

For more information on slowing the spread of aquatic invasive species and educational programs that promote coastal vitality, environmental sustainability, and citizen awareness about New York State's Great Lakes and marine resources, contact:

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New York Sea Grant (NYSG), a cooperative program of Cornell University and the State University of New York, is one of 32 university-based programs under the National Sea Grant College Program (NSGCP) of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). For updates on New York Sea Grant activities, www.nyseagrants.org has RSS, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube links.



STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!

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

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High profile aquatic invasive species (AIS)

Hydrilla

Hydrilla verticillata, one of the most damaging aquatic invasive species, was discovered in Cayuga Lake Inlet in Ithaca, NY, in 2011. It has also been found in other New York locations, including Long Island and Orange County. Leaves, with small teeth on the edges, grow in whorls of 3 to 10 on stems that can reach lengths up to 30 feet. The plant can easily be spread by the smallest of plant fragments. Hydrilla, has been known to displace native plants, cause fish kills, reduce the weight and size of sportfish, eliminate waterfowl feeding areas and fish spawning areas, obstruct boating, swimming and fishing, and reduce the value of shorefront property.



Hydrilla. Photo: Robert Vidéki, *Doronicum Kft., Bugwood.org*

Didymo (Rock Snot)

Didymo, also known as "rock snot," is a freshwater algae. Historically found in cool, clear, nutrient-poor waters, didymo has expanded its worldwide distribution to include nutrient-rich waters. Rivers with stable, regulated flows are particularly at risk. During blooms, didymo can form large, yellow-brown mats that are rough to the touch. These mats can cover large sections of streambeds, altering stream conditions and choking out many of the native organisms that live on the stream bottom. Didymo can be transferred on felt bottom waders and boots and other fishing gear.



Didymo (rock snot). Photo: Center for Invasive Species Research, University of California Riverside

High profile aquatic invasive species (AIS)

Round Goby

Round gobies are bottom-dwelling fish, from Europe, were first detected in the Saint Claire River (Great Lakes system) in 1990 and later sighted in Lake Ontario in 1996. Growing to about 10 inches with a black spot on the dorsal fin and a fused, or one, fin on the belly, gobies are aggressive, have the ability to spawn multiple times per year (every 20 days during the spawning season), and outcompete native species for food and habitat, such as sculpins and log perch. Long-term impacts from the gobies are expected to include declines in native species populations.



Round goby. Photo: David Jude, Michigan Sea Grant

Eurasian Watermilfoil

Eurasian watermilfoil is a very aggressive exotic plant originally from Europe, Asia and Africa. It often forms dense mats of multiple stems usually 3 to 10 feet long and can grow in water up to 30 feet deep. Its leaves are made of 12-21 leaflet pairs, which form a whorl around the stem. This weed severely threatens lake environments and discourages boating, swimming, fishing, and other recreational activities. Although Eurasian watermilfoil can be spread by seed, the far more common vector is by vegetative propagules (living pieces of the plant) being carried in water currents and by commercial and recreational boat traffic and aquatic weed harvesting activities which disturb and fragment the plants and assist in the movement of those fragments throughout and among waterbodies.



Eurasian watermilfoil. Photo: ©Barry Rice, *Sarracenia.com*

Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers

How-To Tips for Slowing the Spread of Aquatic Invasive Species

Learn How Inspecting Your Watercraft Can Protect NY's Waters



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Tip 1: Practice watercraft inspection

What is Watercraft Inspection?

By inspecting your boat before entering and leaving a body of water and removing any type of plant and animal matter (native and invasive) from your watercraft, you help slow the spread of invasive species. Practicing watercraft inspection protects our local waterways and habitats, and keeps them a valuable resource for use now and by future generations.



NY Sea Grant Launch Steward Shelby Persons educates boaters about the importance of watercraft inspection. Photo: Matt Brincka, NY Sea Grant

Tip 2: Learn more about invasive species from local educators

Launch Stewards are environmental educators working to increase public awareness about aquatic invasive species (AIS). They help motorized and non-motorized boaters learn ways to slow the spread of AIS.

