

Preventing the Spread of Aquatic Invasive Species: *What We Can Do*



Name
Event
Date





Wisconsin's AIS programs are supported by the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership.

Main Topics

- **Our problem**—aquatic invasive hitchhikers
- **What Wisconsin is doing** about the problem
- **What volunteers are doing** to help
- **What we can do** to help
- **Resources**—where to go for more information

Roadmap for presentation—main topics to cover

1. Background/introduction
2. Species examples
3. Wisconsin AIS programs
4. Ways that citizens can help
5. Resources for more information

Aquatic Invasive Species

- Non-native species that can “take over”
- Spread primarily with the help of humans
- Major recreational, ecological, and economic impacts



Many are familiar with invasive species and the problems they cause, but want to give a little introduction to make sure that all on the same page and up to speed.

Definition: Invasive species are non-native plants, animals and pathogens that may cause economic, environmental and recreational harm, or affect human health.

Invasive because in native environments predators, parasites, pathogens, and competitors keep these species in check and create a balance, but in a new environment those checks and balances aren't there.

These species can out-compete native species because they are aggressive, reproduce quickly and mature early.

Aquatic Invasive Species

➤ Number of water bodies with:

- EWM 467
(insert # in your county)
- ZM 118
(insert # in your county)



➤ Arrival of VHS



To give you some numbers:...

And then came VHS. The publicity that accompanied VHS allowed us to get our message of prevention across to a lot of the public that we may not have otherwise reached, and the materials and information provided by the DNR Fisheries were really useful in helping educate the public and keep them informed about VHS.

Looking at these numbers and the impact of VHS on Wisconsin's waters, it's easy to understand why it's easy for some people to feel pretty hopeless about preventing the introduction and spread of invasive species. In fact, most of the news we get today about our environment nowadays is negative. For these reasons, it's important to remember... (next slide)

What You Need to Know...



...That there IS something that we can do to make a difference!! Wisconsin has an active AIS program and you can get involved, too!

Wisconsin's Aquatic Invasive Species Program

- Education & Outreach
- Watercraft Inspection
- Volunteer Monitoring
- Purple Loosestrife Biological Control
- Aquatic Invasive Species Grants
- Research
- Rules to Prevent Spread



Clean Boats, Clean Waters

- Volunteer Watercraft Inspection Program
- Trains volunteers to organize and conduct boater education campaigns in their community
- Since 2004, over 1,100 volunteers trained



Statewide watercraft inspection program has several components that span a spectrum from paid DNR staff to local citizen volunteers.

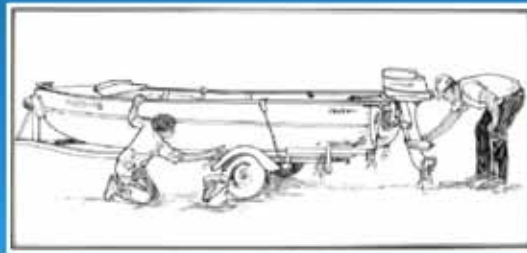
The Clean Boats Clean Waters program trains citizen volunteers to work at landings on their local lakes. These are often lakes that are currently free of invasives that people want to protect.

Workshops are conducted throughout the state for people interested in starting CBCW in their area.

Clean Boats = Clean Waters

➤ Main Goals:

- **Educate** citizens on what AIS are & how they're spread
- **Communicate** that individuals CAN make a difference by following prevention steps
- **Collect data** on boater behaviors & motivations



Our volunteers help us achieve our main goals...

