



2019

# Watercraft Inspection Station Annual Report, 2019

Report Prepared by the: AIS Bureau Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

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# Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks

## 2019 ANNUAL WATERCRAFT INSPECTION STATION REPORT

### 2019 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Accomplishments during the 2019 watercraft inspection season include:

- Over 113,000 watercraft inspections conducted by FWP and partners in Montana.
- 16 mussel fouled vessels intercepted and over 300 vessels intercepted transporting aquatic weeds.
- Contracted inspection stations with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, the Blackfeet Nation, Missoula County, Garfield Conservation District.
- Expanded contracted watercraft inspection station management to include McCone (Nashua station), Garfield (Wibaux), Powder River (Broadus) and Bighorn (St Xavier) Conservation Districts.
- All FWP stations and most partner stations utilized the standard western watercraft inspection data collection app to electronically collect and share inspection information between stations and partners.
- Coordinated with partners around the state to provide consistent protocols, forms, data collection and information sharing including Glacier National Park, Bighorn National Recreation Area and Whitefish Lake Institute.
- Improved station operations through improved training, oversight, on-sight storage and new signage.
- Initiated construction at Tiber Reservoir for inspection staff lodging (funded through Bureau of Reclamation).
- Hosted the Western Regional Panel aquatic invasive species meeting in Missoula in October.
- Held the AIS Summit in Helena in December.

### INTRODUCTION

Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks (FWP) is the lead agency in the state addressing AIS issues. FWP, Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA), Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), and Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) collectively are responsible for implementation of the Montana Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Management Plan. Roles and responsibilities for implementation of the plan are outlined through an MOU between agencies. The goal of the Plan is to minimize the harmful impacts of AIS by limiting or preventing the spread of AIS. This goal is achieved through coordination and collaboration between our partner agencies and stakeholder groups; prevention of new AIS introductions; early detection and monitoring of invasive aquatic plants, animals and pathogens; control and eradication of new and established AIS populations; and outreach and education efforts. This report focuses on the prevention of new AIS introductions in the state, containment efforts at Tiber and Canyon Ferry Reservoirs and other AIS prevention efforts. Prevention is primarily accomplished through watercraft inspection stations.

Montana FWP has been operating watercraft inspection stations since 2004. Watercraft and water-based equipment are the most common vector for the transport of AIS and are the focus for prevention efforts. Inspection stations inspect boats and equipment for aquatic organisms, standing water and illegal bait and fish. Stations also educate the public about the importance of following Clean, Drain and Dry protocols and encourage boaters to do their part to protect the waters they enjoy from AIS.

Following the detection of dreissenid mussels in Tiber Reservoir in 2016, the program rapidly expanded. Additional stations were established, and program staffing levels were increased. The watercraft inspection season was extended as well as hours of operation. FWP also began contracting with partners to operate watercraft inspection stations, allowing for local management and oversight. In 2019, nine inspection stations were contracted through partners around the state. In addition, Glacier National Park, Yellowstone National Park, and the Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area operate watercraft inspection stations within Park boundaries, and the City of Whitefish and the Blackfoot Nation have been inspecting boats for several years. The Flathead and Swan Lakers also conduct volunteer boat inspections on their respective lakes on selected days and a Swan Lake roving crew was operated by Missoula County.

## NEW IN 2019

In 2019, several programmatic changes were made to improve the effectiveness of the AIS prevention program

- 1.) Increased the number of contracted partners operating watercraft inspection stations to expand local management and involvement in AIS prevention efforts.
  - a. McCone Conservation District took over operation of the Nashua inspection station (Hwy 2).
  - b. Garfield Conservation District operated the Flowing Wells station (Hwy 200) seven days a week.
  - c. Garfield Conservation District took over management of the Wibaux Watercraft inspection station. (I-94).
  - d. Powder River Conservation District established a new watercraft inspection station at Broadus (Hwy 212).
  - e. Bighorn Conservation District established a new watercraft inspection station south of St Xavier (Hwy 314).
  - f. The Thompson Falls station was moved to Plains (Hwy 200) and operated by CSKT.
- 2.) Coordinated with enforcement to improve boater compliance and education concerning new administrative rules and laws
- 3.) Installed new signage to expand awareness of the AIS issue.
  - a. Deployed more AIS road signs and lighted reader boards.
- 4.) Moved some inspection / decontamination stations to new locations
  - a. Moved the Thompson Falls inspection station to Plains to allow for CSKT to take over operation and eliminated the station at Elmo.
  - b. The Dena Mora station (I-90 eastbound) was moved to St Regis in order to decrease travel time and increase operational hours.
  - c. The Anaconda station was moved 1 mile east due to season-long construction.
  - d. A new Willow Creek decontamination station was established at Tiber.

- e. The inspection station at Jesco Marine was closed and the FWP Region 1 office expanded operation hours to provide inspections on weekends.
  - f. Inspections at the FWP Region 1 office in Kalispell were extended to 7 days a week.
- 5.) Mussel dogs were utilized at GNP, Bighorn NRA, and the Browning station.
- 6.) Joint effort at Fort Peck with FWP Region 6 Biologists to have watercraft inspections with creel surveys.

