

CLEAN YOUR GEAR!

Preventing the Spread of Aquatic Invasive Species in Pennsylvania



Photo courtesy of Rob Carr, Associated Press. Robert Cousins of Arlington, Va., scrubs his felt soled waders at a wader wash station before fishing for trout.



STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!TM

Prevent the transport of aquatic invasive species. Clean all recreational equipment.

www.ProtectYourWaters.net

TIPS FOR ANGLERS

Recreational fishing provides both economic and social benefits to Pennsylvania. It is important that anglers take action to remove any “hitchhikers” from their equipment, boots, nets, clothing, and other gear that touched the water while fishing so that AIS are not spread to new locations.

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) are non-native plants, animals, or pathogens that cause harm to the environment, the economy, and human or animal health. Preventing the spread of AIS is important because once introduced, these species disrupt ecosystems, reduce biodiversity, and cost communities huge amounts of time, money, resources, and lost revenue.

AIS pose a significant threat to recreational and commercial fishing. Native fish populations, including both prey and game fish, are negatively impacted by AIS because they compete for food, reduce spawning habitat, feed on young of year, and impact water quality. Some species can become a serious nuisance to anglers by fouling fishing lines and stealing bait. Aquatic invasive plants also impact fishing because they clog aquatic habitats, limit access to good fishing spots, and make navigation nearly impossible.

Because anglers often travel great distances to fish at different lakes and streams, unwanted species can be unintentionally transported and introduced. Hitchhikers can attach themselves to equipment, clothing, boots, and boats and move from lake to lake. Therefore it is important to become aware of this issue and understand how to prevent further spread. By following a few simple steps, anglers can play an active role in preventing the spread of AIS (see other side).



Photo courtesy of Ann Faulds, Pennsylvania Sea Grant.

CHECK THESE AREAS:

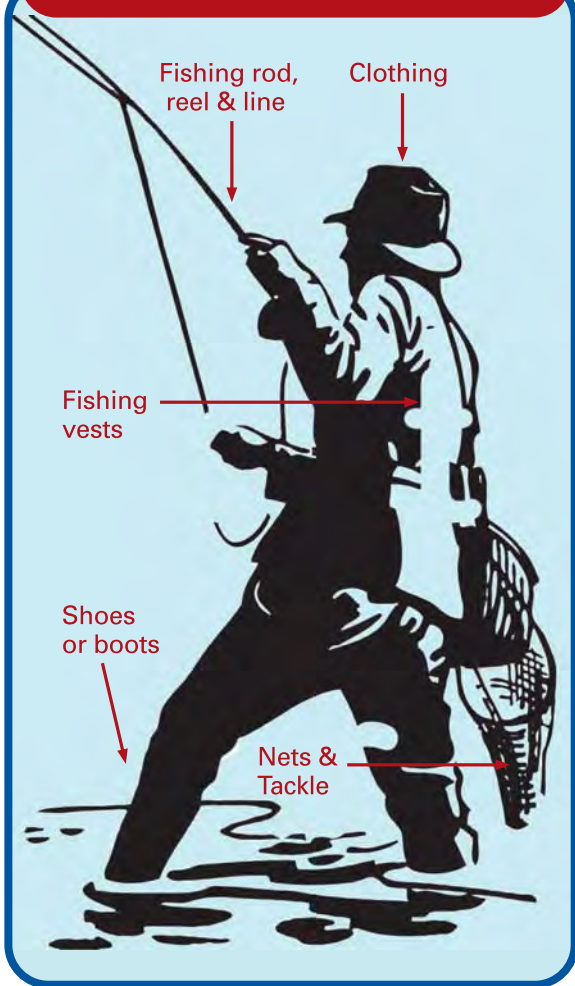


Diagram courtesy of the Aquatic Nuisance Species Taskforce's Recreational User Guidelines.

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CLEAN

Inspect and *clean off* plants, animals, and mud from gear and equipment including waders, footwear, ropes, anchors, bait traps, downrigger cables, dip nets, fishing lines, and field gear *before leaving water access*.

Scrub off any visible material on footwear with a stiff brush.

DRAIN

Drain water from watercraft, motor, bilge, bladder tanks, livewell and portable bait containers *before leaving water access*.

DISPOSE

Dispose of unwanted bait, fish parts, and packing materials, in the trash; do not dump them in the water or on land.

DRY

Dry everything *five days* or more, unless otherwise required by local or state laws, when moving between waters to kill small species not easily seen **OR** if drying is not possible, *wipe* with a towel *before reuse*.

In addition to the steps above, anglers should:

- Use non-felt soled boots instead of felt-soled footwear to further reduce the risk of spreading AIS.
- Never* release live fish, plants, or other organisms into a body of water unless they came from that body of water. Fish caught for eating or taxidermy should be cleaned away from the water and placed on ice.
- Dispose* of unwanted bait, fish parts, worms, and packing material in the trash; do not dump them in the water or on land.

References and links to more information:

Prevention steps for anglers:

Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers: www.Protectyourwaters.net

Additional recreational user guidelines:

http://www.anstaskforce.gov/Meetings/2013_June/Recreational_Guidelines.pdf

Where to report new invasive species infestations:

Sea Grant online reporting form: www.paseagrant.org/report-invasive-species/

Aquatic invasive species in Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Sea Grant AIS fact sheets:

www.paseagrant.org/fact_sheet_group/invasive-species/

Aquatic Invasive species mapping in Pennsylvania:

iMap Invasives: www.imapinvasives.org/

Additional AIS information:

Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission: www.fishandboat.com

Wildlife Forever: www.wildlifeforever.org/