

Most Unwanted List

Purple loosestrife invades marshes and lakeshores, replacing cattails and other wetland plants. The plant can form dense, impenetrable stands which are unsuitable as cover, food, or nesting sites for a wide range of animals like ducks, geese, rails, bitterns, muskrats, frogs, toads, and turtles. Many rare and endangered wetland plants and animals are also at risk.

Sea lamprey is native to the Atlantic Ocean, Lake Ontario, and the St. Lawrence River. It attaches to fish and feeds on their blood. Sea lamprey is historically the most devastating invader in the Great Lakes. Just one can kill 40 lbs. of fish during its adult lifetime. Before control efforts, lake trout populations were drastically reduced or extirpated. Although they are still throughout the Great Lakes and many tributaries, a United States and Canada control program has successfully reduced sea lamprey populations by 90%. Control costs an average \$16 million per year, and protects Great Lakes fisheries valued at \$4.5 billion per year. Minnesota does not have native lamprey in our inland waters that should not be confused with the sea lamprey!

Rusty crayfish are aggressive invaders from the Ohio River watershed. They can harm native fish communities by feeding on their eggs and young, drive out or hybridize with native crayfish, and eliminate aquatic vegetation. Rusty crayfish is a regulated invasive species, which means release into the wild is illegal. Licensed anglers may collect any crayfish for use as bait on the same waterbody. They can also harvest up to 25 pounds of any crayfish for personal consumption. Selling live crayfish for bait or aquarium use is illegal.

Not in Minnesota:

Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) is an extremely serious viral disease of fresh and saltwater fish. It is spreading into the Great Lakes region of the United States and Canada but is not in Minnesota. The virus has been found in extreme western Lake Superior and in several inland lakes in New York, Michigan, and Wisconsin. The disease can cause large-scale fish kills and have severe economic consequences for the tourism industry. Confirming VHS infection requires laboratory testing. A diagnosis cannot be made based solely on observation because many different diseases of fish have very similar symptoms. If you catch a suspected diseased fish, place the fish in a clean plastic bag, keep it in an iced cooler or refrigerator as quickly as possible, and call the local DNR fisheries office right away for instructions.

Hydrilla is an African plant used in aquariums that became established in Florida in the late 1950s and is now throughout most southern and west coast states. It has been found in isolated and controlled spots in western Wisconsin and Iowa, but is not established in the Midwest. It is an aggressive aquatic plant that can physically crowd out and out-compete native aquatic plants. Like other invasive plants, it forms dense mats that interfere with boating and other recreation and it can displace native plants, disrupting the overall health of the water.

Northern Snakehead is an aggressive predatory fish from Asia that can grow up to five feet long and competes with native species for food and habitat. They were sold in the United States in pet shops and live fish markets. It's likely that pet owners released snakeheads into the wild when they grew too big for aquariums. Northern snakeheads have not been found in Minnesota. They are established in Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, and Arkansas. A single snakehead was found in the Wisconsin River near Janesville, Wisconsin, and in Lake Michigan near Chicago, Illinois. The northern snakehead can survive out of the water in moist locations for up to four days and have the ability to wriggle over land to new bodies of water. In 2002 they became illegal to import and to transport between states.