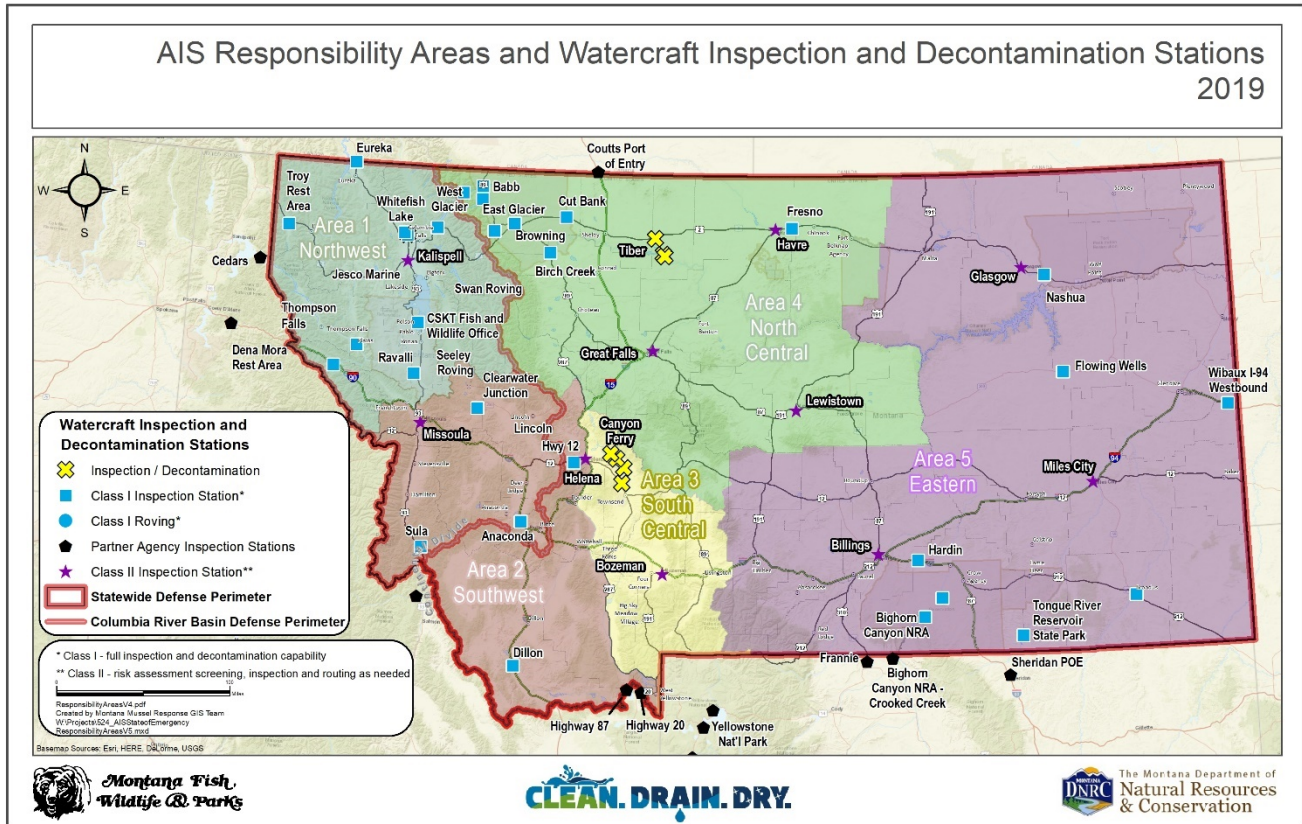


Figure 1. Geographic areas of responsibility for each of the five FWP watercraft inspection and decontamination station supervisors, 2019.

## WATERCRAFT INSPECTION STATION LOCATIONS

Watercraft inspection stations are established in locations to address watercraft that present the highest risk of transporting AIS. Stations are established on high traffic corridors entering the state, crossing west over the Continental divide, and at other strategic locations to intercept high risk boat traffic. Stations are also established at strategic locations on Tiber and Canyon Ferry reservoirs to inspect / decontaminate watercraft

exiting those waters to ensure invasive mussels are not transported.

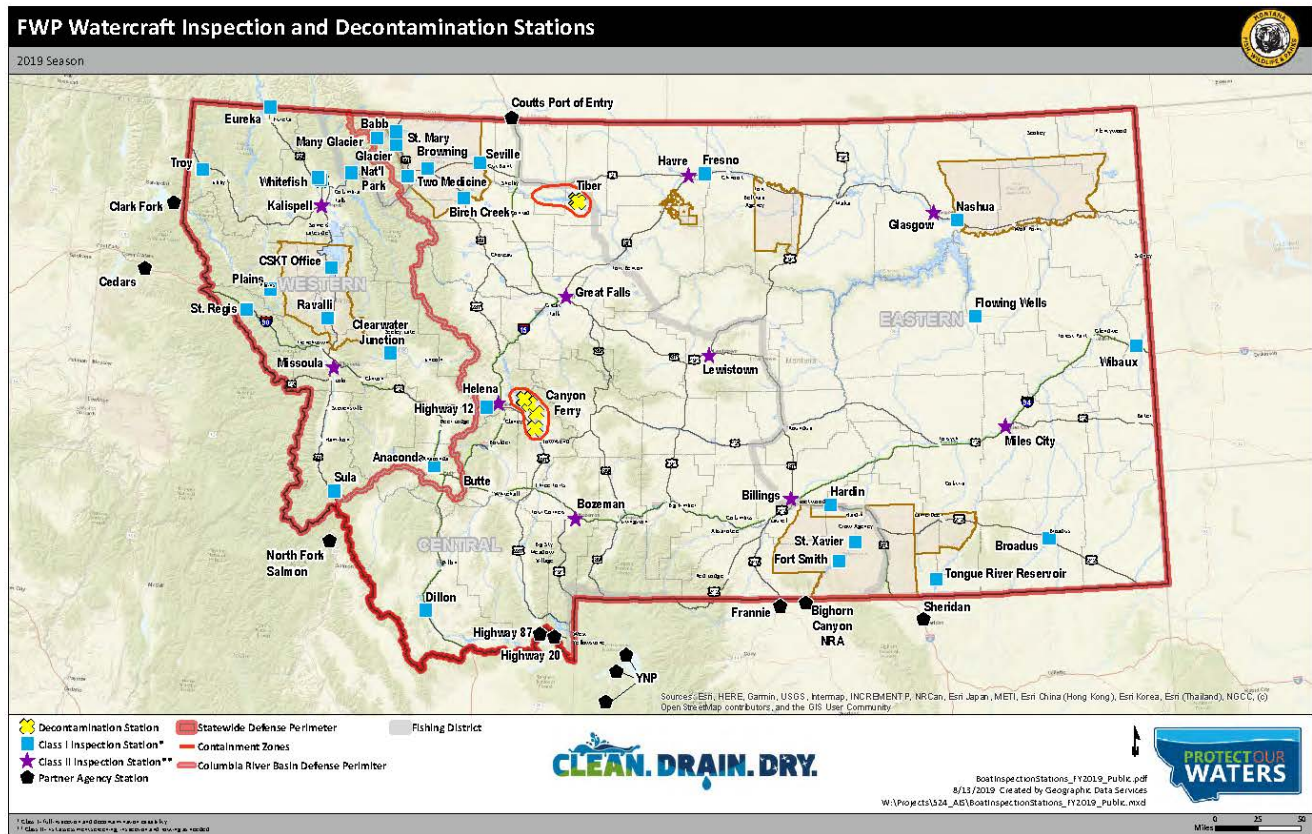
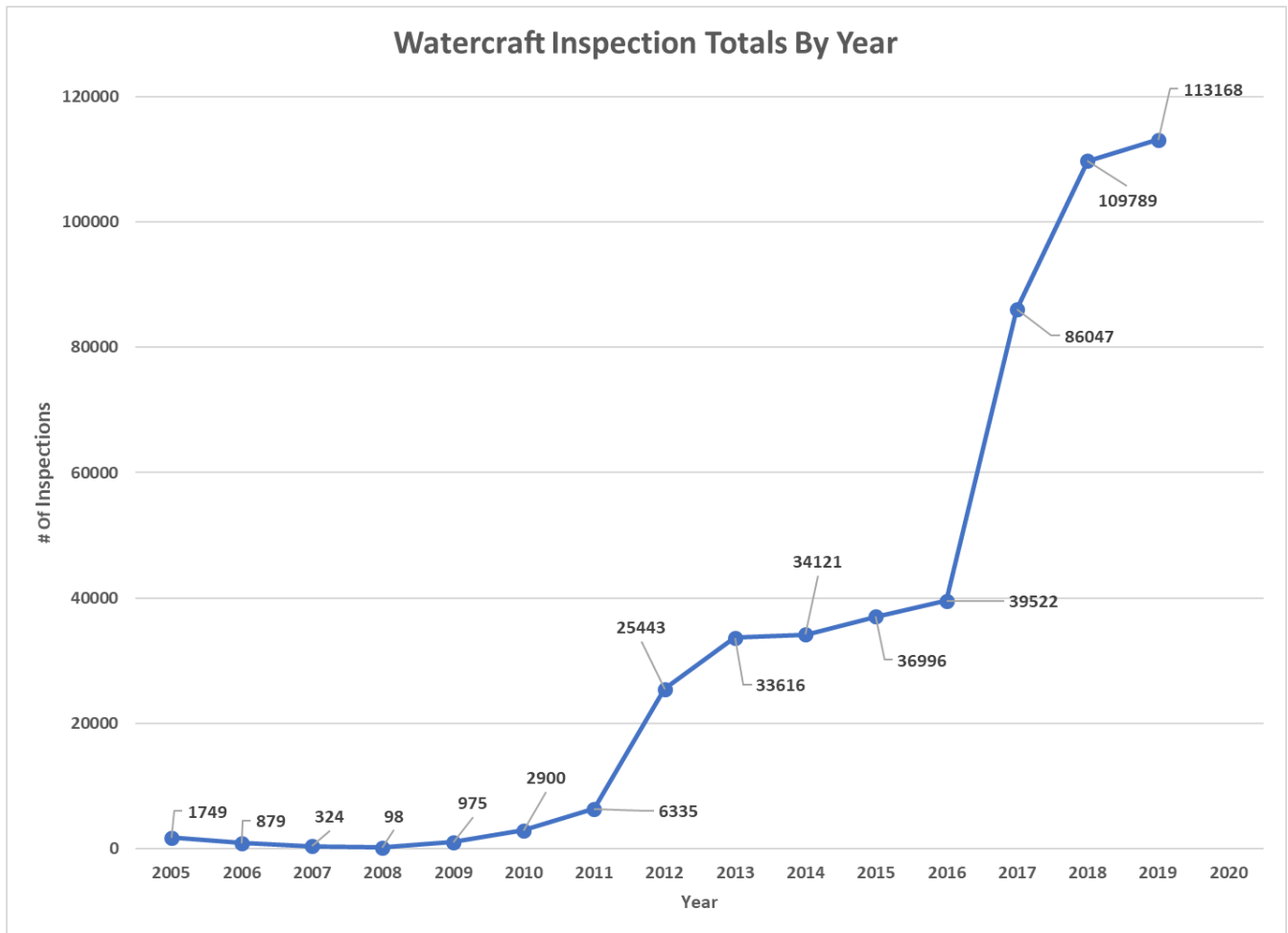


