

CLEAN YOUR GEAR!

Preventing the Spread of Aquatic Invasive Species in Pennsylvania



STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!™

Prevent the transport of aquatic invasive species. Clean all recreational equipment.

www.ProtectYourWaters.net

TIPS FOR RECREATIONAL DIVERS

Divers can accidentally spread zebra mussels and other AIS when they get caught in the folds and seams of diving suits and can hitchhike in the nooks and crannies of equipment.

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) are non-native plants, animals, or pathogens that cause harm to the environment, the economy, and human or animal health. Preventing the spread of AIS is important because once introduced, these species disrupt ecosystems, reduce biodiversity, and cost communities huge amounts of time, money, resources, and lost revenue.

Recreational diving is a popular activity that can be heavily impacted by unwanted AIS such as zebra and quagga mussels. Favorite underwater attractions become encrusted with thousands to millions of invasive mussels, making these destinations less desirable diving spots. Clearing of the water allows sunlight to penetrate deeper in the water column, causing overgrowth of aquatic plants that can decrease visibility and negatively impact water quality.

Scuba divers can unintentionally transport species between waters when they hitchhike on diving gear and equipment. All age classes, including the microscopic larvae (called veligers), can be transported this way so precautions should be taken to reduce the risk of moving AIS, especially when diving in different waters on the same or repeated days. By following a few simple steps, divers can play an active role in preventing the spread of AIS (see other side).



Photo courtesy of Ann Faulds, Pennsylvania Sea Grant.

CHECK THESE AREAS:

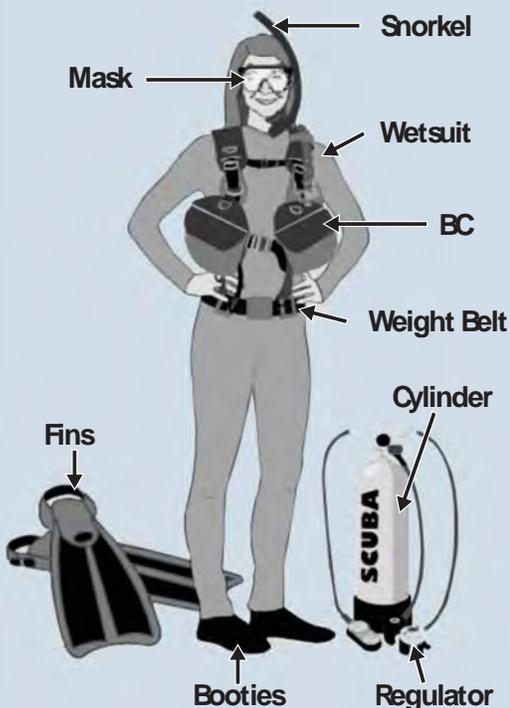


Diagram courtesy of the Aquatic Nuisance Species Taskforce's Recreational User Guidelines.



Photo courtesy of Ann Faulds, Pennsylvania Sea Grant.



Photo courtesy of Ann Faulds,
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CLEAN

Inspect and *clean off* visible plants, animals, and mud from wetsuit, dry suit, mask, snorkel, fins, buoyancy compensator (BC), regulator, cylinder, weight belt, watercraft, motor, and trailer *before leaving water access*.

Soak gear used in saltwater dives in 5% dishwashing liquid solution (1 cup/gallon), or gear used in freshwater dives in 3.5% salt solution, (½ cup/gallon) for 30 minutes. This method is most effective for zebra mussel larvae, but is also effective in treating other small AIS.

Rinse inside and outside of gear with hot water, when possible.

DRAIN

Drain water from BC, regulator, cylinder boot, watercraft, motor, and any water containing devices *before leaving water access*.

DRY

Dry everything *five days* or more, unless otherwise required by local or state laws, when moving between waters to kill small species not easily seen **OR** if drying is not possible, *wipe* with a towel *before reuse*.



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References and links to more information:

Prevention steps for divers:

Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers: www.Protectyourwaters.net

Additional recreational user guidelines:

http://www.anstaskforce.gov/Meetings/2013_June/Recreational_Guidelines.pdf

Where to report new invasive species infestations:

Sea Grant online reporting form: www.paseagrant.org/report-invasive-species/

Aquatic invasive species in Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Sea Grant AIS fact sheets:
www.paseagrant.org/fact_sheet_group/invasive-species/

Aquatic Invasive species mapping in Pennsylvania:

iMap Invasives: <http://www.imapinvasives.org/>

Additional AIS information:

Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission: www.fishandboat.com

Wildlife Forever: <http://www.wildlifeforever.org/>