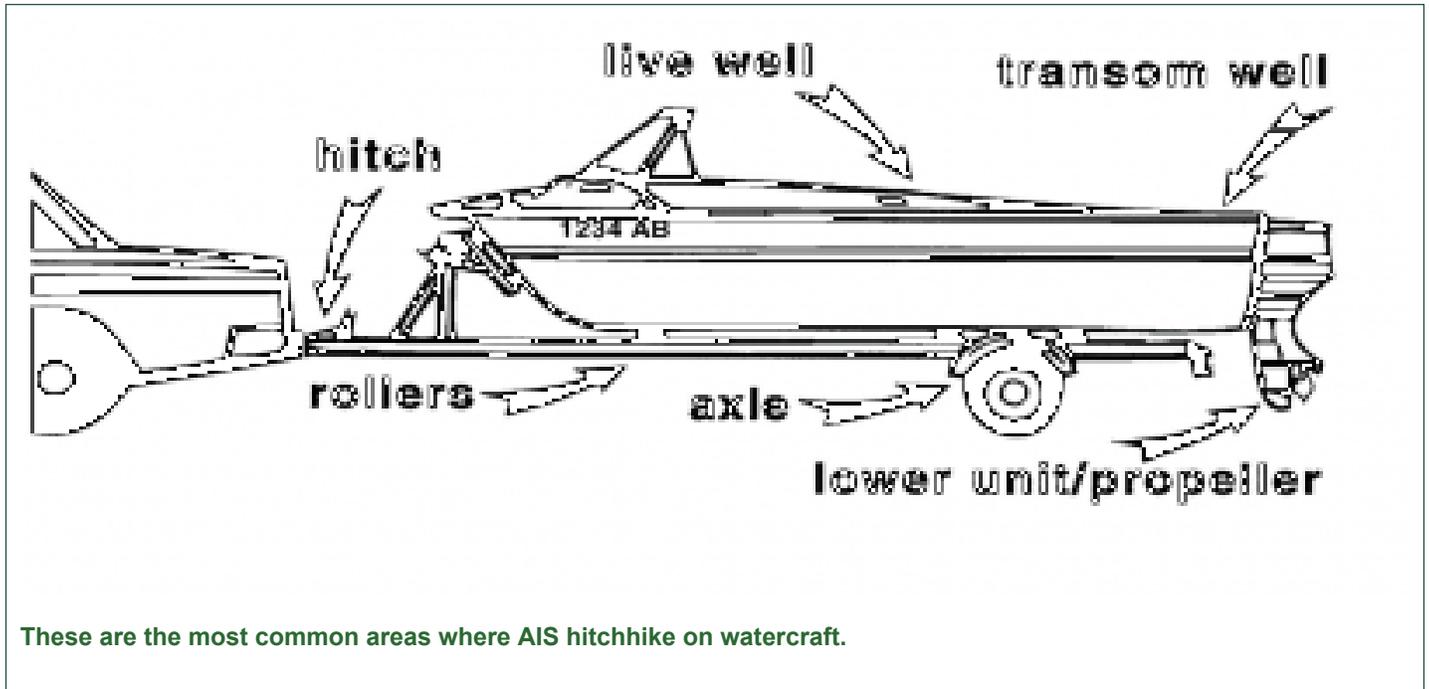


Aquatic invasive species spread is preventable with a few simple steps

Aquatic invasive species control is costly for our state but preventable through clean watercraft and water sport practices

Posted on **June 13, 2017** by [Beth Clawson](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/experts/beth_clawson) (http://msue.anr.msu.edu/experts/beth_clawson), Michigan State University Extension



The Great Lakes fishing industry, both sport and commercial, including related tourism and shipping, generates over \$5 billion to the [Great Lakes states' economies](https://www.glerl.noaa.gov/education/ourlakes/economy.html) (<https://www.glerl.noaa.gov/education/ourlakes/economy.html>). Fisheries and supporting industries also employ over 125,000 people. The impact of [aquatic invasive species \(AIS\)](#) ([/resources/aquatic_invasive_species_sea_grant](#)) is expensive to manage, devastating to local environments reducing fish populations and becoming more widespread due to human water-related activities. In Michigan alone, \$1.5 million a year is spent throughout the state for aquatic invasive species control, management and education.

Boaters play a significant role in the unintentional spread of many AIS throughout the state in our Great Lakes and inland lakes and streams. Michigan has over 786,000 registered boats in the state. That offers many opportunities for AIS to hitch a ride, in live wells, trailer rollers, axels, boat motors, etc., to a new lake or stream. [Cleaning your watercraft](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWobcoWchsl&t=35s) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWobcoWchsl&t=35s>) and other water sport gear can prevent the spread of these costly, disruptive non-native species such as Eurasian Water milfoil and zebra mussels.

[All invasive species](#) ([/resources/midwest_invasive_species_information_network](#)) reduce natural biodiversity through competition for food and space, predation and parasitism of native species. Aquatic invasive species also disrupt and degrade fishing habitats. The zebra and Quagga mussel species, for example, they coat the surfaces of the bottom of a body of water so thoroughly that they disrupt the ability of first and second order consumers to thrive on the bottom, breaking the food chain for larger third order organisms such as fish. Additionally they cause problems for humans by clogging water intake pipes for drinking water facilities, wastewater treatment plants, power stations and dams. They also carry viruses and other harming bacteria that cause disease in local fish populations.

Prevention is much less expensive than removal and eradication. Making sure that all water sport equipment, water craft equipment and related gear are inspected, drained of excess water from all compartments including bilge and ballast tanks and bags and dried before leaving a lake. This ensures bait and other lake debris are properly disposed of and will help prevent the spread of these unwanted hitchhikers. Information and videos for how to clean your boat and gear are available on the Michigan Clean Boats, Clean Waters [website](http://www.micbcw.org/) (<http://www.micbcw.org/>). You can also learn about ways you can help others to do the same thing and become a Clean Boats Clean Waters Hero. Just click on the button that says, “Join the Fight.”

For more information about the Clean Boats, Clean Waters program or aquatic invasive species, contact [Beth Clawson](mailto:clawsonb@anr.msu.edu) (<mailto:clawsonb@anr.msu.edu>), [Michigan State University Extension](http://www.msue.anr.msu.edu/) (<http://www.msue.anr.msu.edu/>) Educator. To learn more about invasive organisms and invasive aquatic plants contact [MSU Extension](http://www.msue.msu.edu/) ([/](http://www.msue.msu.edu/)) Natural Resources educators who are working across Michigan to provide aquatic invasive species educational programming and assistance. You can contact an educator through [MSU Extension's "Find an Expert"](http://expert.msue.msu.edu/) (<http://expert.msue.msu.edu/>) ” search tool using the keywords “Natural Resources Water Quality.”

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