



Watersheds
CANADA

Aquatic Invasive Species in Ontario

Invasive species are plants, animals, and insects that occur in areas outside of their natural range and threaten the health of the ecosystem.

Invasive species can have large negative impacts on an ecosystem, significantly altering soil chemistry, food chain dynamics, a reduction of native species, water quality, etc. Two main impacts invasive species have are:

- Impacts on biodiversity:**
 Invasive species can be a serious threat to biodiversity. Invasive species reproduce rapidly, invading and taking over habitats, and choking out native species. Native species can't get enough food, lose their habitat, or are eaten, causing their populations to plummet.
- Degradation of natural areas:**
 The loss of biodiversity degrades our natural areas as we lose the amount and variety of native species. Ecosystems are left invaded with one invasive species, and can no longer serve as habitats or a food source for wildlife.

Invasive species to watch out for along your shoreline

Of the numerous invasive species found in Ontario, there are several you might encounter along your shoreline. These invasive species can outcompete the native plants and wildlife on your shoreline both on land and in the water.



Emerald Ash Borer

Any Ash trees on your property can be affected by the Emerald Ash Borer. This insect infects and kills Ash trees, reducing the food, shelter and shade available for native species.

Zebra Mussels are highly invasive as they easily attach to surfaces such as rocks, docks, boats and vegetation. They filter the plankton out of water bodies, increasing sunlight penetration and algal bloom formation.



Zebra Mussel



Rusty Crayfish

Rusty crayfish live along lake and river bottoms. They compete for food with native crayfish, reducing aquatic vegetation in the water body.

The Round Goby is a bottom dwelling fish with high reproductive rates and aggressive eating habits. They compete with and prey on native fish, reducing native fish populations.



Round Goby



Goldfish

Commonly kept as pets, goldfish typically invade aquatic ecosystems by human release into the wild. They compete with and prey on aquatic species and decrease water quality.

The European Frog-Bit is an aquatic plant that forms a mat along the water surface. It stops sunlight from reaching submersed plants, reducing the dissolved oxygen content.



European Frog-Bit

Source of photographs: Ontario Invading Species Program <http://www.invadingspecies.com/invaders/>

Help Stop the Spread!

Take preventative actions to stop the spread of aquatic invasive species

FUN FACT

Prevention is the key to stopping the spread of invasive species!

Why we need to stop the spread of invasive species

Once invasive species are established, they are extremely hard and costly to get rid of. Since they are not native to the area, there are rarely natural population controls such as predators and diseases. It is hard to stop their spread once they are introduced, as they reproduce rapidly and are very adaptable to new environments.

When and Where to Watch for Invasive Species

Boats

- ✓ Clean off your boat, trailer, anchor, and fishing equipment when you leave a water body, removing all plants, animals, and mud.
- ✓ All water should be drained from motors, live wells, bilge, and bait buckets when you leave the water.
- ✓ After a wash, your boat and equipment should be left to dry out in the sun.



Animals

- ✓ Don't release pets (i.e. goldfish, turtles) or live bait into water bodies.
- ✓ Dispose of unused bait (i.e. worms, fish) in the garbage.
- ✓ Unwanted pets can be given to rescue societies or pet stores.



Recreation

- ✓ Remove and wash off mud, plants and seeds from your pets, boots, vehicles, and equipment when leaving a site.
- ✓ Consider planting native species in your garden and removing invasive plant species from your property.

