

CENTER FOR AQUATIC NUISANCE SPECIES

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Minimizing the Risk of Moving Aquatic Invasive Species in Fly Fishing Guiding and Outfitting Operations

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) are threatening the waters that fly fishing guides and outfitters depend on for their livelihoods. Since most AIS introductions result from the unintentional movement of these species by humans, it is in the best interest of all guides and outfitters to take reasonable actions to reduce the likelihood that they or their clients are moving AIS.

The Center for Aquatic Nuisance Species (CANS) offers these suggestions for operating in a clean fashion. The suggestions range from simple to complex and CANS recognizes that not all businesses are prepared to incorporate all or even most of them. However, any of these, combined with habitual cleaning, will help to better protect our waters.

Inspect, Clean & Dry

The minimum action that everyone should take after every trip is to *Inspect, Clean & Dry*. There is no excuse for not cleaning to the best of your ability and you should always teach your clients that cleaning is part of every fishing experience. This does not require any expensive equipment or chemicals. At the end of the day, simply clean your gear as best as you can in the river or lake water you have been fishing in all day. For more information about cleaning read the CANS Careful Cleaning Tips at www.stopans.org

In addition to the basic *Inspect, Clean & Dry* you may consider adding these cleaning actions.

- Carry a 5 gallon bucket or collapsible bucket in your vehicle or boat for rinsing
- Carry small cleaning brushes to use for cleaning waders. Brushing them will quickly remove any attached debris. CANS has handy cleaning brushes available. Consider purchasing brushes to give to each client to remind them to clean every time. This sends a message to your client that you are the guide that cared enough about the resource to give them a brush.
- Keep a sponge or chamois cloth in your boat and use it to make sure that all water has been removed from the inside of the boat so it will dry faster

Extra Care for Waders

For the majority of fly anglers, waders are the most likely way they will transport AIS. In addition to the basic *Inspect, Clean & Dry* methods consider adding the following recommendations to your program.

- Clean visiting client's gear in a safe location prior to taking them on the water. Studies have shown that many anglers arrive with visible mud attached to their boots. Carefully clean them at a safe site before you head to the water. An example of a safe site might be using your garden hose and cleaning on your lawn.

The following suggestions require significant expense and effort to implement. CANS is not suggesting that this is what you are expected to do or even that this is what you should try to do. Rather, these are suggestions that we believe are helpful if you are in a situation in which it makes sense for you to implement one or more of these ideas.

- Do not allow visiting anglers to wear their own boots, instead provide boots for them. Most boot companies will gladly work with you to provide the boots at the lowest price possible. This can be a real convenience to visiting anglers as they will eliminate the hassle of bringing boots with them.
- Maintain separate waders for separate waters for your personal use and/or clients. Using different waders on different waters is a great way to insure that you never spread AIS. Many guides and outfitters are willing to personally own a number of sets of gear but, it will be quite expensive to stock separate gear for all clients on every water. In this case, consider making arrangements with shops on different waters that might easily be able to provide boots for a reduced rental fee or in exchange for you bringing your clients into their shop.
- Install a chest freezer to kill invasives on boots and waders. Freezing is an excellent way to kill most of the AIS we are concerned about. Putting all boots, waders and other gear in the freezer overnight will make a huge difference. If you do install a freezer make sure you have arranged to get client boots the night before their first float so you can make sure they are not bringing AIS with them.
- Rent storage lockers for gear to your returning clients. If you have repeat customers that fish with you on a regular basis consider installing a set of gear lockers and rent storage space to these visitors. They can then purchase a set of boots that are only used when they fish with you and you can insure that they are not bringing AIS with them. This could generate additional revenue and it ensures that they will visit you every time they come to the region for a fishing trip.
- Create a drying room or closet. Just like freezing, heat and dryness are deadly to most AIS. A drying room that is designed to be hot and dry with plenty of air circulation is a good option for reducing AIS.

Extra Care for Boats

- Maintain separate anchor ropes for different waters. Anchor ropes have plenty of spaces that can trap AIS. In addition, many ropes are channeled through the boat in ways that make drying the rope almost impossible. Therefore, consider getting multiple ropes and label them by river. Change the rope whenever you go to a different water.
- Replace any carpeting or absorbent material with rubber or other non-porous materials. Soggy carpeting and other absorbent materials on boat floors provide great habitat for AIS. These materials can easily trap debris and are often very

slow to dry. Replacing these materials with non-absorbent alternatives can make a big difference.

- Any removable floor mats should be pulled up to dry every day. Do you have removable mats on the floor of your boat? If so, unless you remove the mat, it is unlikely that your boat ever dries completely under the mat. Make sure to pull these mats each day and let the bottom of the boat dry.
- Make sure that all of the accessory items (PFDs, gear bags, etc.) in your boat are cleaned and dried after each use. Police your boat to insure that the only things in it are things that you use. If you have items that are exposed to splash and spray move them to waterproof storage. Waterproof bags and boxes are much easier to clean and dry than a host of loose items.
- Carefully examine the integrity of your boat hull. Many fiberglass boats have chips or worn spots where AIS could attach. If your boat has any bad spots consider getting a new gel coat to make sure that you eliminate these areas.
- Store your boat in tilted position to ensure water is drained and boat can dry properly. If your boat has a small puddle of water on the floor you need to try to find a way to eliminate it. Some AIS can be transported in a single drop of water so it is important to get the inside of the boat dry. If possible design a boat storage area where your boat can self-drain during storage.
- Pay attention to your trailer as well. Many trailers use carpeting to cover the bunks the boat slides and rests on. These carpeted bunks provide an excellent place for AIS to survive. Look for alternatives to carpeting for these places.

These are just a few examples of actions you can take to both protect the resource from your activities and teach your clients that the answer to this problem lies with each of us. AIS problems have the potential to wreak havoc on guide and outfitter operations and it is up to everyone to help reduce the risk.

Remember, you are a role model to the clients you take fishing. They will emulate you and want to be like you. Teach them to protect the resource by carefully cleaning after every trip. We need to get everyone cleaning every time to reduce the threat.

For more information visit the Clean Angling Coalition at www.cleanangling.org