

# Invasive-Wise Paddlers

TAKE ACTION TO HELP PROTECT BC'S WATERWAYS!

## What are aquatic invasive species?

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) include non-native plants, fish, invertebrates and diseases that negatively impact the environment, economy, and recreation along with human health and safety.

## Why Are They a Problem?

Aquatic invasive species disrupt British Columbia's natural ecosystems and are almost impossible to get rid of once introduced. They can rapidly establish and reproduce, outcompeting native species and reducing biodiversity. Aquatic invasive plants such as Eurasian milfoil and Parrot's feather can produce dense mats of vegetation near the surface, making it almost impossible to paddle or swim. Invasive zebra and quagga mussels are a high risk species that are not yet in BC and pose a serious threat to BC's aquatic ecosystems and water quality. They attach themselves to hard surfaces, clogging water intakes and covering shorelines and watercraft. If introduced to BC, these invasive mussels could cost the recreation and industry sectors up to \$43 million each year.

## Calling all Paddlers: Actions to Take!

Don't let invasive species hitch a ride on your watercraft and gear! Microscopic AIS can be transported as tiny larvae and spores in water, mud, on gear or infected fish (alive or dead). This is how whirling disease and zebra mussels get into new waterbodies.

Paddlers can be exposed to AIS as they often paddle in shallow areas near shorelines—a common habitat for many AIS.

Kayaks, canoes and paddleboards are easy to transport over long distances, potentially visiting contaminated waters along the way. AIS such as yellow flag iris produce burr-like seeds that float on water and can attach to material such as your kayak seat or life jacket. Rowing sculls and dragon boats are also at risk, as they sometimes attend competitions in AIS contaminated waters. Paddlers should always check and clean their gear.

**Turn over for the Paddler Best Practices Checklist to help protect BC's waterways! »**

## Paddler Best Practices Checklist:

- ✓ Always **Clean, Drain and Dry** your watercraft!
- ✓ **Clean:** Make sure to remove any plant fragments, dirt, mud and sand from your watercraft and gear and carefully wash the exterior and interior of your watercraft.
- ✓ Check all gear for any hitchhikers such as burrs or plant fragments, including your paddles, life jackets, footwear and anything that has touched the water, such as ropes, bailers, and sponges.
- ✓ **Drain** any standing water and allow your watercraft to dry before launching it in a new body of water.
- ✓ Pull the plug! Even kayaks and row boats can have a plug! Make sure it is out when you drain or transport your watercraft.
- ✓ **Dry:** Use a small hand sponge to remove any remaining water from the inside of your craft; check all hatches and compartments as water may have seeped into them unexpectedly.



**CLEAN  
DRAIN  
DRY**

Prevent the Spread of Aquatic Invasive Species

## Bringing Your Boat to BC:

- » It is a mandatory requirement that you stop and report to all invasive mussel inspection stations in BC along your travel route.
- » If you're coming from out-of-province, contact [COS.Aquatic.Invasive.Species@gov.bc.ca](mailto:COS.Aquatic.Invasive.Species@gov.bc.ca) to determine if your boat is HIGH-RISK and should be decontaminated for possible zebra or quagga mussel presence before accessing BC's lakes and rivers. It's free!
- » Report suspected contaminated boats carrying mussels that may be travelling from out-of-province to the RAPP line (1-877-952-7277).

## GET INFORMED

- » Free Phone Apps to report new sightings or for species info [Report-a-Species www.gov.bc.ca/invasive-species](https://www.gov.bc.ca/invasive-species)
- » Clean Drain Dry Program [www.bcinvasives.ca/commitments/clean-drain-dry](https://www.bcinvasives.ca/commitments/clean-drain-dry)

**Prevent the Spread of Aquatic Invasive Species and Keep BC a Paddler's Paradise!**

Developed in partnership with Province of BC