Figure 2. 2019 FWP Seasonally permanent watercraft inspection stations.

## WATERCRAFT INSPECTION STATION TOTALS

FWP and partners performed 113,168 watercraft inspections this season (Figure 3). Of that total, FWP or contracted partner stations inspected 97,785 inspections. Other partners conducted the balance of those inspections including 11,517 from Glacier National Park and 1,831 from Whitefish Lake (Figure 4). Stations operated from March through October in 2019 with most stations operating from mid-May and through early September (Table 1). The 2019 season had the highest number of inspections since the inception of the watercraft inspection station program. The high numbers this year were due to an expanded season, expanded hours, additional stations, increased compliance and included Glacier National Park efforts. The July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday was again the busiest period for boater movement (Figure 5).



**Figure 3. Number of Watercraft Inspections by Year. Total in 2019 includes inspections at FWP stations, contracted stations and other partners conducting inspections in the state.**

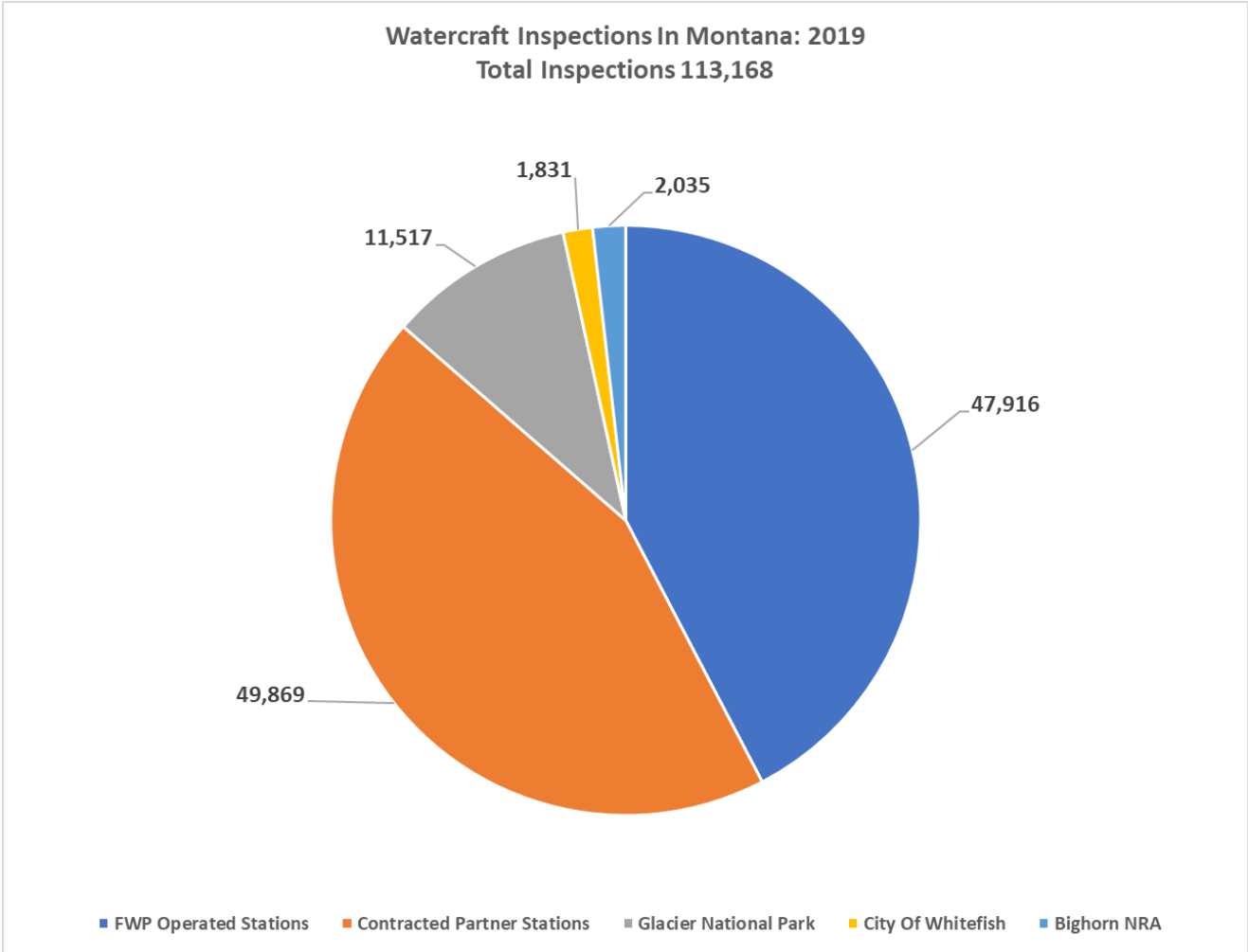
**Table 1. Summary of FWP 2019 Watercraft Inspection Stations.**

