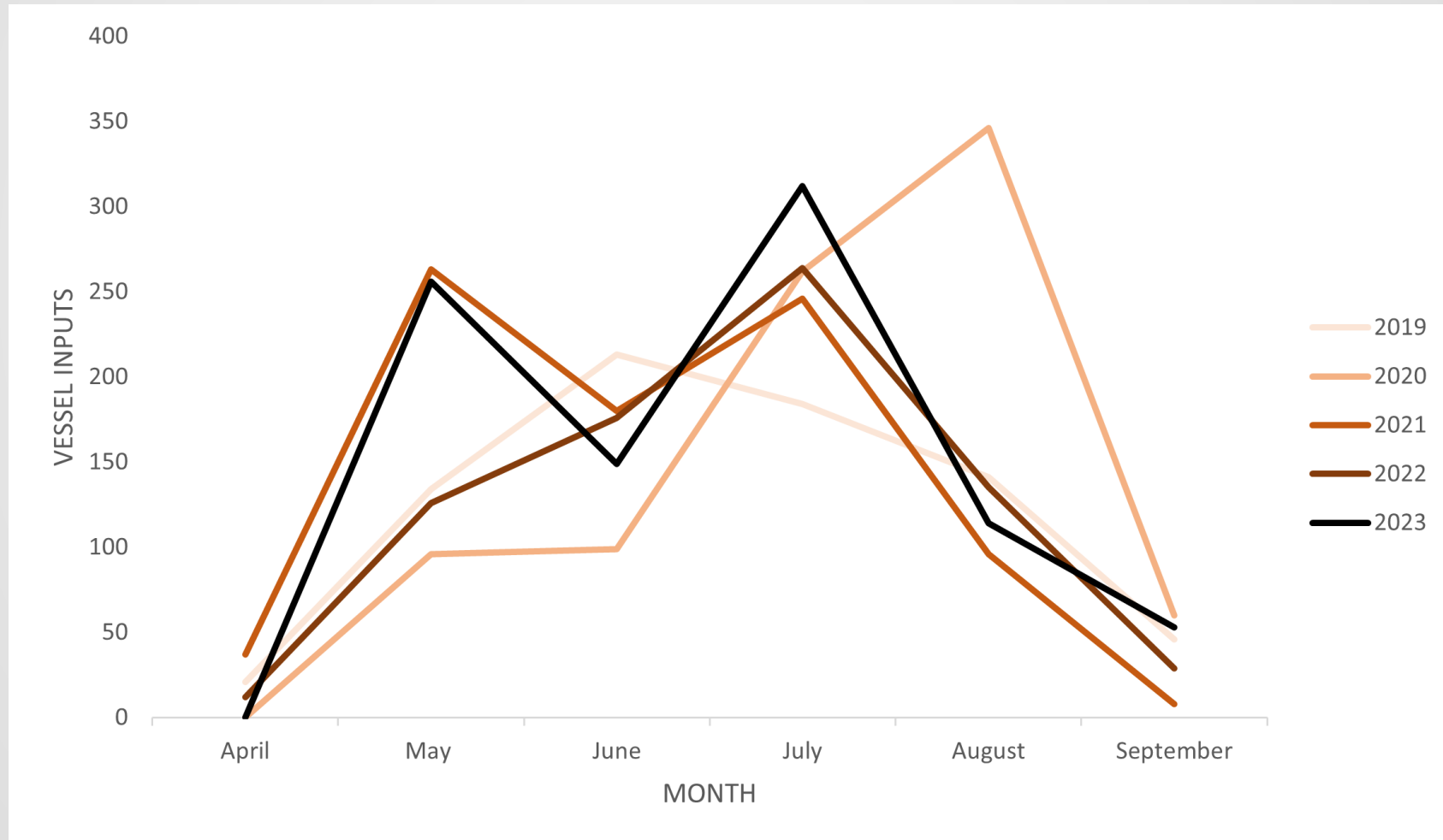


# Sudden Valley Marina

- Opened 5/6/2023
- Weekends
- 8am-5:30pm
- 849 inspections
- Busiest day 5/13/2023
  - 67 boats

