Pennsylvania’s Field Guide to

Aquatic Invasive Species

Sea Grant Pennsylvania
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INTRODUCTION

Preventing the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) should be a top priority in Pennsylvania. The state has more than 84,000 miles of streams, 77 miles of Great Lakes shoreline, and many inland lakes, while sharing five major watersheds with other states and Canada. Once invasive species become widely established, controlling their spread is both technically difficult and expensive, making eradication nearly impossible.

Global trade, human activities, recreation, and climate change are helping invasive species spread at accelerated rates. As a result, they are changing the health and natural diversity of watersheds across the Commonwealth. In the Great Lakes region alone, nearly 200 species from around the world have been recorded, with a continuing trend of one new non-native species introduction every six to eight months.

Identifying and preventing the introduction and spread of AIS are the keys to averting long-term ecosystem damage and ensuring the highest probability of effective control. This field guide is designed to aid natural resource professionals and other interested individuals in AIS early detection and reporting. This reference guide can help waterways conservation officers, regional biologists, volunteer monitors, resource managers, educators, students, and others working in Pennsylvania’s waters. It includes general information for AIS identification, collection, verification, and reporting.
Using the Field Guide

The purpose of this guide is to help slow or stop the spread of invasive species in Pennsylvania. Therefore, in addition to identification, it includes sections on prevention, reporting, and collecting specimens.

The focus of the first section is prevention, since it is important that readers understand how to avoid AIS introduction and spread to new locations. It highlights significant vectors of spread for AIS and describes preventative actions that can be taken.

The second section focuses on how to report species. It is important that new infestations are reported quickly and accurately, and that specimens are collected correctly so that subsequent control or management actions can be taken. Information described in the Pennsylvania AIS Rapid Response Plan is used to ensure species are collected according to recommended guidelines and reported to the appropriate jurisdictional authorities.

The last section contains “species profiles” that highlight important characteristics to help distinguish AIS from other species.

Species are grouped together by taxonomy, with a different color representing each:

- **AQUATIC AND FACULTATIVE PLANTS (GREEN)**
- **INVERTEBRATES (TEAL)**
- **FISH (BLUE)**
- **PATHOGENS (ORANGE)**
- **ALGAE (YELLOW)**
- **REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS (MAROON)**

Species are ordered alphabetically by common name. Each profile contains photographs, illustrations, maps, and narrative descriptions to highlight important facts or features of that species.

Profiles follow the general format below:

**Species at a Glance:** Brief overview and interesting facts

**Identification:** Key characteristics for identifying the species

**Similar Species:** Methods for distinguishing invasive species from native look-a-likes

**Habitat:** Description of the preferred environment

**Spread:** Highlights pathways and vectors in which the species can be transferred to new locations

**Distribution:** Native and invasive range information, including distribution in the United States and Pennsylvania – Note: Distribution information was taken from the USGS Non-Indigenous Aquatic Species database and the USDA NRCS plants database and represents data from 2012. This information may not be completely accurate and may quickly go out of date. Please use additional resources to verify species locations in your area.

**Impacts:** Potential or documented influence on biodiversity, the economy, or human health

**Additional tips for using the guide:**

- At the beginning of each taxonomic grouping is a reference section with important information for identification.
- Each reference section contains images and diagrams highlighting important anatomical structures and features of the species within that group. Reviewing these features may be helpful in identifying species.
- Definitions for words in **bolded letters** can be found in the glossary on page 153.
- The back cover of the field guide can be used as a ruler to help measure specimens in the field.
- For the most up to date information on species and distribution, please reference the electronic version of the field guide on the Pennsylvania Sea Grant website, or download the smart phone application.
Boating and angling

Boats, boat trailers, fishing equipment, waders, and other gear that comes in contact with water can transport AIS from one waterbody to another. Microscopic AIS, such as zebra mussel veligers or didymo cells, may be lurking in bait buckets, live wells, or bilges, waiting to be discarded into a new area. Plants tangled around boat motors and trailers can be released into new environments, transforming valuable fishing and boating areas into mangled mats of weeds. Some species may even harm boats and equipment, jam steering equipment, and ruin boat engines.

Follow these guidelines to protect Pennsylvania waterways:

**Boaters**
- 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 thoroughly before transporting.
- Clean boat and gear with hot water* and/or salt. *Use the highest temperature water possible; 140°F is ideal for killing AIS.
- Dry everything for at least five days.

**Anglers**
- Avoid using felt-soled boots.
- Clean waders, hip boots, dip nets, and field gear before transport.
- Drain water from equipment.
- Thoroughly rinse waders, hip boots, and gear with hot water,* OR Soak in 2% bleach; or a 5% solution of salt, antiseptic hand cleaner, or dishwashing liquid for 30 minutes, OR
- Dry gear for five days before reuse.

Diving and swimming

- Check all gear that was in contact with water (including regulators, buoyancy compensators [BCs], wetsuits, masks, snorkels and any other dive gear).
- Thoroughly clean all diving gear, including both the inside and outside of the BC, to ensure that no mud or organic matter is present.
- After cleaning, soak equipment and inside of BC with hot water* or salt water (1/2 cup salt/gallon) for 30 minutes. Because salt can harm equipment, be sure to thoroughly rinse with freshwater after cleaning.
- Allow clothing, gear, and other equipment to dry completely before entering different waters.

Aquarium and water garden animals and plants

Never release unwanted pets or aquarium plants into the environment. If a pet or plant is no longer wanted, or can no longer be cared for, choose from one of the following alternatives:
- Contact a local retailer for proper handling advice or for possible returns.
- Give/trade with another aquarist, pond owner, or water gardener.
- Donate to a local aquarium society, school, or aquatic business.
- Seal aquatic plants in plastic bags and dispose in trash.
- Contact a local pet store, humane society, veterinarian, or other expert for guidance on appropriate and humane disposal options.

In addition, never dump live plants and/or aquatic animals into storm drains. Storm drains lead to rivers, lakes, or wetlands, which are all integral components of a bigger watershed.

For more information, visit habitatatitude.net.

Aquatic biologists, monitors, and those working in Pennsylvania’s waterways and wetlands

To reduce potential AIS spread, field workers should take the following precautionary measures during activities such as monitoring, collecting, surveying, and fish stocking:
- Inspect and remove aquatic plants, animals, seeds, and mud from boat, trailer, anchors, waders, boots, nets, and all equipment, paying particular attention to cracks and crevices.
- Drain lake or river water from motor or jet drive, bilge, live well, tubs, tanks, and sampling equipment before leaving water access.
- Dispose of unwanted plants, fish, worms, crayfish, snails, or clams in the trash.
- Wash boat, motor, trailer, and personal gear (waders, boots, scuba gear) and field sampling equipment (nets, bottles,ropes, tubs) with high pressure, hot tap water*, OR
- Dry boat, motor, and trailer in the sun for at least five days and equipment for at least 10 days, or freeze for at least two days before reuse.

Visit protectyourwaters.net for more information on AIS prevention.
REPORTING & COLLECTING

REPORTING A SIGHTING
Take the following steps to ensure proper early detection and response for potential new AIS discoveries:

Carry documentation tools to accurately document your finding in the field:
- Digital camera
- A way to identify the latitude/longitude, such as a map of the area or GPS unit
- Notebook and pen for taking notes
- The Pennsylvania AIS Field Guide for assistance in species identification

Gather and document information accurately:
- Note the exact location of the discovery, including latitude and longitude, if possible.
- Make notes about the location, habitat, and environmental conditions of the discovery site.
- Take note of species size and the extent of the area it covers.
- Write down a detailed description of unknown specimen(s).
- Take digital photographs of the unknown specimen(s), as well as the immediate environment. Include key landmarks to assist in finding the site.
- Include commonly known items (coins, eyeglasses, or a camera lens cover, etc.) in the photo for a size comparison.
- Use the Pennsylvania AIS Field Guide to help identify the species.

Verify identification and submit report:
- Fill out as much information as possible in the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission AIS Sighting Report Form. (http://www.fish.state.pa.us/ais-reporting.htm)
- For more information and additional guidance on reporting new AIS infestations in Pennsylvania, refer to the Rapid Response Plan and Procedures for Agencies Responding to Aquatic Invasive Species in Pennsylvania document found on the Pennsylvania Sea Grant website.

Collecting a Specimen*

Only collect a specimen if it is requested by the agency with authority over the AIS in question. When a sample specimen is needed to assist in identification, it is important to keep the specimen secure to avoid spreading the collected species, or any organisms that might be attached to it. Please keep a record with the specimen of the location and date that it was collected. Beware that animal specimens may carry disease organisms. Use appropriate prophylactic measures (gloves, handling with forceps, etc.).

* Please note: It is currently illegal to possess or transport certain aquatic invasive species in Pennsylvania. Please review the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission’s list of regulated species before handling or transporting (http://fishandboat.com/ais.htm).

Collecting specimens:

Aquatic and terrestrial plants:
- Specimens should include the stem with intact leaves, and if available, intact flowers and/or fruits and roots.
- Be very careful when collecting a plant specimen, as fragmentation could result in spreading the plant to other areas.
- Wash the plant in clean water to remove all debris; do not allow the plant to dry out, and keep cool if possible.
- Use care when handling, as some plants may cause skin and other ailments.

Invertebrates (shellfish, worms, or insects):
- Store specimens in a closed vial or jar with enough rubbing alcohol to keep the tissues moist.

Vertebrates (fish):
- Seal securely in double plastic bags and freeze.

Mailing specimens:
When an outside source is needed for identification, refer to the following guidelines for mailing:

Plants:
- Place the plant in a water-tight plastic bag (such as a Ziploc bag) with enough water to cushion the plant and keep it wet.
- Place the tightly sealed bag in a small box with newspaper packing. Padded envelopes do not work well.

Invertebrates:
- Package the specimen securely in a small box with plenty of packing materials to ensure the jars are not broken.

Vertebrates:
- The United States Postal Service has specific standards and requirements regarding the shipment of hazardous materials such as formalin and dry ice. If shipment to a taxonomic expert is necessary for identification, work with the recipient and the postal service to determine the best and safest method for shipping the specimen.

BE SURE TO PROVIDE CONTACT INFORMATION
Always include a copy of your name, address, E-mail address, telephone number, and a copy of the notes you made when collecting the specimen in the mailed package.
Plant Structure
**Brazilian Elodea**

_Egeria densa_

**Species at a Glance**

Brazilian elodea is a submerged aquatic perennial that can reach lengths of 3 m (10 ft) or more, and can survive either rooted or free-floating in depths of up to 6.1 m (20 ft). Because of its showy flowers and oxygen generating capabilities, it is widely used as an aquarium plant and is still sold today under its alias “Anacharis”. All introductions in the United States appear to be male plants.

**Identification**

**Leaves:** Bright to dark green; densely arranged in **whorls** of 4-6 leaves per node (note: some lower leaves may occasionally occur in **opposite** pairs or in **whorls** of three leaves). The leaves are robust and blade shaped, 1-3 cm (0.4-1.2 in) long and 5 mm (0.2 in) wide. Leaf **margins** are very finely toothed (visible only with magnification).

**Flowers:** Large, showy flowers with three white petals, a yellow center, and three green **sepals** emerge above or at the surface on slender stalks projecting from leaf **axils** near the stem tips.

**Branches:** Form irregularly along the stems in areas where two **whorls** appear to be joined (known as double **nodes**).

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**Similar Species**

Brazilian elodea may be confused with the invasive plant _Hydrilla verticillata_ and the native plant American elodea (_Elodea canadensis_). Unlike Hydrilla, Brazilian elodea does not have rough teeth on the underside of the leaves and does not produce **tubers**. American elodea has 2-3 leaves per whorl, which are smaller; usually less than an inch. They also differ significantly by their flowers, with Brazilian elodea being the only one of these species to produce large, attractive white flowers with three petals.

**Habitat**

In its native range, Brazilian elodea lives in slow-moving and shallow waters. In its invasive range, it can be found in lakes, ponds, sluggish rivers, and streams. It grows best in enriched, somewhat acidic lakes, and prefers substrates of sand, mud, or stone.

**Spread**

In the past, spread was mostly by aquarium owner and water gardener releases. Since all plants in the United States are male, they can only reproduce vegetatively by plant fragments, which can attach to recreational boats, trailers, and equipment and spread to new water bodies. Once established, it has the ability to cover 100 acres of water per year.

**Distribution**

Brazilian elodea is native to South America, specifically Brazil and coastal regions of Argentina and Uruguay. It is found to be invasive in several states in the U.S., and in Pennsylvania can be found in the southeast region in Bucks, Montgomery, Delaware, and Philadelphia counties.

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**Environmental Impacts**

Brazilian elodea grows rapidly (up to 30 cm [11.8 in] in length per day in ideal conditions) and forms mats at the water’s surface. These mats crowd out native species, impede aquatic recreational activities such as boating and fishing, destroy water quality, and make poor habitat for fish. Fragmented pieces can also clog water intake pipes.
**Species at a Glance**
Curly-leaf pondweed is an invasive aquatic perennial that can grow off-shore in depths of up to 4.6 m (15 ft). It has a unique ability to form new plants under the ice in winter, making it one of the first nuisance plants to emerge in the spring.

**Identification**

**Leaves:** Submerged, oblong, slightly translucent, olive-green to reddish-brown leaves have rounded tips, narrowing towards the base. They are *alternately* arranged and directly attached to the stem. They are 4-10 cm (1.6-4 in) long and 5-10 mm (0.2-0.4 in) wide, with distinct wavy and finely toothed edges that resemble lasagna noodles.

**Flowers:** Small and tightly arranged flowers at the end of a slender, sometimes curved stalk appear above the water’s surface from June through September.

**Fruits:** Have a prominent cone-shaped beak and a bumpy crown-like ridge.

**Stems:** Slightly flat, reddish-brown stems grow from 0.3-0.9 m (1-3 ft) long and emerge from slender *rhizomes*, often branching as they grow, giving it a bushy appearance.

**Similar Species**
This species may be confused with other pondweeds, many of which have both *emergent* and submerged leaves. Curly-leaf pondweed has only submerged leaves. Other pondweeds also lack the tiny but visible serrations along the edges of the leaves.

**Habitat**
Curly-leaf pondweed prefers soft substrates and shallow water depths in alkaline and high nutrient waters. It tolerates still or flowing water, and is able to survive in low light conditions and water temperatures. It can grow in shaded, polluted, disturbed, or turbid waters where many native plants cannot.

**Spread**
Burr-like winter buds called *turions*, which move around with water flow, spread this plant vegetatively. Plants can also reproduce by seeds and can be spread by waterfowl that ingest them. Recreational activities such as boating and fishing, and intentional plantings for wildlife habitat also aid in its spread.

**Distribution**
Native to Eurasia, Africa and Australia, curly-leaf pondweed was introduced into U.S. waters by hobbyists who used it as an aquarium plant. It has since spread to all states and is widespread in Pennsylvania.

**Environmental Impacts**
Curly-leaf pondweed’s tolerance of low light and temperature conditions allows it to grow sooner than native plants in the spring. It forms dense surface mats that can impede recreational activities such as boating, swimming, and fishing. When it dies off in mid-summer, it may create anoxic conditions, and increases nutrient content that can cause harmful algal blooms.
Eurasian Watermilfoil
*Myriophyllum spicatum*

**Species at a Glance**
Eurasian watermilfoil is a feathery submerged aquatic plant that was once commonly sold as an aquarium plant. Generally found in water less than 6.1 m (20 ft) deep, it quickly forms thick, damaging mats that are causing harm in shallow areas of rivers and lakes throughout North America.

**Identification**
- **Leaves:** Feathery *whorls* of 3-6 leaves (four leaves per whorl is common) are openly spaced along the stem, with 1-3 cm (0.3-1.2 in) between *nodes*. Leaves are threadlike, uniform in diameter, and have 12-24 pairs of *leaflets*. They are aggregated into a *submersed terminal spike*, and tips of leaves often have a blunt, snipped-off appearance. Note that the occasional Eurasian watermilfoil leaf may have as few as five *leaflet* pairs. For this reason it is always advised to count *leaflet* pairs on several leaves, taken from various points along the stem.
- **Flowers:** Tiny *whorls* of flowers are located on floral *bracts* atop slender *spikes* that rise above the water’s surface. Flowers either have four petals or are without petals.
- **Fruits:** Hard segmented capsules contain four seeds.
- **Stems:** Slender stems, which often curve to lie on top of the water’s surface, begin to thicken before blooming and double their width further down.

**Environmental Impacts**
Eurasian watermilfoil forms thick mats that can interfere with swimming, fishing, waterfowl hunting, and boating, as plant fragments become wrapped around propellers. Fish and wildlife are also impacted because nutrient-rich native plants are displaced, and the economy is impacted as these infestations reduce local property values.

**Habitat**
This extremely adaptable plant can thrive in a variety of conditions. It grows in a wide temperature range in still to flowing waters, and even survives under ice. It grows best in fertile, fine-textured sediments and high light conditions, and prefers nutrient-rich lakes, but readily inhabits disturbed lakebeds.

**Spread**
Does not rely on seeds for reproduction, but instead reproduces by *fragmentation*. Plant fragments break off and float via water currents, allowing it to disperse long distances and hitchhike on boats, boat trailers, motors, and fishing equipment.

**Distribution**
Native to Europe, Asia, and northern Africa, Eurasian watermilfoil was first discovered in the eastern United States in the 1940s, but may have arrived as early as the late 1800s. It is now established in nearly every U.S. state and at least three Canadian provinces. It is common in lakes, ponds, and rivers in all regions of Pennsylvania.

**Similar Species**
Without *fruits* or flowers, it is nearly impossible to distinguish Eurasian watermilfoil from the native northern milfoil (*Myriophyllum sibiricum*) and coontail (*Ceratophyllum demersum*). It may be confused with other leafy milfoil species including bladderworts, hornworts, mermaid weeds, and water crowfoots, which generally have fewer than 14 *leaflet* pairs. Counting *leaflets* can provide helpful identification clues.

**Pennsylvania Distribution**

**United States Distribution**

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Pennsylvania AIS Field Guide
European Frog-bit

*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*

**Species at a Glance**
European frog-bit is an herbaceous aquatic plant that resembles a miniature water lily. It has been found in the Great Lakes since the 1930s, but is now spreading inland into streams and lakes within the basin.

**Identification**

**Leaves:** Small, thick, heart-shaped, and leathery leaves (1.5-6.5 cm [0.6-2.6 in]) long occur in clumps and are not anchored to the bottom sediment. They have smooth edges resembling those of a miniature water lily. A dark purplish-red spongy coating is present on the underside of the leaves, allowing it to float on the water’s surface.

**Flowers:** Small, white, and showy flowers are about 1 cm (0.4 in) in length. Each flower has three petals and a yellow center which show up in early summer. Plants are unisexual and therefore seldom produce seeds.

**Stems/Roots:** Stem-like extensions called **stolons** run from the center of the plant to produce juvenile plants. These stolons also produce **turions** (vegetative winter buds) that break free and sink to the water bottom to lie dormant for the winter. Numerous free-floating, unbranched roots grow up to 30.5 cm (12 in) in length. Plants form thick mats with tangled roots and **runners**.

**Similar Species**

While it is often mistaken for water lily species, European frog-bit leaves are distinctly heart-shaped, leathery, and usually smaller. Water lily flowers are much larger, with more than three petals. It may also be confused with American frog-bit, little floating heart, spatterdock, and watershield.

