

Protect Our Waterfowl Habitat



A Hunter's Guide to Stopping Aquatic Invasive Species

Designed by



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STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!

A Wonderful Way of Life...



...Worth Preserving

Hunting and outdoor recreation are some of life's greatest pleasures and pastimes. The health of our natural resources is critical and supports America's outdoor way of life. Waterfowl hunters must take part in protecting the health of our natural resources by preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species, which can have costly effects on our environment and economy.



Join waterfowl hunters in Wisconsin and beyond in helping to prevent the spread of aquatic hitchhikers and preserve waterfowl habitat and populations. Watercraft, trailers, decoys, dogs and all other hunting equipment can transport invasive species. Taking a few simple steps - **Inspect, Remove, and Drain** - before and after spending time on the water will help protect waterfowl, habitat and the hunting tradition for generations to come.



Today, many wetlands, lakes, rivers and streams are threatened by invasive species like zebra/quagga mussels, Eurasian watermilfoil, hydrilla, New Zealand mudsnails and phragmites. With no predators and an ability to thrive in a range of conditions, these "hitchhikers" can spread quickly once established. They can degrade quality habitat and food sources by competing with native plants and animals; some threaten waterfowl populations as carriers of deadly diseases and parasites.

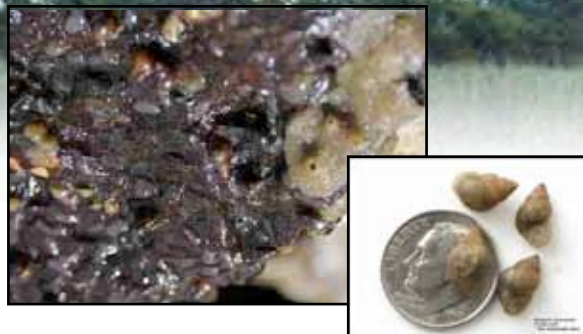
Hunters can also help by learning how to identify invasive species and by sharing their knowledge about prevention to others who enjoy the outdoors, including the next generation.

Know the Facts...

Zebra/Quagga mussels can foul boats and blinds, and create conditions suitable for the botulism bacteria, which can cause waterfowl die-offs. Because the mussels eat plankton, critical food for small fish and organisms, they also cause problems all along the food chain. Perhaps the most important thing to know about zebra mussels is they can spread easily. Adults, juveniles and microscopic larvae can be found attached to aquatic plants or in undrained containers and boat hulls.



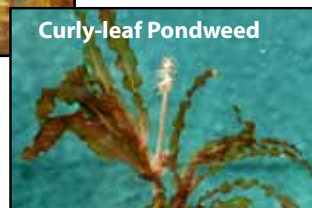
Phragmites is a tall non-native perennial grass that can grow to over 15 feet tall and forms dense stands with both live and dead stems. Leaves are elongated and typically 1-1.5 inches wide. Phragmites form a dense network of roots which can spread several feet each year. Choking out shallow wetlands and waterfowl habitat, phragmites should not be used for camouflage or transported on hunting blinds. Seeds can easily be spread, causing new infestations.



Faucet snails serve as hosts to parasites, which can be deadly to waterfowl that feed on the snails. These parasites have been linked to several waterfowl die-off events in the Upper Mississippi Wildlife Refuge. Faucet snails are small (up to 1/2 inch long) brown or black snails that are oval in shape and may attach to waders, anchors, decoy anchors, boats and vegetation. They can live out of water for many days by closing the cover or 'operculum' on their shell openings.



Eurasian Watermilfoil



Curly-leaf Pondweed

Invasive aquatic plants, like **Eurasian watermilfoil** and **Curly-leaf pondweed**, also endanger waterfowl habitat. These plants can grow rapidly, degrading quality hunting and fishing habitat. Eurasian watermilfoil and curly-leaf pondweed frequently get wrapped around boat propellers and decoy lines, and cling to trailer axles, bunks and rollers. Always **INSPECT** and **REMOVE** all vegetation from equipment. New weed beds can start from only small pieces!

Be a Part of the Solution!

You can help stop the invasion.

BEFORE launching and BEFORE leaving any water access, Wisconsin law requires that you:

- ✓ **INSPECT** footwear, decoys, dogs, watercraft, trailers, motor and hunting equipment.
- ✓ **REMOVE** plants, animals and mud.
- ✓ **DRAIN** all water from decoys, watercraft, motor, livewells and other hunting equipment.
- ✓ **NEVER MOVE** plants or live fish away from a water-body.



It's what you might not see that counts.

The larvae of many invasive aquatic animals are microscopic. These tiny organisms can survive for days in water left in watercraft, decoys and other hunting gear. Invasive plants and their seeds can be found in mud and cling to decoy bags, clothing, dogs and other equipment. If transported to new waters, these hidden animals and plants can establish, spread rapidly, and threaten the places where you hunt.

Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers! to protect our waters and waterfowl habitat. Take these simple steps to ensure that your natural resources remain healthy and vibrant for future generations.

✓ **INSPECT** ✓ **REMOVE** ✓ **DRAIN**

This message brought to you by Wildlife Forever.
Join at: www.WildlifeForever.org

Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers! Learn more at:
www.dnr.wi.gov and search "invasive species"

National Invasive Species Information site:
www.InvasiveSpeciesInfo.gov

Report invasive species to the Wisconsin DNR,
invasive.species@wisconsin.gov
or call (608)-267-3531



**STOP AQUATIC
HITCHHIKERS!™**

Prevent the transport of invasive species.
Clean all recreational equipment.
www.ProtectYourWaters.net