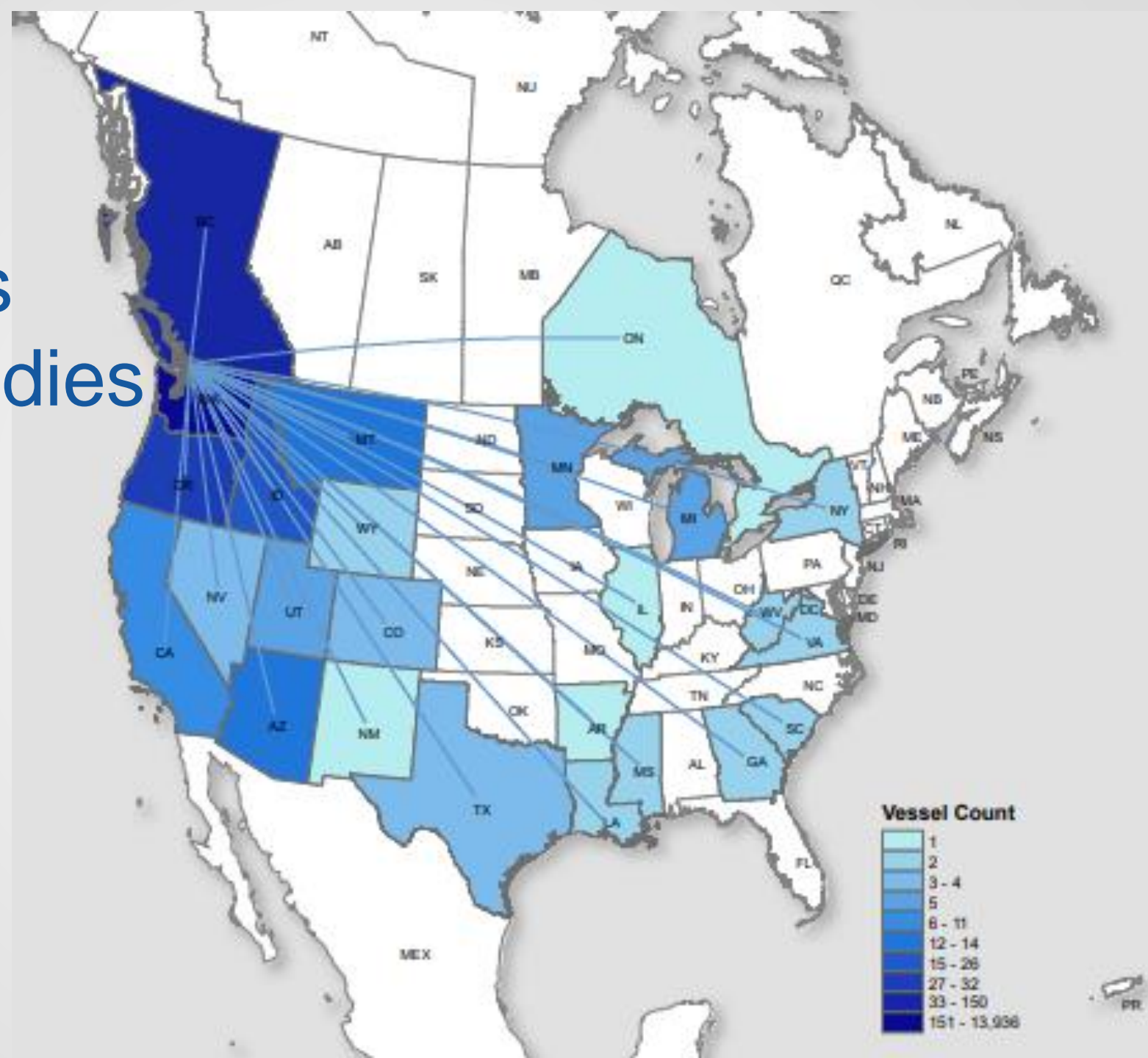


# Sudden Valley Marina by Month, 2019-2023





# 2023 Previous Waterbodies



# What did we find?

- 1,439 (10.1%) boats required additional attention
  - High risk boats
    - 45 boats had last launched in mussel infested waterbodies this year
    - 565 boats had previously ever launched in or nearby mussel infested waterbodies