**Habitat**

Prefers quiet, still, calcium-rich areas such as marshes, fens, swamps, backwaters, bays, sheltered coves, slow-moving shorelines of rivers, streams and lakes, and poorly drained ditches.

**Spread**

European frog-bit can spread to new areas by plant fragments, or by **turions**, which float to the surface and begin to grow in the spring. A single plant can produce 100 to 150 turions in one season. It can also hitchhike on boats, trailers, waterfowl, and flowing currents, and may also be spread deliberately by humans that purchase it as an aquarium plant for water gardens.

**Distribution**

Native to Europe and northern Asia, but introduced intentionally in the United States as a commercial ornamental, European frog-bit escaped cultivation and spread to the Canadian shorelines of Lake Erie, Lake Ontario, the St. Lawrence River in New York, and Lake Champlain in Vermont. Populations are also present in Michigan and Washington. This species is currently not in Pennsylvania.

**Environmental Impacts**

European frog-bit populations increase rapidly, forming dense mats that decrease the amount of nutrients, dissolved oxygen, and light penetration into the water, limiting the growth of any native vegetation beneath. These mats can also inhibit the movement of waterfowl and fish, and limit recreational activities; however, it can serve as a food source for some types of water birds, fish, and insects.
Fanwort
*Cabomba caroliniana*

Species at a Glance
Fanwort is a submersed freshwater perennial that can often be found rooted or floating. Stems may reach lengths of up to 6m (20 ft). It is persistent, aggressive, and competitive, bringing with it the potential to take over Pennsylvania’s waterways.

Identification
Leaves: Two types of leaves include submersed and floating. Submersed leaves are delicate, fan-shaped, and usually green in color, averaging 5 cm (2 in) in diameter. They are finely divided and arranged in opposite pairs along the stem. Floating leaves, which are not always present, are narrow, small (less than 1.3 cm [0.5 in]), oval to diamond in shape, and arranged in an alternating pattern.

Flowers: Small white, pink, or purple flowers with a diameter less than 1.3 cm (0.5 in) grow from the tips of the stems and float on the water’s surface.

Shoots/Stems: Usually green in color ranging from grass to olive green and sometimes reddish brown. Shoots are upturned extensions of the horizontal rhizomes and may reach lengths of up to 6m (20 ft).

Similar Species
Fanwort is often confused with other leafy milfoils, Beck’s water-marigold (*Megalodonta beckii*), some bladderworts, hornworts, mermaid weeds, and water crowfoots. The leaves of watermilfoils are whorled, and the plants have small flowers growing from where the leaves meet the stem. Beck’s water-marigold has yellow, composite flowers and sessile leaves, while fanwort has white flowers and slender leaves. Water marigold also has opposite leaves that attach directly to the stem with no petiole between the leaf and stem.

Habitat
This very hardy plant is usually found rooted in muddy areas of slow moving waters such as streams, small rivers, lakes, and ponds. It can establish in a wide variety of environments and tolerate a wide range of temperatures, allowing it to overwinter in frozen lakes.

Spread
Fanwort is thought to have spread from intentional and unintentional release in the aquarium trade. Its fragile stems break off easily, and most pieces can re-sprout and grow into new plants.

Distribution
Native to the sub-tropic areas of North and South America, and Gulf of Mexico regions of the United States, fanwort has been introduced to regions in the Northeast and the Pacific Northwest. It is present in both the eastern and western counties of Pennsylvania.

Environmental Impacts
Fanwort is highly competitive and persistent, forming dense mats at the water’s surface that block sunlight into the water column, negatively impacting native plant species, biodiversity, and water quality. It can also clog waterways, impacting recreational activities such as boating, fishing, and swimming.
Flowering Rush
*Butomus umbellatus*

**Species at a Glance**
Flowering rush is a perennial aquatic herb that can grow both as an emergent plant along shorelines and a submersed plant in lakes and rivers. It often goes fairly unnoticed among other wetland plants until it blooms a distinctive spray of attractive flowers in late summer and early fall.

**Identification**
- **Leaves:** Emergent leaves are stiff, narrow, green, and can grow up to 0.9 m (3 ft) above the water’s surface. Leaf tips may be spirally twisted. Submersed leaves are limp under water and do not flower.
- **Flowers:** Grow in umbrella-shaped clusters on a long stalk, with each flower made up of three petals, three sepals, and red anthers. Flowers are approximately 2.5 cm (1 in) across and are typically white, pink, or purple in color. Flowering occurs in late summer to early fall, and only occurs on emergent plants.
- **Fruits:** Pistils ripen into a dark brown fruit filled with tiny seeds.
- **Stems/Roots:** Green stems are triangular in cross section. The extensive root system is a thick, creeping rhizome. Bulblets that form on the rhizome can easily break off when disturbed and form a new plant.

**Similar Species**
Leaves of flowering rush resemble bur-reed (*Sparganium spp*), another shallow water plant; however, the leaves of the bur-reed are V-shaped, and its female flowers appear as small spiked balls. Bur-reed grows 0.3-1.2 m (1-4 ft) tall.

**Habitat**
Flowering rush prefers shallow and slow moving waters but will inhabit deeper waters. It grows well in riparian zones, watercourses, and wetlands such as ditches, marshes, lakes, or streams. It cannot grow in shade and requires wet soil.

**Spread**
Once in a watershed, flowering rush spreads locally by underground rhizomes, root pieces, and seeds. Wildlife, water movement (water or ice), anglers, and boaters can carry this plant to new areas. Its use as a water garden plant could have also contributed to its spread over long distances.

**Distribution**
Native to Europe and Asia, flowering rush was brought to North America as a garden plant. It is present in states along the U.S./Canadian border, extending north to the tip of Quebec, and south to Illinois. In Pennsylvania, the flowering rush is present in Erie County.

**Environmental Impacts**
Flowering rush can easily crowd out native species. The large amount of underground rhizomes can harm fish and other wildlife by destroying food sources and habitats. It can also interfere with recreational activities such as swimming and boating.

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**Pennsylvania AIS Field Guide**

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INVASIVE AQUATIC PLANTS

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**Pennsylvania Distribution**

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**United States Distribution**

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**INVASIVE AQUATIC PLANTS**
Narrowleaf & Hybrid Cattails
Typha angustifolia, Typha x glauca

Species at a Glance
Cattails are aquatic perennials that grow in wetland areas and produce distinct velvety brown spikes of flowers. The two most widespread species in the United States are the native common cattail, also called the broadleaf cattail (Typha latifolia) and the non-native narrowleaf cattail (Typha angustifolia). The hybrid cattail is produced when these two species cross, giving it characteristics of both species.

Identification
Leaves: Long, narrow (5-15 mm [0.2-0.6 in]), flat leaves originate at the base of the stem from each shoot and spread outward as they rise into the air, reaching 0.9-1.8 m (3-6 ft) in height.

Flowers: Dense, fuzzy, cylindrical spikes are located at the end of the stem. The flower is divided into two distinct male and female flowers, separated by a 3-10 cm (1.2-3.9 in) gap. Lighter brown male flowers (staminate) are located above the female (pistillate) flowers, which are often green during bloom, turning dark brown during seed maturation.

Fruits: Cigar-shaped fruits about 5-15 cm (2-5.9 in) long contain soft, downy seeds about 1 mm (0.04 in) in size.

Stems: The flowering stalks are light green, stiff, round in cross-section, and grow up to 3 m (10 ft) tall.

Similar Species
Both the narrowleaf and hybrid cattails can be easily confused with the native common cattail. However, the common cattail has both male and female flower types directly next to each other, whereas the invasive cattails have a clear separation of male and female flowers, and the leaves are narrower, deeper green, and typically extend beyond the spike.

Habitat
Stands of non-native cattail can be found in a wide variety of wetland habitats, including marshes, lakeshores, river backwaters, and roadside ditches. This prolific plant can grow in disturbed areas, as well as brackish and polluted waters of depths nearing 0.9 m (3 ft).

Spread
The flower head of the parent plant can produce 250,000 seeds, which can remain viable for up to 100 years, waiting for the right amount of water and sunlight to germinate. Seeds are dispersed by wind, and once established, additional spread occurs through an extensive underground root system.

Distribution
Narrowleaf cattails are believed to have originated from the dry ballast of European ships on the Atlantic seaboard. The hybrid cattail may occur wherever both the native and the narrow-leaved species are present. These plants have spread throughout the United States, and all three cattail species are currently found in Pennsylvania.

Environmental Impacts
Cattails grow in dense monocultures that can dominate shorelines near open water areas, eliminating habitat and replacing native plants important for waterfowl and wildlife. They are also thought to be allelopathic, meaning they produce chemicals which prevent the growth of other plant species.
Hydrilla
Hydrilla verticillata

Species at a Glance
Hydrilla is a submerged aquatic perennial that could be considered nature’s “perfect weed.” It comes in two forms, dioecious and monoeccious. Both forms grow and spread at a very fast rate, covering the surface of water bodies and restricting boating, fishing, swimming, and other recreational uses.

Identification
Leaves: While morphological characteristics can vary, leaves are typically strap-like and pointed, with small sharp teeth on the edges that are difficult to see with the naked eye. Spines or conical bumps are sometimes found on the mid-rib on the underside of the leaf; however, these are not always present. The underside of the mid-rib can also be red. They are generally 2-4 mm (0.08-0.2 in) wide, 6-20 mm (0.2-0.8 in) long, and occur in whorls of 3-8.

Flowers: Small (10-50 mm [0.4-2 in] long), white flowers which float on the water’s surface are attached at the leaf axils and are clustered towards the tips of the stems.

Stems/Roots: Long and branching stems form intertwined mats at the water’s surface. Plants are usually rooted to the lake bottom, growing upward from the substrate in water up to 3.7 m (12 ft) deep. During the late growing season, small white tubers, which are used for food storage, are formed on the plants root’s, allowing it to overwinter.

Similar Species
Hydrilla closely resembles Brazilian elodea (Egeria densa) and North American elodea (Elodea canadensis). Brazilian elodea typically has whorls of 3-6 leaves, is usually 2-3 cm (0.8-1.2 in) long, and has minute teeth on the margins with no conical bumps on the mid-rib below. The native North American elodea has leaves that occur in whorls of three and is usually a much smaller plant. Neither North American nor Brazilian elodea produces the tubers or turions found on Hydrilla.

Habitat
Hydrilla grows in a wide variety of still and flowing water, including freshwater lakes, ponds, rivers, impoundments and canals. It tolerates a wide range of pH, nutrient, and light levels and is somewhat winter-hardy, but optimum temperature for growth is 20-27°C (68-81°F).

Spread
Because Hydrilla reproduces primarily vegetatively, even the smallest living plant fragment can float downstream and form a new plant. While it was imported to the United States as an aquarium plant, recreational activities now help it spread.

Distribution
While it is unknown where Hydrilla originated, possible native ranges include Asia, Africa, and Australia. It continues to spread and is listed as a federal noxious weed in the United States. While the dioecious form appears to spread from South Carolina south, the monoeccious form is spreading both north and south and is typically the form found north of North Carolina. In Pennsylvania, it was first reported in Adams and Bradford counties, and is also established in the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia, Highland Lake in Bradford County, and Lake Nockamixon in Bucks County.

Environmental Impacts
Hydrilla’s dense thick mats interfere with commercial activities by clogging water intake pipes and filters and hindering irrigation. It also restricts recreational uses and prevents sunlight from reaching other species growing beneath it. As the mats die and decay, bacteria deplete oxygen from the water, impacting fish and other aquatic organisms.
**MUDMAT**  
*Glossostigma diandrum*

**Species at a Glance**  
Mudmat is a low-growing, mat-forming, aquatic invasive plant that has remained largely under the radar due to its small size and the public’s lack of familiarity with it. The plant itself is usually less than 2 cm (0.8 in) high and can be found submerged in the water or emerging above the water’s surface.

**Identification**  
**Leaves:** Bright green paired leaves resemble tiny rabbit ears. They are narrow, about 1-4 cm (0.4-1.6 in) in length and are slightly expanded at the tip; they taper to the base and may be sessile or stalked. Leaf margins are smooth.

**Flowers:** Small, 1-3 mm (0.04-0.1 in) wide flowers are inconspicuous in leaf axils at the base of the plant. They emerge when the water recedes in the summer months. Color ranges from mauve, lilac, blue, and bluish-white to white, although Pennsylvania populations are usually pinkish. Closed, self-fertilizing flowers called cleistogams are also produced underwater in the soil among the roots.

**Fruits:** Round, thin-walled capsules are divided into two cavities that contain many small, dark brown seeds.

**Stems:** Creep horizontally just below the soil surface and root along the nodes.

**Similar Species**  
Native mudwort species (*Limosella* spp.) closely resemble mudmat. It may also be confused with emergent leaf forms of some members of the bladderworts (*Utricularia* spp.).

**Habitat**  
Mudmat prefers conditions with low pH, conductivity, and phosphorous in shallow waters, swamps, and periodically flooded areas with little wave action.

**Spread**  
Initial introduction of mudmat probably occurred by aquarium release, and its subsequent spread may have been mediated by both human activities, such as recreational boating, and by natural means, such as hitchhiking on migrating geese or other waterfowl.

**Distribution**  
Native to Australia, New Zealand, India, and east Africa, mudmat was discovered in the United States in 1992 at a single location in southern Connecticut. In Pennsylvania, mudmat has been found only in Lake Galena in Bucks County; however, because of its small size, it may have a wider distribution than what is currently known.

**Environmental Impacts**  
Mudmat forms thick carpet-like mats that smother the lake bottom from the shoreline to depths of greater than 2 m (6.6 ft). It spreads very rapidly, covering prime shore-line habitat, reducing biodiversity, and threatening native plant and animal communities.
Parrotfeather
Myriophyllum aquaticum

Species at a Glance
Parrotfeather, also called Brazilian watermilfoil, is an herbaceous aquatic perennial and member of the watermilfoil family. It gets its name from its bright green feather-like leaves, which are whorled around the stem and can form thick suffocating mats.

Identification
Leaves: Emergent leaves are robust, vibrant green, feathery, and covered with a waxy coating. They are arranged around the stem in whorls of 4-6 and are 2.5-5 cm (1-2 in) long with 10-18 leaflet pairs. Leaves become more closely arranged toward the growing tips of the plant. Limp submerged leaves are brownish to reddish, often appearing deteriorated. They are 1.5-3.5 cm (0.6-1.4 in) long with 20-30 divisions per leaf.

Flowers: Small (1.5 mm [0.06 in]), white-pinkish flowers appear between leaf axils of female plants in the spring. Only female plants have been found in North America.

Stems: Long unbranched stems reach heights of 30 cm (12 in) above the water surface. When attached to a bank, they can extend out several yards over the water surface.

Similar Species
A close relative, Eurasian watermilfoil (Myriophyllum spicatum), is easily mistaken for the submerged leaves of parrotfeather. Other look-a-likes include bladderworts, hornworts, mermaid weeds, water crowfoots, and other leafy milfoils. The emergent stems and leaves are the most distinct characteristics of parrotfeather, as they can grow up to a foot above the water surface and resemble small fir trees.

Habitat
Parrotfeather is hardy but prefers shallow, nutrient-rich, and slow-moving waters. It is most common in shallow water as a rooted plant but can also be found as a floating plant in deeper, nutrient-enriched lakes.

Spread
Since all parrotfeather plants in the United States are female, they spread exclusively by fragmentation. Therefore, human activities such as water gardening, boating, and fishing, can easily spread fragments to new locations where they can grow into new plants.

Distribution
Native to South America in the Amazon River, parrotfeather was introduced as a garden plant in the 1800s and has since spread throughout the United States. It is found in the south central region of Pennsylvania in Bedford and Adams counties, and in eastern Pennsylvania in Lackawanna, Lehigh, Bucks, Philadelphia, and Delaware counties.

Environmental Impacts
Parrotfeather forms thick mats that can shade out native plant and algae species, impact water flow, clog recreational waterways and irrigation canals, and alter the physical and chemical characteristics of lakes and streams.
**Variable-leaf Milfoil**  
*Myriophyllum heterophyllum*

**Species at a Glance**
Variable-leaf milfoil, also called broadleaf watermilfoil or two-leaf milfoil, is a submerged perennial aquatic herb that is usually found rooted in up to 1.8 m (6 ft) of water. It gets its name from its two noticeably different forms of submersed and emergent leaves.

**Identification**

**Leaves:** Submerged leaves, usually 2-6 cm (0.8-2.4 in) in length, are finely dissected into 7-11 thread-like leaflets, which are arranged in very dense whorls of 4-5, giving it a bottlebrush appearance. In general, there is less than 5 mm (0.2 in) between whorls. Color ranges from reddish to greenish-brown. Emergent leaves that may not appear until late summer are bright green, oval, narrow (0.6 cm [0.2 in] wide), and stand 15-20 cm (6-7.9 in) out of the water.

**Flowers:** Emergent flower spikes are 5-30 cm (2-12 in) long with whorls of four flowers each. Petals are small, measuring less than 3 mm (0.1 in), and emerge on green to reddish stalks from June to September.

**Fruits:** Small and almost perfectly round with four chambers and a rough surface.

**Stems:** Stout, usually dark red to reddish-brown stems measure up to 3 mm (0.1 in) in diameter and 100 cm (39 in) in length.

**Similar Species**
Take caution because all milfoil species display a wide vegetative variability. Variable-leaf milfoil may be confused with parrotfeather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*) and Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*); however, neither species has winter buds and they generally have a greater distance between whorls (1 cm [0.4 in] or greater).

**Habitat**
This extremely well-adapted plant can thrive in freshwater ponds, lakes, ditches, and other still or flowing aquatic systems, and even survives under ice.

**Spread**
Reproduction is primarily through vegetative fragments, which can hitchhike on boats, trailers, and fishing equipment. It may also reproduce via seed production, but probably to a lesser extent.

**Distribution**
While native to the southeastern United States, variable-leaf milfoil has become invasive in most of the northeast. In Pennsylvania, it is considered native and endangered in Erie County, but shows invasive tendencies in lakes and impoundments in Fayette, Monroe, and Bucks counties.

**Environmental Impacts**
Variable-leaf milfoil can alter ecosystems by forming dense mats that shade out native aquatic plants, inhibit water flow, and impede recreational activities.
Water Chestnut
*Trapa natans*

**Species at a Glance**
Water chestnut is a rooted aquatic plant, very different from the one you find in Chinese take-out. It can dominate ponds, shallow lakes, and rivers because it grows in thick, dense colonies and can grow as much as 4.8 m (16 ft) in length.

**Identification**

**Leaves:** Come in two distinct forms: floating and submersed. Floating leaves are triangular or fan-shaped with noticeably toothed margins on the outer edges. They are roughly 1-3 cm (0.4-1.2 in) long and are arranged in large floating rosettes. The upper leaf surface is glossy, while the underside is covered with soft hairs. These leaves are kept afloat by spongy, inflated bladders attached to long stems called petioles (up to 15 cm [5.9 in]), which connect the leaves to the submersed section of the plant. The submersed leaves are green and feathery and whorl around the cord-like stem.

**Flowers:** Small flowers, about 1 cm (0.4 in) long, with four white petals are located in the center of the leafy rosette, and usually appear in mid to late July.

