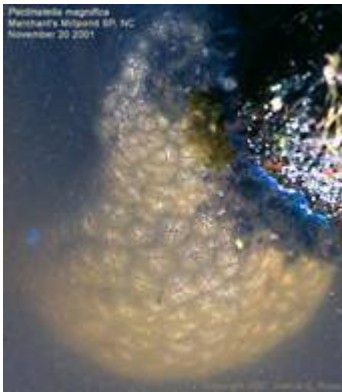


The following was sent as an e-mail broadcast to the Vilas County AIS Partnership on August 10, 2007

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The Vilas County Land & Water Conservation Department has been fielding questions lately similar to the following:

- What are those “**jelly ball**” things in my lake? They look nasty!
- Are these disgusting looking “**gelatinous masses**” some new invasive species?
- These things look like they could be used as “**breast implants**”! What are they?



What people are seeing is a type of freshwater bryozoa, (*Pectinatella magnifica*) to be specific. These masses typically range in size from golf balls to volley balls. While not appealing to humans, they are harmless and normal. They are more likely to be found in biologically productive lakes (lakes with diverse and healthy plant and animal populations).

The following excerpts from the website <http://www.millermicro.com/bryozoa.html> provide basic information. Please visit the site or do an Internet search for **freshwater bryozoa** or **Pectinatella magnifica** for additional information.

- Bryozoa are underwater colonies of tiny, colonial animals which, like sponges, filter water for their food.
- Worldwide, there are over 3,500 species of bryozoa, but only about 50 of these species inhabit freshwater.
- *Pectinatella magnifica* grows larger than most other species, but has less external form -- just a coating of firm jelly along a branch or stone, and a semi-visible set of pea-sized shapes just under a tough outer skin. Its characteristic *lophophores*, the visible portions of the actual animals, poke their tiny stems out into the water and wave petals to guzzle water and water-borne nutrients. When disturbed, they all pop back into the jelly in unison.

**To all lake monitors looking for invasive species lurking in lakes, keep up the good work. You never know what other interesting life forms you might find!**

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