

Invasive Species Week: Non-native plants, animals a serious threat to global, local biodiversity

Read this series to learn what to do to help protect Michigan and the Great Lakes.

Posted on **February 21, 2016** by [Mary Bohling](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/experts/mary_bohling) (http://msue.anr.msu.edu/experts/mary_bohling), Michigan State University Extension, Michigan Sea Grant, and Bindu Bhakta, MSU Extension



When water hyacinth plants escape or are released into the natural environment, they often form dense mats of vegetation which block out sunlight. Photo by A. Murray, University of Florida/Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants. Used with permission.

Michigan has a great variety of native plants and animals—those that have naturally evolved in the state and which have existed here prior to European settlement. You may have heard about invasive species that are wreaking havoc on Michigan’s ecosystems and have had a negative impact of some kind, whether ecological, economic, social, and/or a public health threat.

Invasive species are the second biggest threat, with habitat destruction being the biggest, to Michigan’s native diversity. They have already had major impacts on nearly all of the state’s natural communities. Invasive species are literally found everywhere in Michigan. They are present throughout our waterways, along roadside ditches, in forests and natural areas, as well as rural, urban and suburban environments.

The [Michigan Department of Natural Resources](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr) (<http://www.michigan.gov/dnr>) (MDNR) defines invasive species as non-native, rapidly reproducing species which threaten the integrity of natural areas. Once established in an area, invasives can have devastating effects. They often out-compete native

species for limited resources including food and habitat, alter and damage existing habitat, displace native species, and in some cases prey directly upon native species. All told, invasive species have been identified as serious threats to global and local biodiversity.

According to the [Weed Science Society of America \(http://wssa.net/\)](http://wssa.net/) (WSSA), it has been estimated that the damage caused by invasive plants alone costs the U.S. an estimated \$34.7 billion a year. Despite the profound impacts of invasive species, WSSA believes that the key to being able to manage invasives and prevent their spread is awareness.

February 21-27, 2016, is [National Invasive Species Awareness Week \(http://www.nisaw.org/\)](http://www.nisaw.org/). The goal is to draw attention to invasive species and what individuals can do to stop the spread of them. This effort sponsored by WSSA, is supported by a diverse set of partners from across the country. The program website lists events around the country related to invasive species that plan to raise awareness and identify solutions to invasive species at the local, state, tribal, regional and national scale. For more information about National Invasive Species Awareness Week, contact Dr. Lee Van Wychen ([Lee.VanWychen@wssa.net \(mailto:Lee.VanWychen@wssa.net\)](mailto:Lee.VanWychen@wssa.net)), or Chris Dionigi ([Chris_Dionigi@ios.doi.gov \(mailto:Chris_Dionigi@ios.doi.gov\)](mailto:Chris_Dionigi@ios.doi.gov)).

To help bring attention to this important issue, [Michigan State University Extension \(/\)](#) (MSUE) and [Michigan Sea Grant \(http://www.michiganseagrant.org\)](http://www.michiganseagrant.org/) will feature two invasive species each day of Invasive Species Awareness Week (one aquatic and one terrestrial) that have invaded, or have the potential to invade, Michigan's environment. Each article will include tips on what individuals can do to prevent the spread of the invasive species.

[Michigan Sea Grant \(http://www.michiganseagrant.org/\)](http://www.michiganseagrant.org/) helps to foster economic growth and protect Michigan's coastal, Great Lakes resources through education, research and outreach. A collaborative effort of the University of Michigan and Michigan State University and its [MSU Extension \(/\)](#), Michigan Sea Grant is part of the [NOAA-National Sea Grant \(http://seagrant.noaa.gov/\)](http://seagrant.noaa.gov/) network of 33 university-based programs.

Read the aquatic series:

[Part 1: Introduction \(/news/invasive_species_week_non_native_plants_animals_a_serious_threat_bohling16\)](#)

[Part 2: Water hyacinth \(/news/national_invasive_species_awareness_week_water_hyacinth_bohling16\)](#)

[Part 3: Water chestnut \(/news/national_invasive_species_awareness_week_water_chestnut_bohling16\)](#)

[Part 4: Yellow floating heart \(/news/national_invasive_species_awareness_week_yellow_floating_heart_bohling16\)](#)

[Part 5: Round goby \(/news/national_invasive_species_awareness_week_round_goby_bohling16\)](#)

[Part 6: Spiny waterflea \(/news/national_invasive_species_awareness_week_spiny_waterflea_bohling16\)](#)

[Part 7: Quagga mussel \(/news/national_invasive_species_awareness_week_quagga_mussel_bohling16\)](#)