**Fruits:** Black nut-like structures have four spiny projections that are so sharp they are capable of penetrating shoe leather.

**Roots:** Numerous finely branched roots develop along the lower stem, which assist in anchoring the plant to the substrate.

**Environmental Impacts**
The dense floating mats of water chestnut can choke a water body, limiting light and oxygen, and impede boating and other recreational activities. Colonies of this plant can outcompete native organisms for nutrients and space, and they offer little nutritional value for wildlife.

**Habitat**
Water chestnut can grow in any freshwater setting, but prefers nutrient rich waters less than 4.8 m (16 ft) deep in ponds, lakes, slow moving streams, and rivers.

**Spread**
Water chestnut has a high reproductive rate, with each plant producing up to 15 nuts per season. Each nut can sink to the bottom and remain viable for up to 12 years. It can also spread vegetatively when the rosettes of floating leaves break apart and fragments attach to boats and trailers, or float to new locations.

**Distribution**
Native range includes Europe, Asia, and Africa. When water chestnut was brought to the United States by water gardeners in the 1800s, it quickly established, and was first observed in Massachusetts. It has since spread to the waters of Maryland, New York, and eastern Pennsylvania, where it is most common in the upper Delaware River. Populations are also established in Bucks, Pike, and Dauphin counties.
Species at a Glance
This exotic member of the iris family, also called the yellow flag, is commonly found in wetlands in many regions of the United States. It is an emergent aquatic perennial with showy yellow petals that can grow on average 0.3-0.9 m (1-3 ft) tall, although some can reach up to 2.1 m (7 ft).

Identification
Leaves: Long, broad, flattened, and sword-shaped; usually dark green in color, pointed at the ends and overlapped at the base. Can grow up to 2.5 cm (1 in) wide.

Flowers: There are usually 2-3 flowers on each stalk that have bright yellow to cream-colored petals with sepals outlined in purple and brown. They are 8-10 cm (3.1-3.9 in) in diameter and bloom June through August.

Seeds: Numerous smooth, flattened seeds grow in small oblong shaped capsules, roughly 5 cm (2 in) long. Capsules grow in clusters at the base of the flower and have the ability to float.

Roots: Fleshy and form from a single-branched stem. They are 10-30 cm (3.9-12 in) long.

Similar Species
Native look-a-likes include the cattail (Typha spp.), bur-reeds (Sparganium spp.), and the blue flag iris (Iris versicolor). Cattails look similar during spring growth, except that their leaves are arranged in rounded layers rather than flat like the yellow iris. Native irises have thinner leaves and blue-purple flowers instead of yellow.

Habitat
Found mainly in wetland areas like marshes and the shores of lakes, ponds, and streams; however, they have a high tolerance for drought and can survive long periods in dry, acidic, and low-oxygen soils.

Spread
The yellow iris reproduces vegetatively through horizontal underground stems called rhizomes, which form into roots, allowing it to re-grow new plants.

Distribution
Native to Europe, western Asia, northern Africa, and the Mediterranean region, yellow iris was brought to the United States as an ornamental plant that quickly spread to uncultivated areas and is now established in over 40 states, Lake Erie, and several counties throughout Pennsylvania.

Environmental Impacts
The roots of the yellow iris are sturdy and connect hundreds of flowering plants underground, congesting water flow and leaving no room for native wetland plants to grow. It is also poisonous, harming fish and animals that touch or eat it. It can cause skin irritation when touched, so caution should be used when trying to remove it.

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Species at a Glance
Common privet, also called European privet, belongs to the olive family and was introduced from Europe and Asia in the early to mid-1800s as a traditional southern ornamental. It is a semi-evergreen, thicket-forming shrub that grows upright to a height and width of 3.7-4.6 m (12-15 ft), and often has multiple trunks with long leafy branches.

Identification
Leaves: Opposite in two rows at or near right angles to the stem. Oval to elliptical in shape and rounded at the tip (often with little indentations); 2-4 cm (0.8-1.8 in) long and 1-3 cm (0.4-1.2 in) wide. Upper sides of the leaves are a lustrous green, while undersides are pale green with a hairy mid-vein beneath.

Flowers: Small white flowers grow in clusters at the end of the stems and bloom from June to July.

Fruits: Small, shiny, blue-black berries occur in clusters at the end of the stem and mature from September to October.

Stems: Slender twigs are straight, rounded, or four-angled below the nodes and increase upward, with color ranging from brownish gray to gray-green. Privet bark is whitish tan to gray in color and smooth in texture, and young branches have tiny hairs.

Similar Species
It is difficult to distinguish between the various privet species, including Chinese (L. sinense) and Japanese (L. japonicum) privets. Common privet also has leaves similar to the native shrub coralberry (Symphoricarpos orbiculatus), but the coralberry has very slender twigs, deciduous leaves, and red berries produced in axillary clusters, and lacks a terminal bud.

Habitat
Common privet is often seen along roadsides, bottom-land forests, fencerows, forest fields, and other areas with disturbed soil. It grows well in full sunlight and low nutrient soils, but will tolerate lower light levels if nutrients are increased.

Spread
Common privet easily escapes cultivation to invade adjacent areas, reproducing both vegetatively and by seed. Seeds are dispersed by birds and other wildlife that eat the fruits and excrete the seeds undamaged into new areas.

Distribution
Common privet is native to Europe, Northern Africa and Asia. Current range maps show its distribution in several U.S. states, with a wide distribution throughout Pennsylvania.

Environmental Impacts
Common privet is aggressive and troublesome. It spreads rapidly to form dense thickets that can easily out-compete native plant species.
**Common Reed (Phragmites)**

*Phragmites australis*

**Species at a Glance**
Phragmites is a perennial long-lived grass that can grow 1.8-4.6 m (6-15 ft) high in stands that exclude almost all other vegetation. While phragmites is native to North America, the introduction of a non-native strain from Europe rapidly and aggressively expanded throughout the United States, replacing much of the native reed.

**Identification**
Leaves: Broad, pointed, elongate and typically 20-60 cm (7.9-24 in) long and 1-5 cm (0.4-2 in) at their widest point. Leaves arise from thick vertical stalks. Foliage is gray-green during the growing season.

Flowers: Bushy clusters called **panicles** grow 15-40 cm (5.9-16 in) long in late July and August and are usually purple or golden in color. As seeds mature, the **panicles** begin to look “fluffy” due to hairs on the seeds, and they take on a gray sheen.

Stems/Roots: Rigid stems that feel rough to the touch often reach 4.6 m (15 ft) in height next to dead stems from previous growth. Below ground, phragmites forms a dense network of roots several meters in depth and includes rhizome **runners**, which can grow 3 m (10 ft) or more in a single season.

**Similar Species**
Reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) has a similar appearance to phragmites but is much smaller and has a membranous **ligule**. Giant reed (*Arundo donax*) also has a similar appearance and habitat but has a hairy **lemma** and a hairless **spikelet stalk**.

**Habitat**
Phragmites is abundant along the borders of lakes, ponds, and rivers, in tidal and non-tidal, brackish, and freshwater marsh communities, roadsides, and disturbed areas. It does not tolerate rapidly moving water.

**Spread**
Spread occurs mainly through vegetative means such as rhizome and **stolon** fragments. Rhizomes can break off and be washed downstream, becoming established in new areas. Phragmites also produces an abundance of wind-dispersed seeds, although seed viability is typically low. Heavy machinery may transport phragmites along roadsides between sites.

**Distribution**
Invasive strains of phragmites, which were introduced in the late 1800s, are now widespread throughout the lower 48 states and southern Canada. It can be found in eastern, western, and south-central Pennsylvania counties.

**Environmental Impacts**
Dense stands of invasive phragmites can crowd out native plant species, alter marsh hydrology, alter wildlife habitat, and increase fire potential. It blocks light to other plants and emits a toxin that allows it to outcompete native plants, quickly turning once biologically diverse wetlands into monocultures.
Exotic Bush Honeysuckles
Lonicera sp.

Species at a Glance
Exotic bush honeysuckles are dense, upright, deciduous shrubs, which usually grow 1.8-6 m (6-20 ft) high. The five most problematic species in Pennsylvania include Amur (L. maackii), Morrow’s (L. morrowii), Standish (L. standishii), Tatarian (L. tatarica), and Belle honeysuckle, which is a Tatarian-Morrow’s hybrid cross.

Identification
Leaves: Oval to oblong or egg-shaped leaves reach 2.5-6.5 cm (1-2.6 in) in length and are opposite along the stem. The significant difference between species is the presence of fine hairs on the leaf. Tatarian honeysuckle has smooth, hairless, bluish-green leaves, and Morrow’s has downy leaves. Belle honeysuckle leaves are a combination of the two.

Flowers: Fragrant flowers arranged in pairs less than 2.5 cm (1 in) long occur during May and June. Tatarian flowers are usually pink to crimson in color, while other species are white and become yellow as they age.

Fruits: Round berries are usually a deep red, yellow, or orange color. They contain 2-6 seeds and mature in September to October but may remain on the shrub throughout winter.

Stems/Roots: Generally thornless, hairless, and shallow. Older stems have a shaggy-barked appearance and are often hollow.

Similar Species
Exotic bush honeysuckles begin leaf development one to two weeks before other shrubs and native bush honeysuckles, and they also hold their leaves later into the fall. Native honeysuckles also have solid instead of hollow stems.

Habitat
These plants are relatively shade-intolerant and most often occur in forest edges, abandoned fields, pastures, roadides, and other open, upland habitats and disturbed areas. Morrow’s honeysuckle is also capable of invading bogs, fens, lakeshores, sand plains, and other uncommon habitat types.

Spread
Prolific berries are attractive to deer and over twenty species of birds, which feed on and disperse the seeds over long distances. Vegetative sprouting also aids in their persistence.

Distribution
Native to Asia and western Europe, exotic bush honeysuckles were introduced to the United States as ornamentals, and for wildlife cover and soil erosion control. Their spread from the central Great Plains to southern New England and south to the Carolinas includes several Pennsylvania counties where all five exotic species are found extensively.

Environmental Impacts
Bush honeysuckle invasions shade out native plant species and alter habitats by decreasing light availability, soil moisture, and nutrients, and possibly by releasing toxins that prevent other plant species from growing nearby. In addition, the fruits, while rich in carbohydrates, do not offer migrating birds the nutrient-rich food sources needed for long flights that are supplied by native plant species.
Giant Knotweed
Fallopia sachalinensis

Species at a Glance
Giant knotweed is an herbaceous perennial and member of the buckwheat family. It forms large colonies of erect stems, which are woody in appearance and can reach heights over 3.7 m (12 ft).

Identification
Leaves: Large rounded leaves alternate on the stem and reach over 0.3 m (1 ft) in length. They have heart-shaped bases and rounded lobes. Thin, wavy hairs are present on the underside of the leaves in June through mid-September.

Flowers: Small flowers reach about 10 cm (3.9 in) in length and range in color from a creamy white to greenish white. They grow in short, branched clusters from leaf axils at the ends of stems and appear from August to October.

Fruits: Three-sided seeds are shiny, brown to black, egg-shaped, and have a paper-like texture.

Stems: Smooth, hollow, jointed stems are swollen at the nodes, are light green in color, and resemble bamboo shoots.

Similar Species
Giant knotweed looks similar to the other knotweed species, including Japanese knotweed (Fallopia japonica) and Virginia knotweed (Persicaria virginiana). Giant knotweed is generally much larger and can be distinguished by its heart-shaped leaf bases, and the fine hairs on the undersides of the leaves.

Habitat
Giant knotweed grows in various levels of sunlight in moist soils of streams and riverbanks, wet meadows, roadsides, and areas of human disturbance.

Spread
Giant knotweed spreads primarily through rhizomes and root fragments that disperse to new areas by natural means such as wind and water, and by man-made disturbances such as roadside clearings and equipment.

Distribution
Native to the Sakhalin Islands of Japan, it was introduced to the United States around 1900 as an ornamental. It is currently widespread across the United States and is found in several Pennsylvania counties.

Environmental Impacts
Once established, giant knotweed is very difficult to eradicate. It quickly forms dense strands that crowd out native vegetation, clog waterways, and displace stream-side vegetation, causing erosion along stream banks and degrading fish and wildlife habitat.
Glossy Buckthorn
*Rhamnus frangula*

**Species at a Glance**
Also known as European alder or smooth buckthorn, glossy buckthorn is a large shrub to small tree that can grow as high as 5.5 m (18 ft) but is usually closer to 3-3.7 m (10-12 ft) tall, 2.4-3.7 m (8-12 ft) wide, and 25 cm (9.8 in) in diameter.

**Identification**

- **Leaves:** Thin, glossy, dark green, oblong leaves alternate on the stem. Size is 2.5-8 cm (1-3.1 in) in length and the leaf stalk is one-third the length of the blade. The upper leaf surface is shiny, while the lower surface can be hairy or smooth, and leaf margins are smooth instead of serrated. A diagnostic characteristic of buckthorns, which is shared only with dogwoods, is the lateral veins that curve to follow the leaf margins as they approach the edges. Buckthorns leaf out early in the spring and retain their leaves (which do not change color) into late fall.

- **Flowers:** Small flowers with five petals are arranged in creamy green clusters that bloom in May or early June.

- **Fruits:** Small berries, about 1 cm (0.4 in) in diameter, are arranged in large clusters. Fruit is red-brown in color, changing to black when it ripens and falls in July through September. Each fruit contains 2-4 smooth, ungrooved seeds.

- **Branches:** Warty-looking or bumpy branches have naked hairy buds. A cut branch reveals yellow sapwood and a pink to orange colored heartwood.

**Similar Species**
This plant is often confused with other buckthorn species, including the invasive common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*), the native alder buckthorn (*Rhamnus alnifolia*), and the lance-leafed buckthorn (*Rhamnus lanceolata*). Unlike glossy buckthorn, common buckthorn flowers have four petals, twigs are tipped with short spines, and leaves are smooth on both surfaces, with serrated edges. Native buckthorns are also much smaller, with alder buckthorn reaching only 0.9 m (3 ft) high and lance-leafed buckthorn reaching 1.8 m (6 ft) high.

**Habitat**
Aggressively invades moist wetlands and disturbed areas like swamps, bogs, fens, and wet meadows; however, is not confined to wet soils and can also invade upland sites such as old fields and roadsides.

**Spread**
Glossy buckthorn propagates mainly by seed, so dispersal occurs as the fruits are consumed by birds and mice and are distributed over long distances.

**Distribution**
Native to Eurasia, it was introduced as an ornamental shrub because of its hardiness and ability to thrive in varying light and soil conditions. It is now widespread in many areas and can be found throughout Pennsylvania, where it is still cultivated under the alias ‘tallhedge.’

**Environmental Impacts**
Once established, glossy buckthorn can spread aggressively, forming dense thickets that shade out native shrubs and herbs, often completely eliminating them. The dense buckthorn seedlings also inhibit the growth of native shrub and tree seedlings.
Japanese Hop
*Humulus japonicus*

**Species at a Glance**
Japanese hop is a fast-growing, herbaceous, annual climbing vine and member of the hemp family. It can climb to heights of 3 m (10 ft) or more with the help of many small hooked prickles that cover the stem and can cause irritation to bare skin.

**Identification**
- **Leaves:** Opposite, palmate leaves are approximately 5-10 cm (2-3.9 in) in length and have rough, serrated edges. They are divided into 5-9 lobes with downward pointed prickles and down-curved bracts at their base. The down curved bracts and sharp prickles are distinguishing characteristics of this plant.
- **Flowers:** Because they lack petals and are green in color, the flowers can be inconspicuous. They bloom in clusters about 5 cm (2 in) in length in early to mid-summer.
- **Seeds:** Green hops produced by female plants contain oval, yellowish-brown seeds, which can remain viable for up to three years.
- **Stems:** Rough stems, which are covered in tiny hooked hairs, can reach 2.4-11 m (8-35 ft) in length and help the plant climb.

**Similar Species**
May be confused with common hop (*Humulus lupulus*), which typically has three-lobed leaves, with upper leaves occasionally lacking lobes altogether. Unlike Japanese hop, the leaf stems of common hop are shorter than the leaves.

**Habitat**
Japanese hop grows dense, nearly continuous stands in floodplain areas along river and stream banks; along roadsides, open fields, and woodlands; or wherever soil is moist. It can grow in full sun or shade and in sandy, clay, acidic, or neutral soil.

**Spread**
Along with spread from intentional introductions, seeds dispersed by wind and moving water can help Japanese hop multiply.

**Distribution**
Native to Japan and eastern China, Japanese hop was introduced to the United States as an ornamental garden plant and is now growing in the Great Lakes area and surrounding states. In Pennsylvania, it is found in many counties spanning the state.

**Environmental Impacts**
Japanese hop can form dense, almost solid stands that outcompete native vegetation. It can be removed by hand pulling before the seeds ripen (August through September), but protection is needed (gloves, etc.) as irritation and blistering can occur from the hooked hairs covering the vines.
Japanese Knotweed
*Fallopia japonica*

**Species at a Glance**
Japanese knotweed is a shrub-like herbaceous perennial that is nicknamed elephant ear bamboo because it has stems that resemble bamboo when mature. It can reach upright heights of over 4 m (13 ft).

**Identification**

- **Leaves:** Wide, triangular to egg-shaped leaves are pointed at the tip and arranged **alternately** along the stem. Size may vary, but average is about 15 cm (5.9 in) long by 8-10 cm (3.1-3.9 in) wide. Leaf stems are often a reddish color, and leaf bases are essentially straight across (**truncate**).
- **Flowers:** Small, attractive, greenish to white flowers occur in branched clusters about 10-13 cm (3.9-5.1 in) long in the summer.
- **Fruits:** Soon after flowering, small winged **fruits** called **nutlets** are produced.
- **Seeds:** Triangular seeds are shiny and small, about 0.3 cm (0.1 in) long.
- **Stems:** Smooth, stout, hollow stems are swollen at the leaf joints and resemble bamboo, especially in older plants. Like all members of this family, the base of the stem above each joint is surrounded by a thin membranous **sheath** called an **ocrea**.

**Similar Species**

Giant knotweed (*Fallopia sachalinensis*) occurs in some of the same areas as Japanese knotweed but can be distinguished by its larger leaves with heart-shaped bases instead of the characteristic **truncate** leaf base. It also lacks egg-shaped leaves and the stems that resemble bamboo.

**Habitat**

Found in moist, open, partially shaded habitats, Japanese knotweed has been reported along riverbanks, wetlands, roadways, hillsides, and disturbed areas in a variety of soil types and pH's. It also tolerates adverse conditions such as high temperatures, high salinity, drought, and floods.

**Spread**

Long stout **rhizomes**, which are capable of rapidly producing new plants, result in thick colonies. Plant fragments, seeds, and **rhizomes** can be spread naturally by water and wind, but also by human interactions.

**Distribution**

Native to Japan, China, and parts of Korea and Taiwan, Japanese knotweed was introduced to the United States probably in the late 1800s as an ornamental plant and for erosion control and landscape screening. It is now found throughout the United States and is widespread throughout Pennsylvania.

**Environmental Impacts**

Japanese knotweed emerges early in the spring and grows quickly and aggressively. It forms dense mats that crowd and shade out native plants and grasses along creeks, making riverbanks less stable and more likely to shear off during flooding.
Japanese Stilt Grass
*Microstegium vimineum*

Species at a Glance
Japanese stilt grass is an annual, herbaceous, sprawling grass that resembles miniature bamboo. It germinates in the spring and grows slowly through the summer months, reaching a canopy height of 30-61 cm (12-24 in).