**20** Inspectors  
— at —

**4** Launches

**14,233 BOATS**

Inspected



**1,156**  
**Visitors**  
**to tent**



**1,324** boats carried  
standing water that had to  
be drained



**103 AQUATIC**  
**PLANTS**  
that had to  
be removed



**0** new invasive  
species found in  
either Lake

# Decontaminations (12 total)

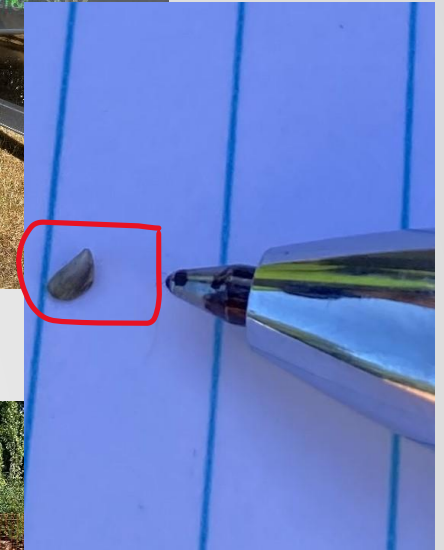
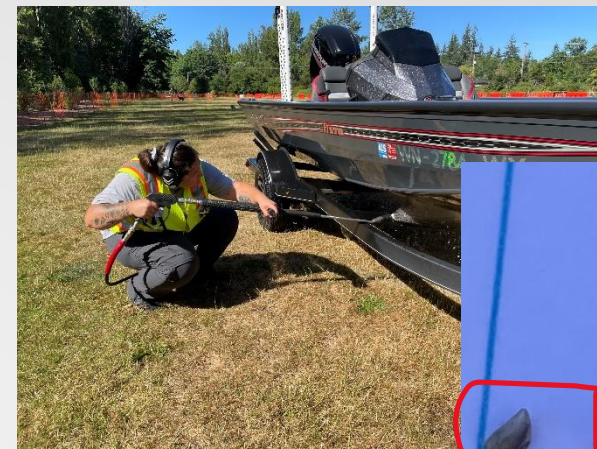
- Arizona pontoon- 3/24/2023
  - Lake Pleasant, AZ
  - **Species: Quagga Mussels**  
(found on stern on portside pontoon)
- 
- Arizona sailboat- 5/31/2023
  - Lake Powell, AZ
  - **Species: Quagga Mussels**





# Decontaminations cont.

- Minnesota Bass Boat-7/9/2023
- Lake Darling, MN
- **Species of Concern: Zebra Mussels**
- Nevada PWC-7/13/2023
- Lake Mead, NV
- **Species of Concern: Quagga Mussels**
- Texas Wakeboard Boat- 7/26/2023
- Belton Lake, TX
- **Species of concern: Zebra Mussels**



# Off-site inspections

- 1,422 boats permitted at 276 off-site appointments
- average 5 boats per appointment

# Wire Seal Program

- Express pass for boaters returning to the same lake
- More efficient
- 8,305 additional interactions with boaters in 2023





# Events

- Float plane “splash-in”
- Bass tournaments
- Paddling events
- Lake Padden- New Zealand Mudsnail Outreach
- Rowing Clubs
- Special operation at the border

# Early Detection and Monitoring

- New species “early detection”
- Existing species “monitoring”
  - Looking for spread or increase in density of species already present
  - European Green Crab (EGC) spotted first in Post Point Lagoon, then Chuckanut Bay



# Invasive quagga mussels detected in Idaho; monitoring and prevention efforts ramp up in Washington

Preliminary results from 2023 detected no presence in Washington. In response to the Idaho detection, WDFW is redirecting staff from statewide monitoring to the Snake River.



- The Columbia River Basin, which includes the Snake River, was the last major river system in the U.S. that was ZQM free
- Rapid response plan- notify impacted entities, containment measures, delimiting surveys, evaluation of treatment options
- Would cost an estimated \$100 million each year to keep Washington's power and water infrastructure running



