



Background Information for Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)

ANS can be plants, animals or microbes and are generally non-native (invasive). They often have a competitive advantage over native species. By out competing/replacing native species AIS can cause widespread ecological and economic problems

Typically, ANS are inadvertently introduced but may be from intentional introduction. Once introduced ANS are impossible to eradicate. AIS are successful foreign environments because there is usually an absence of animals that eat them, and diseases that kill them like in their native habitat. AIS are spread mostly by human activity including boating, fishing, hunting, and irrigating.

Many AIS are native to Eurasia which encompasses the geographic region of Europe and Asia. Many AIS made their way to the U.S. in the ballast water of large ocean freighters. Many AIS were introduced into the Great Lakes. From there they spread to other waters via recreational watercraft.

Zebra and Quagga mussels reach incredible densities and will attach themselves to any hard surface. They are filter feeders and when populations get out of control can rob the water of essential nutrients that native macro-invertebrates rely on.

Didymo (rock snot) is a single cell algae. It reproduces very quickly to blanket stream/river bottoms suffocating the benthic macro-invertebrate population. Didymo infestations have been linked to significant fish population declines.

Eurasian Milfoil is a plant that forms dense mats that clog waterways and crowd out native aquatic plants. It is spread easily through fragments. It can stay alive so long as it stays moist.

VHS (Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia) is a virus that kills fish. VHS can be transmitted in one drop of water. Infected fish can spread the virus as well. VHS can live up to two weeks in water that contains bait, boat bilge, and live wells. There is no cure for VHS and it has led to large fish kills in the Great Lakes.

Ecological impacts of AIS include displacement of native species, environmental degradation, and disruption of food webs and nutrient cycles.

Economic effects include impacts on agriculture, hydropower and municipalities. Degraded environments will result in less tourism, angling and other recreational use of our waters. Costs of mitigating for introductions, preventing introductions and monitoring species may be very significant for industry and agriculture.

What Can We Do About ANS? Aquatic nuisance species are nearly impossible to eradicate once they are established. Preventing introduction is the only effective method of combating the threat. Prevention can only succeed if the entire public is invested in the prevention effort.

Inspect – Clean – Dry your gear every time you go fishing or boating.

- Use water only – No Chemicals
- Nothing special to remember
- No special equipment needed
- Cheap, Easy and Available to Everyone!

For more information and links regarding AIS please visit our website at www.stopans.org