Identification
- **Leaves**: Pale green leaf blades are 3-8 cm (1.2-3.1 in) in length; they are narrow, asymmetrical, taper at both ends, and are lightly hairy, alternating along a branched stalk. A distinguishing characteristic is a pale silvery strip of reflective hairs along the mid-rib of the upper surface.
- **Flowers**: Flattened, trapezoid-shaped flowers grow in spikes on slender stalks about 3-8 cm (1.2-3.1 in) long in late August to September.
- **Fruits**: Dry fruits called achenes are produced soon after flowering, usually in early October.
- **Stems**: The weak, somewhat reclining stems are hairless and branched, rooting at the lower nodes.

Similar Species
The native perennial whitegrass (*Leersia virginica*) is similar but lacks the silver stripe along the mid-rib, and flowers earlier in August. The nodes of stilt grass are also smooth, while whitegrass has hairy nodes. In the fall, stilt grass turns yellow to pale purple, while whitegrass stays green.

Habitat
Japanese stilt grass occurs in a wide variety of habitats, including moist soils of open woods, floodplain forests, wetlands, fields, roadsides, ditches, utility corridors, and gardens. It readily invades areas subject to disturbances such as mowing, tilling, foot traffic, and flooding.

Spread
This colonial species spreads by roots that grow from nodes along the stems that come in contact with the ground. It also spreads through a high production of seeds that disperse by water currents during floods, or by contaminated materials, such as hay, soil, and potted plants, or on footwear. Seeds can remain viable for five or more years before they germinate.

Distribution
Native to Japan, Korea, China, Malaysia, and India, Japanese stilt grass was introduced into the United States in 1919, when it was thought to have escaped from its use as packing material for porcelain. It is now invasive in several states, and is found in south-central to eastern Pennsylvania, as well as Erie County.

Environmental Impacts
Japanese stilt grass rapidly spreads to form extensive mats that displace native plant species that are unable to compete. It can alter natural habitats by changing soil chemistry and creating low light conditions that shade out other species.
Lesser Celandine
*Ranunculus ficaria*

**Species at a Glance**
Lesser celandine, also known as fig buttercup and pilewart, is a low-growing, perennial, flowering herb that completes its life cycle during the winter and spring. When in bloom, large infestations appear as a thick green carpet with yellow dots spread across the forest floor.

**Identification**
*Leaves:* Kidney to heart-shaped leaves with both smooth and coarse toothed edges form a *rosette*. Leaves are tender, *stalked*, and a shiny, almost lustrous, dark green color.

*Flowers:* A single flower with 8-12 symmetrical petals blooms in the center of each *rosette* in March and April. They are buttery yellow with slightly darker centers and grow to be about 2.5 cm (1 in) wide.

*Stems/Roots:* Tiny cream-colored *bulblets* are produced in the stem *axils* and become apparent later in the flowering period. Roots produce numerous finger-like *tubers* that are easily visible when the plant is pulled up and are used to store energy for early growth in the spring.

**Similar Species**
Native marsh marigold (*Caltha palustris*) also has kidney-shaped leaves and yellow flowers but does not produce *tubers* or form a continuous carpet of growth. Other look-a-likes include celandine (*Chelidonium majus*) and celandine poppy (*Stylophorum diphyllum*), both of which belong to the poppy family and have flowers with only four petals.

**Habitat**
Although found mostly in moist, forested floodplains with sandy soils, lesser celandine can also occur in drier upland areas.

**Spread**
Lesser celandine spreads using an abundant network of *tubers* and *bulblets*, which easily separate from the parent plant to form a new independent plant. *Tubers* can be unearthed and scattered around by animal and human activity, allowing them to spread to new locations on equipment, animal fur, or by flooding events.

**Distribution**
Native to Eurasia, including Europe, northern Africa, western Asia, Caucasus, and Siberia, lesser celandine was introduced to the United States as an ornamental plant, and many colorful varieties are still available commercially. It is reported as an invasive in at least seventeen states in the northeastern United States, including the southern half of Pennsylvania.

**Environmental Impacts**
Lesser celandine emerges before most native species in the spring, giving it a competitive advantage and allowing it to form a thick blanket of leaves across the forest floor, preventing native species from penetrating.

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**INVASIVE FACULTATIVE PLANTS**

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**Pennsylvania AIS Field Guide**
MILE-A-MINUTE
Persicaria perfoliata

Species at a Glance
Mile-a-minute, also called Asiatic tearthumb, is a herbaceous, annual, trailing vine that can reach lengths of up to 6 m (20 ft). It survives using its recurved barbs to climb to areas of high light intensity and attach to any other plants that get in its way.

Identification
Leaves: Light green and shaped like distinctive equilateral triangles. They are 3-8 cm (1.2-3.1 in) in length, alternate along a thin delicate stem, and have barbs on the undersides. Circular, cup-shaped leafy structures called ocrea surround the stem at each node, where flower buds, late flowers, and fruits emerge.

Flowers: Small, white, and generally inconspicuous.

Fruits: Attractive, deep metallic blue, berry-like fruits are arranged in clusters with each fruit containing a single, glossy black or reddish-black hard seed.

Stems: Delicate, thin, reddish stems have curved downward pointing barbs.

Similar Species
Some native vine species, including native tearthumbs, may be confused with mile-a-minute; however, they lack the equilateral triangle-shaped leaves and the blue berry-like fruits.

Habitat
Mile-a-minute generally colonizes open and disturbed areas along the edges of woods, wetlands, stream banks, roadsides, and uncultivated open fields. It prefers extremely wet environments with poor soil structure and full sunlight, although it will tolerate shade for part of the day.

Spread
This self-pollinator produces a large number of seeds that can persist in the soil for up to six years. Birds, ants, small mammals, and water are the primary dispersal methods. Fruits can remain buoyant in streams or rivers for 7-9 days, allowing it to disburse over long distances.

Distribution
Native to India and eastern Asia, the first successful population of the vine in the United States was in York, Pennsylvania in the late 1930s. Today in Pennsylvania, mile-a-minute has spread to several eastern counties, as well as Butler County in western Pennsylvania.

Environmental Impacts
Mile-a-minute grows rapidly, overtaking shrubs and other native vegetation by reducing their access to sunlight and destroying their stems and branches by its added weight and pressure. It also poses problems to nursery and horticulture crops, Christmas tree farms, and forestry operations.
Oriental Bittersweet
Celastrus orbiculatus

Species at a Glance
Oriental bittersweet, also called Asian bittersweet, is an aggressive, deciduous, woody vine that was introduced into the United States in the 1860s as an ornamental plant. Because of its colorful yellow and orange berries, it is still widely used as an ornamental vine, further promoting its spread.

Identification
Leaves: Glossy, rounded, elliptical or ovate, with finely toothed margins and an abruptly pointed tip. They are typically 5-13 cm (2-5.1 in) long and grow alternately and evenly around the stem.

Flowers: Female plants produce small clusters of greenish flowers along the stems in May and early June.

Fruits: Globular capsules produced from July to October change from green to yellow as they ripen. At maturity the yellow capsules split open to reveal three red-orange, fleshy seed coatings, each containing 3-6 seeds. Male plants are non-fruiting.

Stems: Usually light brown, reaching 5-10 cm (2-3.9 in) in diameter and may be up to 18 m (60 ft) long.

Similar Species
American bittersweet (Celastrus scandens), a native species, can be distinguished from Oriental bittersweet because the flowers and fruits of the native plant grow only at the tips of small clusters of branches, rather than along long stretches of the stems. In addition, the fruit capsules ripen to a dark orange color.

Habitat
Oriental bittersweet infests forest edges, riparian corridors, woodlands, fields, hedge rows, coastal areas, and salt marsh edges, particularly those suffering from land disturbance. It prefers open, sunny sites but tolerates shade enough to invade forested areas. It will grow over anything it comes upon.

Spread
Oriental bittersweet reproduces prolifically by seeds, which are readily dispersed to new areas by birds. It also spreads through root suckering, which is when the plant forms a new growth-shoot from an existing exposed or buried root. Fruits can also float downstream to new areas. Vines with fruit have also been used ornamentally in wreaths and decorations.

Distribution
Native to Eastern Asia in Korea, China, and Japan, Oriental bittersweet has been reported as an invasive in 21 U.S. states including Pennsylvania, where it has been found in several counties spanning the state.

Environmental Impacts
Oriental bittersweet grows vigorously, climbing over and smothering native vegetation and preventing sunlight from reaching native plants. Its weight on trees can lead to uprooting and blow-over during high winds and heavy snowfalls. In addition, Oriental bittersweet is displacing the native American bittersweet through competition and hybridization.
**Purple Loosestrife**

*Lythrum salicaria*

**Species at a Glance**
Purple loosestrife is an upright perennial herb that can grow 0.9-3 m (3-10 ft) high, depending on environmental conditions. While gardeners might enjoy the brilliant purple display, its attractiveness doesn't outweigh the serious threat it poses to Pennsylvania.

**Identification**

**Leaves:** The body of the leaf is lance-shaped or oblong, while the base is usually heart-shaped or rounded. Leaves are **stalkless** with smooth edges and are sometimes covered in fine, downy hairs. They reach 4-10 cm (1.6-3.9 in) in length and are usually paired and **opposite** each other down the stem, but can also be **whorled** in groups of three.

**Flowers:** Paired, or clustered into 10-40 cm (3.9-16 in) long magenta colored **spikes**. Each flower is complete, containing five to seven petals that can range in color from pink to purple-red, and blooms from June to September.

**Fruits:** Two-valved shaped capsules that burst at maturity release seeds usually in late July or August.

**Stems/Roots:** Mature plants can have 1-50 square, woody stems arising from a large central taproot. Stems are 4-6 sided, green to purple in color, and are often branching, giving the plant a bushy or woody appearance.

**Similar Species**
It's best to identify purple loosestrife during its long period of bloom when the characteristic reddish-purple flower masses can be easily seen. It is often confused with blue vervain (*Verbena hastata*), which has toothed instead of smooth leaves; blazing stars (*Liatris spp*.), which only have one flowering **stalk**; and other species of loosestrifes.

**Habitat**
Purple loosestrife occurs in freshwater and brackish wetlands, riparian corridors, ditches, and other moist soil areas. It is a successful colonizer and potential invader of any wet, disturbed site in North America.

**Spread**
A long flowering season allows purple loosestrife to produce an estimated two to three million seeds per year from its 30-50 flowering stems. It can also reproduce vegetatively through underground stems at a rate of about one foot per year.

**Distribution**
Native to areas of Europe and Asia, purple loosestrife was brought to North America in the early 1800s for ornamental and medicinal uses. It has since spread to every state in the U.S. except Florida and is widespread in Pennsylvania.

**Environmental Impacts**
Purple loosestrife quickly establishes and spreads, outcompeting and replacing native grasses and other flowering plants that provide high quality food and habitat sources for wildlife. It forms dense stands that restrict native wetland plants and alter the structural and ecological values of wetlands.
Reed Canary Grass
Phalaris arundinacea

Species at a Glance
Reed canary grass is a large, cool-season perennial that grows 0.6-2.7 m (2-9 ft) in height and forms large monotypic stands that can dominate an area. Two virtually indistinguishable ecotypes are thought to exist in the United States, including a native ecotype and a more aggressive Eurasian one.

Identification
Leaves: Long, gradually tapering leaves with flat blades have a rough texture on both the upper and lower surfaces. Size ranges are 9-25 cm (3.5-9.8 in) long and 0.5-2 cm (0.2-0.8 in) wide. Coloration can be light green to a straw color. A transparent, thin, membranous outgrowth called a ligule is also present at the junction of the leaf and stalk.

Flowers: Densely packed clusters called panicles are generally 7.5-15 cm (3-5.9 in) in length and arise from the stem high above the leaves from May to mid-June. At first, they appear a green to purple color, but gradually change to beige over time.

Stems: Sturdy, often hollow, hairless stems are 1 cm (0.4 in) in diameter and have some reddish coloration near the top.

Similar Species
The highly transparent ligule is helpful in distinguishing reed canary grass from the non-native orchard grass (Dactylis glomerata), which has leaves with wider blades, and more narrow and pointed clusters of flowers. Additionally, blue-joint grass (Calamagrostis canadensis) may be mistaken for reed canary grass in areas where orchard grass is rare.

Habitat
A wetland plant, this species typically occurs in soils that are saturated for most of the growing season but where standing water does not persist for extended periods. Ideal conditions typically occur in roadside ditches, rights-of-ways, river dikes and levees, shallow marshes, and meadows.

Spread
Seeds and creeping rhizomes help reed canary grass spread aggressively. Seeds can be moved from one wetland to another by waterways, animals, humans, or machines.

Distribution
Reed canary grass is native to temperate regions of Europe, Asia, and North America. Historically, the Eurasian ecotype was planted throughout the United States for forage and erosion control. It has become naturalized in much of the northern half of the United States and is widespread in Pennsylvania.

Environmental Impacts
Reed canary grass forms large, monotypic stands that harbor few other plant species and are of little use to wildlife. Once established, it dominates an area by building up a seed bank that can eventually erupt, germinate, and recolonize treated sites.
INVERTEBRATE ANATOMY

Abdomen

Carapace

Antenna

Antennule

Rostrum

Cheliped

Cephalothorax

Telson

Apex

Spire

Sutures

Body whorl

Lip

Aperture (which operculum covers)

Spirals forming whorls

Anterior

Lateral tooth

Umbo

Cardinal teeth

Adductor muscle scars

Pallial line

Ventral edge

Posterior

INVASIVE INVERTEBRATES

INVASIVE INVERTEBRATES

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**Asian Clam**

*Corbicula fluminea*

**Species at a Glance**
The Asian clam, also called the Asiatic clam, pygmy clam, or gold clam, is a small freshwater bivalve with two thick-hinged shells that rarely exceed the size of a nickel. It was first introduced to the west coast of the United States in 1924, possibly as a food item. By the 1970s, it occupied most of the Mississippi River Basin, the Gulf Coast, and the eastern United States.

**Identification**
The shell is typically yellow-green to brown; however, darker morphs exist, usually in the southwestern United States. While the small shell averages 2.5 cm (1 in), it can reach up to 6.5 cm (2.6 in) long. The shell is thick, triangular in shape, and displays course, concentric growth rings. The inside of the shell is layered with light purple polished nacre and the teeth are finely serrated. Microscopic juveniles called veligers appear under a microscope in a “D” shape less than 1 mm (0.04 in) in length.

**Similar Species**
Introduced fingernail and pea clams have smooth, instead of serrated, teeth and are generally smaller, with thinner shells and less prominent growth rings than the Asian clam.

**Habitat**
Because it prefers running water with a sand or gravel substrate bottom, Asian clams can be found in streams, rivers, ponds, lakes, and man-made canals. Although it is a freshwater species, it can withstand slightly brackish waters and is also tolerant of degraded waters.

**Spread**
Because it is hermaphroditic, the Asian clam is capable of self-fertilization. In warmer waters it can spawn year round, and a single clam can release hundreds to thousands of free-floating, microscopic veligers per day. These juveniles are then spread by water currents and human activity. Asian clams attach to boating, fishing, and scuba diving equipment, and veligers can be transferred in bait buckets or live wells.

**Distribution**
While native to the temperate and tropical regions of Asia and Africa, the Asian clam is widespread in the United States and spans almost the entire state of Pennsylvania.

**Environmental Impacts**
The Asian clam is a known biofouler that blocks water flow to power plants and industrial water systems, and causes problems in irrigation canals and pipes. It also increases clarity in the water column by filtering suspended matter, leading to excessive plant growth and altered nutrient and water quality regimes. This clam may also compete with native mollusks for food and habitat.
Bloody Red Shrimp

Hemimysis anomala

Species at a Glance
The bloody red shrimp is a tiny freshwater crustacean in the order “Mysidacea,” more commonly referred to as mysids. Mysids are also sometimes called opossum shrimp because females typically carry their eggs in a pouch. The impact of this shrimp on the Great Lakes is unknown, but based on its history of invasion across Europe, significant impacts are possible.

Identification
Bloody red shrimp are very small; males reach only 8-10 mm (0.3-0.4 in) and females reach 11-16 mm (0.4-0.6 in). They are ivory or translucent, but pigmentation can appear bright red to orange. Their eyes are large, black, and stalked, and they have 8 pairs of legs. A soft carapace covers the head and thorax. Under a microscope, the telson (tail) will be flat with two prominent terminal spikes. While these animals bear live young, juveniles are not easily visible to the naked eye. Its unique swarming behavior is unlikely to be confused with anything else in the Great Lakes. During daylight hours, especially in late summer, it may be observed forming reddish swarms in the shadows of piers, boats, or break walls. At night swarms disperse, but in clear, calm waters, they may be detected by shining a bright light on the water—the shrimp will rapidly swim away from the light.

Similar Species
The native Great Lakes opossum shrimp (Mysis diluviana) also has stalked eyes and overlapping size ranges. The best way to tell these species apart is by the shape of the tail (using a microscope or hand lens). The native opossum shrimp will have a deeply forked tail instead of a distinct flat tail.

Habitat
This species typically aggregates and hides in rocky crevasses and shadowed areas during the day and disperses to deeper water at night. It typically avoids soft bottoms and vegetation, but can be found in fresh or brackish water over hard bottom surfaces such as rocks and shells.

Spread
It was most likely introduced into the Great Lakes through ballast water discharges from transoceanic ships. Inter-basin transfer is most likely facilitated by bait buckets, live wells, bilges, boat motors/trailers/hulls, or other equipment used in the water.

Distribution
While native to the Ponto-Caspian region of eastern Europe, the bloody red shrimp was first reported in 2006 in Lake Michigan waters. The shrimp’s current distribution includes lakes Michigan, Ontario, and Erie. The closest report to Pennsylvania’s shoreline has been 60 miles north in Dunkirk, New York.

Environmental Impacts
The bloody red shrimp is considered “high risk” for invasion of inland lakes in the Great Lakes region. Its history of invading canals, streams, lakes, and reservoirs throughout Europe also indicate the potential for significant impacts to our inland lake systems.
**CHINESE MITTEN CRAB**  
*Eriocheir sinensis*

**Species at a Glance**
The Chinese mitten crab is a medium-sized burrowing crab that ranges in size from 30-100 mm (1.2-4 in), and has legs about double the length of the torso. It has made its way to the United States in parts of San Francisco as well as the Great Lakes region.

**Identification**
The "mitten" claws mainly identify this crab. Dense patches or bristles of hairs are present on the claws, on males more so than on females, although juveniles may not have any hair. The tips of the claws are typically white. They have four pairs of spines located on the side edges of the *carapace*. Mitten crabs range from a light brownish-orange to a greenish-brown. They also have a small notch between the eyes.

**Similar Species**
None.

**Habitat**
While the mitten crab is the only crab found in the fresh waters of the United States, it can also tolerate saltwater. These crabs are very skillful at walking on land, especially during upstream migration, allowing them to bypass dams and other natural obstructions.

**Spread**
The Chinese mitten crab is spreading across the world in ballast water transfers. Mitten crabs are also becoming popular in seafood markets, especially in New York. These crabs are often illegally released by purchasers in nonnative areas. They have also been known to cling to ship barges and hulls during transport.

