

Water WoRDs

Updates from the Water Resources Division



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Michigan's Aquatic Invasive Species Landing Blitz

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is kicking off June's Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Awareness Week with an event on June 6 and 7, 2014, for boaters. We'll team up with citizen volunteers and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) for the inaugural two-day event, called the AIS Landing Blitz, at 12 boat landings around the state.

AIS crowd out native species, disrupt aquatic ecosystems, and interfere with boating, fishing, and other recreation. Michigan landowners spend about \$25 million annually on chemical treatment of aquatic plants to minimize their harmful effects. Boaters can unknowingly transfer invasive plants, animals, and even fish diseases such as viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS). AIS can hitchhike to new waters when they are attached to boats, trailers and other equipment; floating in live well or bilge water; or even as contaminants in fishing bait. Fortunately, there are some simple steps that boaters can take to greatly reduce the risk of spreading AIS.

The Landing Blitz is designed to help boaters prevent the spread of these harmful species and comply with current AIS-related laws. State agency staff and local partner organizations will focus on delivering the following information to boaters and anglers enjoying Michigan's waters:

Required Actions – It's the Law in Michigan!

- **Remove** aquatic plants from boats, boating equipment, and boat trailers, before launching or placing in the water (Part 413, Transgenic and Nonnative Organisms, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended, Section 41325).
- **Drain** live wells, bilges and all water from boats before leaving the access site (DNR Fisheries Order No. 245).
- **Dispose** of unused bait in the trash. Do not release bait into the water (DNR Fisheries Order No. 245).
- **Don't transfer** fish to water bodies other than where they were caught (DNR Fisheries Order No. 245).



Aquatic plants attached to a boat/trailer illustrating the importance of inspections and cleaning equipment.



STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!™

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

www.ProtectYourWaters.net

Required Actions – It's the Law in Michigan!

- **REMOVE** aquatic plants from boats, boating equipment, and boat trailers before launching or placing in the water.
- **DRAIN** live wells, bilges and all water from boats before leaving the access site.
- **DISPOSE** of unused bait in the trash. Do not release bait into the water.
- **DON'T TRANSFER** fish to water bodies other than where they were caught.

Additional Recommended Actions – Protect Our Natural Resources!

- **INSPECT** and **REMOVE** plants and mud from boats and trailers and dry equipment before leaving the access area.
- **POWER WASH** boats and trailers before leaving the access area if possible or at a nearby car wash, AND/OR
- **DRY BOATS** & equipment for at least 5 days before going to other waters.
- **DISINFECT** livewells and bilges with bleach solution (1/2 cup bleach to 5 gallons water)



"Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers" winch post stickers will be handed out during the Landing Blitz. Contact Kevin Walters (waltersk3@michigan.gov) if you're interested in obtaining winch post stickers.

Additional Recommended Actions – Protect Our Waters!

- **Inspect and remove** plants and mud from boats and trailers and dry equipment before leaving the access area. Dispose of the material in a trash receptacle or otherwise away from the water body, if possible.
- **Wash** boats and trailers before leaving the access area if possible, at a nearby carwash, or at home.
- **Dry** boats and equipment for at least five days before launching into a different body of water.

Disinfect live wells and bilges with bleach solution (1/2 cup bleach to five gallons of water).

State agency staff and local partners will also demonstrate how to visually check for AIS and show where and how to clean and decontaminate boats and recreational equipment. Sometimes it is easy to see gobs of plant material that should be removed, but there can also be microscopic animals, plant parts, or diseases. With just a few minutes of effort, the risk of AIS transfer can be greatly reduced. Handouts with AIS prevention messaging such as key chain floats, trailer winch post stickers, can coozies, towels, and informational AIS cards will also be distributed at the event. For more information about Michigan's AIS Program and AIS Awareness week, visit

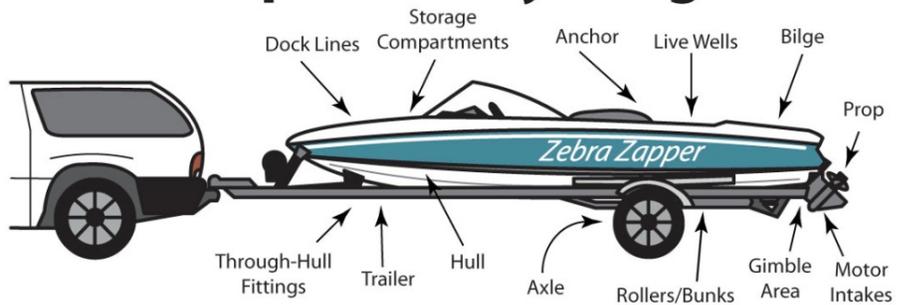
www.mi.gov/aquaticinvasives.

Locations for the AIS Landing Blitz

Torch Lake, Antrim County
Glen Lake, Leelanau County
Paradise Lake, Emmet County
Higgins Lake, Roscommon County
Manistee River, Manistee County
Hardy Dam Pond, Newaygo County
AuGres Boating Access Site
(Saginaw Bay), Arenac County
Pontiac Lake State Recreation Area,
Oakland County
Gun Lake, Barry County
Gull Lake, Barry County
Chicagon Lake, Iron County
Lake Antoine, Dickinson County

Before leaving and before launching...

inspect everything!



What do you do in the WRD? Meet Kevin Walters

Kevin Walters is an aquatic biologist with the WRD. His work focuses on AIS, particularly education and outreach. Whether engaging recreational boaters and fishermen to promote the removal of AIS from boats and equipment or working with lake associations and property owners to control invasive plants such as Phragmites, Kevin enjoys learning and helping others learn about AIS. He lives in Grand Rapids with his wife and three daughters, and enjoys writing, photography, and sailing the Great Lakes.