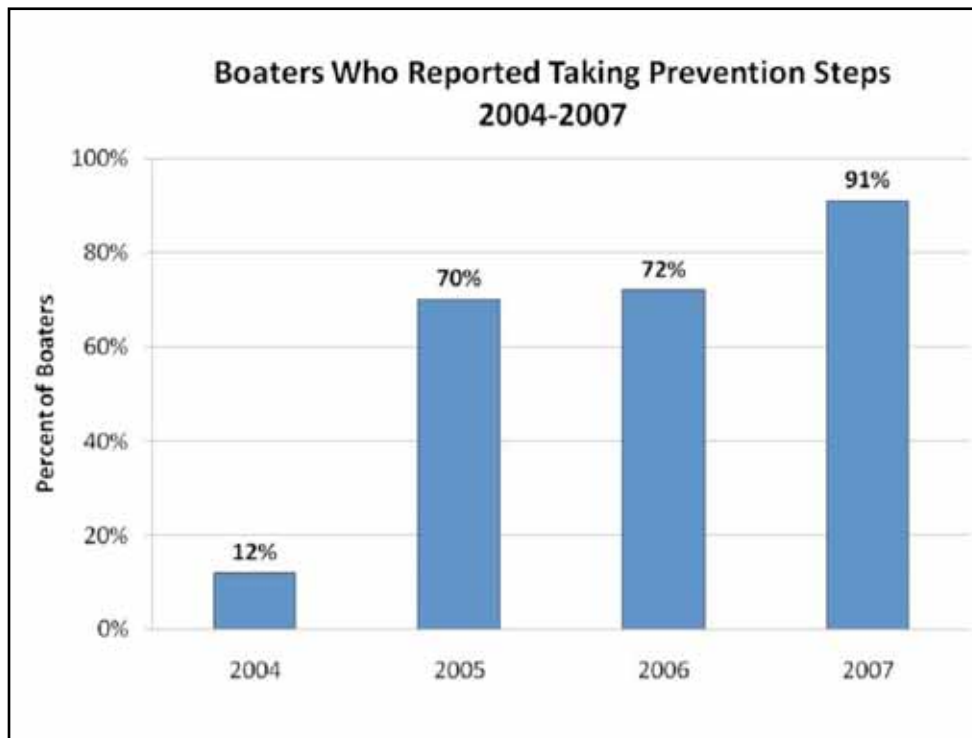
Our Key Message

➤ Help Stop the Spread—

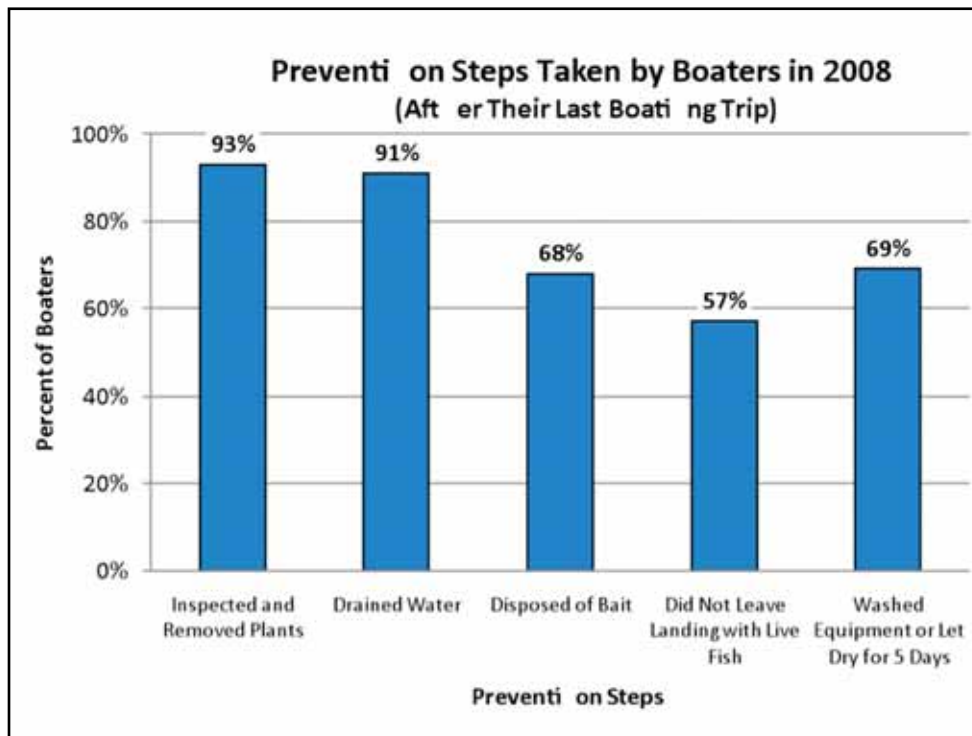
- Inspect and remove aquatic plants and animals
- Drain all lake or river water (from bilges, live wells, etc.)
- Dispose of unwanted bait in trash
- Rinse boat and equipment with high temperature/high pressure water OR
- Dry boat for at least 5 days

This message is the heart of aquatic invasive species prevention!