Station Name	Hwy	Direction of Travel	Open days/week	Average hours of operation	Start date	End date	Total Inspections
<b>Border Stations</b>							
Nashua	US 2	West	7	13	18-May	31-Oct	2,093
St. Regis	I-90	East	7	13	18-May	15-Sept	5,575
Dillon	I-15	North	7	13	06-Apr	13-Oct	2,764
Eureka	US 93	South	7	12	24-May	15-Sept	1,812
Hardin	I-90	West	7	12	19-Apr	14-Oct	5,939
Seville (Blackfeet Nation)	Hwy 2	West	7	8	06-Jun	07-Sept	473
Troy	US 2/ MT 56	East/North	7	13	25-May	15-Sept	5,696
Wibaux	I-94	West	7	13	17-Apr	30-Oct	1,357
<b>Continental Divide Stations</b>							
Anaconda	I-90	West	7	13	12-Apr	13-Oct	5,587
Browning (Blackfeet Nation)	HWY 2	East/West	7	13	02-Apr	13-Oct	3,922
Hwy 12 Helena	HWY 12	West	7	13	18-May	13-Oct	4,122
Sula	HWY 93	North	7	10	18-May	15-Sept	1,351
<b>Interior Stations</b>							
Clearwater Junction (MSLA)	MT 200	West	7	13	11-Apr	29-Sept	21,421
Broadus (PRCD)	MT 212	West	3	12	10-July	13-Oct	227
St. Xavier (BCCD)	MT 313	South	3	12	15-July	26-Oct	1,320
Flowing Wells (GCCD)	MT 200	East/West	7	13	18-May	14-Oct	2,459
Fresno Reservoir	Fresno	N/A	4	9	18-May	18-Aug	856
Ravalli (CSKT)	US 93	North	7	19	15-Mar	15-Oct	14,034
Plains (CSKT)	MT 200	East	7	12	11-May	15-Sept	3,228

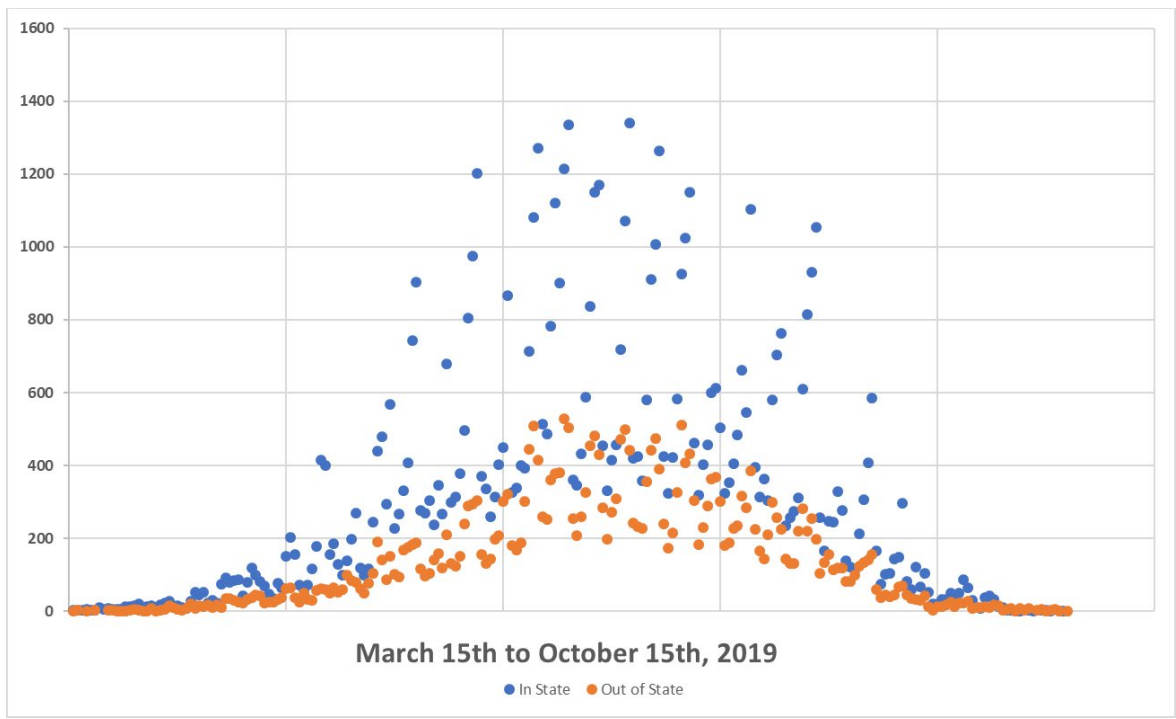


Station Name	Hwy	Direction of Travel	Open days/week	Average hours of operation	Start date	End date	Total Inspections
Whitefish Lake City Beach (WLI)	Boat Ramp	N/A	7	16	1-May	30-Sept	841
Whitefish Lake Decontamination Station (WLI)	Edgewood Place	North	7	9	1-May	30-Sept	132
<b>Parks</b>							
Bighorn NRA Fort Smith (NPS)	Fort Smith	North	7	10	14-Jun	10-Sept	2,035
Tongue River Reservoir State Park	State Park	N/A	4	10	25-Apr	22-Sept	2,604
Whitefish Lake State Park (WLI)	Boat Ramp	N/A	7	16	1-May	30-Sept	858
Glacier National Park (NPS)	4 Locations	N/A	7	Varied	11-May	31-Oct	11,517
<b>Roving</b>							
Swan Roving	N/A	N/A	4	8	23-May	01-Sep	692
<b>Regional and Area Offices</b>							
FWP Region 1 Office	Kalispell	N/A	5	9	02-Jan	31-Dec	560
FWP Region 2 Office	Missoula	N/A	5	9	02-Jan	31-Dec	26
FWP Region 3 Office	Bozeman	N/A	5	9	02-Jan	31-Dec	94
FWP Region 4 Office	Great Falls	N/A	5	9	02-Jan	31-Dec	26
FWP Region 5 Office	Billings	N/A	5	9	02-Jan	31-Dec	25
FWP Region 6 Office	Glasgow	N/A	5	9	02-Jan	31-Dec	13
FWP Region 7 Office	Miles City	N/A	5	9	02-Jan	31-Dec	39
Lewistown Area Resource Office	Lewistown	N/A	5	4	02-Jan	31-Dec	3
Havre Area Resource Office	Havre	N/A	5	4	02-Jan	31-Dec	2
Helena Area Resource Office	Helena	N/A	5	9	02-Jan	31-Dec	9
<b>Canyon Ferry Reservoir</b>							

Station Name	Hwy	Direction of Travel	Open days/week	Average hours of operation	Start date	End date	Total Inspections
Goose Bay Marina	Canyon Ferry	N/A	7	14	25-May	15-Sept	830
Hellgate Recreational Area	Canyon Ferry	N/A	7	14	18-May	15-Sept	741
North BOR Site	Canyon Ferry	N/A	7	14	11-May	29-Sept	2,712
Silos Area	Canyon Ferry	N/A	7	14	11-May	29-Sept	3,637
<i>Tiber Reservoir</i>							
Tiber Boat Ramp -- Marina	Tiber	N/A	7	14	11-May	13-Oct	603
Tiber Boat Ramp -- Willow Creek	Tiber	N/A	7	11	25-May	11-Aug	103
Tiber Boat Ramp -- VFW	Tiber	N/A	7	14	11-May	13-Oct	830
<b>TOTALS</b>							<b>113,168</b>



**Figure 4: Partner involvement with watercraft inspection in 2019.**



**Figure 5. Number of Watercraft Inspections by Day for 2019.**

**ORIGIN OF WATER USERS, RELATIVE RISK, AND BOATER MOVEMENT**

The origin of watercraft and subsequent movement is valuable information that helps guide the placement of FWP watercraft inspection stations and monitoring priorities and helps inspectors assess relative risk. Boats traveling from eastern states tend to come from areas where zebra mussels, quagga mussels, and Eurasian watermilfoil are prevalent, such as the Great Lakes region. Boats coming from southwestern states could be carrying quagga mussels from the lower Colorado River System. Boats that originate in-state also are at risk of transporting AIS and must be cleaned, drained and dry. Of the 113,168 watercraft that passed through inspection stations during the 2019 season, 70,720 were from Montana.

