GOOSE LAKE ASSOCIATION

Help Protect Our Lakes - Clean Boats and Boat Trailer Campaign

Submitted by Joe Turk

Each year the United States spends approximately $9 Billion trying to control the spread of aquatic invasive species that are damaging our waterways, says Leah Miller, director of watershed programs for the Izaak Walton League

Closer to home, over the past 15 years, the Goose Lake Association has spent over $250,000 (of which $115,000 was spent in the last 2 years) trying to control invasive aquatic species.

That is why it is so very important for boaters, anglers, and other water users to inspect and clean their boats and gear every time they leave the water or prior to entering the water.

Every day, boaters and anglers unknowingly introduce harmful invasive species into their favorite lakes and streams. These harmful plants and animals hitch a ride on boat trailers, boat hulls, boat motors, propellers, and things as simple as muddy boots and are unfortunately introduced into our lakes.

Invasive species such as Zebra Mussels and Round Gobies are not native to American waters and therefore are safe from predators and diseases of their native habitat. As a result, they reproduce in extraordinary proportions and out-compete native fish and wildlife populations, threatening the delicate balance of the lakes ecosystem. Zebra Mussels can ruin boat engines by clogging water cooling intakes, damage engine seals, jam steering equipment, affect human health, and can cause a significant increase in unwanted weed and algae growth throughout our waterways Invasive aquatic plants such as Eurasian Water Milfoil and Curly Leaf Pondweed are non-native, invasive plants that can easily overrun a waterway making it almost impossible to use for boating, swimming, or fishing. Unlike many other aquatic plants, Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) does not rely on seed for reproduction. Its seeds germinate poorly under natural conditions. It reproduces mainly through fragmentation, allowing the plant to be easily and uncontrollably spread over large areas. EWM is often spread when boaters carelessly leave plant fragments on trailers and boats and carrying these fragments from one body of water to another.

Listed below are steps that you can take to help reduce the spreading of invasive aquatic species throughout our waterways:

Remove any visible plant matter, animals, mud, and dirt from your boat, trailer, boots, waders, decoys, and all equipment that was exposed to the water. Even plant fragments and dirt may contain tiny hitchhikers.

Empty water from motors, jet drives, live wells, boat hulls, canoes and kayaks, bait buckets, etc. Do this before you leave the body of water you are coming out of. If you wait until you get home

to empty the water, the water could run down a ditch or slop in the landscape and contaminate another body of water.

Clean your equipment, including your boats engine cooling system, live wells, and bilge area with hot tap water (at least 104 degrees F). If hot water is not available, spray equipment such as boats, motors, trailers, anchors, decoys, floats, and nets with high pressure washer.

Whenever possible, try to allow your boat and other equipment to dry for at least 5 days before using it in other waters.

For other equipment that cannot be exposed to hot water, either dip it in vinegar for 20 minutes or place it in a 1-percent salt water solution for 24 hours. (example: 2/3 cups of salt per 5 gallons water)

Do not release unused bait into any waters that it did not come from. Unused bait should be taken home and discarded into the trash.

If you need to dispose of your aquarium pets, do not release them into or near a lake, stream, pond, or any other body of water. If you cannot find another home for them, bury them. Dump the aquarium water in the toilet or in your yard, far away from any area where it may run off to a nearbyÂ body of water.

You can find out more information about aquatic invasives and how to prevent their spread by visiting the following excellent web sites: www.protectyourwaters.net or www.iwla.org.