Launch Stewards demonstrate watercraft inspection and encourage boaters to follow ecologically responsible recreational practices that maintain or improve the health of coastal ecosystems and communities. The Stewards also conduct educational programming and distribute educational resources.

New York Sea Grant (NYSG) manages a Launch Steward program focused on sites along Lake Ontario's southern and eastern shores, the Salmon River, Oneida Lake and other inland waters in Central New York as part of a statewide watercraft inspection effort.

Tip 3: Inspect & Clean, Drain & Dry

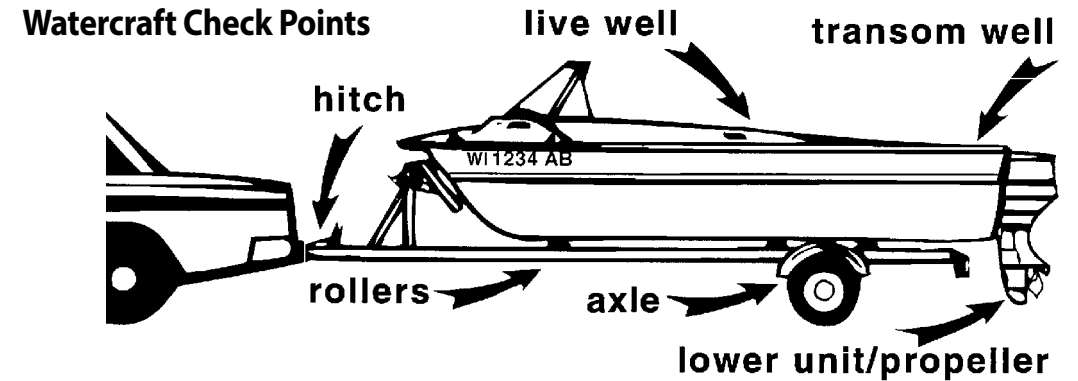
Follow these simple steps from the *Stop the Aquatic Hitchhiker* Campaign:

- 1. INSPECT & CLEAN:** Remove all visible plants, animals, fish, and mud from your boat, trailer, or other equipment and dispose of in a suitable trash container or on dry land away from vehicle traffic and water.
- 2. DRAIN:** Drain water from bilge, live wells, ballast tanks, boat body, and any place capable of holding water before leaving the launch.
- 3. DRY:** Dry your boat, trailer, and all equipment completely. Drying times vary depending on the weather and the type of material. Dry by hand, or let vessel sit to dry for at least five days, which is enough to kill most organisms that may be left on the boat during the summer months.



NY Sea Grant Launch Steward Julia Gilbert assists a boater with plant removal. Photo: Matt Brincka, NY Sea Grant

Tip 4: Use this AIS inspection checklist for thoroughly inspecting your boat, watercraft, or water gear



Boats:

- Motor:
 - Prop
 - Intake pipes
- Trailer
 - License plate
 - Taillights/wiring
 - Wheels and axles
 - Frame
 - Rollers
- Boat
 - Floor
 - Hull
 - Livewell
 - Transom well
- Accessories:
 - Anchor
 - Bow line
 - Ladder
 - Tow ropes
 - Water skis, wake boards, tubes
 - Life jackets
 - Swim fins
 - Diving or snorkeling gear
- Fishing Gear:
 - Bait bucket
 - Landing net
 - Tackle
 - Fishing reel/rod
 - Waders
 - Boots

Personal Watercraft (PWC):

- Trailer (see above)
- PWC body
- Intake (under PWC)
- Propulsion
- Life jacket

Kayaks and Canoes:

- Boat
- Paddles
- Life jacket
- Skieg/skeg cavity

Used with permission from University of Wisconsin – Extension Lakes

Tip 5: Practice proper disposal of AIS

When you remove debris or organisms from your boat or gear, please place the unwanted material:

- In the trash
- On dry land away from vehicle traffic and water
- In Invasive Species Disposal Station



An Invasive Species Disposal Station. Boaters are encouraged to dispose of invasive species in these disposal stations. Photo: Julia Gilbert, NY Sea Grant