



Invasive
Species
Centre



RECREATION GUIDE

SUMMER 2015



Be Invasive Species Aware this Summer While at the Cottage or Campsite

As the warm weather approaches many Canadians will spend weekends relaxing with family and friends at cottages and campsites. As pleasant as this may be, it is important to keep in mind that invasive species will be enjoying those same environments, jeopardizing the future of our beloved landscapes and waterways.

Although the high costs of invasive species to cottagers and campers may not be immediately apparent, they will start to add up throughout the summer. Invasive species, such as [emerald ash borer](#), [Asian long horned beetle](#), and [hemlock woolly adelgid](#) can damage and kill trees, significantly reducing the overhead canopy. This reduces the seclusion of campsites, detracts from the natural beauty of the surrounding area, reduces bird populations, and can end up costing the land owner a lot of money to treat, remove, and replace affected trees. Moving firewood is often a principal way for invasive insects to spread. While it may be tempting to load up the car or camper with firewood from home, firewood should be purchased at the destination.

Invasive plants can carpet lawns and the forest floor, and can form dense mats of vegetation in lakes and rivers crowding out native vegetation and reducing biodiversity. This leads to less

native wildlife around cottages and campsites such as butterflies, birds, deer, and fish. Did you know that [dog-strangling vine](#) closely resembles milkweed so much so that Monarch butterflies will lay their eggs on the invasive plant? The Monarch caterpillar, however, cannot feed on dog-strangling vine and will not survive. This contributes to the declining population of Monarch butterflies, and results in campsites and cottage yards being devoid of the sounds and sights of native wildlife.

Aquatic invasive species, such as [zebra and quagga mussels](#) have caused problems for cottage owners and campsite operators in Ontario for decades. Attaching to pipes, docks and boats, mussels damage water intake pipes, septic systems, docks and waterfront assets, and hydro operations. Equally important, mussels filter water in such a way that it makes lakes less hospitable for valuable recreational fish, reducing the amount of fish that anglers have to catch. Sharp mussel shells litter beaches, risking harm to bare feet. Invasive mussels have started to make their way west toward the lakes in Manitoba, Alberta and B.C., with overland transport of infected boats being a common carrier of invasive mussels from waterbody to waterbody.

There are simple steps that every cottage goer and camper can take to prevent the spread of invasive species:

Fishermen – do not transport or dump live bait in waterways.

Campers – only use local firewood and do not transport firewood between locations.

Cottage owners – do not plant invasive plants or trees on your property.

Boaters – clean your boats after use by washing off all fish, mussels and plants that may be attached to the inside or outside of your boat. Take great care to not move invasive species from one waterbody to another.

What to Watch for on the Water this Summer

For many Canadians, summer means getting boats out on the many beautiful lakes and rivers that Canada has to offer.

While spending time on the water this summer, be sure to watch for invasives such as the [Round Goby](#), a fish that prefers the rocky and sandy bottoms of all five Great Lakes and many of their tributaries. Round Gobies can also be found in some inland waters in southern Ontario such as Lake Simcoe, the Trent River, Rice Lake, and parts of the Otonabee River. [Zebra Mussels](#) continue to spread throughout the Great Lakes, filtering plankton out of the water and depleting food sources for native species. Large colonies can take over fish spawning areas and beaches, potentially cutting the feet of unsuspecting swimmers.

[Asian carp](#), currently established in the southern United States, continue to be a potential serious threat to the Great Lakes. If these large fish establish populations in Canadian waters, they would eat the food supply that our native fish depend on and crowd them out of their habitat. This situation has already been observed in the Mississippi River and its tributaries.

If Asian carp were to reach the Great Lakes, fishermen would surely take notice: instead of being able to catch lake trout, salmon, pickerel, perch, lake whitefish, smallmouth bass, steelhead and brown trout, there would only be Asian carp. Carp also would make it impossible to swim, ski or boat on the lakes due to their powerful jumping ability. For more information regarding Asian carp visit www.asiancarp.ca.



Round Goby
USFWS Archive, USFWS, Bugwood.org



Zebra Mussel
Amy Benson, USGS, Bugwood.org



Asian Carp
Great Lakes Fisheries Committee





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European Water Chestnut

Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org



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Phragmites

Ohio State Weed Lab Archive, The Ohio State University, bugwood.org



Water Soldier

Ontario's Invading Species Awareness Program

Aquatic invasive plants also remain a threat to our natural environments. The [European Water Chestnut](#) population continues to grow in the Ottawa River, causing decreased biodiversity and potentially hazardous swimming conditions to the region and its neighboring provinces and states. [Phragmites](#) outcompete native species for water and nutrients, threatening Ontario's biodiversity, wetlands and beaches. There are also species, such as [Water Soldier](#), where the challenge is containing the only population in North America, the Trent River. When operating a boat on the water do not drive through any in-

sive vegetation, many of these plants spread through fragmentation, and the disturbance from the motor can disperse the invasive over a much larger area.

