



# CLEAN BOATER TIP SHEET

## AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

---

Our nation's waters are under attack by aquatic invasive species, also called "exotic" or "non-indigenous" because they are not native to our waters. Many came from Europe and Asia in the ballast waters of ships, and they are spreading at alarming rates. In many cases, they are having negative effects on our native species, habitats, and water quality.

Some species, like zebra and quagga mussels and Eurasian watermilfoil, are spreading as "hitchhikers" on boats and other recreational equipment. Whenever you leave a body of water without cleaning your equipment, you may be taking one of these harmful organisms with you. If you then travel to other waterways, you could inadvertently be spreading that invader. As a boater on Wisconsin waters you can be an active steward of our valuable resources by implementing these practices:

### **Before Leaving the Boat Launch**

- ☞ Inspect your boat, trailer, and equipment and remove any plants, sediment, and animals.
- ☞ Drain, on land, all water from the motor, livewell, bilge, and transom well. Some invasives may not be visible to the naked eye.
- ☞ Bait buckets can transport invasive species and fish diseases. Do not empty your bait bucket into the water. Empty your bait bucket in the trash to help prevent the spread of invasive species and fish diseases.

### **After Leaving the Boat Launch**

- ☞ Wash your boat, tackle, trailer, and other equipment with hot (104°) tap water or a high-pressure sprayer to kill or remove any exotic species not visible at the boat launch. Or, allow your boat and other equipment to dry thoroughly in the sun for at least five days before moving to another body of water – some invasives can survive for long periods of time out of water.

- ☞ If you have used your watercraft where a fish disease called viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS) has spread (check with your local Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources [WDNR] office or Wisconsin Sea Grant), disinfect the outside and inside of your watercraft and your gear after using them. Mix one cup bleach in 10 gallons of water and brush/mop your watercraft and trailer surfaces. Test this diluted bleach solution in an inconspicuous location prior to applying to the entire watercraft and trailer. Keep the surface wet for five minutes, then rinse with water. Disinfection should occur on land away from lakes, rivers, and storm drains because chlorine is toxic to aquatic life.

### **Other Helpful Practices**

- ☞ Do not use fish parts as bait or chum. This practice encourages the spread of VHS and other fish diseases.
- ☞ Help prevent the spread of invasive species and fish diseases by not transferring water, fish, fish eggs, or other aquatic organisms between waterways.
- ☞ Learn what aquatic invasive species look like by viewing images at [www.sgnis.org](http://www.sgnis.org). Know how to identify Eurasian watermilfoil, round goby, zebra mussel, quagga mussel, spiny waterflea, bighead carp, silver carp, phragmites and purple loosestrife, to name a few. Know which waterways are infested, and report any new infestation to Wisconsin Sea Grant at **(920-683-4697)** or your local WDNR service center.
- ☞ For further recommendations on controlling the spread of aquatic invasive species, including any permit requirements for applying control methods, talk with the staff of WDNR's Divisions of Fisheries Management and Wildlife Management as well as staff from Wisconsin Sea Grant.