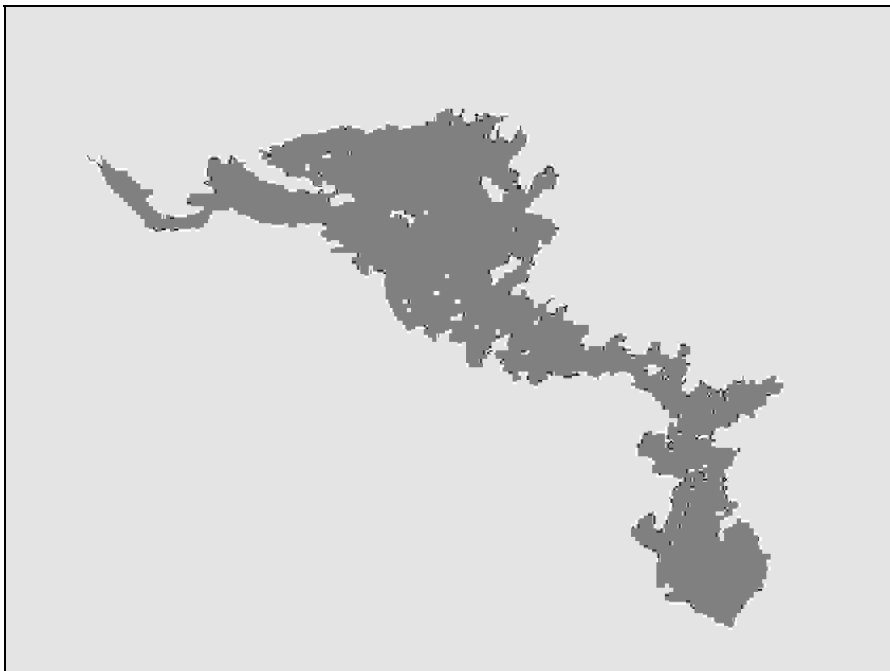


ZEBRA MUSSEL INFESTATION CONFIRMED IN LOUGH CORRIB

27th September 2007

Officers of the Western Regional Fisheries Board have this week confirmed an infestation of zebra mussels in Lough Corrib. The zebra mussel is a pest or more correctly termed an invasive alien species which will impact on all aspects of the lake from water supplies, ecology, fisheries and amenity etc. The infestation is not confined to one particular area but appears to be fairly widespread in so far as the presence of the mussel has been confirmed at a number of sites in the upper NW section of the lake and at one site in the lower lake. It is not clear at this stage whether it is a single or multiple infestation but it is clear that a number of sites remote from one another have been infested. All of the mussels recovered have been analysed and are mostly less than 10mm in length which would indicate that the recovered specimens relate to a settlement that occurred this summer. However, the parent population and the original infestation site(s) have not been found.

Fig.1 Lough Corrib.



It is anticipated that more infested sites will continue to be identified and that the next few years will see a rapid expansion in the zebra mussel population within the lake and possibly to other lakes in the catchment unless urgent measures are adopted.

In May of this year a zebra mussel infestation was recorded in Ross lake, a coarse angling lake in the Moycullen area which flows into lower Lough Corrib. However, it appears that the Lough Corrib infestation is a separate and discrete event as some of the infested sites are located in the upper lake over 25km upstream from the Moycullen lakes canal link to L. Corrib.

The main focus now will be to confine the infestation to Lough Corrib and to prevent it spreading to Lough Mask, Lough Carra and other vulnerable lakes in the region. In this regard, the Board is calling on all relevant bodies including Mayo and Galway County Councils, and the Western River Basin Project to join together to put in place whatever measures are necessary to try and prevent these alien invasive organisms from getting into Lough Mask and Carra.

Gregory Forde PhD

Acting Chief Executive Officer.

27th September 2007.