

# AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

## What is it and how can you help?

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**CLEAN, DRAIN, DRY.** This is a simple message that can have large benefits when trying to slow the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) to and within South Dakota. It is also a message that Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) is hoping to spread to every person who uses a surface water of the state.

### WHAT ARE AIS

Well, they are aquatic plants and animals that have been introduced into waterways in which they do not live naturally. They can have harmful effects on the natural resources in these ecosystems and the human uses of these resources. They include fish, plants and invertebrates and can be found in many aquatic systems across the state. They can impact recreation, as well as infrastructure within a waterbody and once established, can be very hard to get rid of.



Currently, 13 fish, 8 plants and 8 invertebrates are classified as AIS in South Dakota and the impacts of each can vary.

In certain cases, they may have a minimal impact on waterbodies and the users, but in other cases, the impacts can be much larger. One prime example is zebra mussels, which are small mussels native to the Eurasia. While the impacts to fisheries can be different in each system they become established in, they can have larger impacts to any infrastructure that is in the water. The reason for this is that they can attach to anything hard, such as docks and pipes, which makes them different than any native mussels. Additionally, they can reach high numbers, up to a million in a square yard. Once they have attached to all the hard structures, they begin attaching to other mussels and can cause issues by clogging or severely restricting pipes and pumps. They can also survive in small amounts of water or even just damp places for a period, if conditions are right.

### HOW DO AIS SPREAD

One of the primary ways species move from one system to another is by hitching a ride. This can occur through the transport of water or equipment between systems. Unfortunately, this can happen easily as some species like young zebra mussel, can be invisible to the naked eye. Additionally, plants can take hold if even a portion of a plant is introduced to a waterbody.

### HOW CAN YOU HELP

In the end, it comes down to the actions of every user of South Dakota's aquatic resources to help take steps to minimize the risk of spreading AIS. One of the ultimate goals of the GFP AIS program is to provide individuals with the tools and information needed to help them implement best management practices when using the water. While much of the information that is provided by GFP is geared towards anglers and recreational boaters, it applies to any individual that uses a waterbody in the state, regardless of the reason. Information on how to help slow the spread of AIS, current species distributions, and regulations can be found at [SDLEASTWANTED.SD.GOV](http://SDLEASTWANTED.SD.GOV) or by contacting your local GFP office or representative.