## Zebra and Quagga Mussel Sightings Distribution

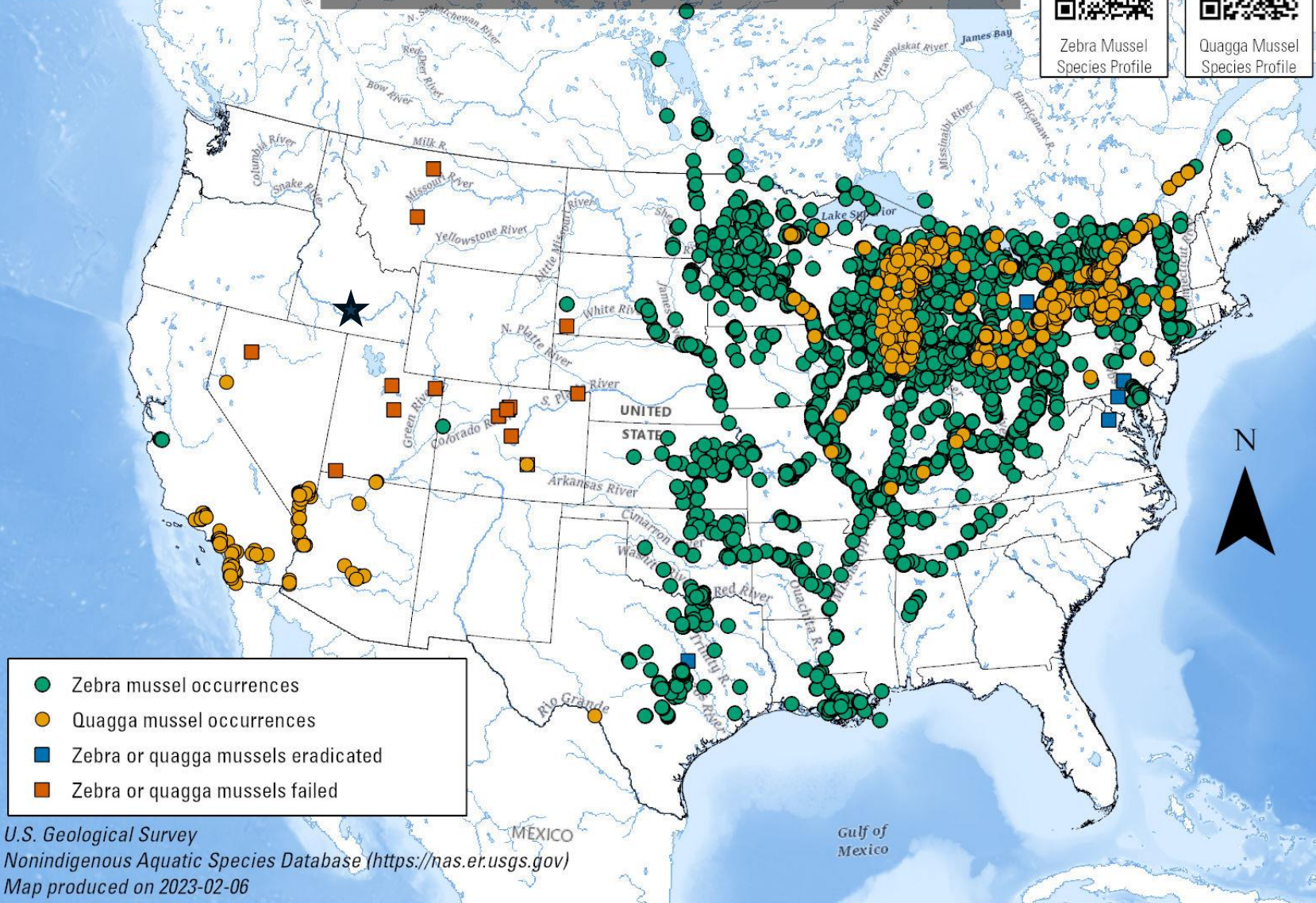
*Dreissena polymorpha* and *Dreissena bugensis*



Zebra Mussel  
Species Profile



Quagga Mussel  
Species Profile



# Snake River Treatment

- copper treatment to kill mussels at all life stages in the 6-mile range they were detected
- Will evaluate effectiveness in spring
- Most aggressive approach tried in the US to date
  - “We know doing nothing would have cost a lot more”

# 2024

- The AIS program is constantly trying to improve the program and the customer service we can provide
- Conversion of 2, 9-month seasonal positions to FTE's.
- Retain institutional knowledge and make the program more robust
- **Lake Whatcom Specific Rapid Response Plan, increased monitoring efforts**



# Whatcom Boat Inspections: 2023 Program Update

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