



STATE AGENCIES ENCOURAGE BEST-PRACTICE PROCEDURES FOR AQUATIC NUISANCE SPECIES PREVENTION

With the summer recreation season fast approaching, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) would like to remind residents and tourists to help preserve North Dakota's beloved waters. Water-based activities are enjoyed by many during both the warm and cold weather months throughout the state.

In the past decade, North Dakota has seen a dramatic rise in Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS). These invasive species are not native to our ecosystems and introducing them can cause negative environmental effects, economic impacts, and even public health concerns. Taking precautions and implementing best-practice procedures by water recreationalists, pet owners, municipalities, private contractors, and water-front property owners can greatly reduce the spread of these species.

Aquatic nuisance species, whether they are animals such as zebra mussel or plants such as curly-leaf pondweed, threaten fishing, boating, swimming, and other water-based activities. In states where they have become established, ANS have proven expensive to combat and difficult or impossible to control

or eradicate. They can cause harm to recreational fisheries, negative impacts on communities, and adverse effects on water supplies.

The DWR's vision is to afford present and future generations of North Dakotans with an adequate supply of good quality water for people, agriculture, industry, and fish and wildlife. It is imperative to advocate and support this vision by assisting in the control of aquatic nuisance species and aid in preventing further spread.

The DWR, in collaboration with the North Dakota Game and Fish Department (NDGFD) and the Aquatic Invasive Species Committee (AISC), aims to ensure public awareness and encourage residents, tourists, and contractors to implement preventative measures to address the rapid increase of ANS across the state. If precautions are taken and individuals demonstrate compliance, the spread can be controlled. By following NDGFD guidance, we can help safeguard a reliable water supply, empower our communities to take action, and limit the harsh repercussions of invasive species.

The public should incorporate the following boat cleaning recommendations including: **Clean, Drain, and Dry** all equipment, every time you use it. Clean and remove all plants or animals from your watercraft or equipment prior to leaving any recreational area you have used. Drain and remove water from all equipment prior to exiting designated access points. Not draining water can be extremely hazardous and may cause negligent transportation of ANS to new locations. Afterwards, verify that all equipment is completely dry before utilizing it again.



Zebra mussels are just one of the aquatic nuisance species that threaten North Dakota waters.

North Dakota's ANS laws are designed for easy understanding, compliance, and enforcement, and they are similar to those of neighboring states. North Dakota's ANS laws also apply to commercial and industrial equipment, and NDGFD collaborates with permitting agencies such as the North Dakota Department of Transportation, North Dakota Department of Water Resources, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to ensure contractors comply. Similarly, waterfowl hunters, aquatic pet owners, teachers, water gardeners, and others should be aware of regulations that may affect them. NDGFD implements the following additional ANS regulations:

- All aquatic vegetation must be inspected and removed from boats, personal watercraft, trailers, and fishing and hunting equipment such as fishing poles, bait buckets, lures, duck decoys, and waders before leaving a body of water. That means "vegetation free" when transporting watercraft and/or equipment away from a boat ramp, landing area or shoreline.

- Live aquatic bait or aquatic vegetation may not be transported into North Dakota.
- All water must be drained from boats and other watercraft, including bilges, livewells, baitwells and motors before leaving a water body.
- All drain plugs that may hold back water must be removed, and water draining devices must be open, on all watercraft and recreational, commercial, and construction equipment bilges and confined spaces, during any out-of-water transport of same.
- Anglers may not transport live bait in water away from any Class I ANS infested water. All water must be drained from bait buckets as anglers leave the shore, or remove their boat from the water. Anglers must properly dispose of unused bait away from the water's edge, as dumping bait in the water or on shore is illegal. In all other waters not infested with Class I ANS species, anglers can transport live bait in water in containers of five (5) gallons or less in volume.



ANS regulations urge people to please **Inspect, Remove, and Drain** all equipment every time it is used.

The Department of Water Resources, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, and Governor Burgum acknowledges May 15 - May 21, 2022, as North Dakota's Aquatic Nuisance Species Awareness Week. We strongly encourage the public to please help monitor, control, and prevent the spread of invasive species in North Dakota.

For more information, please visit www.dwr.nd.gov and www.gf.nd.gov.