Figure 6 shows the origin of watercraft from 2019 and illustrates the great distances that people travel to recreate in Montana. It is important to the overall prevention strategy to contact both out-of-state and in-state boaters to reach as much of the public as possible.

Watercraft Movement into Montana 2019

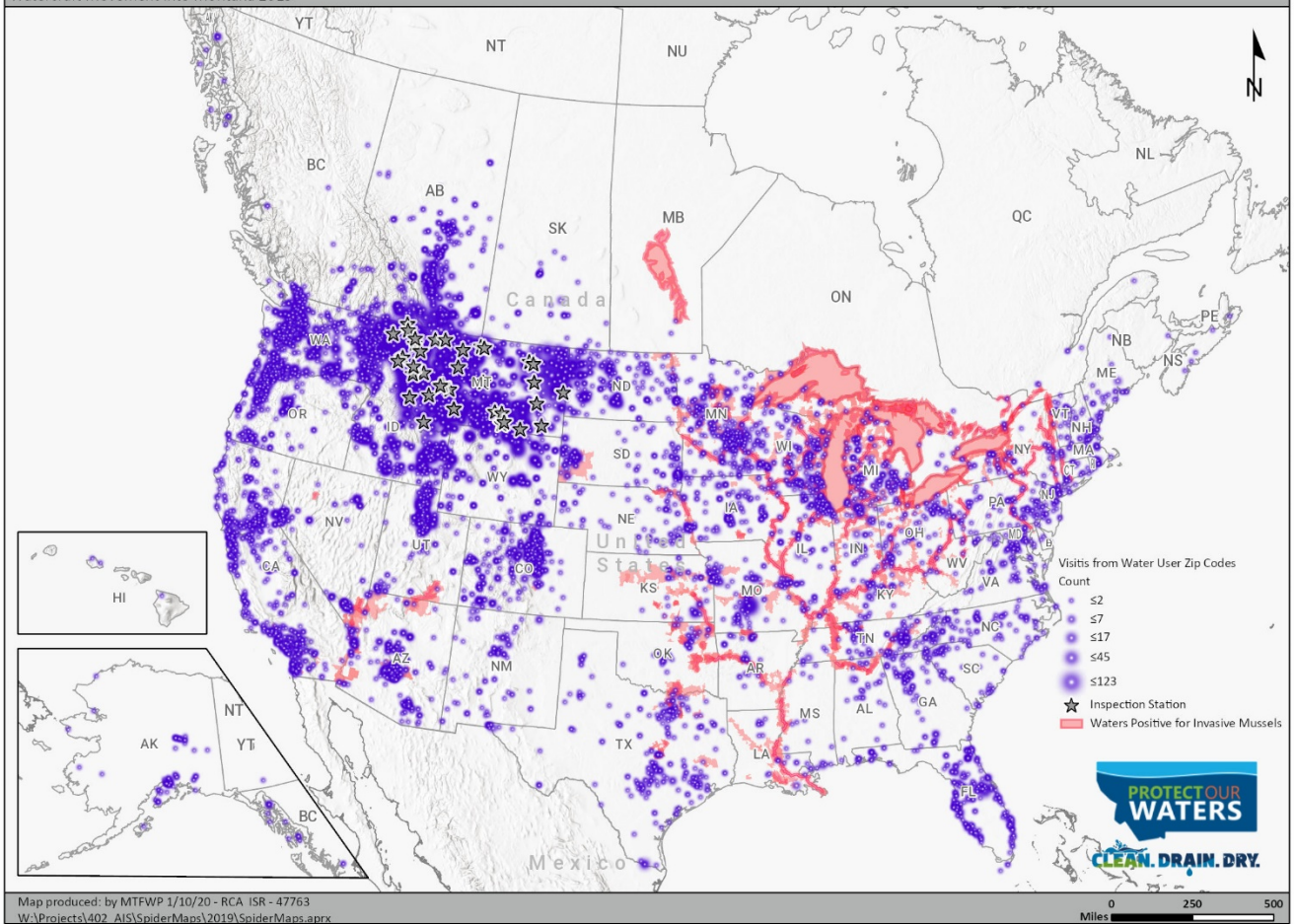


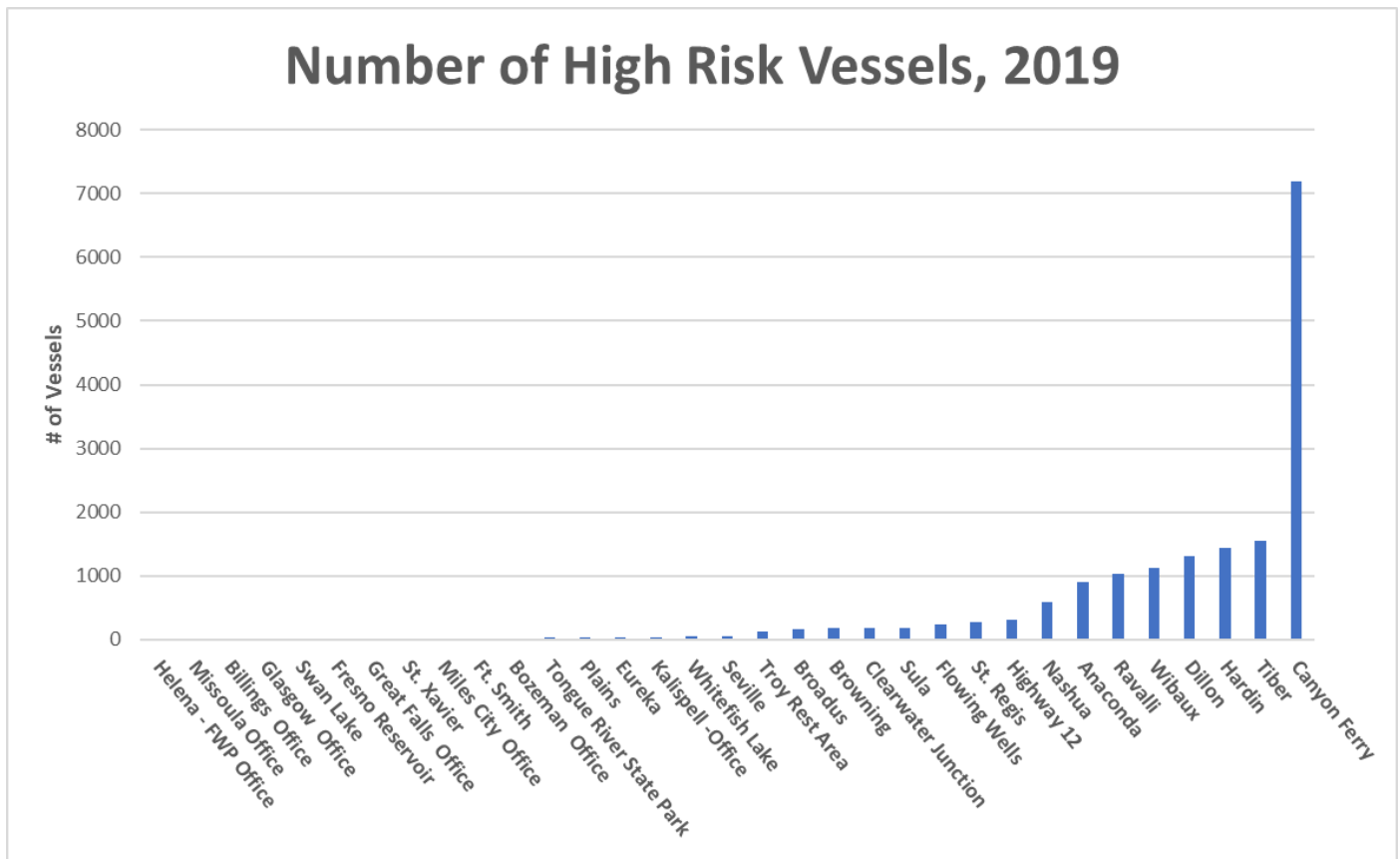
Figure 6. Origin of Montana inspected watercraft in 2019 by postal code. Red waters are those positive for invasive mussels.

