



INVASIVE AQUATIC PLANTS and FLOATPLANE OPERATIONS: Help prevent new infestations

BACKGROUND: Aquatic plants grow in a variety of habitats including lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, bogs and wetlands. Some aquatic plants grow out of the water along the shoreline; others have leaves that float on the surface, while many live completely underwater. Native aquatic plants provide food and shelter for fish, birds, amphibians and other wildlife. They also help stabilize habitat along lake and river banks. However, invasive aquatic plants can become a serious nuisance to natural systems and also a danger to safe floatplane operation.



Canadian waterweed infestation in Chena Slough, Alaska
(T. Wurtz, USFS)

PROBLEM: Invasive plant species (sometimes called exotic or non-native species) can out-compete native aquatic plants and choke waters with excessive plant growth. Uncontrolled growth of invasive aquatic plants can:



Fouled rudder - Lake Hood floatplane (USFWS)

- Impact habitat and reduce fish populations
- Ruin boat engines and jam steering equipment
- Make lakes/streams unusable for recreation (e.g., fishing, boating, or swimming)
- Reduce native plant species and degrade natural habitats
- Reduce property values
- Reduce water quality
- Increase maintenance costs for floatplane operations
- Complicate safe floatplane operation, especially for taxiing near tight slips and at take-off

There are many ways seeds or fragments of invasive aquatic plants and invasive snails can be introduced into Pacific Northwest waters including: birds, boats, waders, and even floatplanes. Many of these aquatic invasive species are already established in Pacific Northwest states and provinces, but further spread can be prevented by learning how to recognize them!

Keep watch for these high-priority species



New Zealand mud snail
(*Potamopyrgus antipodarum*)



Eurasian watermilfoil
(*Myriophyllum spicatum*)



Canadian waterweed
(*Elodea canadensis*)



Curly leaf pondweed
(*Potamogeton crispus*)



Reed canary grass
(*Phalaris arundinacea*)



Parrot feather
(*Myriophyllum aquaticum*)



Hydrilla
(*Hydrilla verticillata*)



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It is important to take steps now to prevent new introductions and to prevent the further spread of invasives that are already found in the region. Floatplane pilots can help to reduce potentially harmful infestations by learning more about aquatic invasive species, reporting them and following these simple steps:

Before entering the aircraft

Inspect/remove plants from floats, wires or cables, and water rudders.
Also, check the transom, bottom, chine, wheel wells, and float step area.
Pump water from floats.

Before takeoff

Do not taxi through heavy aquatic plant growth prior to takeoff.
Raise and lower water rudders to clear off plants, minimize cable stretch and improve steering effectiveness.

After takeoff

Raise/lower water rudders several times to free aquatic plant fragments while over the waters you are leaving or over land.

REPORTING OPTIONS: If you encounter the aquatic invasive species shown here or other species you suspect may be invasive, note the location and any distinguishing characteristics. If possible, take photos of the specimen and the site. Report your observations by phone or online:

Oregon Invasive Species Council
1-866-INVADER (1-866-468-2337)
<http://oregoninvasiveshotline.org>

Washington Invasive Species Council
1-877-9-INFEST (1-877-946-3378)
<http://www.invasivespecies.wa.gov/report.shtml>

Invasive Species Council of British Columbia
1-888-WEEDSBC (1-888-933-3722)
<http://www.reportaweedbc.ca/>

Idaho Invasive Species Council
1-877-336-8676

