Boating, fishing, hunting, and wildlife watching are traditions that we want to preserve for future generations.

As someone who cares about our lakes, rivers, and wetlands, I pledge to protect them from aquatic invaders. To help stop their spread:

- I will remove, drain, and dry before I leave a water access.
- I will follow AIS laws and regulations.
- I will learn to recognize AIS.
- I will dispose of all unwanted bait and fish parts in the trash.
- I will share this information with other recreationists.

What are AIS?
Aquatic invasive species (AIS), such as zebra mussel, hydrilla, silver carp, and didymo, are plants and animals that do not naturally occur in our waters. Once established in a new body of water, they can do lasting damage to our environment, outdoor recreation, and Illinois’ economy, which all rely on healthy water resources.

How do they spread?
Often easily overlooked, the main way that these aquatic invaders spread is by hitching rides on boats, trailers, and gear used by anglers, boaters, and other recreationists. If you leave a water access site without taking precautions, you may be transporting these harmful organisms from one body of water to another.

What can you do?
The good news is that many of Illinois’ lakes, rivers, and wetlands are not yet infested with invasive species. With a few simple but effective steps, you can help protect our valuable waters.

If you would like more information about AIS, contact one of the following organizations:

Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant College Program
217-333-6444
www.iiseagrant.org

Illinois Department of Natural Resources
217-782-6302
www.dnr.illinois.gov

By working together and taking responsibility, we can help protect our waters!
Here are a few simple actions you can take to prevent aquatic invaders from spreading:

**REMOVE**
Remove plants, animals and mud from all equipment.
Many invaders spread by attaching to boats, trailers, and other equipment.
Plant fragments can create new populations and transport smaller invaders like zebra mussels.

**DRAIN**
Drain all water from your boat and gear.
Pull drain plugs and remove water from all equipment prior to leaving a water access.
Water should be drained from all water-containing equipment, such as portable bait containers, ballast tanks, motors, bilge tanks, livewells, and baitwells.

**DRY**
Dry everything thoroughly with a towel.
Wiping down your boat, trailer, and other equipment not only leaves you with clean gear, but also removes all the invaders you can’t see, such as zebra mussel larvae and fish diseases like VHS. If possible, let your gear remain dry for at least 5 days.

**DON’T DUMP BAIT**
Remember Dispose of all unwanted bait and hitchhikers in the trash, and never release organisms caught from one waterbody into another.

These tips don’t just apply to boaters and anglers! Other activities can easily spread invaders, such as:

- JetSkiing
- Windsurfing
- Sailing
- Kayaking
- Waterfowl Hunting
- Bodyboarding
- Paddleboarding
- Canoeing
- Shore and Fly Fishing
- Scuba Diving
- Surfing

Report new sightings!
If you suspect a new infestation of an invasive plant or animal, save a specimen and report it by visiting [http://www.usgs.gov/stopANS](http://www.usgs.gov/stopANS) or calling the Illinois Department of Natural Resources at 217-782-8302.