



Photo: BJ Schoenmakers



**WESTERN INVASIVES  
NETWORK**

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\*\*\*\*\*STATEWIDE INVASIVE SPECIES ALERT\*\*\*\*\*

## Zebra Mussels

Zebra mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*) have been detected in moss balls that are sold at pet stores across the United States, including Oregon. ***Of particular concern are the "Betta Buddy" marimo moss balls sold under the Imagitarium brand name*** sold at pet stores like Petco, and possibly others. It is likely that other brands use the same supplier.

### Why is it a problem?

In addition to drastic habitat modification and as a vector for avian disease, zebra mussels cause hundreds of millions of dollars in damages to infrastructure like hydropower, irrigation and municipal water supplies.

Establishment of zebra mussels in Oregon waterways would be catastrophic to industry, tourism and recreation.

### What Can You Do?

First, here's **what NOT to do**:

-DO NOT dump your tank water or any of its contents into any water body, household sink, toilet, drain or outdoor storm drain. While a tank infestation is unfortunate, it is at least contained.

### What Can You Do? (cont'd)

If you have these moss balls in an outdoor pond, or an aquarium with outflow, please remove them and place in a watertight container or plastic bag and contact the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife at (503)-947-6308; or [Rick.J.Boatner@state.or.us](mailto:Rick.J.Boatner@state.or.us)

If you have these moss balls in a fully contained home aquarium, please remove them and place in a watertight container. Then, place the container in a freezer for at least 3 days and throw the moss in the garbage.

If you do not have a freezer, you can also boil the moss balls for a few minutes.

With fish and moss removed, disinfect water and other tank contents, including filters, by adding 1-2 cups of bleach per gallon of water and let sit for one hour. Dispose of disinfected water and refill tank with fresh water.

Click [here](#) for detailed information on other decontamination methods. As always, please report invasive species sightings online at: <https://oregoninvasiveshotline.org/>



*Zebra mussel found in marimo moss ball at a pet store in Washington State, 2021. While they are extremely small, especially in this limiting environment, the namesake zebra stripes are unmistakable. (Photo courtesy of USGS)*



*If zebra mussels are introduced in Oregon, personal equipment and critical infrastructure are at extreme risk. Hydropower facilities and irrigation networks can be devastated and aquatic ecosystems can be severely disrupted. (Photo: Tom Britt)*