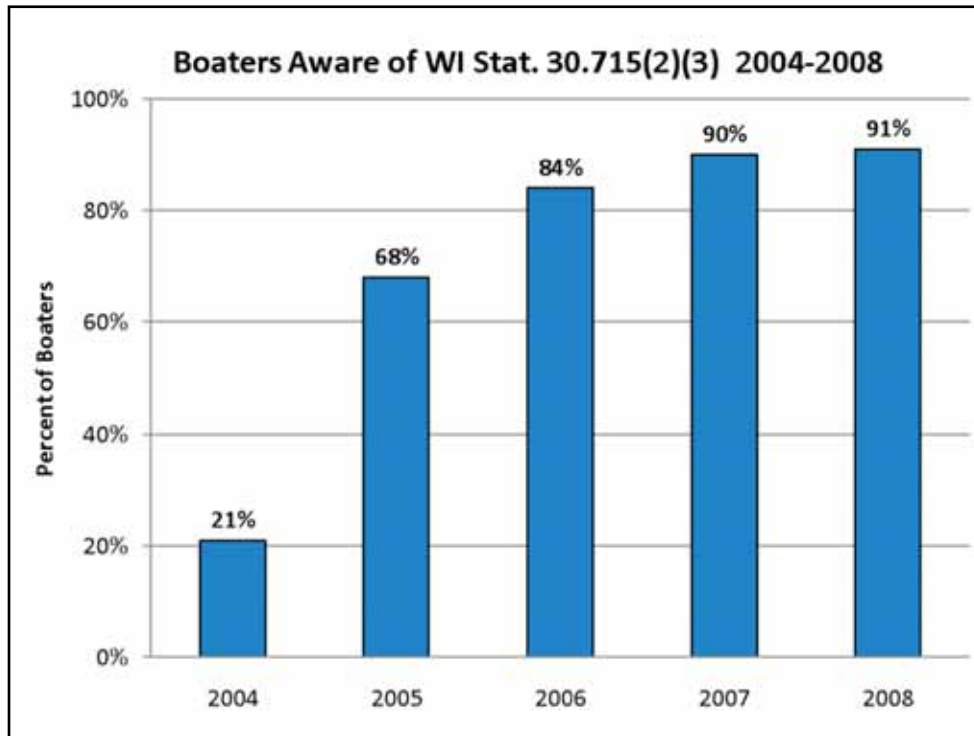
So, is this message reaching boaters and other lake users?



It seems to be! This is data was collected by CBCW volunteers and DNR Watercraft Inspectors from 2004-2007. One of the questions on the Watercraft Inspection Report form was “Do you take the recommended AIS prevention steps?” I was skeptical of this question when I first saw the data sheet, thinking “who in their right mind would say No!” However, people obviously used to! And in 2007, we saw an increase from 72% to 90% in the number of people who reported taking the prevention steps. This is encouraging information and allows us to move forward and ask a more specific question.



Since we have data that shows folks are taking the AIS prevention steps, we were interested in learning what steps people took most often. This past summer, we altered the previously mentioned question to ask about each specific prevention step. Inspectors asked boaters and anglers, “Which prevention steps did you take after your last boating trip?” The data collected by inspectors suggests that inspecting your boat and equipment for plants and removing them is the step taken most often, followed closely by draining the water from you boat and equipment. This data helps us know that we need to do a better job of spreading the word about the remaining prevention steps and explaining why they are important.



It is also useful to know how aware boaters are of AIS regulations. This question refers to the regulation in Wisconsin that states it is illegal to launch a boat into a water body with any aquatic plants or animals attached to it (called WI Statute 30.715). You can see how the awareness has increased over the years. This is thanks to the efforts of all the watercraft inspectors who spend time at the landings sharing AIS information! We wouldn't even be able to share this data with you today if it wasn't for them.

Rules to Prevent Spread

- Illegal to launch a boat known to have aquatic plants or animals attached
- Restrictions on use and transport of some AIS species
- VHS regulations – draining water, not moving live fish, etc.



It also seems that our prevention message is getting out to politicians as well. I previously mentioned the statute that prohibits the launching of a boat or trailer into a water body with any aquatic plants attached. Many of you may also be familiar with the ordinance that some counties have enacted that prohibit anyone from transporting aquatic invasive species on boats, trailers, or other equipment. It's only a matter of time before a similar statewide ordinance is adopted.

The arrival of VHS also brought new regulations that address preventing the spread of an AIS that is spread by water and impossible to see with the naked eye.

What We Can Do

- Take AIS prevention steps
- Be responsible aquarium owners and water gardeners
- Volunteer!
- Educate friends & neighbors
- Protect natural shoreline & native plants



So what can we do to help protect Wisconsin's lakes? Follow the prevention steps and be responsible when buying water plants and animals – know what you're buying for your aquarium or pond and never release plants or animals into nature.

Join the CBCW efforts or help monitor for AIS as a volunteer! There's a lot of different way you can get involved.

AIS Resources

➤ Staff contacts

- **Julia Solomon**—General questions, pub orders, information
608-267-3531 julia.solomon@wisconsin.gov
- **Christal Campbell**—General questions, pub orders, information
608-266-0061
christal.campbell@wisconsin.gov
- **Erin Henegar**—Clean Boats, Clean Waters
715-346-4978 erin.henegar@uwsp.edu
- **Laura Herman**—Citizen Lake Monitoring Network
715-346-3989 laura.herman@uwsp.edu
- **Brock Woods**—Purple Loosestrife Biocontrol
608-221-6349 brock.woods@wisconsin.gov
- **Carroll Schaal**—Aquatic invasive species grants
608-261-6423 carroll.schaal@wisconsin.gov

If you have any questions, please contact any of the AIS staff.



Thank You! Any Questions?

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