## HIGH RISK BOATS

High-risk boats are categorized as vessels that:

- Originated outside of the northwest (WY, ID, OR, WA, or MT)
- Launched in a waterbody in a zebra or quagga mussel-positive state in the previous 30 days
- Are from a mussel-positive state; originated from Canyon Ferry or Tiber Reservoirs
- Or has standing water, plants, animals, dirty or ballast tanks.

These boats are more likely to be carrying adult or veliger (larval) mussels, aquatic weeds or other AIS, therefore extra time and care is taken during inspection of these boats. In 2019, there were a total of 22,409 high-risk boats that passed through FWP and partner inspection stations, which was more than 20% of all inspections. The stations with the highest number of high-risk watercraft were Canyon Ferry, followed by Hardin, Dillon, Wibaux, Ravalli, Anaconda, and Nashua (Figure 7).



**Figure 7. Number of high-risk boats by station based on origin: Mussel positive state or water, 2019.**

## TIBER AND CANYON FERRY

Following the detection of invasive mussel larvae at Tiber and a suspect detection on Canyon Ferry in late 2016 mandatory exit inspections were put in place to ensure boats are clean, drained and dry upon exit to prevent the spread of invasive mussels to other basins. In 2019, three mandatory inspection stations operated at Tiber Reservoir. The stations conducted 1536 inspections to ensure vessels were clean, drained and dry. If issues were identified on the boat or if standing water could not be drained, station staff decontaminated the vessel.

Three Certified Boater ramps were operated at Tiber in 2019, although; the Willow Creek station was open to all public for a couple of months. These certified boater ramps were gated ramps that allow access to boaters that primarily use Tiber. To access these ramps boaters were required to take a test and sign an affidavit they will follow the rules for Certified Boater ramps. Certified Boaters are permitted to use these ramps and can exit without an inspection if they are cleaned, drained and dry. If they wish to launch on another waterbody, they must receive an inspection / decontamination. There were 301 Certified Boaters for Tiber and 1743 for Canyon Ferry in 2019.

Four stations were operated at Canyon Ferry Reservoir in 2019 conducting 7920 inspections. Over 20 Certified Boater ramps also exist on Canyon Ferry. Inspection stations at Canyon Ferry were some of the busiest in the state and were staffed accordingly to ensure inspections / decontaminations were as effective and timely as possible.

## IN-STATE AND OUT-OF STATE BOATS

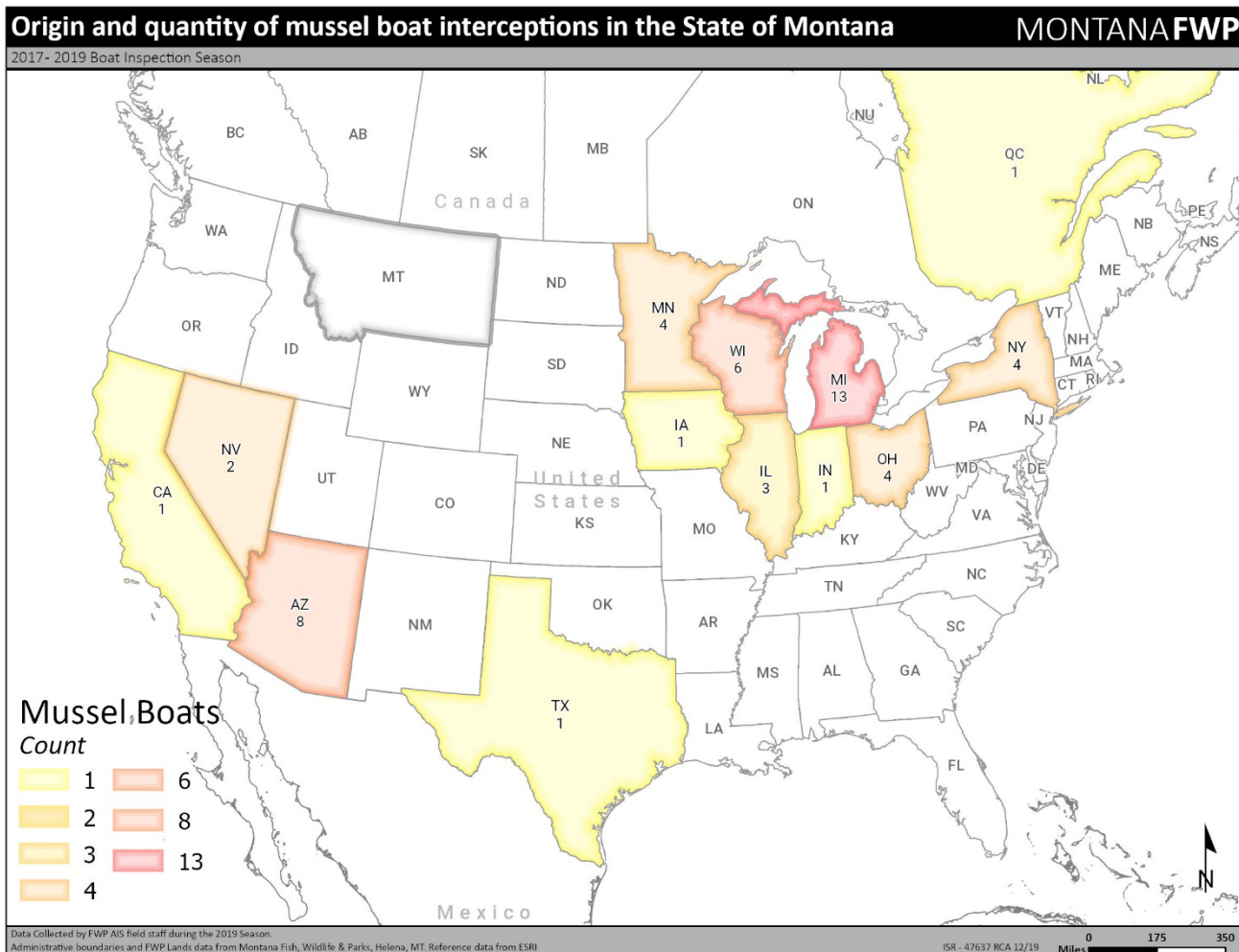
Border stations see higher percentages of out-of-state boats than internal stations and roving crews, but internal stations also see out-of-state-boats and are extremely important to the overall prevention strategy. Many Montana boaters regularly recreate in AIS-positive waters and could potentially spread AIS to other clean waterbodies in the state. It is also common for Montana residents to purchase used boats from out-of state, particularly from midwestern states.

