

## Aquatic Invasive Species

The WCOLA Water Quality Team has met to address items related to Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) in our chain of lakes. The team is working to develop an action plan in order to be proactive should AIS be found in our lakes. One of the action items includes educating all chain of lakes residents on a few specific AIS species to be aware of.

The five species that MN DNR AIS Specialist, Rich Rezanca, has noted to be most concerning include two invertebrates: Zebra Mussels and Spiny Waterflea; and three Plants: Starry Stonewort, Eurasian Watermilfoil, and Curly-leaf Pondweed. The difficulty in determining if one of these species is found is that other similar looking native invertebrates and plants do exist in our waters. But residents have resources available to help determine if the finding is invasive.

**Following are photos of the five invasives to be on the look out for.** If you think you might have found one of the following, or some other invasive, you can contact DNR Specialist Rich Rezenka at 218-328-8821 or email: [Richard.rezanka@state.mn.us](mailto:Richard.rezanka@state.mn.us). Another contact is Itasca County AIS Coordinator Bill Grantges, 218-256-4243 or email: [coordinator@itascaais.info](mailto:coordinator@itascaais.info). A third contact is one of our WCOLA members who has been through the University of Minnesota's AIS Detector training, Jean Panchyshyn, 952-250-6690 or email: [tsp.jmp@gmail.com](mailto:tsp.jmp@gmail.com). Additional information on AIS is available on the MN DNR website: <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/index.html>, and the University of Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center: <https://www.maisrc.umn.edu>.



**Spiny Waterflea**, photo credit: Gary Montz, 144, Bugwood.org

Size: 1/4" – 5/8"

Often found clumped on fishing line

Has black eye spots

Has 1-4 pairs of barbs on long spiny tail

**Looks similar to:** Native Predatory zooplankton



**Zebra Mussels**, photo credit:  
United States Geological Survey

Size varies from: 1/5" - 2"

Has zigzag strips; some may be solid tan or brown  
Has flat edge and shells form a fairly straight line  
when closed

Can be found with several clumped onto an object,  
such a rock, clam, or on docks and boats

**Looks similar to:** Native snails and mussels



**Starry Stonewort**, photo credit: Bruce Anspach  
<https://www.eddmaps.org/midwest/distribution/point.cfm?id=4759545>

Size: Branchlets can be up to 12" long  
Can form small star-shaped bulbils at base of plant  
Long, smooth branchlets are attached in whorls of 5 – 8  
Forked tips of branchlets are asymmetrical  
Small orange spheres (antheridia) may be visible  
Found in shallow and calm water near access  
**Looks similar to:** Native Muskgrasses and Stoneworts



**Eurasian Watermilfoil**, photo credit: Megan Weber, AIS Extension Educator, U of M

Size: can get to 10 feet long  
Leaves are feathery with 4 leaves per whorl  
Leaves have central axis with 12 – 20 leaflet pairs  
Produce pink and white flowers on spike above the surface  
**Looks similar to:** Native Northern watermilfoil, coontail, bladderworts, white water crowfoot, water marigold



**Curly-leaf Pondweed**, photo credit: Megan Weber, AIS Extension Educator, U of M

Thin, submerged leaves have small "teeth" and wavy edges  
Produce turions that look like little pinecones  
Usually one of first pondweeds to develop in spring and die back mid-summer  
Can be found in water up to 15 feet deep  
**Looks similar to:** Native Clasping leaf pondweed

Source: Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center *in partnership with* University of Minnesota Extension. (2017). *AIS identification guide*. Minneapolis, MN: Regents of the University of Minnesota.