Read the terrestrial series:

[Part 1: Introduction \(/news/invasive_species_week_non_native_plants_animals_a_serious_threat_bohling16\)](#)

[Part 2: Chinese Yam \(/news/national_invasive_species_awareness_week_michigan_species_and_what_day_two\)](#)

[Part 3: Kudzu \(/news/national_invasive_species_awareness_week_michigan_species_and_what_you_shou\)](#)

[Part 4: Japanese stilt grass \(/news/national_invasive_species_awareness_week_michigan_species_and_what_you_4\)](#)

[Part 5: Mile-a-minute weed](#)

[\(/news/national_invasive_species_awareness_week_michigan_species_and_what_you_5\)](#)

[Part 6: Himalayan balsam \(/news/national_invasive_species_awareness_week_michigan_species_and_what_6\)](#)

[Part 7: Asiatic sand sedge \(/news/national_invasive_species_awareness_week_michigan_species_and_what_you_7\)](#)

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Related Events

[Protecting Your Shoreline: A Workshop for Lakefront Property Owners](#)

http://msue.anr.msu.edu/events/protecting_your_shoreline_a_workshop_for_lakefront_property_owne

Mar 25, 2017 | Oakland County Executive Office Building (EOB), 2100 Pontiac Lake Rd., Bldg. #41W, Waterford, MI 48328

[Dessert with Discussion \(http://msue.anr.msu.edu/events/dessert_with_discussion\)](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/events/dessert_with_discussion)

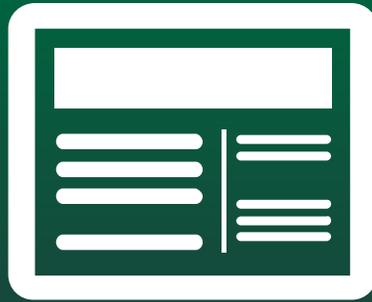
Apr 11, 2017 | Kellogg Biological Station, 3700 E. Gull Lake Drive, Hickory Corners, MI 49060

[Michigan Lake and Stream Associations 56th Annual Conference](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/events/michigan_lake_and_stream_associations_56th_annual_conference)

http://msue.anr.msu.edu/events/michigan_lake_and_stream_associations_56th_annual_conference

Apr 21, 2017 – Apr 22, 2017 | Crystal Mountain Resort, 12500 Crystal Mountain Dr., Thompsonville, Michigan 49683

[MIYI WFP \(http://msue.anr.msu.edu/events/miyi_wfp\)](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/events/miyi_wfp)



Related Articles

[Fishing for answers: Here's how you can help Great Lakes fisheries](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/fishing_for_answers_how_you_can_help_great_lakes_fisheries_msg17_c)

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March 22, 2017 | **Dan O'Keefe** | Michigan Sea Grant is offering anglers a variety of ways to contribute information to scientists in 2017.

[Fishery experts to discuss recent findings, management at South Haven Fishery Workshop](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/fishery_experts_to_discuss_recent_findings_at_south_haven_msg17_of)

[http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/fishery experts to discuss recent findings at south haven msg17 of](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/fishery_experts_to_discuss_recent_findings_at_south_haven_msg17_of)

March 20, 2017 | **Dan O'Keefe** | 2017 Southern Lake Michigan meeting on April 20 is free, open to public.

[Michigan Sea Grant project looks at cisco restoration in Lake Michigan](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/cisco_restoration_in_lake_michigan_msg17_kinnunen17)

[http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/cisco restoration in lake michigan msg17 kinnunen17](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/cisco_restoration_in_lake_michigan_msg17_kinnunen17)

March 6, 2017 | **Ronald Kinnunen** | How can cisco restoration efforts be tailored to fit the needs of Lake Michigan stakeholder groups?

[Workshop offers options for protecting shorelines](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/workshop_offers_options_for_protecting_shorelines)

[http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/workshop offers options for protecting shorelines](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/workshop_offers_options_for_protecting_shorelines)

March 1, 2017 | **Bindu Bhakta** | Workshop will educate inland lake property owners about natural solutions that can be used/adopted/developed for shoreline and water quality protection.

[National Invasive Species Awareness Week: Flowering rush](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/national_invasive_species_awareness_week_flowering_rush_msg17_cr)

[http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/national invasive species awareness week flowering rush msg17 cr](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/national_invasive_species_awareness_week_flowering_rush_msg17_cr)

February 26, 2017 | **Kip Cronk** | This plant is an up and coming aquatic invasive plant in the Saginaw Bay Watershed.