Aquatil invasive species such as zebra mussels, spiny waterfleas, Eurasian watermilfoil, burmese snails, and viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS) now inhabit a small percent of waters throughout the state. Other harmful species, such as pythons and northern snakehead, may be on the way and will create new problems if they are introduced in Minnesota.

Zebra mussels attack native mussels, plants, and watercraft. They can be hard to remove at a cost in terms of damage ecosystems by reducing habitat for young fish. Their microscopic larvae can be moved in boat bottoms, drain holes, and other water-related equipment.

Eurasian watermilfoil causes problems in lakes by displacing native plants and producing extensive mats on the surface that reduce oxygen levels. These mats form dense mats that interfere with boating and other water recreation. It also can displace native aquatic plants.

The good news is that the vast majority of lakes and rivers are at risk because of aggressive aquatic invasive species (AIS) that wreak havoc with our natural resources. Boating, fishing, hunting, and wildlife watching are traditions we enjoy and want to preserve for our children and grandchildren. Today, these traditions are at risk because of invasive aquatic invasive species that enter and will continue to spread in Minnesota.

To help protect Minnesota’s lakes, rivers, and wetlands, I will:
- Clean and Drain my boat and equipment before I leave the water access.
- Dispose of all uncooked bait, worms, and fish parts in the trash.
- Learn to recognize aquatic invasive species.
- Follow Minnesota’s AIS laws and regulations.
- Share this brochure with others who spend time fishing, boating, or recreating in Minnesota water.
- Report new infestations. If you suspect a new infestation of an aquatic invasive plant or animal, note the exact location, take a photo or keep the specimen, and call a DNR AIS Specialist at 651-259-5100, or contact a local DNR office or University of Minnesota Sea Grant Office.
- Participate in an aquatic invasive species management activity such as removing Eurasian watermilfoil or raising funds to fight AIS – because it is preventable. Make a pledge to do your part.

Every person who uses Minnesota’s lakes and rivers for outdoor recreation has a responsibility to help prevent and control the spread of AIS – because it is preventable. Make a pledge to do your part.
You can help prevent the introduction and spread of AIS by following both the required and recommended actions listed below.

**Adicional recommendations:**
You can take additional steps to reduce the risk of spreading invasive species, especially if your boat has been in the water for more than 24 hours— or if you have recently been in zebra mussel or spiny waterflea-infested waters. Take one or more of the following actions to clean your watercraft and equipment before visiting another lake or river.

**CLEAN**

- Clean visible aquatic plants, zebra mussels, and other prohibited species from all watercraft, trailers, and water-related equipment before leaving a water access or shoreland property. It is illegal to transport aquatic plants, zebra mussels, or other prohibited species whether dead or alive.
- Spray with high-pressure water
- Rinsed with very hot water. To kill zebra mussels and other AIS, clean with 120°F water for at least 2 minutes, or 140°F water for at least 10 seconds.
- Dry for at least 5 days.
- Run motor and personal watercraft for a few seconds to discharge water before leaving a water access.
- Transport fish on ice—be prepared, bring a cooler.

**DRAIN**

- Drain water-related equipment (boat, ballast tanks, portable bilge) and drain bilge, livewell, and baitwell devices open while transporting watercraft. It is illegal to transport water-related equipment without removing the drain plug.
- Drain water-related equipment (boat, ballast tanks, portable bilge) and drain bilge, livewell, and baitwell devices open while transporting watercraft. It is illegal to transport watercraft or water-related equipment without draining water.

**DISPOSE**

- Dispose of unwanted bait, including minnows, baits, worms, and fish parts in the trash. If you want to keep live bait, drain bait containers and refill with bottled or purified tap water. It is illegal to release bait into the water or to release worms on the ground.
- Scuba diving
- Clean aquatic plants, animals, and mud from waders and hip boots.
- Rinse any visible material off footwear with a stiff brush.
- Use non-lead weights instead of leaded sinkers, to further reduce the risk of spreading AIS.
- Disposes of unwanted bait, worms, and fish parts in the trash. When keeping live bait, drain bait container and replace with bottled or purified tap water.
- Sailing
- Clean aquatic plants and animals from hull, centerboard or sailboat well, rudderpost, trailer, and other equipment before leaving water access.
- Personal watercraft
- Avoid areas with aquatic plants before launching personal watercraft.
- Run engine for 5–10 seconds on the trailer to blow out excess water and vegetation from internal drive, and then turn engine off.
- Clean aquatic plants and animals from hull, trailer, water intake grate, and steering nozzle, before leaving water access.

**NEW:** Affirmation
Beginning in 2016, you’ll need to affirm, with your signature, that you understand AIS regulations to get a new boat license or non-resident fishing license.

Learn more at trailers.mndnr.gov.