Whether you are hiking, angling, or boating, it is always important to watch for signs of invasive species and report any sightings to the proper authorities. Please take action and report invasive species by contacting the toll free Invading Species Hotline at 1-800-563-7711, or online at eddmaps.org/Ontario.



Controlling Invasive Species on the Water

While out on the lakes and rivers this summer you might see invasive species control efforts underway.

- ⇒ Fisheries and Oceans Canada will be out this summer administering lampricide to control the [sea lamprey](#) populations in the Great Lakes region.
- ⇒ Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters will be working in the [Trent-Severn Waterway](#) to help control water soldier.
- ⇒ Ducks Unlimited will be at Wolfe Island to control [European water chestnut](#).
- ⇒ Nature Conservancy Canada will be working to control invasive [phragmites](#) in the Great Lakes region.



Clean All Recreational Equipment Before you Leave

Exploring different lakes and rivers can be a great part of your summer but, if done incorrectly, can spread environmentally damaging invasive species to new water bodies. Boats and trailers need to be decontaminated after being in the water to ensure that all living organisms have been removed.

To remove invasive species, all water must be drained, any plant matter or organisms must be removed, and the equipment should be dried for at least 5 days. Alternatively, pres-

sure washers can be used to “disinfect” boats and trailers. These require a temperature of 60°C and a contact time of at least 10 seconds to dislodge and kill invasive species. More and more marinas are beginning to implement boat decontamination programs and installing boat wash stations to prevent spreading invasive species. Prevention is vital to keeping waterways free of invasive species and healthy for continued use in the future.

Look Before You Leave!

Invasive Species may be joining you on vacation.

When you load up for the cottage or a camping trip, you could unknowingly be carrying stowaways (invasive species). An invasive species is a plant or animal that has been introduced to an area outside of its normal geographic range, and threatens the health of our natural areas by outcompeting native species for food and habitat.

- Bikes:** Mud can carry seeds of invasive plants, such as Garlic Mustard and Dog-strangling Vine. *Clean bikes thoroughly before moving them to new locations.*
- Pets:** Invasive seeds can be carried in fur and mud on pets. *Remove seeds and mud from your pets.*
- Firewood:** Invasive insects like the Emerald Ash Borer and the Asian Longhorned Beetle can be carried in firewood. *Buy firewood locally.*
- ATVs:** Mud on ATV's and trail equipment can harbor invasive plant seeds. *Clean ATV's thoroughly before transport.*
- Boots:** Muddy boots can carry seeds and insects. *Clean your boots before going to a new location.*
- Garden Plants:** Some ornamental plants may be invasive. Soil can also carry seeds of invasive plants, exotic earthworms, and European Fire Ants. *Look for and use non-invasive plants in your garden.*
- Bait:** Improper disposal of live bait can introduce new species. Know the rules for bait use in Ontario. *Dispose of baitfish at least 30m from the water's edge, and dispose of worms in the trash.*
- Watercraft:** Boats and other watercraft can carry invasive plants and animals, such as Zebra Mussels, Spiny Water Flea and European Earwigs. *Inspect and clean your boat and motor before moving to a new waterbody.*
- Patio Furniture:** Lawn chairs and patio furniture can harbor invasive insects, such as European Earwigs, or the seeds of invasive plants. *Clean your furniture before transporting it.*

- ✓ Clean equipment before transport
- ✓ Garden with non-invasive plants
- ✓ Groom your pet after hiking
- ✓ Dispose of bait properly
- ✓ Buy firewood locally
- ✓ Inspect and clean your boat and motor

Did You Know?

Alberta has new regulations that make boat inspection and decontamination mandatory. The province has created Watercraft Inspectors to stop and search any watercraft entering Alberta for invasive species.

[Read more about the regulations.](#)

Ensure that you are not transporting invasive species on your recreational equipment.



Ontario Invasive Plant Council

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO WWW.ONTARIOINVASIVEPLANTS.CA

Click to view ISC Funded 'Look Before You Leave' Poster

Invasive Species Centre



The Invasive Species Centre is a non-profit, non-governmental organization that connects stakeholders, knowledge, and technology to prevent and reduce the spread of invasive species that harm Canada's environment, economy and society.

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