**Distribution**
This species was first identified in eastern Asia and quickly spread throughout Europe. Currently, California (in particular San Francisco) is the only confirmed U.S. state with a mitten crab population. While there is no evidence they are established in the Great Lakes, specimens have been collected in the Detroit River, Lake Erie, and the Mississippi River Delta. While not yet confirmed in Pennsylvania waters, several of the crabs have been collected in the lower Delaware River and Delaware Bay.

**Environmental Impacts**
The burrowing behavior of mitten crabs causes erosion of stream banks and damage to embankments, as well as clogged drainage systems. They are also becoming a nuisance for recreational and commercial anglers when they become tangled up in nets. One positive aspect of the mitten crab is that it is a prime food source for predatory fish.
The Chinese mystery snail is a large freshwater snail commonly sold for use in freshwater aquariums and garden ponds. Its popularity in the aquarium industry has contributed highly to its spread across the United States.

Identification
The shell reaches 6.5 cm (2.6 in) in height. It is smooth, strong, and spherical with 6-7 convex whorls separated by prominent sutures, and fine vertical and horizontal lines that are slightly indented. Color is usually dark olive-green for adults and lighter for juveniles. Some adults are greenish-brown, brown, or reddish-brown. The outer lip of the shell is round or oval-shaped and black. An oblong-shaped operculum (or “trap door”) displays concentric growth rings and allows the snail to close the opening of the shell when water conditions are unfavorable or when predators attack.

Similar Species
The native brown mystery snail (Campeloma decisum) has a width to height ratio smaller than the Chinese mystery snail, making it much smaller and narrower with less convex whorls. The introduced banded mystery snail (Viviparus georgianus) is generally smaller (up to 3.5 cm [1.4 in] in height) and has prominent dark horizontal bands. The Chinese mystery snail is also often misidentified as the Japanese mystery snail (Cipangopaludina japonica), which many consider the same species.

Habitat
The Chinese mystery snail inhabits shallow, quiet waters of lakes, ponds, marshes, irrigation ditches, and slower portions of streams with some vegetation and muddy or sandy substrate.

Spread
Introduction of the Chinese mystery snail probably occurred through the aquarium industry and importation for Asian food markets. Once in a body of water, it can be spread by recreational activities via bait buckets and water holding areas on boats.

Distribution
While native to southeastern Asia and eastern Russia, the Chinese mystery snail was introduced to the United States in the 1890s and into the Great Lakes basin in the 1930-40s. It now occurs widely in the United States and Pennsylvania, including Lake Erie and the Schuylkill and Susquehanna Rivers.

Environmental Impacts
Chinese mystery snails can serve as vectors for transmitting parasites and diseases, and are a known host for some parasites that can infect humans. They can also clog water intake pipes and compete with native snails for food and resources.
Fishhook Waterflea
*Cercopagis pengoi*

**Species at a Glance**
The fishhook waterflea is a tiny freshwater crustacean that threatens aquatic ecosystems and fishing. It is not actually a flea, but rather a predatory cladoceran that consumes native plankton and collects in cotton-like masses on fishing lines and downrigger cables.

**Identification**
Clumps of waterfleas look and feel like gelatin dotted with tiny black spots. Magnification is needed to see the transparent body, which is about 10 mm (0.4 in) in length, with the tail making up 80 percent of the total length. The tail spine is strongly angled at 90° away from the body, with 1-3 widely spaced pairs of barbs and a unique loop or “hook” at the tip. The head is composed primarily of a single large compound eye. The dorsal egg pouch is elongated and pointed.

Note: This species does have another morph, which usually occurs earlier in the spring season, but has a much shorter tail that lacks the loop at the end and has up to four paired barbs.

**Similar Species**
The spiny waterflea (*Bythotrephes cederstroemi*) is larger, with a similar delicate spine; however, it lacks the distinctive looped hook at the end of the tail. In addition, it has a bulbous “balloon-shaped” brood pouch, which is more elongated and pointed in the fishhook waterflea. The two species are difficult to identify without magnification.

**Habitat**
While it can tolerate a wide range of temperatures, from 8-30°C (46-86°F), it prefers open, deep waters and is typically found in the upper, warmer water layer.

**Spread**
Fishing, boating, and other recreational equipment can transport fishhook water fleas and their eggs to new waters. In the absence of males, the females reproduce by a process called parthenogenesis, which requires no fertilization, and the offspring are clones of the mother.

**Distribution**
Originally native to the Ponto-Caspian region of Europe and Asia, the fishhook waterflea arrived in the ballast water of ships. It has been found in lakes Ontario, Erie, and Michigan, and the Finger Lakes Region of New York. In Pennsylvania, the fishhook waterflea is present in Lake Erie.

**Environmental Impacts**
Introduction of the fishhook waterflea into the Great Lakes continues to decrease populations of native zooplankton species. It competes directly with juvenile and small fish for food and is considered a nuisance to fishermen because the barbed tail can hook onto and clog fishing lines, nets, trawls, and other equipment used for recreational and commercial fishing.
New Zealand Mudsnail
*Potamopyrgus antipodarum*

**Species at a Glance**
The New Zealand mudsnail is a tiny aquatic snail whose population in Pennsylvania consists of only female clones. Since these mudsnails reproduce asexually, it takes only one snail to start a new population.

**Identification**
The shell is long, narrow, and coiled to the right in up to 8 whorls that come to a pointed tip at the top of the shell and are separated by deep grooves. Some morphs, such as those in the Great Lakes, can have either smooth shells or shells with a keel in the middle of each whorl. Average adult size is only 3-6 mm (0.1-0.2 in) in invasive populations. Color varies from gray to light and dark shades of brown. An ear-shaped operculum covers the opening of the shell when the animal withdraws.

**Similar Species**
While it resembles many species of native snail, New Zealand mudsnails are usually narrower, longer, and have more whorls than most native snails in the same genus.

**Habitat**
They are known to inhabit freshwater ponds, streams, rivers, lagoons, lakes, ditches, and reservoirs. Because they can tolerate slightly brackish water, they have a wide range of tolerances for substrate, temperature, and salinity.

**Spread**
The operculum, which is a small cover that can be used to close the opening of the shell, allows the New Zealand mudsnail to survive out of water and hitchhike on recreational boating or fishing equipment, the feet of wildlife, or even fur. They can also pass through the digestive system of predators alive and undigested.

**Distribution**
While native to New Zealand, this mudsnail was accidentally introduced into the United States in the 1980s, possibly with the transfer of fish eggs and live game fish, or in the ballast water of transoceanic ships. Their only occurrence in Pennsylvania has been 6 km north of Presque Isle Bay in Erie County.

**Environmental Impacts**
New Zealand mudsnails reproduce rapidly, displacing native species of mollusks and invertebrates, altering the food web, and impacting food sources for native trout and other fish, while offering them little nutritional value in return. They also impact water quality, as they alter ecosystem structure and natural cycles, such as the nitrogen cycle.
Rusty Crayfish
*Orconectes rusticus*

**Species at a Glance**
The rusty crayfish is a large, aggressive crustacean that can outcompete native crayfish for food and shelter, and devastate aquatic ecosystems with its huge appetite.

**Identification**
Adult rusty crayfish are typically 8-13 cm (3-5 in) long, with large, black tipped claws, and smooth mouthparts. They are typically grayish-green to reddish-brown in color, with a set of dark rusty orange spots on each side of the **carapace**, which is the most distinguishing feature. Due to the **hybridization** of male rusty crayfish with female native crayfish, these spots may not always be present or well developed.

**Similar Species**
May be confused with other native and invasive crayfish, including the calico crayfish (*Orconectes immunis*), virile crayfish (*O.virilis*), and northern clearwater crayfish (*O. propinquus*). However, these crayfish generally have smaller claws and lack the rusty orange spots present on the **carapace**.

**Habitat**
Rusty crayfish are often found in silt, clay, or gravel substrates, and prefer areas with adequate rock, log, and debris cover; however, they can survive in a variety of habitats, including lakes, rivers, ponds, and streams. They are most active at temperatures above 8° C (46°F).

**Spread**
Anglers using rusty crayfish as bait are one of the most common ways they have spread to new regions. It is not necessary to have both males and females to establish a new invasion; a female carrying viable sperm could begin a new population if released into a suitable environment.

**Distribution**
While their native range extends throughout the Ohio River basin in Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Illinois, and Indiana, rusty crayfish have become invasive in Michigan, Missouri, Iowa, New Mexico, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, the New England states, and areas of Ontario, Canada. In Pennsylvania, they were first discovered in 1976 in the lower Susquehanna River, with established populations documented in the south-central region of the state.

**Environmental Impacts**
Rusty crayfish reduce native crayfish populations by competing for food and daytime hiding locations. They are very aggressive and voracious eaters, destroying aquatic plant beds and reducing food, shelter, and spawning sites for other organisms, including valued sport fish.
Spiny Waterflea

*Bythotrephes cederstroemi*

The spiny waterflea is a tiny freshwater crustacean that consumes native plankton and collects in cotton-like masses on fishing lines and cables. It has the potential to outcompete native fish and can threaten a lake’s entire ecosystem.

**Identification**
This species is not actually a flea, but rather a transparent crustacean or *cladoceran* that sticks on fishing lines and forms clumps that look and feel like gelatin, with tiny black spots (eyes). Magnification is needed to see the transparent body, which ranges from 6-16 mm (0.2-0.6 in) long. The single long, straight tail, which makes up to 70 percent of its length, has several spikes or barbs. The ball-shaped head with large eyes is clearly separated from the body.

**Similar Species**
The fishhook waterflea (*Cercopagis pengoi*), which is smaller, also has a similar delicate spine; however, its tail has a distinctive looped hook at the end. It also has a more elongated and pointed brood pouch, in contrast with the spiny waterflea’s bulbous, “balloon-shaped” brood pouch. The two may be difficult to identify without magnification.

**Habitat**
Prefers large, deep, clear lakes with summer bottom temperatures of 10-24°C (50-75°F), but can also be found in wetlands, estuaries, and marinas. Spiny waterfleas do not tolerate warm lake temperatures.

**Spread**
Enacting stricter ballast water regulations, avoiding the release of bait, rinsing boats and equipment with hot water sprayed at high pressure, and drying boats and equipment for five days before reentering the water could help prevent further invasion of this species.

**Distribution**
While native to Europe and Asia, the spiny waterflea was most likely brought to the Great Lakes in the ballast water of ships traveling internationally. It was first found in 1984 in Lake Huron but is now found in all of the Great Lakes, including the Pennsylvania portion of Lake Erie. Spiny waterfleas were also collected in the Allegheny Reservoir in Warren County.

**Environmental Impacts**
The spiny waterflea decreases populations of native zooplankton and competes directly with juvenile and small fish for food although it can be a food source for several freshwater fish. Anglers consider it a nuisance because the tail spines hook onto and clog fishing lines and downrigger cables.
United States Distribution

**Quagga Mussel**
*Dreissena bugensis*

**Species at a Glance**
The quagga mussel, which some consider even more dangerous than its close relative the zebra mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*), is a small, fingernail-sized, freshwater mollusk and is one of the most intrusive, prolific, and costly aquatic invaders in North America.

**Identification**
The shells are rounded, fan-shaped, and attached by a hinge. While they are usually 3 cm (1.2 in) long, they can reach up to 5 cm (2 in). The shell is smooth and lacks ridges, although it typically has dark concentric rings that fade to a pale coloration near the hinge. The sticky thread-like projections called byssal threads are located toward the anterior end of the shell and help them attach to other objects. Eggs hatch into round, microscopic larvae called veligers that free-float in the water column for up to five weeks before settling.

**Similar Species**
While the zebra mussel is similar, it is more "D"-shaped, with a prominent ridge on its ventral side that allows it to sit upright. Quagga mussels are rounded and would simply topple over if placed on their sides. The midventral line is also straight in zebra mussels and curved in quaggas. The location of their byssal threads also differs; in zebra mussels they are located in the middle of the shell.

**Habitat**
Quagga mussels are found in both shallow, warm waters and deep, cool waters of freshwater lakes, reservoirs, ponds, quarries, and slow-moving or sluggish rivers. Their byssal threads attach to rocks, docks, cement, wood, and vegetation, but unlike zebra mussels they can also live and thrive directly on muddy or sandy bottoms. Quagga mussel reproduction can occur at low water temperatures, as cold as 4-9°C (39-48°F).

**Spread**
One female can produce up to one million eggs in a breeding season. The free-floating veligers can be scooped up undetected and transferred in bait buckets, bilge water, and live wells. Because mussels can survive out of water for up to five days, they are easily transported to other waterways on recreational boating and fishing gear.

**Distribution**
While native to the Black, Azov, and Caspian sea drainages, quagga mussels first appeared in the Great Lakes in Lake Erie in 1989 in contaminated ballast water. They have since spread through all of the Great Lakes, the Mississippi River drainage, and many inland lakes. In Pennsylvania, they have been found in Lake Erie, and diving quarries in Northampton and Blair counties.

**Environmental Impacts**
Like the zebra mussel, quagga mussels clog water intake pipes and damage equipment at power and water facilities. They also harm fisheries, alter water quality, and increase the growth of harmful algae. They decrease food sources for native species by filtering large amounts of microscopic plants and animals from the water, and they accumulate contaminants in their tissues. Economic impact is in the billions of dollars.
Species at a Glance
The zebra mussel is a small, fingernail-sized, freshwater mollusk that attaches to hard objects and has cost billions of dollars to control and remove. Since its discovery in the Great Lakes, it has quickly spread to become one of the most intrusive, prolific, and costly aquatic invaders in North America.

Identification
Although the zebra mussel is named for the alternating light and dark bands present on the shell, color patterns can vary between black, brown, beige, and tan, with white to yellow stripes or zigzagged patterns. The shell is “D”-shaped, with a straight midventral line and a prominent ridge that allows it to sit upright; quagga mussels would simply topple over if placed on their sides. In quagga mussels, the midventral line is also curved, and the location of the byssal threads is more towards the anterior end of the shell.

Habitat
Zebra mussels can be found in lakes, rivers, reservoirs, ponds, and quarries, but they require calcium for shell production, and water temperatures over 10°C (50°F) for reproduction. They can be found attached to hard surfaces such as rocks, wood, concrete, steel, and even other organisms.

Spread
One female can produce up to one million eggs in a breeding season. The free-floating veligers can be scooped up undetected and transferred in bait buckets, bilge water, and live wells. Because mussels can survive out of water for up to five days, they are easily transported to other waterways on recreational boating and fishing gear.

Distribution
While native to the Black, Azov, and Caspian sea drainages, zebra mussels first appeared in the Great Lakes in Lake St. Clair in 1988, probably imported in contaminated ballast water. They have since spread throughout all of the Great Lakes, the Mississippi River drainage, and many inland lakes. In Pennsylvania, they have been found in numerous inland lakes, creeks, rivers, and diving quarries throughout the state.

Similar Species
A close relative, the quagga mussel (Dreissena bugensis) is also fingernail-sized but more rounded in shape, lacking the prominent ridge that allows zebra mussels to sit upright; quagga mussels would simply topple over if placed on their sides. In quagga mussels, the midventral line is also curved, and the location of the byssal threads is more towards the anterior end of the shell.

Environmental Impacts
The clustering behavior of zebra mussels causes them to clog water intake pipes and damage equipment at power and water facilities, making them very expensive to remove and control. They also harm fisheries, alter water quality, and increase the growth of harmful algae. They decrease food sources for native species by filtering large amounts of microscopic plants and animals from the water, and they accumulate contaminants in their tissues. Economic impact is in the billions of dollars.
Fish Anatomy

Dorsal fins

Lateral line

Caudal fin

Pectoral fin

Dorsal

Ventral

Anterior

Mouth

Gill cover (operculum)

Pelvic fin

Anal fin

Caudal peduncle

Homocercal shapes

Heterocercal types

Protocercal

Diphycercal

Invasive Fish

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**ALEWIFE**  
*Alosa pseudoharengus*

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**Species at a Glance**

The alewife is a small forage fish that belongs to the herring family. It migrates long distances from the ocean to fresh water to reproduce in the spring and returns to the ocean in the fall; however, some populations have become landlocked and are restricted to inland waters.

**Identification**

Alewife size can range from up to 38 cm (15 in) in coastal populations to less than 25 cm (10 in) in inland populations. Their typically silver body is small, slender, and laterally compressed, but individuals entering freshwater often have a copper-sheen color. Eyes are relatively large, with an obvious eyelid. A single black spot is present on each side just behind the head. A row of scales, called scutes, which form a sharp edge along the mid-line of the belly, are responsible for its nickname “sawback”.

**Similar Species**

The alewife is closely related to the blueback herring (*Alosa aestivalis*), which is native in parts of the lower Susquehanna River. Alewives are lighter in color than bluebacks, and their body is more strongly compressed and less elongated. The most distinguishing characteristic between these species is the color of their peritoneum, or the lining of the abdominal cavity. An alewife’s peritoneum is pale with dusky spots, while the blueback herring’s is black to dusky in color.

**Habitat**

This pelagic species is found in marine waters or open lake waters, except during the breeding season, when they can be found in large rivers, small streams, ponds, and large lakes over a wide range of substrates, including gravel, sand, detritus, and submerged vegetation. Because alewives are sensitive to the osmotic stresses of freshwater, disturbances such as severe changes in water temperature can cause the fish to die, with large numbers washing up on beaches.

**Spread**

The Welland Canal most likely gave the alewife access to the Great Lakes and it has continued to spread through waterway connections. Because it looks very similar to native members of the herring family, accidental transfer is possible through fish stockings or release of live bait. It has also been intentionally introduced by some state agencies into inland lakes to increase the forage base for popular sport fish.

**Distribution**

Native to the Atlantic coast and its tributaries from South Carolina northward, alewives are found from Nova Scotia to the Carolinas, with landlocked populations in the Great Lakes and in lakes and ponds along the East Coast. In Pennsylvania, introduced populations of alewives can be found in Lake Erie, as well as many inland lakes and reservoirs across the state—in addition to its native range in the Delaware and Susquehanna rivers.

**Environmental Impacts**

Alewives feed primarily on zooplankton, which puts them in direct competition with native fish and invertebrates for limited food resources. Large densities of alewife in Lake Erie have been blamed for the disappearance of native salmonid species.
**Bighead Carp**

*Hypophthalmichthys nobilis*

### Species at a Glance

The bighead carp is a member of the Asian carp complex, which also includes silver, black, and grass carp. As of 2011, its presence in Pennsylvania has not been confirmed; however, its large size and voracious appetite make it an enormous threat to the Commonwealth. Any potential sightings should be reported immediately.

### Identification

The body of the bighead carp is large, reaching 1-1.5 m (3.3-4.9 ft) in length and weighing over 100 pounds. It is broad, **fusiform**, and **laterally compressed** with a solid dark gray top blending to white underneath. It has many irregular gray-black blotches on its sides. Its large head lacks scales and its big **terminal** mouth lacks barbels and teeth. The lower jaw also protrudes out farther than the upper jaw. The eyes are situated low on the head and are positioned downward. The short **dorsal fin** lacks spines, and contains 7-10 rays. Scales are very small and resemble those of a trout.

