

INVASIVE HITCHHIKERS Fact Sheet # 7

What Fishermen Need To Know!



Invasive species are taking over rivers, lakes and other natural areas throughout Pennsylvania, making fishing and boating difficult and damaging valuable habitat. Luckily fishermen can play a critical role in slowing the spread of invasives.

“Invasive species” are non-native plants, animals and pathogens that can cause harm to the economy, environment and human health.

Invasives can make it difficult for people to fish and enjoy

other recreational opportunities. For instance, invasive animals like the zebra mussel (*see photo below*) can consume most of the plankton that supports fish and other aquatic life. These mussels also absorb a lot of water-borne pollutants, so that if a person eats a fish that has eaten many zebra mussels, they are also consuming that pollution!

Invasive species are also a concern to fishermen because they can ruin the

beauty of Pennsylvania landscapes and lower biodiversity (the variety of living things in an area). We need biodiversity to maintain healthy habitats.

Plus it’s simply more interesting to fish in a water body full of different plants and animals, rather than just a few. But that is exactly what could happen if an invasive species appears...all other species, including fish and the insects they eat, may be chased out!



USGS, www.invasive.org

Make A Difference!

Now that you know why invasive species are a concern, what can you do to help minimize their spread? Luckily there are many small, easy steps you can take to keep invasives in check.

- Know how to identify some of the invasive plants in your area, so you can avoid walking and fishing near them. Visit www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/plants/invasiveplants/index.htm to learn more.
- For more information on aquatic invasive species and how to prevent their spread: www.protectyourwaters.net
- Remove any visible plant and animal parts from fishing equipment and leave it on-site.
- You can’t always see aquatic invasives, but they might be there. And some can survive for days out of water. So always wash boats with a high-pressure spray or hot water, and dry it off, before going to a new water body.
- Don’t dump leftover bait into or near the water, or it might survive and take over.
- Volunteer to help prevent and control invasive species. Contact your local state park or forest office, watershed group or fishing club to get involved.