Internal stations provide another level of protection for these in-state boats that might miss an inspection at the border. Internal stations also help prevent movement of AIS between Montana waters. In-state boats can still transport AIS including species such as Eurasian watermilfoil, New Zealand mudsnails, illegal bait/live fish, and pathogens between waterbodies. Internal inspection stations help contain AIS and minimize the potential spread among Montana waters.

## AIS INTERCEPTED

Out of the 113,168 inspections during the 2019 field season, 6737 (<6%) boats had some type of issue identified (Table 2). Standing water (water in bilges, live wells, etc.) was the most common factor identified followed by vegetation. Standing water is a concern because it can carry mussel larvae, disease-causing pathogens and plant fragments. Zebra or quagga mussels were found on 16 boats over the course of the season. These vessels are decontaminated on site and require a follow up inspection / decontamination before they are permitted to

launch. Additional dry time may be required to ensure no live mussels remain on the vessel.



**Figure 8. Origin of mussel fouled vessels intercepted at watercraft inspection stations in Montana, 2017-2019.**

When a Dreissenid mussel-infested boat or piece of equipment is found, protocol mandates that staff from the FWP AIS management team is contacted and oversee decontamination. If the boat is complex (air conditioning unit, seas strainers, multiple internal compartments, complex plumbing, or ballast tanks), marine mechanics may be brought in to aid in the decontamination process. Boats must pass a second inspection before they can launch in Montana waters. Sixteen mussel fouled vessel were intercepted in Montana in 2019 and 49 over the last 3 years (Figure 8). If a boat or piece of equipment is carrying vegetation or any other AIS besides mussels, the inspectors remove the AIS, decontaminate the boat on site, and then release it.



Station	Out-of-State	In-State	Total	Zebra / Quagga Mussels	Vegetation	Standing Water	Illegal Bait	Illegal Fish	Total Observed
<b>Border Stations</b>									
Nashua	558	1535	2093	0	0	6	0	0	6
St. Regis	4166	1409	5575	0	35	32	0	0	67
Dillon	2165	599	2764	3	0	17	0	0	20
Eureka	1537	275	1812	0	1	4	0	0	5
Hardin	2561	3378	5939	4	5	42	0	1	52
Seville (Blackfeet Nation)	141	332	473	0	0	3	0	0	3
Troy	2196	3500	5696	0	21	39	0	5	65
Wibaux	929	428	1357	1	4	9	0	0	14
<b>Continental Divide Stations</b>									
Anaconda	2008	3579	5587	4	25	109	0	0	138
Browning (Blackfeet Nation)	1969	1953	3922	0	13	27	0	0	40
Highway 12 Helena	953	3169	4122	1	1	34	0	0	36
Sula	681	670	1351	0	1	21	0	0	22
<b>Interior Stations</b>									
Clearwater Junction (MSLA County)	2746	18675	21421	0	6	32	0	1	39
Broadus (PRCD)	194	33	227	0	2	22	0	0	24
St. xavier (BCCD)	285	1035	1320	0	0	1	0	0	1
Flowing Wells (GCCD)	764	1695	2459	2	2	40	0	0	44
Fresno Reservoir	31	825	856	0	1	89	0	0	90
Ravalli (CSKT)	3310	10724	14034	1	14	37	0	0	52
Plains (CSKT)	639	2589	3228	0	35	15	0	0	50
Whitefish Lake (WLI)	260	1571	1831	0	5	61	0	0	66
<b>Parks</b>									
Bighorn NRA Fort Smith (NPS)	1031	1004	2035	0	0	1	0	0	1
Tongue River Reservoir State Park	1105	1499	2604	0	1	29	0	0	30
Glacier National Park (NPS)	N/A	N/A	11517	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
<b>Roving</b>									
Swan Roving	76	616	692	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Regional and Area Offices</b>									
Total All Offices	212	585	797	0	1	17	0	0	18
<b>Canyon Ferry Reservoir</b>									
Canyon Ferry Totals	367	7553	7920	0	10	4518	0	1	4529
<b>Tiber Reservoir</b>									
Tiber Totals	47	1489	1536	0	157	1168	0	0	1325
<b>Totals</b>	<b>30,931</b>	<b>70,720</b>	<b>113,168</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>6373</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6737</b>

## LIVE FISH

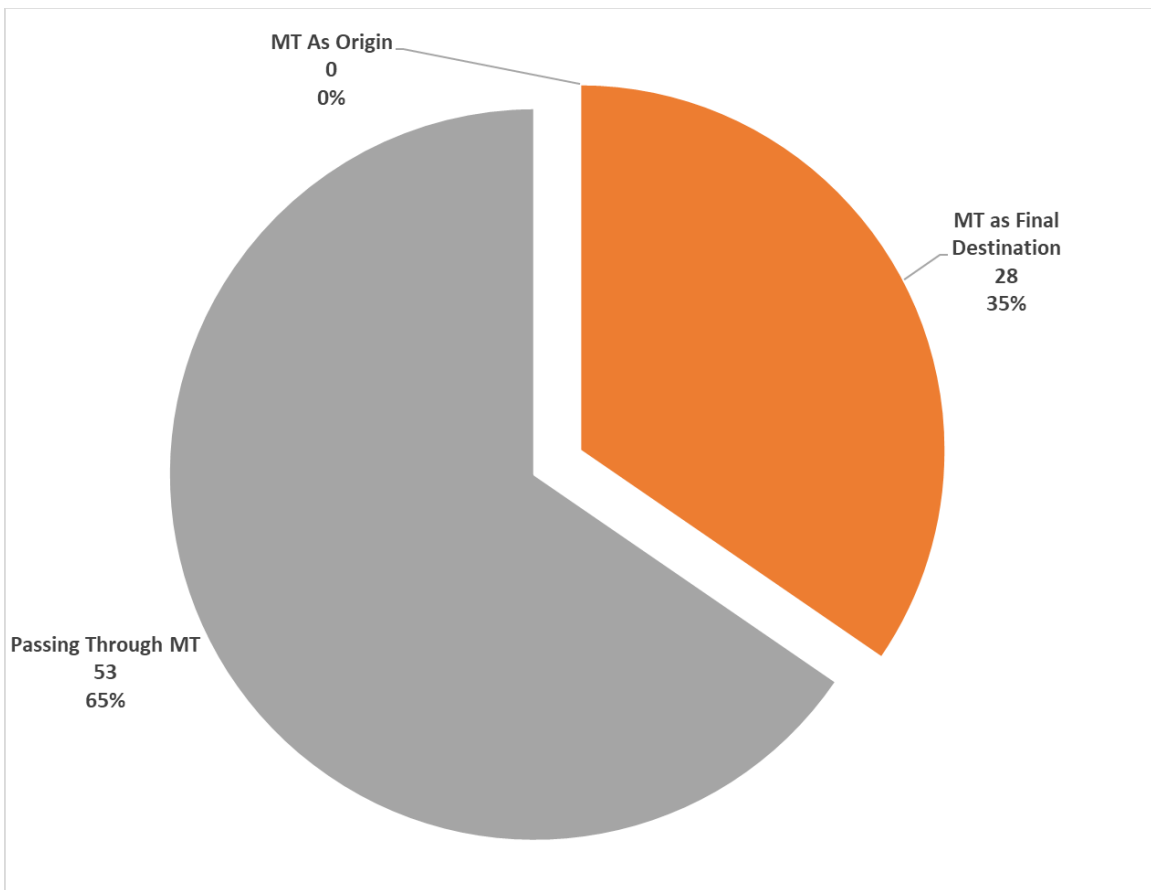
It is illegal to transport live fish, including bait fish, into Montana without authorization from FWP, and it is unlawful to possess or transport live fish away from the body of water in which the fish were taken anywhere in the western and central fishing district. Live non-game fish may be used as bait in certain waters in the central and eastern fishing districts. These regulations exist to prevent the introduction of non-native fish into Montana's waters. Fish and the water they are transported can also carry pathogens, weeds, snails, mussels, or other AIS. In 2019, inspectors found 8 cases of illegal live fish over the course of the season most of which came from Troy. Standard protocol for inspection staff is to confiscate any illegal live fish and call an FWP game warden.

