

Aquatic Invasive Species Program



Fisheries
& Habitat
Conservation

Aquatic invasive species occur in all parts of the U.S. Some, like zebra mussels, wreak havoc by damaging water intake equipment for cities, boat engines and more. Others, like the sea lamprey, inflict serious damage on fish and other native aquatic life.

The nutria, a large rodent, can strip wetlands of vital plants. Some species are of particular concern, like the highly predatory, air-breathing, snakehead fish.

Even attractive aquatic invasive plants can be trouble, altering aquatic habitats, choking waterways, and reducing the recreational use of rivers and lakes.

The Fisheries Program leads the effort within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to implement aquatic nuisance species control and prevention activities authorized under the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990.

Through the cooperative activities of the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, representatives of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA serve as co-chairs and coordinate the activities of 9 Federal agencies and 11 ex-officio members to prevent and control aquatic nuisance species. Service program staff at the Washington Office, Regional Offices and Fish and Wildlife Management Assistance Offices work with State and private partners to coordinate and conduct activities carried out under the Task Force to implement a variety of the Act's provisions.

SOME EFFORTS INCLUDE:

EARLY DETECTION AND RAPID RESPONSE

- Conducting detection and monitoring activities, including establishing surveys and supporting the Nonindigenous Aquatic Species database.
- Working with Regional, State, and local stakeholders to rapidly respond to new introductions.

PREVENTION

- Conducting a variety of prevention programs aimed at keeping invasive species out the United States and working to prevent the spread of those already established.
- Supporting development of new technology to combat the entry of invasive species through vessels' ballast water.
- Working with partners to implement the 100th Meridian Initiative, an effort to prevent the westward spread of zebra mussels and other aquatic invasive species.
- Evaluating animal species to determine their injurious nature and regulate injurious species.



USFWS Photo

MANAGEMENT

- Conducting activities to control, manage and prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species, including aquatic invasive plants.
- Providing cost-sharing grants to implement approved State/Interstate Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plans to assist States and Tribes in their efforts to prevent and control aquatic invasive plants and animals.
- Developing species-specific control and management plans through ANS Task Force working groups.

OUTREACH

- Leading the development of two national public awareness and partnership campaigns — The Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers! campaign, and the Habitattitude™ campaign. Both campaigns provide the conservation community with vehicles to speak with one voice about this issue.
- The Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!, targets aquatic recreationists and empowers them to become part of the solution in preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species.



USFWS Photo

- The Habitattitude™ campaign, targets aquarium hobbyists and water gardeners to raise awareness about the aquatic invasive species issue and its relevance to their hobbies, and to promote environmentally-friendly alternatives when they are faced with a situation of having to dispose of aquatic plants or fish.

Using the prevention procedures that are the basis of both public awareness campaigns, **here's what you can do to help:**

- If you find a strange fish or other aquatic species that seems out of place, do not throw it back — keep it, and notify your state fish and wildlife agency or the nearest office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Moving your boat or personal watercraft from one body of water to another? Examine it to make sure you're not carrying unwanted hitchhikers, either on the boat, trailer, or in live wells or on boat motors. Check those tiny hiding places.
- If you have live bait left over from a fishing trip, do not dump it where you are fishing. Some bait is not native to the U.S., and once introduced into the wild, it's difficult to eradicate.
- If you buy an exotic fish in a pet store and decide later you no longer want it, do not release the animal into the wild. Many see this as a humane way to dispose of it, but it can be the least humane to the native species that are already there.



STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!™

Prevent the transport of nuisance species.
Clean all recreational equipment.

www.ProtectYourWaters.net



Habitattitude™

PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT
DO NOT RELEASE FISH AND AQUATIC PLANTS

PIJAC • U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE • NOAA'S SEA GRANT

www.Habitattitude.net

For more information about Aquatic Invasive Species Program, contact U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Fisheries and Habitat Conservation at 202/208-6394 or visit us on the Internet at <http://fisheries.fws.gov/>. or the Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers website at www.ProtectYourWaters.net and the Habitattitude™ website at www.Habitattitude.net.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
800/344-WILD
<http://www.fws.gov>

February 2005

