

Don't inadvertently pick up aquatic hitchhikers and bring them home to your lake. Once invasive species become established, they are very difficult to control, very expensive to combat and often times impossible to eradicate. Therefore, prevention remains our first line of defense against the arrival and spread of invaders in our lake.

Many aquatic invasive species are virtually invisible and can be spread between lakes very easily. AIS can easily hitch a ride on boats, boat trailers, fishing equipment, diving equipment, or even wet clothing in contact with the water.. Another possibility is the inadvertent introduction of invasive species via minnows from waters outside our lake. Minnows are essentially small, often a unknown, baitfish. Using minnows from a minnow bucket place in Lake Wilhelm could introduce the gizzard shad into our waters. Recently PA Fish and Boat biologists report that Lake Wilhelm's panfish population may have collapsed due the gizzard shad. If you fish, you know that Lake Latonka's panfishing population, at present, brings tremendous enjoyment to many young and old.

Protect Pennsylvania's waterways by following these guidelines: (**Wash-n-Wait**)

- Check for and remove plants, mud, and aquatic life from boat and equipment before transporting
- Drain water from boat, live well, bilge, and bait bucket before transporting
- Clean boat and gear **with hot water** (drive your through a car wash)
- Dry everything for **at least five days**

Also, fisherman:

- Don't bring minnows in from unknown outside sources (including vendors).
- If you use a bait bucket, use it only in your 'home' lake.
- Consider not purchasing live bait other than worms.

Boat Check:



Source: Collaborative effort of SeaGrant of Pennsylvania and Penn State University (Erie)  
(<http://www.pserie.psu.edu/seagrant/ais/about/about.htm>)

# **Mom Always Warned:** **“Don’t Pickup Hitchhikers”**

*Adapted from an article Aquatic Invasive Species of PA  
a collaborative effort of Seas Grant of Pennsylvania and Penn State (Erie)*

*Presented by the LLPOA Lake Preservation Committee*

Imagine driving down the highway returning from a very enjoyable day or weekend get-a-way to waters outside of Lake Latonka. As you pull into your driveway that feeling of ‘home sweet home’ comes over you. Maybe you’re thinking: I can’t wait for dinner or lets get the kids to bed early because I’d love to watch the game tonight. Now imagine over the next couple of days, maybe after work one evening, you put the boat into the lake for a little fishing, skiing, or an evening cruise. UH OH! At that point, the little hitchhiker that has been clinging onto your boat, trailer, skiing or fishing gear has been set free and entered its new home-Lake Latonka. Unknowingly, you may have just put the entire lake at great risk. What! How?

Aquatic Invasive Species are hitchhiking their way across Pennsylvania, New York, and Ohio. State authorities across the country consider Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) one of the greatest threats to freshwater lake communities and biodiversity. During the 2010 Pennsylvania Lake Management Society’s Conference the PA Fish and Boat announced that the threat to lakes, from AIS has significantly increased in recent years. The spread of these invasive species is largely due to their ability to hitchhike from lake to lake on boats, trailers, and fishing gear. Some lakes and waterways have lost recreational activities, diminished their fisheries, and had to incur large costs to combat the adverse effects of these hitchhikers.

What are Aquatic Invasive Species? Aquatic Invasive species are:

- Non-native plants, animals, or pathogens
- Live primarily in water
- Thrive in a new environment
- Cause harm to the natural balance in lake’s eco-system,

Why are AIS’s such a problem? Much like a new virus, which can spread rapidly because current body has no or little natural defense, non-native invasive species introduced into (new) lake waters often out compete the native species and can essentially spread or take over a lake very quickly. Invasive species are considered a biological invader disrupting ecosystems and reducing biodiversity. AIS can....

- prey on native species reducing the food supply for native species;
- destroy pan fish populations, the gizzard shad a native of deep southern waters, recently introduced to nearby lakes in western PA, has been responsible destroying panfish populations;
- cause economic damage, like the zebra mussel that is estimated to cost the Great Lakes \$100 million to \$400 million each year to control;
- compete with native species, like purple loosestrife that can take over a marsh or wetland by crowding out native plants;
- alter ecosystems, like nutria that dig channels that convert productive, green wetlands of the Chesapeake into barren mud flats;
- spread diseases, like the Canadian goose that can spread bacteria and viruses and excess nutrients in their waste;

How can I help prevent the spread of an AIS?