### Similar Species

The bighead carp most closely resembles the invasive silver carp (*Hypophthalmichthys molitrix*). However, the **keel** of the bighead carp runs from the pelvic fins to the anal fins, while the silver carp has a mid-ventral keel that is more extensive and runs from the anal fins up to the base of the gills. Silver carp also lack the dark blotches characteristic of bighead carp. Bighead carp may also resemble the common carp (*Cyprinus carpio*), which has barbels on either side of the mouth, or species of suckers (*Catostomidae*), which have thick lips containing small nipple-like bumps.

### Habitat

Bighead carp are exclusively freshwater fish that prefer large river systems with flowing water, which they need for spawning; however, they will inhabit lakes and ponds.

### Spread

Once introduced to open waters, bighead carp readily spawn and disperse themselves. Because the juveniles resemble some common baitfish species, they may be unintentionally spread through the use of live bait. Spread can also occur as they are sold through the Asian food market.

### Distribution

Native to eastern Asia, the bighead carp was intentionally introduced into the United States to control algae growth in aquaculture ponds. During flooding in the early 1980s, it escaped into the Mississippi River and has since moved upstream towards the Great Lakes. There is evidence of reproducing populations in the middle and lower Mississippi and Missouri Rivers and in the Ohio River. Bighead are in the Illinois River, which is connected to the Great Lakes via the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. Currently, no established populations have been recorded in the Great Lakes or Pennsylvania.

### Environmental Impacts

The bighead carp can consume up to 40 percent of its body weight in plankton and detritus per day, competing with native filter feeders and juvenile fish for food. This impact on the food web and trophic structure of an ecosystem could result in large population declines, impacting biodiversity as well as commercial and recreational fishing.
Species at a Glance
The black carp is a member of the Asian carp complex, which also includes silver, bighead, and grass carp. This molluscivore has powerful teeth that allow it to crack open mussels, snails, and other hard-shelled organisms.

Identification
The elongate, *fusiform*, slightly compressed body of the black carp averages 1-1.5 m (3.3-4.9 ft) in length. Color can vary but is usually dark brown to black on the back and sides, with some white on the underside, with dark fins. The mouth is small, *terminal*, and lacks barbels. Teeth are strong, flat and molar-like, and are arranged in rows of 4-5 on each side. The scales are very large and have black tips, giving it the appearance of cross-hatching. Fins lack spines. The anal fin is set far back on the body, and the caudal fin is large and forked. Average weight is about 33 lbs, but some black carp can reach up to 150 lbs.

Similar Species
The best way to distinguish the black carp from the grass carp (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*) is by looking at the *pharyngeal* teeth. Black carp teeth appear molar-like, whereas the grass carp’s teeth have deep parallel grooves. Black carp may also resemble the common carp (*Cyprinus carpio*), which has barbels on either side of the mouth, and species of suckers (*Catostomidae*), which have thick lips containing small nipple-like bumps.

Habitat
Black carp are exclusively freshwater and prefer large river systems and embayments in temperate to subtropical climates.

Spread
The availability of black carp in the live fish market may have created a risk for accidental or unlawful release. Additional introduction and spread occurs as fish escape from holding facilities and naturally disperse to new areas.

Distribution
The black carp is native to eastern Asia from southern Russia to northern China. They were brought to the United States to control snail populations in aquaculture facilities and escaped from holding ponds during flooding in 1994. Individuals have since been found in the lower part of the Mississippi River basin. There are no reports of black carp in Pennsylvania.

Environmental Impacts
Black carp pose a considerable threat to native mussel and snail populations. They can live up to 15 years, consuming several pounds of mollusks each day, competing with native fish, turtles, birds, and some mammals for food. Black carp may also be a vector for parasites and disease affecting native species.
Common Carp
Cyprinus carpio

Species at a Glance
The common carp, which can live up to 50 years, is omnivorous, has a voracious appetite, and is one of the largest members of the minnow family. Varieties of common carp include mirror carp, leather carp, and koi, which is a type of common carp popular in small ponds and water gardens.

Identification
These bronze, brassy, or yellow fish have spine-like rays at the front of the dorsal and anal fins, and are easily identified by two pairs of barbells on each side of the upper jaw. The body is heavy and stout, with large scales usually outlined in black. The head is short, with a rounded snout and a toothless, sucker-like mouth. Their average length is 25 -55 cm (10-22 in) and they typically weigh 1-10 lbs, although some can reach up to 122 cm (48 in) long and weigh up to 80 lbs.

Similar Species
Common carp resemble the smallmouth buffalo (Ictiobus bubalus), bigmouth buffalo (I. cyprinellus), grass carp (Ctenopharyngodon idella), and other species of carp. The best way to identify common carp is the two barbels on each side of the mouth, and the long dorsal fin.

Habitat
This species generally inhabits lakes, ponds, and the lower sections of rivers (usually with moderately flowing or standing water). It is also found in brackish-water estuaries, backwaters, and bays, and is often seen in the spring in shallow water during spawning.

Spread
Once established in a body of water, common carp can escape from the point of introduction and move to other connected bodies of water. Transfer of the species to different water bodies can also occur by anglers using juvenile carp as bait.

Distribution
Native to Europe and Asia, common carp were intentionally introduced into United States waters as a game fish in the 1880s. They are now very prevalent throughout the United States including Pennsylvania.

Environmental Impacts
The common carp’s tendency to destroy vegetation and increase water turbidity by dislodging plants impacts native species spawning sites and decreases water quality. They also release phosphorus that increases algae abundance and production.

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**Eurasian Ruffe**
*Gymnocephalus cernuus*

**Species at a Glance**
The Eurasian ruffe is an aggressive member of the perch family that was brought to the United States in the ballast water of ocean-going ships. Its high growth rate, adaptability, and high reproductive success make it a serious threat to commercial and sport fishing.

**Identification**
This small fish has a fairly deep and compressed body reaching 11-15 cm (4.3-5.9 in) in length. The body, which is very slimy when handled, is greenish-brown above, with dark patches on lighter brown sides. The yellowish belly has rows of prominent dark spots on the dorsal and caudal fins. The dorsal fin has a spiny fin and a soft fin that are connected. Sharp spines on their gill covers, dorsal and anal fins make them undesirable to predators. Their head lacks scales and their small downturned mouth resembles a frown.

**Similar Species**
While it may be confused with native yellow perch (*Perca flavescens*), the native trout perch (*Percopsis omiscomaycus*), and the invasive white perch (*Morone americana*), the Eurasian ruffe can be distinguished by the lack of scales on its head, and its downturned mouth. The yellow perch also has two separate dorsal fins and a body pattern with dark vertical bars, and the trout perch has a short, single-lobed dorsal fin and an adipose fin; these are lacking in the ruffe.

**Habitat**
The Eurasian ruffe is highly adaptable and will exploit a wide range of depths and conditions in lakes and rivers. However, it prefers turbid lakes with soft bottoms with little or no vegetation, and rivers with slow moving waters.

**Spread**
Once introduced into Lake Superior, ballast water exchange within the Great Lakes may have facilitated further spread. It may also spread unintentionally through the use of live bait.

**Distribution**
Native to fresh and brackish water areas of Eurasia, the ruffe was introduced into Lake Superior in the mid-1980s. Since its introduction, it has spread throughout the upper Great Lakes. It is not currently present in Lake Erie or Pennsylvania waters.

**Environmental Impacts**
Explosive growth of the Eurasian ruffe population means less food and space in the ecosystem for other fish with similar diets and feeding habits. Because of this, walleye, perch, and a number of small forage fish species are seriously threatened by continued expansion of this pest species.
European Rudd
*Scardinius erythrophthalmus*

Species at a Glance
The European rudd is a medium-sized fish belonging to the carp and minnow family. It is largely carnivorous when young, feeding on snails, insects, and small crustaceans, but prefers aquatic vegetation as it gets older.

Identification
The body of the rudd is somewhat stocky, robust, and elliptical in shape, with large scales and a forked tail. It has a scaled, *keel*-like belly that runs from the pelvic to the anal fins. Coloration is brownish-green above and brassy yellow to rosy on the sides, fading to silvery underneath. The pectoral, pelvic, and anal fins are a distinctive bright reddish-orange color. The mouth is *terminal* and lacks barbels, and the lower lip is sharply angled, with a protruding lower jaw. The iris of the eye is yellow to orange, often with a red spot that can cover the pupil. Another identifying feature of the rudd is the beginning of its *dorsal fin* set well behind the front of the pelvic fin. Maximum size is up to 48 cm (19 in) in length.

Similar Species
While young rudd often resemble golden shiners (*Notemigonus crysoleucas*), adults reach larger sizes. Rudd have 6-9 scales on the belly, whereas the golden shiner has a naked, scale-less belly. In addition, the fins of the golden shiner are clear to pale orange, not bright orange or red, and it lacks the red spot on the iris above the pupil.

Habitat
The European rudd prefers still and sluggish waters and weedy shoreline areas of lakes and rivers, but it can adapt to a wide range of environmental conditions, including poor water quality.

Spread
Bait bucket release is the primary mechanism by which the rudd has gained access into open waters. Because of the rudd’s similarity to golden shiners, they can become mixed in with shiner shipments to bait dealers and become introduced into new environments by anglers.

Distribution
Native to Europe and western Asia, the European rudd was probably introduced to the United States as a game and food fish. Since its introduction, it has spread throughout much of the country and has been collected in 21 states. In Pennsylvania, the rudd has been collected in Lake Erie and its tributaries, the Allegheny Reservoir, and Lake Winola in Wyoming County.

Environmental Impacts
Although the rudd’s impacts are mostly unknown, it may compete with native fish for invertebrate food sources and influence the population dynamics of various ecosystems.
Flathead Catfish

Pylodictis olivaris

Key characteristics of the flathead catfish are its flattened head, tiny eyes, squared tail, and protruding lower jaw. It can grow up to 152 cm (60 in) long and weigh on average 30 pounds, although some have been known to reach over 100 lbs. Coloration is usually brownish-yellow with mottled speckles on the back and a cream-colored white to yellow belly.

Species at a Glance

The flathead catfish is one of the largest species in the catfish family. It voraciously feeds on other fish, making it an extreme threat to native ecosystems. It has many nicknames, including Pied Cat, Mud Cat, Mississippi Cat, Shovelhead Cat, Yellow Cat, and Opelousa Cat.

Identification

Unlike other catfish, which prey on dead organisms, the flathead feeds on live fish, eating mostly sunfish, carp, and even other catfish. Flathead catfish are nearly double the weight of the channel catfish (Ictalurus punctatus). The lower jawbone of the flathead extends outward from the rest of the face, like an under-bite, whereas the channel catfish’s upper jaw extends over the lower. The channel catfish also has a forked tail instead of a squared tail.

Habitat

Thriving in reservoirs, lakes, rivers, and large streams, flathead catfish prefer deep, still, muddy waters with logs and other debris to use as shelters.

Spread

The most likely vector of spread is intentional stocking and release by anglers for game and food fishing.

Distribution

Native to North America, including areas of the Mississippi River Basin and the Ohio River drainage in western Pennsylvania, flathead catfish are invasive in eastern parts of Pennsylvania, including the Blue Marsh Reservoir, the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia, the Susquehanna River, and the Springton Reservoir in Media.

Environmental Impacts

The flathead catfish poses an enormous threat to native fish populations because it feeds on other fish. Young flathead catfish also feed on crayfish, darters, shad, and possibly crabs and young American eel. Species such as sunfish and native catfishes have declined heavily in some areas where flathead catfish are present.

*Note: The flathead catfish poses specific management and policy challenges. It is native to the western part of Pennsylvania in the Ohio, Allegheny, and Monongahela river watersheds; however, it is considered invasive in eastern Pennsylvania.

Similar Species

The flathead catfish is one of the largest species in the catfish family. It voraciously feeds on other fish, making it an extreme threat to native ecosystems. It has many nicknames, including Pied Cat, Mud Cat, Mississippi Cat, Shovelhead Cat, Yellow Cat, and Opelousa Cat.
**Goldfish**
*Carassius auratus*

**Species at a Glance**
The goldfish is a freshwater member of the carp and minnow family. It was one of the first aquatic invasive species to reach North America, arriving in the 1600s as ornamental fish for aquariums and water gardens. It is now one of the world’s most widespread invasive species.

**Identification**
It has an elongated, stout body, which is typically 10-20 cm (4-8 in) in length and weighs 100-300 g (3.5-10.5 oz), although it can reach a maximum length of 59 cm (23 in) and maximum weight of 6.6 lbs. It has a long **dorsal fin** with 15-24 rays, and a hard **serrate** spine at the origin of both the dorsal and anal fins. There are normally 26-32 scales in the **lateral line**. The mouth is small, **terminal**, and lacks barbels. While goldfish were mostly golden in color one thousand years ago, they now come in a variety of colors, including orange, yellow, white, black, silver, olive-green or greenish-brown and combinations of these colors. When found in nature, goldfish are most often a shade of green, brown, or gray.

**Similar Species**
Goldfish can be distinguished from common carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) by the carp’s two pairs of barbels on the upper jaw, a non-serrate spine, and typically more than 32 scales in the **lateral line**. However, they can also **hybridize** with the common carp, producing individuals with both characteristics.

**Habitat**
While goldfish prefer a habitat with a muddy bottom and thick vegetation, they can tolerate pollution, temperature fluctuations and high levels of **turbidity**. They naturally live in freshwater ponds and slow-moving or still waters in depths of up to 19.8 m (65 ft) and prefer temperatures of 4-41°C (40-106°F), although they cannot live for long at high temperatures.

**Spread**
Goldfish have been intentionally introduced for ornamental purposes to ponds, fountains, and small lakes to which they may disperse through connecting waters. Many introductions of goldfish were also due to their use as live bait. In addition, goldfish are often released into the wild by pet owners not realizing the environmental repercussions of setting the fish free.

**Distribution**
Native to eastern Asia, goldfish have been reported invasive in the United States by every state except for Alaska. They are established in all of the Great Lakes, and in Erie, Northampton, and Philadelphia counties in Pennsylvania. Individual specimens have also been collected in several drainages throughout Pennsylvania; however, it is unknown whether these represent established populations.

**Environmental Impacts**
Goldfish are believed to be responsible for population declines in many native fish, invertebrate, and plant species. They also uproot plants and create enormous **turbidity** due to their aggressive bottom feeding behavior.
Grass Carp
Ctenopharyngodon idella

Species at a Glance
The grass carp, also known as the white amur or the waan ue, is one of the largest minnows in the family Cyprinidae. It is also a member of the Asian carp complex, which also includes the black, bighead, and silver carp. They were introduced into the United States to help control the growth of aquatic weeds in aquaculture facilities; however, they also feed voraciously on other food types, including invertebrates, vertebrates, and algae.

Identification
The body of the grass carp is oblong in shape but considered slender for most carp. They typically reach between 65 and 80 lbs, although individuals as large as 400 lbs have been reported. Scales are large, with dark edges and a black spot at the base. The scaleless head lacks barbels. Overall color is olive to silvery-white, while the fins are a clear to gray-brown. The dorsal fin is composed of three simple rays and seven branched rays.

Similar Species
Grass carp may be confused with the common carp (Cyprinus carpio), which can be distinguished by the presence of barbels around the mouth. Common carp are also more golden in color and have spiny modified rays on the dorsal and anal fins.

Habitat
Grass carp prefer shallow and quiet waters, typically 0.91-3 m (3-10 ft) deep, such as ponds, lakes, pools and backwaters of large rivers.

Spread
Once introduced, grass carp can spread to distant water bodies by tributaries, waterways, river systems, canals, and dams. This carp is also still intentionally stocked in aquaculture facilities; however, it must be stocked in the triploid form, which means it is sterile and unable to reproduce. A permit is required to stock the carp in Pennsylvania, and stocking is only permitted in ponds to prevent the spread through waterways and river systems.

Distribution
Native to eastern Asia, including China and Russia, grass carp were introduced in many countries for aquaculture plant control. They are now widespread in 45 states in the U.S., including Pennsylvania. In Pennsylvania, triploid carp, which are reproductively sterile, can be stocked with a permit.

Environmental Impacts
While grass carp do help to reduce unwanted aquatic vegetation, they alter the food web because they also voraciously feed on desirable plant species, reducing the amount of food available to native invertebrates and fish. Excreted plant material can also increase nutrient levels in the water that cause harmful algal blooms and affect water quality.
Northern Snakehead

Channa argus

Species at a Glance

The northern snakehead is a freshwater fish nicknamed “Frankenfish” because of its intimidating appearance and voracious appetite. An air bladder that works like a primitive lung lets this species survive out of the water in moist locations and wriggle over land to new bodies of water. These adaptations give the snakehead a competitive edge in securing habitat and expanding its range.

Identification

These cylindrical fish can grow over 84 cm (33 in) long. As the name implies, the scaled head of the fish looks like a snake. They have a large mouth with sharp teeth, a truncate, not rounded tail, and are easily identified by dark irregular blotches along their sides. Snakeheads also possess relatively long dorsal and anal fins.

Similar Species

The native bowfin (Amia calva) is often mistaken for the northern snakehead. Bowfin are distinguished by their rounded tail, scaleless head, and an eyespot near the tail in males. The burbot (Lota lota) looks somewhat similar but can be distinguished by its split dorsal fin and a single barbel on the lower jaw. The dorsal and anal fins of the bowfin and burbot are also very short in comparison to snakeheads.

Habitat

These fish prefer stagnant shallow ponds, swamps, and slow streams with mud or vegetated substrate. Temperature range is from 0-30°C (32-86°F), and they can survive in waters that are covered in ice. As juveniles, northern snakeheads eat zooplankton, insect larvae, small crustaceans, and young fish. As adults, they become voracious predators, feeding on other fish, crustaceans, frogs, small reptiles, and even birds and mammals.

Spread

Before their threat was fully appreciated, live snakeheads were sold in the United States in pet shops and live fish markets. Uninformed pet owners may have released them into the wild when they grew too big for aquarium tanks, or as part of religious or cultural practices. In 2002, the import and interstate transport of the northern snakehead was banned without a permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Distribution

Native to China, Russia, and Korea, the first reported breeding population in the United States was discovered in a pond in Crofton, Maryland in May 2002. In July 2004, northern snakeheads were found in a lake in FDR Park in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. About a year later, another was caught in the nearby Delaware River. In 2008, snakeheads were discovered in the Schuylkill River below Fairmount Dam in Philadelphia County, and in 2012 a discovery was made in the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge in Delaware County.

Environmental Impacts

With no natural enemies, northern snakeheads can devastate populations of native fish and wildlife. They compete directly with native fish, altering feeding habits, food availability, and behaviors of other members of the ecosystem.
Rainbow Smelt
Osmerus mordax

Species at a Glance
The rainbow smelt is a small fish that is eagerly pursued by anglers because of its fine flavor. Its Latin name Osmerus, which comes from the Greek word meaning “odor”, is fitting because when removed from the water, they give off an odor which smells like freshly cut cucumbers.

Identification
The rainbow smelt has a small, slender body that typically ranges from 18-23 cm (7-9 in) long and weighs around 85 g (3 oz). Smelt are mostly silver, with pale olive-green backs and iridescent purple, blue, and pink sides. A conspicuous silvery streak runs lengthwise along each side. In the water, rainbow smelt shimmer colorfully, but when removed, they quickly fade to a silver white. In freshwater they are darker, becoming almost black on the back. The head is elongated, with a relatively large mouth and pointed snout. The lower jaw protrudes, and prominent teeth can be seen on the tongue and both jaws. Scales are thin and easily detached. A single dorsal fin and a single adipose fin lack spines. Spawning males are covered on the head, body, and fins with tiny bumps called nuptial tubercles.

