



Aquatic Invasive Species

Whether you are a boater, angler, swimmer, kayaker or just enjoy sitting in your yard enjoying the beautiful view, it is really important to understand the potential impacts of aquatic invasive species and what can be done to prevent them.

Invasive species can lead to the extinction of native plants and animals, destroy biodiversity, and permanently alter habitats. This can result in huge economic impacts and fundamental disruptions of aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems.

Without controls in their new range, invasive species populations can increase dramatically in a short period of time. This growth may reduce habitat quality, increase microbial exposures, lower biodiversity, and eventually impact fishery resources and water quality.

Aquatic invasive species pose an ongoing threat to the environment, economy, recreation and human health and safety. These species are a direct driver of biodiversity loss, yet also hinder economic development, serve as vectors of disease, decrease the aesthetic value of nature, and prevent recreational activities.

Aquatic invasive species can upset the balance of an ecosystem in a number of ways, including a widespread loss of habitat. Eurasian water milfoil for instance forms dense mats that block sunlight, starve aquatic life of oxygen and crowd out native vegetation which provides food, shelter and nesting areas for fish and other wildlife.

Many of our recreational activities depend on healthy native ecosystems. Invasive plants can clog water intakes on motors, causing overheating which may ruin engines. Waterfowl hunting and bird watching can be impacted if native vegetation is crowded out. Additionally, there can be substantial reductions in populations of certain native fish due to aggressive invasive species.

Aquatic invasive species can result in enormous economic costs in terms of impacts on fisheries, decreased water availability to residential and commercial users, degradation of water quality and decrease property values.

Here are some figures to illustrate some economic impacts from aquatic invasive species:

- A congressional report estimated the cost for the power industry to control zebra mussels from 1993 to 1999 was \$3.1 billion
- Eurasian watermilfoil reduced Vermont lakefront property value up to 16% and Wisconsin lakefront property values by 13%.
- \$24 million per year is being spent to control invasive aquatic plants in Michigan

It is so important that you understand the impacts of invasive and how it can affect you!

Next Month...What can you do to help prevent aquatic invasive species.

In the meantime, here is a link to aquatic invasive plants in Michigan...keep a look out for them. [Aquatic Invasive Plant Identification](#)

November 2020

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