

CLEAN YOUR GEAR

HELP REDUCE THE SPREAD OF AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) (http://www.fishandboat.com/Resource/AquaticInvasiveSpecies) are plants and animals that have been introduced into new ecosystems and have environmental, recreational, economic or health impacts. These invaders may damage equipment and compete with native species. Anglers and boaters may unknowingly introduce AIS into new waters.

STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS BY FOLLOWING THESE SIMPLE STEPS.

Check your equipment before leaving any body of water. Inspect every inch of your boat, trailer and fishing gear. Remove and leave behind plants, mud and aquatic life.

CLEAN YOUR GEAR GRAPHIC

1. Check
2. Drain
3. Clean
4. Or Dry

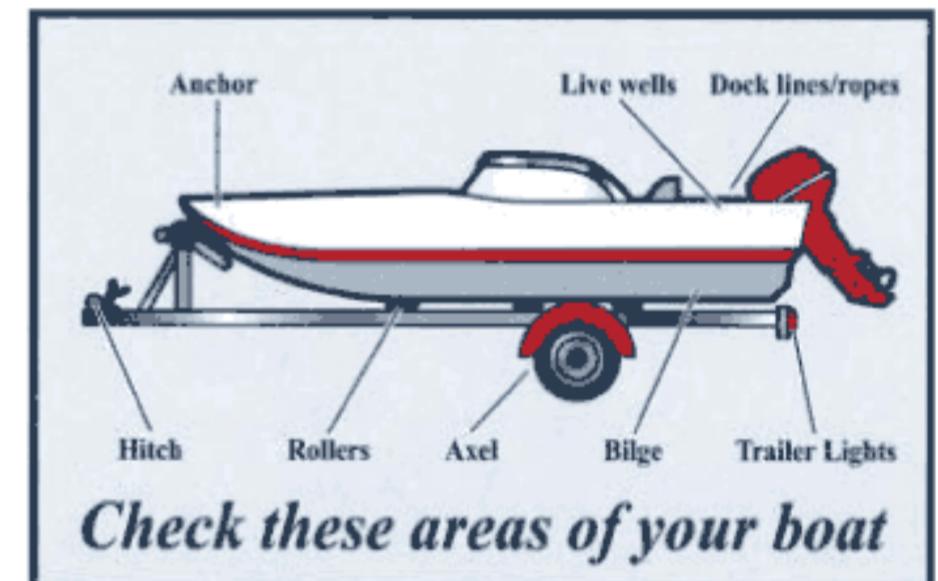


CHECK YOUR EQUIPMENT BEFORE LEAVING ANY BODY OF WATER.

Inspect every inch of your boat, trailer and fishing gear. Remove and leave behind plants, mud and aquatic life.

Check your boat

- Anchor and line
- Motor lower unit
- Hull
- Trailer hitch, rollers, lights and axle
- Life jackets
- Swimming floats, water skis, wakeboards or tubes



Check your fishing gear

- Shoes or boots
- Clothing
- Fishing vests
- Fishing rod, reel and line
- Hooks and lures
- Tackle boxes

Remove

- Visible plants
- Fish or other aquatic animals
- Mud and dirt

Do not transport any potential hitchhiker, even back to your home. Remove and leave them at the site you visited.

Drain water from all equipment before leaving the area you are visiting. Some species may live for months in water that has not been removed.

Drain

- Motors

- Jet drives
- Live wells
- Compartments
- Boat hulls
- Bilge
- Shoes, boots and waders
- Bait buckets
- Life jackets
- Swimming floats, water skis, wakeboards or tubes

Many AIS can't be seen and are microscopic. It's important to clean your gear even if it doesn't appear to have anything on it. Follow the cleaning instructions below after the water has been removed.

- Use hot (140° F) water to clean your equipment.
- Spray equipment with a high-pressure washer. If hot water is not available, a commercial hot water car wash also makes an ideal location to wash your boat, motor and trailer.

Or, dry everything before entering new waters. Allow equipment to dry to the touch, and then allow it to dry another 48 hours. Thick and dense material like life jackets and felt-soled wading gear will hold moisture longer, take longer to dry and can be more difficult to clean.

STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS. Do not transport any plants, fish or other aquatic life from one body of water to another. Do not release unused bait into the waters you are fishing. Dump unused bait in a trash can.



Rusty Crayfish

Quagga Mussel

Photos provided by USGS



RESOURCE

[Fish Habitat Improvement Plans](http://www.fishandboat.com/Resource/Habitat/Pages/LakeImprovementPlans.aspx) (<http://www.fishandboat.com/Resource/Habitat/Pages/LakeImprovementPlans.aspx>)
[Amphibians & Reptiles](http://www.fishandboat.com/Resource/AmphibiansandReptiles/Pages/default.aspx) (<http://www.fishandboat.com/Resource/AmphibiansandReptiles/Pages/default.aspx>)
[Aquatic Critters & Habitat](http://www.fishandboat.com/LearningCenter/Pages/AquaticCrittersHabitat.aspx) (<http://www.fishandboat.com/LearningCenter/Pages/AquaticCrittersHabitat.aspx>)
[Snake Photos](http://www.fishandboat.com/Resource/AmphibiansandReptiles/Pages/SnakePhotos.aspx) (<http://www.fishandboat.com/Resource/AmphibiansandReptiles/Pages/SnakePhotos.aspx>)
[Frog & Toad Photos](http://www.fishandboat.com/Resource/AmphibiansandReptiles/Pages/FrogandToadPhotos.aspx) (<http://www.fishandboat.com/Resource/AmphibiansandReptiles/Pages/FrogandToadPhotos.aspx>)
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[Amphibians & Reptiles FAQ](http://www.fishandboat.com/LearningCenter/FAQs/Pages/AmphibiansReptiles.aspx) (<http://www.fishandboat.com/LearningCenter/FAQs/Pages/AmphibiansReptiles.aspx>)



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