Similar Species
While they may be confused with many minnow species, rainbow smelt have an adipose fin and prominent teeth that minnows lack.

Habitat
Historically, rainbow smelt have been strictly anadromous (residing in saltwater, but entering freshwater to reproduce). However, since the early 1900s the smelt has been successfully introduced into freshwater systems. It prefers deeper, cooler waters during the warmer seasons but will favor shallower coastal areas for feeding as winter approaches.

Spread
Rainbow smelt spread naturally through waterway connections. Other potential vectors include ballast water, bait bucket transfers, improper disposal of fish remains containing gametes, and intentional introduction as forage and bait fish.

Distribution
The rainbow smelt is native to the Atlantic Coastal drainages of North America and the Pacific drainages of North America and Asia. It was introduced into Michigan’s Crystal Lake as a food for stocked salmon and soon escaped into Lake Michigan. It can now be found in all of the Great Lakes, the Mississippi River, and other inland waters. In Pennsylvania, rainbow smelt populations are established in Lake Erie, the Allegheny and Monongahela river drainages, and Harvey’s Lake in Luzerne County.

Environmental Impacts
Rainbow smelt could impact sport fishing and native fish populations because they compete directly with sport fish such as perch, walleye, and lake trout for food. Smelt also feed on early or larval stages of other fish.
**Red Shiner**
*Cyprinella lutrensis*

**Species at a Glance**
The red shiner is in the genus *Cyprinella*, which is Greek for “small carp.” This hardy, widespread shiner is native to the Midwest, but through its use as a baitfish has been introduced to habitats outside of its native range.

**Identification**
The red shiner is a deep-bodied species with a highly arched back. Its **flanks** are mixed olive-green and silver, with bright orange fins and a large orange spot that sits between the eyes on its blunt, sloped brow. Spawning males become bluish on the sides and the fins redden. There are 7-8 rays on the **dorsal fin** and 8-10 (usually 9) rays in the **anal fin**. Maximum size is only 9 cm (3.5 in) in length. The red shiner can crossbreed with other minnow species, such as the blacktail shiner (*Cyprinella venusta*) and the endangered blue shiner (*Cyprinella caerulea*), producing hybrids that may also have a faint **caudal** spot.

**Similar Species**
While easily confused with most other minnows, including the golden shiner (*Notemigonus crysoleucas*), the rudd (*Scardinius erythrophthalmus*), and the roach (*Rutilus rutilus*), the outstanding characteristics of red shiners are the vibrant orange fins and the orange spot between the eyes.

**Habitat**
Although found in a variety of habitats, the red shiner prefers silt disturbed streams and muddy riverbeds where it doesn’t have to compete with other minnows for prey.

**Spread**
The red shiner has infiltrated Lake Michigan through its use as bait for recreational fishing and, more recently, through the aquarium trade. Its extended mating season, coupled with the versatile nature of the eggs, ensures the species will spread quickly throughout habitats.

**Distribution**
The red shiner is native to a large portion of the U.S. Midwest, reaching from central North Dakota to the southernmost point of Texas along the Mississippi River and its tributaries. Currently, the red shiner is only present in the Great Lakes region in Lake Michigan and is not yet found in Pennsylvania.

**Environmental Impacts**
Known to eat small invertebrates, the red shiner is in direct competition with native fish and invertebrates for food. The red shiner also has adaptive advantages over other Cyprinids because it not only can lay eggs in tight crevices, but it can attach adhesive eggs to rocks and plant life.
**Round Goby**  
*Neogobius melanostomus*

**Species at a Glance**  
The round goby is a small, aggressive, bottom-dwelling fish that has dramatically altered the Great Lakes food web since it was first discovered in Lake St. Clair in 1990. It grows rapidly and reproduces several times in one season. Avian botulism outbreaks appear directly related to the round goby due to its heavy feeding on invasive zebra and quagga mussels.

**Identification**  
The two most distinguishing features of the round goby are the black spot on the dorsal fin, and the fused pelvic fin that forms one suction cup shaped fin. Young round gobies are a solid slate gray, whereas older gobies are mottled, with olive green, black, gray, and brown spots. Spawning males turn almost solid black. Their soft body and large round head have very distinctive frog-like raised eyes. On average, they grow 10-25 cm (3.9-9.8 in) in length.

**Similar Species**  
While round gobies look very similar to the native mottled sculpin (*Cottus bairdi*), the sculpin has two separated pelvic fins and lacks the black spot on the dorsal fin. The round goby may also resemble the much smaller, invasive tubenose goby (*Proterorhinus marmoratus*), but the tubenose has tubular shaped nostril extensions and lacks protruding eyes and the black spot on the first dorsal fin.

**Habitat**  
This freshwater fish prefers shallow water with rocky and sandy bottoms where it likes to perch on top of rocks and hide in crevices. Round gobies can occupy a variety of depths, can tolerate a wide range of temperatures, water quality, and oxygen concentrations, and can survive in brackish water.

**Spread**  
The round goby was most likely introduced to the Great Lakes through the ballast water of ocean-going cargo ships. Because they resemble small baitfish, boaters and fishermen can accidentally carry them from one body of water to another through bait buckets, bilge water, and plant debris.

**Distribution**  
Native to Eurasia, including the Black, Caspian, and Azov seas and tributaries, round gobies were first sighted in the St. Clair River in 1990 and since have spread to all of the Great Lakes. They are now working their way inland through rivers and canal systems. In Pennsylvania, the round goby is abundant in Lake Erie and its tributaries. The first Pennsylvania inland occurrence was confirmed in 2010 at the Gravel Pits quarry in Erie County.

**Environmental Impacts**  
The round goby is thriving at the expense of native populations, many of which are important sport fish. It outcompetes native species including sculpin, logperch, lake trout, and darters for food sources, habitat, and spawning sites. It also spawns more frequently and feeds on their eggs and young.
Sea Lamprey
Petromyzon marinus

Species at a Glance
Sea lampreys are primitive, jawless fish that resemble eels. These aggressive parasites affect Great Lakes native fish populations such as lake trout, rainbow trout, whitefish, and walleye because they can latch onto their victims for up to several weeks and feed on their blood and body fluids.

Identification
Sea lampreys have long, flexible, cylindrical, scaleless bodies with a deeply notched dorsal fin, separating it into two distinct parts. The body is 30-51 cm (12-20 in) long and weight can range from 227-369 g (8-13 oz). Adults have a disc-like mouth that contains circular rows of over 100 sharp, hooked teeth. Larval lampreys, called ammocoetes, have a very small, undeveloped mouth hidden between folds of skin. Juveniles have white undersides and uniformly colored blackish blue or silver backs. Adults can be olive-brown, yellow-brown, green, red, or blue mottled with a darker shade of the same color; or sometimes nearly black. The underside is typically white or gray.

Similar Species
Non-parasitic native lamprey species such as the Ohio lamprey (Ichthyomyzon bedellium), the American brook lamprey, (Lampetra appendix) and the northern brook lamprey (Ichthyomyzon fossor) are much smaller, lack the dark blotches on the body, and have a single, continuous dorsal fin.

Habitat
Sea lampreys require three distinctly different habitats connected by free-flowing stretches of stream. Spawning adults are found in late May or early June in shallow pits near the upper end of gravel riffles. After hatching, the ammocoetes drift down to larger, slower moving streams and burrow into the sediment. After several years, they transform into parasitic adults in spring, and migrate into large bodies of water. They migrate back to tributary streams the following spring to spawn and then die shortly after.

Spread
In 1921, the sea lamprey appeared in Lake Erie, arriving via the Welland Canal. It took just 25 years for it to spread to the remaining Great Lakes.

Distribution
Sea lampreys are native to the Atlantic Ocean, where natural populations moved into the freshwater areas of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River to spawn. Now landlocked in the Great Lakes, the sea lamprey has distributed itself into the tributaries of those lakes. In Pennsylvania, sea lampreys are native to the Delaware and Susquehanna river basins in the eastern part of the state, and invasive in Lake Erie and Walnut Creek in Erie County.

Environmental Impacts
A single sea lamprey can destroy up to 40 pounds of fish during its adult lifetime. Under some conditions, only one out of seven fish attacked will survive. The sea lamprey population explosion in the 1940s and 1950s contributed significantly to the collapse of economically important Great Lakes fish species such as lake trout.
**Silver Carp**
*Hypophthalmichthys harmandi*

**Species at a Glance**
The silver carp is a member of the Asian carp complex, which also includes bighead, black, and grass carp. Although it is not yet found in Pennsylvania, its large size, voracious appetite, and ability to leap out of the water make it an enormous threat to the Commonwealth’s fishery and recreational economies.

**Identification**
This very large filter feeder averages 40-70 cm (16-28 in) but can reach up to 130 cm (51 in) in length and weigh up to 80 lbs. Its deep body is **lateral compressed**, with a **ventral keel** that extends forward from the anus almost to the base of the gills. Large eyes are located low and forward on the head. The mouth is large and **terminal**, and the lower jaw is slightly longer than the upper jaw. No barbels are present on the mouth. The short **dorsal fin**, which lacks spines, contains 7-10 rays. Scales are very small. Coloration is olive to grayish-black on the back, with silvery sides blending to white below, with darker pigmentation on the fins.

**Similar Species**
While it most closely resembles the invasive bighead carp (*Hypophthalmichthys nobilis*), the silver carp is fairly uniform in color, whereas the bighead has irregular dark blotches on its back and sides. The bighead also has a less extensive **keel**, spanning from the pelvic fin to the anal fin. Silver carp may also resemble the common carp (*Cyprinus carpio*), which has barbels on either side of the mouth, and species of suckers (*Catostomidae*), which have thick lips containing small nipple-like bumps.

**Habitat**
Silver carp are exclusively freshwater fish, preferring large river systems, lakes, or impoundments with flowing water, which they need to spawn. They can feed in temperatures as low as 2.5°C (36.5°F) and can withstand low levels of oxygen.

**Spread**
Once introduced to open waters, silver carp readily spawn and disperse. Because the juveniles resemble some common baitfish species, they may be unintentionally spread through the use of live bait. They can also spread in illegal shipments of live Asian carp, which is popular in the Asian food market.

**Distribution**
Native to eastern Asia, silver carp were intentionally introduced into the United States to control algae growth in aquaculture ponds. During flooding in the early 1980s, they escaped into the Mississippi River and have since moved upstream towards the Great Lakes. In an effort to prevent the dispersal of Asian carp species between the Mississippi and Great Lakes watersheds, an electronic barrier is being used in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal.

**Environmental Impacts**
The silver carp consumes vast amounts of plankton and **detritus** each day, competing with native filter feeders and juvenile fish for food. In addition, when startled by boat motors or other equipment, the silver carp can leap up to 3 m (10 ft) out of the water, posing a risk of injury to boaters and watersport enthusiasts.
**Tubenose Goby**  
*Proterorhinus marmoratus*

**Species at a Glance**
The tubenose goby is a small, bottom-dwelling fish that gets its name from its tubular-shaped nostrils. It feeds mainly on aquatic insects, and although females can live for up to five years, males die immediately after spawning.

**Identification**
Its cylindrical body has small scales and a somewhat flattened underside, measuring 6-11 cm (2.4-4.3 in) in length. It has a blunt and rounded snout with a wide mouth and large lips. Tubular shaped nostrils extend just beyond the tip of the snout. Two pelvic fins are fused into a single suction cup shaped fin, and two dorsal fins lack spots. The body is light brown, with darker brown blotches that can form vertical bars on the rear half of the sides. A triangular black spot is present at the base of the caudal fin, followed by two white spots.

**Similar Species**
While it may be confused with the round goby (*Neogobius melanostomus*), the tubenose goby is much smaller, has tubular shaped nostril extensions, lacks a spot on the first dorsal fin, and has eyes that do not protrude from the top of the head. In addition, tubenose gobies do not feed on zebra mussels, and their mouths are too small to be caught on fishing lines like round gobies. Tubenose gobies may also be confused with native sculpins; however, sculpins do not have scales or pelvic fins that form a suction cup.

**Habitat**
The tubenose goby lives in slightly brackish to fresh water and defends nest sites created under rocks, logs, and shells in shallow areas of lakes and rivers with plenty of plant cover.

**Spread**
The tubenose goby was most likely introduced to the Great Lakes in the ballast water of ocean-going ships. Since they often resemble small bait fish, they can also be spread by boaters and fishermen who accidentally carry them from one body of water to another through bait buckets, bilge water, and plant debris.

**Distribution**
Native to the Black and Caspian seas in Europe, the tubenose goby was first found in Lake Erie around 1990 and can now be found in lakes St. Clair, Erie, and Superior.

**Environmental Impacts**
While their impacts are not yet known, tubenose gobies may compete with and prey upon benthic species in a manner similar to the larger round goby. However, because it is small and not as aggressive, the tubenose goby may not be as detrimental as the round goby.
**White Perch**
*Morone americana*

**Species at a Glance**
The white perch, also called the silver perch and the stiffback, is not actually a perch but rather a member of the temperate bass family. It is a prolific competitor of native fish species and is believed to have the potential to cause declines of Great Lakes walleye populations.

**Identification**
Its deep, laterally compressed body, which averages in length from 13-18 cm (5.1-7 in), is steeply sloped from the dorsal origin to the nose. The mouth is large and extends just below the eye, and the tongue lacks teeth. The dorsal fin is made up of a spiny and soft portion separated by a deep notch and a small membrane. Color is silvery-gray to greenish-brown above, fading to silvery-white below and paler on the sides, with no lateral line.

**Similar Species**
The white perch is most similar to the white bass (*Morone chrysops*), which grows larger, is more uniformly silver with prominent dark horizontal stripes, and lacks the connected membrane between the first and second dorsal fins. Hybridization between the two species has been documented in Lake Erie, which has resulted in mixed characteristics.

**Habitat**
This predacious and opportunistic feeder thrives in brackish and freshwater rivers, streams, and lakes. It exploits shallow and deep water, and can overpopulate quickly.

**Spread**
Spread has occurred through natural dispersal, unauthorized stockings, and recreational activities. Additional spread may occur as the white perch is stocked as a sport fish in many areas of the Mississippi River Watershed.

**Distribution**
The white perch is native to the Atlantic coastal regions of the United States, including the Lower St. Lawrence River south to South Carolina. It invaded the Great Lakes through the Erie and Welland canals in 1950 and is now found in all of the Great Lakes. In Pennsylvania it is established in Lake Erie, the Monongahela and Allegheny rivers, and has been found in several inland lakes throughout the state. This species is native in the lower Delaware and lower Susquehanna rivers.

**Environmental Impacts**
The diet of the white perch, which includes zooplankton, insect larvae, and other fishes, puts it in direct competition with native game and forage species for food. In the spring, white perch feed heavily on the eggs of other fish species such as walleye and white bass, limiting recruitment and causing declines in species numbers.
Fish are vulnerable to a variety of diseases caused by organisms (pathogens) such as bacteria, viruses, and fungi that are a normal part of their environment.

These pathogens can be present at low levels, yet fish can remain healthy if their immune system is strong.

Disease outbreaks occur when fish are stressed by poor diet or sudden environmental changes that weaken their immune system, allowing the pathogens to be more active. Outbreaks also occur when fish are exposed to new pathogens to which the fish has limited immunity.

Like human diseases, fish diseases are infectious: Once a few fish get sick, the pathogens can spread rapidly in water, from fish to fish, causing large die-offs in the population.
**Spring Viremia of Carp (SVC)**
*Rhabdovirus carpio*

**Similar Species**
The symptoms of SVC have characteristics similar to those of other fish diseases, so lab testing is necessary to confirm that a fish is infected with SVC.

**Habitat**
SVC usually occurs in the spring, when water temperatures are less than 18°C (64°F), however, the virus can persist in 10°C (50°F) water for more than four weeks, and in 4°C (39°F) mud for at least six weeks. Mortality rates vary with stress factors, population density, age, and condition of the fish.

**Spread**
SVC is highly contagious and can be spread through contact with the environment and through parasitic invertebrates such as the carp louse or leeches. Infected fish shed the virus through feces, urine, and gill and skin mucous. When fish come into contact with infected water, the virus enters most often through the gills.

**Distribution**
SVC has been identified in Europe, Russia, and the Middle East, and was first diagnosed in Yugoslavia. The first report of this disease in the United States was in 2002 in North Carolina. It has since been found in Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri, Washington, Lake Michigan, and in areas of the upper Mississippi River.

**Environmental Impacts**
SVC mortality rates, which can reach up to 70 percent in young carp, can have serious economic impacts on aquaculture. No vaccines exist for the virus, so prevention by proper disinfection of equipment and gear is the best method for fighting this disease. There is currently no indication that SVC is any threat to human health.

**Species at a Glance**
The spring viremia of carp (SVC) virus is a highly contagious pathogen found to impact mainly common carp and related species. While fish can carry SVC with or without symptoms, outbreaks can cause high rates of death and substantial economic losses.

**Identification**
SVC is caused by a bullet-shaped RNA virus that can cause external symptoms including bulging eyes; hemorrhaging of the skin, gills, and eyes; a bloated appearance; darkening of the skin; and vent protrusion. Internally, fluids can build up in the organs and body cavity, and hemorrhaging and inflammation can occur in the swim bladder and intestines. Diseased fish may appear lethargic, swim and breathe more slowly than normal, and tend to gather at the water inlet or sides of ponds. Loss of equilibrium with resting and leaning can also be seen in later stages. Other members of the Family Cyprinidae (minnow family) and possibly northern pike (*Esox lucius*) are also susceptible to this disease.
### Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS)

*Novirhabdovirus sp.*

#### Species at a Glance

Viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS) virus is a highly contagious fish pathogen that has caused significant fish kills in the Great Lakes region of the United States and Canada. Once a fish is infected with VHS, there is no known cure. **REPORT SUSPECTED CASES TO STATE AND FEDERAL AUTHORITIES IMMEDIATELY.**

#### Identification

VHS is a bullet-shaped virus of the genus *Novirhabdovirus*. Symptoms of the disease may include bulging eyes, bloated abdomens, darker coloration, unusual behavior, and hemorrhaging in the eyes, muscle tissue, skin, gills, and at the base of the fins. Some species, such as the bluntnose minnow (*Pimephales notatus*) and the emerald shiner (*Notropis atherinoides*), show no obvious symptoms.

#### Similar Species

The symptoms of VHS have characteristics similar to those of other fish diseases, so lab testing is necessary to confirm that a fish is infected with VHS.

#### Habitat

Fish mortality from VHS infection is highest at water temperatures between 9-12°C (48-54°F), and deaths rarely occur at temperatures above 15°C (59°F). Outbreaks often occur during stressful environmental changes, such as rising water temperatures in the spring, or during spawning.

#### Spread

VHS is highly contagious and easily transmissible, spreading through contact with the infected water or from fish to fish. Survivors can become lifelong carriers. Transfer to new water bodies is thought to be primarily through fish stockings and baitfish transfer. Natural fish migrations, recreational boating and angling, ballast water discharge, and aquarium and live fish releases could also help spread this virus.

