



2013 Launch Steward Program

AIS Prevention - Watercraft Inspection Education Series

Help Prevent Spread of AIS BEFORE We Pay for Management

by New York Sea Grant Launch Steward Ryan Thompson

An aquatic invasive species (AIS) is a water-living organism that causes or is likely to cause harm to the economy, environment, or human health. AIS are becoming a persistent problem in New York waterways, clogging boating channels, disrupting the natural food webs, and negatively impacting taxpayers through management costs, and decreased tourism, recreation and shoreline property value.

The St. Lawrence Eastern Lake Ontario Partnership for Regional Invasive Species (PRISM) website estimates that AIS cost the U.S. approximately \$137 billion annually. According to “The Cost of Aquatic Invasive Species to Great Lakes State” (*Anderson Economic Group, 2012*), it is “likely that the overall aggregate level of cost (of AIS) to the Great Lakes region is significantly over \$100 million annually.”

The weight AIS pose on the economy has been felt even more regionally. James Balyszak, *Hydrilla* Task Force of the Cayuga Lake Watershed Project Manager, estimates the cost of removing *Hydrilla* from the Cayuga Lake Inlet in 2012 alone at \$400,000. He expects the cost to stay at \$400,000-\$500,000 for the remainder of the project -- another seven years.

AIS have the potential to decrease shoreline property value by adversely affecting recreational activities, such as boating, fishing, swimming, and by lowering the overall aesthetics of the property. There is no definitive estimate for the impact AIS have on property values, however, heavy growth of aquatic weeds, including AIS, can decrease shoreline property values by up to 20 percent. Cornell University Cooperative Extension Invasive Species Program Coordinator Chuck O'Neill stresses that “even a 10 percent drop in waterfront property values can be a big hit to a local community.”



A boater puts weeds found on his propeller into a Nuisance Invasive Species Disposal Station. Photo: Ryan Thompson, NYSG Launch Steward



**STOP AQUATIC
HITCHHIKERS!**

All this adds up to the need for public engagement in efforts to prevent and slow the spread of AIS. To learn how “**Clean, Drain, Dry**” watercraft inspection helps nip AIS in the bud before they nip us in the pocketbook, visit the New York Sea Grant Launch Steward Program blog at <http://nysglaunchsteward.blogspot.com>.

The statements and views expressed in this publication are those of the New York Sea Grant Launch Stewards who are student authors. 9/2013

How AIS are Spread

- Hitchhiking on the hulls of ships, motorized and nonmotorized boats
- On recreational gear, e.g., paddles, fishing waders, trailers, swim fins, etc.
- On animals, birds, muskrats, dogs . . .
- Accidental release by humans
- Dumping of baitfish and aquarium contents in local water bodies
- AIS used in aquatic gardening
- Release from livewells or bilge tanks
- Natural migration



An AIS: round goby. Photo: Megan Pistolese, NY Sea Grant Launch Steward

Potential Economic Damages

- Aquatic invasive plants can form dense mats that hinder recreation and tourism
- Aquatic invasive animals, e.g., zebra/quagga mussels, can clog intake pipes, impacting water supplies and industrial operations
- AIS infestation can lower waterfront property aesthetics and property value
- AIS impact fish habitat, disrupt aquatic food webs, and decrease the diversity and abundance of fish species to limit sportfishing opportunities

How YOU Can Help Prevent & Slow the Spread of AIS

• Implement Clean, Drain, Dry practices

Clean: Look for, remove and properly dispose of any visible mud, plants, fish or organisms from boats, trailers, equipment, clothing, dogs, etc.

Drain: Before leaving the launch, empty all water from bilges, buckets, livewells, etc. that hold water. Dump live bait at bait disposal sites or in the trash.

Dry: Dry anything that comes into contact with water. Recommended air dry time is 5 days.

- **Become active with your local PRISM**
- **Attend local community outreach programs on AIS**
- **Stay up-to-date on all things AIS**



FOR MORE INFORMATION

New York Sea Grant
Launch Steward Program
315-312-3042
www.nyseagrants.org



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