



**STOP AQUATIC  
HITCHHIKERS!**  
Be A Good Steward. Clean. Drain. Dry.  
[StopAquaticHitchhikers.org](http://StopAquaticHitchhikers.org)



# Aquatic Invasive Species

## The Story Continues

Last month you heard about the potential impact of aquatic invasive species, including impacting biodiversity, recreation and even home values. For those of you wondering how to minimize the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species, here are a few ideas.

## Identify and Report

Be on the look-out for invasive species ... that includes plants and animals. If you see one of these contact the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy at this number 517-284-5593 or email [egle-wrd-anc@mi](mailto:egle-wrd-anc@mi). Here are some links to help you identify invasive plants and animals in Michigan:

[Invasive Aquatic Plants](#)

[Invasive Mollusks](#)

## Prevent Escapes from Aquariums and Backyard Ponds

Many plants and pets commonly found in aquariums and backyard ponds have been imported from other parts of the world. Some of these, including rusty crayfish, Eurasian watermilfoil and Carolina fanwort, have made their way into Michigan's waters, where they are harming the environment and affecting recreation. Aquariums and backyard pond plants and pets tend to be hardy and reproduce vigorously, making them appealing to hobbyists but dangerous to Michigan's native ecosystems if they escape.

Here's how to prevent escapes:

- Inspect and rinse any new plants to rid them of seeds, plant fragments, snails and fish.

- Build water gardens well away from other waters.
- Seal aquatic plants for disposal in a plastic bag in the trash. Do not compost.
- Give or trade unwanted fish or plants with another hobbyist, environmental learning center, aquarium or zoo.
- Contact a veterinarian or pet retailer for guidance on humane disposal of animals.

### **Clean Your Watercraft**

Michigan law requires that all aquatic plants be removed from watercraft, watercraft equipment and trailers before placing them into Michigan waters.

Prior to transporting any watercraft over land, boaters are required to do all of the following:

- Remove all drain plugs from bilges, ballast tanks, and live wells.
- Drain all water from any live wells and bilges.
- Ensure that the watercraft, trailer, and any conveyance used to transport the watercraft or trailer are free of aquatic organisms, including plants.

This means that after trailering boats, and before getting on the road, boaters must pull plugs, drain water and remove plants and debris. Violation of the law is a state civil infraction and violators may be subject to fines up to \$100.

You can really help protect Lake Leelanau by following these straightforward guidelines.

**Our next ebulletin will give more information about cleaning your watercraft.**

*December 2020*

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