## LIVE BAIT OTHER THAN FISH

Live animals such as mealworms, red worms, night crawlers, leeches, maggots, crayfish, reptiles, amphibians, and insects may be used as bait on all waters, but some live bait animals may not be imported into the state without authority from FWP. For example, anglers who use leeches in Montana must have purchased them within Montana or have a bill-of-sale from an FWP-approved out-of-state dealer. Leeches have the potential to transport pathogens and mussel larvae in the water that they are transported in. Watercraft station inspectors confiscate leeches if the angler cannot prove out of state leeches were legally obtained. FWP inspectors didn't encounter any cases of illegal leeches in 2019.

## COMMERCIALY HAULED AND OVERSIZE VESSEL TRACKING AND INSPECTION

Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) helps support the AIS Program in several ways, including the tracking and inspection of commercially hauled and oversize vessels. Licensing and permitting personnel with MDT question commercial boat haulers about the origin and destination of vessels during the permitting process and include a restriction on permits requiring boat haulers to contact FWP upon entry into Montana. AIS Program staff receive notifications for all permitted vessels entering the state and follow up with all boats destined for Montana. For vessels passing through the state, notifications are forwarded to the destination state or province. Most commercially hauled boats (53, 65%) are passing through Montana, one of which had either zebra or quagga mussels attached (Figure 8).



**Figure 9. Percentage of Commercially Hauled Boats Bound for MT, 2019.**

## ENFORCEMENT AND COMPLIANCE

Compliance at watercraft inspection stations is an ongoing challenge. To address this, FWP installs signage, flagging and lighted message boards to clearly indicate the inspection station and the mandatory need to stop. Despite this fact, boaters sometimes fail to stop at the station. FWP Wardens dedicate time to sit at stations throughout the season to enforce compliance. When wardens aren't present, station staff are trained to call 1-800-TipMONT if a boat fails to stop at the station. Enforcement officers from FWP, state police or local enforcement then attempt to follow up with that watercraft. 114 AIS related citations and 245 warnings were issued in 2019, primarily to boaters that failed to stop at inspection stations.

FWP wardens also stop boats on the water to ensure boaters have the proper safety equipment, check fishing licenses and verify boats have met mandatory inspection requirements for boats entering the state or crossing west over the Continental Divide.

## OTHER PREVENTION EFFORTS

Wading anglers: FWP promoted a targeted outreach campaign to wading anglers encouraging cleaning boots and gear. Outreach was distributed to partners and user groups as well as through an Upper Columbia

Conservation Commission (UC3) effort directed at local fly shops. Signs were also installed at wading angler sites promoting the clean drain dry message.

Seaplanes: FWP was approached by the Seaplane Pilots Association (SPA) to help them ensure pilots do not transport AIS. The State of Washington, in coordination with SPA, developed a training and certification to ensure seaplanes are free of invasive species. <https://www.seaplanepilotsassociation.org/invasive-species/> Montana, Idaho and Oregon endorsed this training and coordinate with seaplane pilots to address the AIS issue.

## CHALLENGES

Every year the AIS Prevention Program evaluates operations and identifies areas for improvement. The AIS prevention program is an expansive state-wide effort with over 200 staff working for partners and FWP inspecting boats around the state.

## QUALITY ASSURANCE QUALITY CONTROL (QA/QC)

It is an ongoing challenge to ensure that inspectors follow inspection protocols every time to ensure boats are clean, drained and dry. To help address this issue, FWP has sought out local entities that are interested in operating watercraft inspection stations. Contracting with local entities such as tribes, counties or conservation districts allows for local management and expand local support and participation in AIS prevention efforts. Contracted stations also are required to hire a station supervisor who reinforces protocols and provides oversight and management at the station. Other efforts to improve QA/QC included increased supervisor time at stations, updated training and secret shopper evaluations.

Additional initiatives to improve QA/QC for the 2020 season include:

- Updated training to include more hands on and interactive content
- Refresher trainings to be delivered throughout the season
- An online inspection evaluation that will be distributed to boaters to report on their inspection
- Incentives for inspectors to keep them engaged and motivated throughout the season.

## BOATER COMPLIANCE

Ensuring boats stop at inspection stations is also an ongoing challenge. Several initiatives in 2019 aimed to improve compliance at inspection stations. Signage was improved to help make boaters aware they need to stop at the station. This included the installation of permanent highway signs and placement of lighted message boards. FWP wardens assisted with compliance at the stations, dedicating time during the season to focus on intercepting boats that fail to stop.

In 2020, FWP is exploring ways to expand enforcement in areas where compliance is an issue to help intercept boats that fail to stop at the stations.

## SUMMARY

The 2019 watercraft inspection season was highly successful. Overall, FWP recruited many outstanding people to serve in inspector positions across the state. Their professionalism and dedication to this issue were instrumental in stations running smoothly and in getting people checked and on their way as quickly as possible. Many improvements have been put into place in 2019 and the program will continue to make adjustments and improvements to make the program more effective and efficient.

Knowledge and awareness of the issues surrounding AIS continues to increase because of the outreach and education efforts across Montana. Many thanks to all our partners around the state. A special thanks to Missoula County Weed District, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, The Blackfeet Nation, Garfield County Conservation District, Glacier National Park, Whitefish Lake Institute, McCone County Conservation District, Bighorn County Conservation District, and Powder River Conservation Distr

