

Aquatic Invasive Species Update Washington & Waukesha Counties



January 2023

Amanda Schmitz:

Email: amanda.schmitz@washcowisconsin.gov or aschmitz@waukesha.wisconsin.gov

Washington County Website

Waukesha County Website

Preventing the Spread: Ice Fishing



Invasive species are still able to spread in cold, icy winter months. Two common non-native aquatic plants in Wisconsin, Curly-Leaf Pondweed and Eurasian Watermilfoil, remain hardy in winter, giving them an advantage over native aquatic plants. The star-shaped bulbils of Starry Stonewort can also be dredged up from the sediment by ice augers. Larvae of invasive snails and mussels can also be found in the water and mud during winter.

Ice fishers can help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species!

- **Inspect** boats, trailers and equipment for attached aquatic plant, animals or mud
- **Remove** all attached plants or animals
- **Drain** all water from boats, motors, livewells, buckets and other equipment
- **Never move** live fish away from a waterbody
- **Dispose** of unwanted bait in the trash

The Wisconsin DNR is hosting a [Free Fishing Weekend January 21st-22nd, 2023](#). On Free Fishing Weekend, you can drill a hole and drop a line without a fishing license, trout stamp, or salmon stamp. Remember to follow the above steps to prevent the spread of invasive species!

Please note that fishing regulations, seasons, bag limits, and length limits apply to this event.



Spiny & Fishhook Waterflea: Winter Survivors

The Spiny (*Bythotrephes cederstroemi*) and Fishhook (*Cercopagis pengoi*) waterfleas are small, predacious crustaceans that threaten aquatic ecosystems and fishing by competing with native fish for food and fouling gear. Though these species are tiny, they are visible to the naked eye, especially when clumped together in gelatinous masses.



A mass of Spiny Waterfleas congregated on a fishing line.

Spiny waterfleas are primarily spread via fishing gear and undrained water. These waterfleas collect in masses on fishing lines and downrigger cables and can clog eyelets of rods, damage a reel's drag system, and prevent fish from being landed.

This species spreads to inland lakes via egg-laden female waterfleas. While females die out of water, the eggs they produce can remain viable after drying out, winter freezing, and passing through the guts of fish.

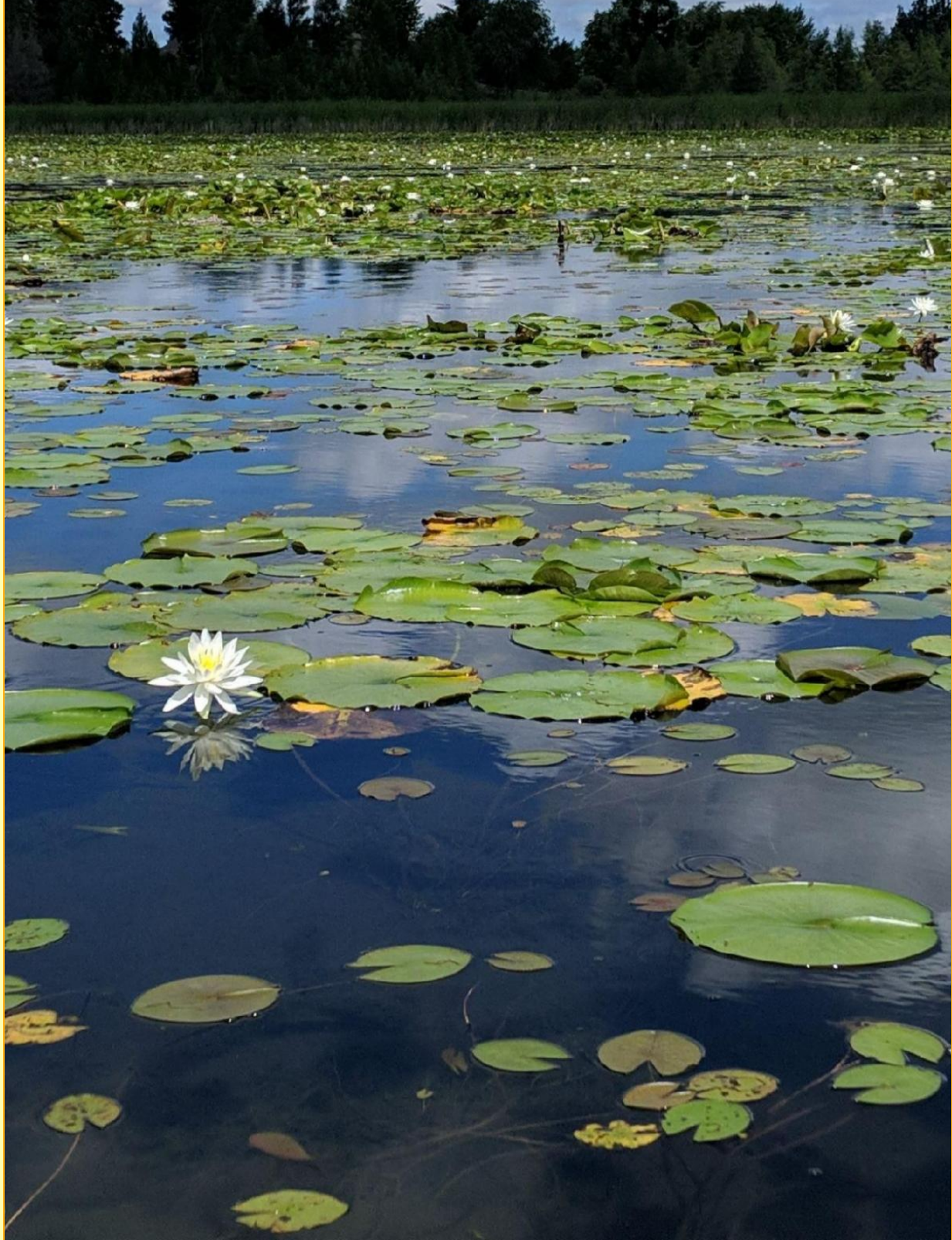


While fishing may be the primary cause of spread, fisherpeople are also the best group to be able to identify and report populations of waterfleas. Being familiar with the species and spreading the word is an important step in preventing the spread of invasive waterfleas.

To help prevent the spread of Spiny & Fishhook Waterfleas:

- Inspect and remove any gelatinous and algae materials from fishing lines and nets.
 - Prevent the release of fish or plants from one body of water to another.
 - Flush bilge water, bait buckets or livewells before you leave a lake for home.
 - Clean and dry equipment using a mild chlorine solution.
 - Maintain good boat hygiene – Clean Boats, Clean Waters.
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The Aquatic Invasive Species Program is a cooperative effort between Washington & Waukesha Counties, supported by grant funds from Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and a number of

*generous local lake groups working to control the spread of AIS.
Thank you for your support!*

For more information:

Email: amanda.schmitz@washcowisco.gov
aschmitz@waukeshacounty.gov

Washington County
262-335-4806
www.washcowisco.gov

Waukesha County
262-548-7818
www.waukeshacounty.gov/ais