Clean Boater Tip Sheet

Aquatic Invasive Species

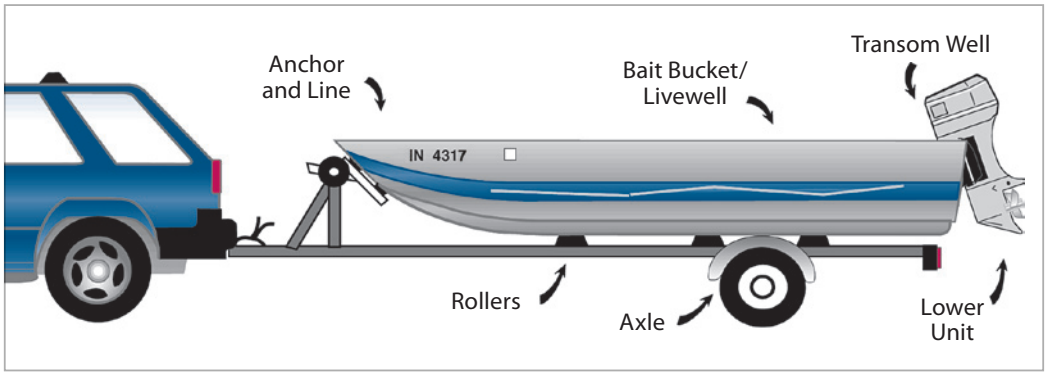
The waters of the Midwest are under attack by aquatic invasive species, also called "exotic" or "nonindigenous," because they are not native to our waters. Many came from Europe and Asia in the ballast waters of ships, and they are spreading at alarming rates. In several cases, they are having negative impacts on our native species and habitats.

Eurasian Watermilfoil (Source: Alison Fox, University of Florida, Bugwood.org)

Some of these species are spreading as "hitchhikers" on boats and other recreational equipment. Whenever you leave a body of water without cleaning your equipment, you may be taking one of these harmful organisms with you. If you then travel to other waterways, you could inadvertently be spreading that invader. You, as a boater on Indiana water, can be an active steward of this valuable resource by implementing these practices:

Before Leaving the Boat Launch

- Inspect your boat, trailer and equipment and remove any plants, sediment and animals (see illustration below).
- Drain, on land, all water from the motor, livewell, bilge and transom well. Some invasives may not be visible to the naked eye.
- Empty your bait bucket on land to help prevent the spread of invasive species and fish diseases.



Source: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Indiana Department of Environmental Management

Indiana Department of Natural Resources

Indiana Lake Michigan Coastal Program

Sea Grant Illinois - Indiana

After Leaving the Boat Launch

Two bighead carp demonstrating a size comparison (Source: David Riecks, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant College Program)

- Wash your boat, tackle, trailer and other equipment with 104° tap water or a high-pressure sprayer to kill any exotic species not visible at the boat launch. Or, allow your boat and other equipment to thoroughly dry for at least five days before moving to another body of water—some invasives can survive for long periods of time out of water.
- If you have used your watercraft on the Great Lakes, where a fish disease called viral hemorrhagic septicemia has spread, disinfect the outside and inside of your watercraft and your gear after using them. Mix 1 cup bleach in 10 gallons of water and brush/mop watercraft and trailer surfaces. Test dilute bleach solution in an inconspicuous location prior to applying to the entire watercraft and trailer. Keep the surface wet for five minutes, then rinse with clean water. Disinfection should occur away from lakes, rivers and storm drains because chlorine is toxic to aquatic life.

Other Helpful Practices

- Do not use fish parts as bait or chum. This practice helps prevent the spread of viral hemorrhagic septicemia and other fish diseases.
- Help prevent the spread of invasive species and fish diseases by not transferring fish, fish eggs or other aquatic organisms between waterways. Private pond owners who fish on Indiana's or other states' waterways would also benefit from the same advice.
- Learn what aquatic invasive species look like by viewing images at www.IN.gov/dnr/3123.htm and the websites listed on this page. Become familiar with Eurasian Watermilfoil, Round Goby, Zebra Mussel, Spiny Waterflea, Bighead Carp, Silver Carp, Phragmites and Purple Loosestrife, to name a few. Know which waterways are infested and report any new infestation to the Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant at (847) 872-8677 or the Indiana Department of Natural Resources' (IDNR) Division of Fish and Wildlife at (317) 234-3883.
- Talk with the staff of IDNR's Division of Fish and Wildlife and the Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant for further recommendations on controlling the spread of aquatic invasive species and any permit requirements before applying any control methods.

For More Information on Aquatic Invasive Species

Preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species:
www.protectyourwaters.org

Invasive species:
www.IN.gov/dnr/3123.htm

Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant:
www.iisgcp.org