#### Distribution

Since its initial discovery in Europe in the mid-1900s, four VHS strains, including freshwater and marine, have been identified. Introduction into the Great Lakes is believed to have been as early as 2003. VHS is present in the waters of lakes Michigan, Huron, St. Clair, Erie, and Ontario, as well as the Detroit, Niagara, and St. Lawrence rivers and in some of the Finger Lakes in New York.

#### Note

In Pennsylvania, live fish transport out of the Lake Erie and Genesee River drainage basin is prohibited. It is also unlawful to transport, sell, or introduce VHS susceptible species, dead or alive, into the Commonwealth unless laboratory tested and certified as negative for the virus. It is also unlawful in Pennsylvania to use the eggs of VHS-susceptible species as bait.

#### Environmental Impacts

At least 50 species of marine and freshwater fish carry the virus, including muskellunge, smallmouth bass, northern pike, and yellow perch. The full list of VHS susceptible species can be found online at [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/animal_dis_spec/aquaculture/](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/animal_dis_spec/aquaculture/). The long-term risks of VHS on the Great Lakes’ 4 billion dollar fishery are unclear; however, large fish kills of certain species have been reported. There is no indication that VHS is a threat to human health.
**Algae Group Descriptions**

**Green algae** (*chlorophyta*): This large and diverse group of algae can range from small, single-celled organisms to large, multicellular organisms and colonies. They are considered the closest ancestors to the land plants because they share common features, including the photosynthetic pigments chlorophyll a, chlorophyll b, beta carotene, and cellulose-rich cell walls. They are also the only algal group to produce starch for food stores.

**Blue-green algae** (*cyanobacteria*): Notorious for forming blooms (some of which are toxic), these organisms are not really algae, but rather aquatic bacteria that obtain their energy through photosynthesis. Like other bacteria, the cells are prokaryotic and therefore lack nuclei, chloroplasts, mitochondria, and flagella. Cyanobacteria may be single-celled or colonial, with colonies forming filaments, sheets, or even hollow balls.

**Golden-brown algae** (*chrysophyta*): Mostly abundant in freshwater, this large group of algae is typically found in waters with a neutral or slightly acidic pH, low conductivity and nutrient levels, and colder temperatures. They are particularly important in lakes, where they may be a primary source of food for zooplankton. In many species, the cell walls are composed of cellulose with large quantities of silica, similar to the diatoms.

**Dinoflagellates**: These typically unicellular flagellates have armored cell walls made of thick plates that fit tightly together to form a continuous covering for the cell. Half the dinoflagellates are colorless predators that consume their food. The other, pigmented half are usually a golden brown in color. Out of the several thousand species of dinoflagellates, only a couple hundred are found in freshwater habitats.

**Diatoms**: These single-celled organisms are characterized by beautiful and intricate shapes. Most diatoms exist singly, although some join to form colonies. Diatoms can be fresh or salt-water and appear in the greatest abundance early in the year in the phenomenon called the “spring bloom,” when both light and nutrients are highly available. The cell walls are made up of silica, which persists in the environment after the cells have died, creating an extensive fossil record.

**Euglenoids**: This small phylum consists of mostly freshwater, unicellular aquatic algae. Some euglenoids contain chloroplast with photosynthetic pigments, and others are heterotrophic, meaning they can ingest or absorb their food. The most characteristic genus is Euglena, common in ponds and pools, especially when the water has been polluted by runoff from fields or fertilized lawns.
**Didymo**

*Didymosphenia geminata*

**Species at a Glance**

Didymo, also called “rock snot,” is a single-celled alga found in the cool waters of northern Europe and North America. Since the mid-1980s, it has begun to take on the characteristics of an invasive species, forming massive blooms that blanket stream and river bottoms, threatening a variety of aquatic systems.

**Identification**

Beginning as small circular brown blotches on rocks and other substrates, didymo can grow in two stalked forms – short stalked and long stalked. The short form generally appears as a coating on hard substrates, while the long stalked form can take on the appearance of wet fiberglass or toilet paper. Didymo has also been mistaken for raw sewage. The extracellular stalk material can form thick nuisance mats that can be over 20 cm (8 in) thick. While it appears slimy, it is actually rough to the touch, like wet wool, and is very difficult to pull apart and detach from rocks. When determining if a suspect specimen is didymo, squeeze out as much water as possible and rub between the fingers.

**Similar Species**

Unlike other species of algae, didymo does not break apart when rubbed between your fingers, nor does it feel slimy to the touch.

**Habitat**

Didymo is both epilithic (attaching to stones) and epiphytic (attaching to plants) and can thrive in a wide range of physical and chemical conditions within lakes and rivers. It prefers relatively shallow, clear, moderately-flowing and nutrient-poor waters with rocky substrates and plenty of sunshine. Nuisance blooms are only known to occur in flowing water.

**Spread**

Anglers, kayakers, canoeists, and boaters can accidently spread this microscopic hitchhiker, which can cling to fishing gear, waders, boots, and boats. Felt-soled waders are especially good at transporting didymo because they can stay wet for longer periods of time, and didymo can survive outside of a stream in a cool, damp environment for at least 40 days. Only one cell is needed for it to spread.

**Distribution**

Historically, didymo was found in cooler waters in the northern hemisphere and was considered a rare alga in the United States. However, in recent years it has exhibited a much greater tolerance for different water chemistry conditions and has expanded to diverse areas, including parts of Canada, New Zealand, and scattered areas in the United States, including New England, the Mid-Atlantic Region, and the western United States. In October 2007, didymo was first discovered where the east and west branches of the upper Delaware River meet along the New York and Pennsylvania border. Since then, didymo has spread as far south as Bucks County in the Delaware River, and the entire length of the Youghiogheny River, in several other counties throughout Pennsylvania.

**Environmental Impacts**

Didymo cells can create large amounts of stalk material that form thick mats that are capable of completely engulfing a stream bottom, covering substrates, smothering aquatic organisms, and ultimately reducing fish habitat and food. Didymo does not appear to affect the safety of drinking water, does not produce an odor, and while aesthetically unappealing, does not appear to be a threat to human health.
Golden Alga
*Prymnesium parvum*

**Species at a Glance**
Golden alga is a naturally occurring, one-celled, microscopic organism that can be found worldwide on every continent except for Antarctica. Toxins produced by the alga have caused extensive kills of aquatic animals, resulting in severe ecological and economic harm.

**Identification**
Golden alga is a tiny organism about the size of a human blood cell. It is very mobile and uses its two “tails,” called flagella, to move through the water. A short, stiff, hair-like structure called a haptonema is used to attach the cell to other cells or objects. A yellow-green, C-shaped chloroplast wraps around the middle of the cell and can be seen under a microscope. During a typical bloom, the water turns yellowish, yellowish-copper, or a brownish tea color. Foaming at the surface of the water in areas where there is a lot of wave action is another sign. Exposed fish may swim slow or erratically just below the surface, lie inactively along the bottom in shallow areas, or show no avoidance to human presence. Other visible signs include redness or hemorrhaging at the base of the fins, around the mouth area, under the chin, and along the belly.

**Similar Species**
The conditions typical of a golden alga bloom may come from other sources and do not always indicate a golden alga bloom.

**Habitat**
Generally found in brackish waters, golden alga cells can thrive in a variety of environmental conditions, including a salinity range of 1-40 PSU (Practical Salinity Unit) and a temperature range of 5-35°C (41-95°F). Other factors that affect its growth include phosphorus (P) and nitrogen (N) levels, cationic substance levels, and pH. Toxic blooms typically occur at salinity levels of 1-12 PSU, temperatures of 10-25°C (50-77°F), and at fairly high P and N levels.

**Spread**
A single drop of water may contain over 2,000 golden alga cells. Unintentional spread may occur by water currents or as cells stick to the feathers or fur of waterfowl and other animals. Under stressful conditions, golden alga is able to form into dormant cysts that can hitchhike to new areas in live wells, bait buckets, recreational boating and fishing equipment, or equipment used during water withdrawals.

**Distribution**
First identified in the United States in Texas in 1985, golden alga has since spread to 18 states. In Pennsylvania the first known occurrence was in 2009, when it caused a massive kill spanning nearly 30 miles of Drunkard Creek in Greene County along the Pennsylvania-West Virginia border.

**Environmental Impacts**
Golden alga is fast growing, resilient, and uses nutrients more effectively than other kinds of algae. Bloom situations can cause extreme die-offs of native threatened and endangered species. Serious economic consequences for affected communities have also been well documented. At-risk waters can include those with high salinities and those being affected by mineral resource extraction, such as natural gas. There is currently no evidence that golden alga has toxic effects on non-gill breathing organisms or humans.
Turtle Shell Anatomy

- Carapace
- Scutes
- Plastron
- Scutes
Red-eared Slider
*Trachemys scripta elegans*

Species at a Glance
The red-eared slider, which gets its name from the red, oblong streaks present behind each eye, has been listed as one of the “100 World’s Worst Invaders.” It has a voracious appetite and outcompetes native turtles, and its popularity in the pet trade has helped account for its numerous introductions worldwide.

Identification
The unique, broad, reddish-orange patch behind the eyes grazes the left and right flanks of the skull. The shell is a dark green with black or off-white stripes. The skin is olive to brown with yellow stripes or spots. Females typically reach 25-33 cm (10-13 in) in length, whereas males are considerably smaller, reaching 18-23 cm (7-9 in), and have a long, thick tail. Young individuals have numerous dark, eye-like spots on the yellow plastron, or under part of the shell.

Similar Species
This average-sized, common-looking turtle can be easily confused with many other turtle species, especially those in the *Trachemys* genus. The most notable look-a-like is the yellow-bellied slider (*Trachemys scripta scripta*), which has a yellow patch behind the eye instead of red. The red-bellied turtle (*Pseudemys rubriventris*), which is a Pennsylvania threatened species, has almost identical foraging, nesting, and food requirements as the red-eared slider, but it can be distinguished by a distinctive orange to reddish color on the underside of the shell.

Habitat
The red-eared slider is a hardy, freshwater turtle that flourishes in many kinds of habitat and is frequently seen basking on rocks, logs, vegetation masses, and banks. It prefers quiet waters such as ponds and wetlands but will also inhabit slow-moving waterways, brackish waters, or even fairly polluted waters and can survive the cold by hibernating in the winter.

Spread
Despite a 1975 ban by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration on the sale of red-eared sliders fewer than four inches, small hatchlings are still available for Internet or mail order. When they grow into large adults, unprepared pet owners release them into the natural environment, where they can reproduce and spread.

Distribution
While the native range includes Midwestern states within the Gulf Coast basin and Mississippi Valley area, this turtle has invaded most of the world with human help. In Pennsylvania, the first recorded red-eared slider was in 1996 in Lehigh County. Today, this turtle can be found in many counties in southeastern Pennsylvania and is thought to be widespread in the Delaware River basin.

Invasive Reptiles

Environmental Impacts
The red-eared slider has infiltrated the ecosystems of nearly every continent. As aggressive omnivores feeding on fish, plants, insects, amphibians, and other aquatic organisms and their eggs, they directly compete with many native aquatic and terrestrial turtles for food, basking areas, and nesting sites. Their ability to survive and reproduce in polluted waters makes them prone to contracting and spreading diseases.
**Species at a Glance**
The yellow-bellied slider is a semi-aquatic basking turtle that can be found resting on logs, stumps, or rocks when the weather is mild and the sun is out. This species can mate with the red-eared slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*), producing hybrids that are often sold as pets.

**Identification**
A vertical yellow blotch that runs behind the eye is most evident in juveniles and females. Narrow yellow stripes mark the neck, legs, and arms. The upper shell (*carapace*) is oval in shape and tends to be serrated, with olive to brownish-yellow vertical bands. Older turtles can be completely black. The lower shell (*plastron*) is typically yellow with dusky smudge-like markings and often has two solid black spots towards the rear. Males range from 13-20 cm (5-8 in), while females range from 20-33 cm (8-13 in).

**Similar Species**
Both the yellow-bellied slider and the eastern river cooter (*Pseudemys concinna concinna*) have yellow stripes down the neck and underside, but the eastern river cooter tends to have green spots along the edge of the belly.

**Habitat**
The yellow-bellied slider inhabits lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, ditches, marshes, bays, and swamps, preferring areas with aquatic vegetation. They can also survive in saltwater.

**Spread**
Because the yellow-bellied slider is popular in the pet industry, intentional pet releases, as well as escapes into the natural environment, are the mostly likely vectors for its spread.

**Distribution**
Although the yellow-bellied slider is native to the United States in parts of Virginia and the Carolinas, it has been collected (but is not yet established) in New York, Wisconsin, Colorado, New Mexico, California, Arizona, and Mexico. In Pennsylvania, the yellow-bellied slider has been reported in Philadelphia and Montgomery counties.

**Environmental Impacts**
Little is known about the ecological impact of sliders, although they compete with other native species of turtles for food and basking sites. These turtles have also been linked with salmonella when farmed and sold as pets, increasing the spread of disease to humans and other turtles.
FIELD GUIDE SOURCES

The following primary sources were used for multiple species in the field guide:


Below is a list of species with additional sources other than those listed prior:

PLANTS:

Bush honeysuckles
Common Privet
Eurasian watermilfoil
European frogbit
Fanwort
Flowering rush
Giant knotweed
Glossy buckthorn

Hybrid cattail

Hydilla

Japanese hops

Japanese knotweed

Japanese stiltgrass

Lesser celandine

Mudmat

Oriental Bittersweet

Parrotfeather

Phragmites

Purple loosestrife

Reed Canary Grass

Variable-leaf milfoil

Waterchestnut
FISH:

Alewife

Common carp

Goldfish

Northern snakehead

Rainbow smelt

Round Goby

White perch

INVERTEBRATES:

Asian clam
2. Chinese mitten crab

Fishhook water flea

New Zealand mudsnail

Quagga mussel
**PATHOGENS:**
1. Zebra mussel (Dreissena polymorpha).
2. Spiny waterflea (Daphnia pulex).
3. Rusty crayfish (Orconectes rusticus).
4. Spring viremia of carp (DVV).
5. Yellow-bellied slider turtle (Trachemys scripta).
   - Savannah River Ecology Laboratory Outreach and SPARC. Yellow-bellied slider turtle. Briefing Paper. Michigan DNR.
6. Red-eared Slider: Larry Meade, Flickr; Eurasian Watermilfoil: Alison Fox, University of Florida; Rusty Crayfish: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Flickr; Round Goby: D. Jude, GLFC.

**REPTILES:**
1. Yellow-bellied slider
   - The Outreach Program of the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory. 2007. Yellow-Bellied Slider Turtle.

**Image Credits**

The images in this publication were used courtesy of the following sources:

Bugwood.org (BW), Invasives.org, Encyclopedia of Life (EOL), University of Florida (UFL) Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants (CAIP), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Plants Database (PD), United States Geological Survey (USGS) Non-indigenous Aquatic Species Database (NAS); NOAA Great Lakes Environmental Research Lab (GLERL), Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC).

Cover: Red-eared Slider: Larry Meade, Flickr; Eurasian Watermilfoil: Alison Fox, University of Florida; Rusty Crayfish: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Flickr; Round Goby: D. Jude, GLFC.

Page 2: Introduction-Sean Kelly, Flickr.
Page 6: Prevention-top: Jeff Schardt, University of Florida; bottom: Pennsylvania Sea Grant.
Page 7: Prevention-logo: Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers; top: protectyourwaters.net.
Page 10: Plant structure diagram-UFL CAIP.
Page 11: Plant structure diagram-UFL CAIP.
Page 12: Brazilian elodea-background: Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut (BW); close-up: Richard Old, XID Services, Inc. (BW); line art: University of Florida (UFL CAIP).
Page 14: Curly-leaf pondweed-background: Chris Evans, River to River CWMA (BW); close-up: Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut (BW); line art: USDA PD.
Page 16: Eurasian watermilfoil-background and close-up: Richard Old, XID Services, Inc. (BW); line art: USDA PD.
Page 17: Eurasian watermilfoil-PA and U.S. maps: USDA PD; bottom: Allison Fox, University of Florida (BW).
Page 18: European frogbit-background: Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut (BW); line art: UFL CAIP.
Page 20: Fanwort-background: Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut (BW); close-up: Troy Evans, Eastern Kentucky University (BW); line art: USDA PD.
Deciduous: Falling off or shedding at a particular season or stage of growth, such as trees shedding their leaves annually.

Depressed: Flattened from top to bottom; fish with this body shape typically live on the bottom.

Detritus: Non-living, particulate organic material; any disintegrated material or debris.

Dioecious: Having male and female reproductive organs on separate individuals of the same species.

Diphycercal: Caudal tail shape; vertebrae extend to the tip of the tail and the tail is symmetrical and expanded.

Dorsal fins: Are located on the back of a fish and serve to protect against rolling and assist in sudden turns and stops; can have up to three.

Eel-like: Having a snake-like body shape.

Emarginate: Caudal fin with a slight inward curve.

Emergent: Plants with leaves that extend above the water surface, usually found in shallow water.

Elongated: Stiff, hair-like extensions of certain cells or unicellular organisms, used in movement.

Fusiform: Long, slender, whip-like extensions of certain cells or unicellular organisms, used for attachment, feeding, or avoidance.

Heartwood: The dense inner part of a tree trunk.

Hermaphroditic: Organism that has reproductive organs associated with both male and female sexes.

Heterocercal: Caudal tail shape; vertebrae extend into the upper lobe of the tail, making it longer (as in sharks).

Homocercal: Caudal tail shape; fin appears superficially symmetric but in fact the vertebrae extend for a very short distance into the upper lobe of the fin.

Hybridization: The mixing of different species or varieties of animals or plants to produce hybrids of those species.

Inflorescence: A cluster or arrangement of flowers on an axis.

Keel: A lateral ridge found on the caudal peduncle of many fast-swimming fishes that provides stability and support to the caudal fin.

Lateral line: A series of sensory pores along the head and sides of a fish and some amphibians by which water currents, vibrations, and pressure changes are detected.

Laterally compressed: Flattened from side to side; fish with this body shape usually do not swim rapidly but have exceptional maneuverability.

Leaflet: Individual blades found in a compound leaf.

Lemma: A larger, outer bract which, along with the palea, serves to contain the floret(s) held within and provides a protective covering for the developing floret as well as for the seed after ripening.

Ligule: Thin, membranous extension of the leaf sheath on the upper surface of the leaf, may be hairy or bristly, hard or soft.

Lunate: Caudal fin shaped like a crescent moon.

Margin: The edge of a leaf.

Mid-vein (Mid-rib): The central vein of a leaf that runs from the tip to the base of the leaf.

Monoeocious: Having male and female reproductive structures on the same plant.

Monotypic: Having only one type or representative; such as a genus containing only one species.

Morphs: One of several variant forms of an animal or plant.

Nacre (Mother of pearl): The hard, pearly, iridescent substance forming the inner layer of a mollusk shell.

Nodes: A knob, or joint of a stem from which leaves, roots, shoots, or flowers may arise.

Nut/Nutlet: Dry fruit having a hard shell which usually contains only one seed; nutlets are very small nuts.

Nuptial tubercles: Usually small, raised structures on regions of the head, body, or fin rays where two individuals come in contact to breed; may function to maintain body contact between the sexes during spawning.

Ocrea: A sheath around a stem or node formed by two or more stipules.

Operculum: A structure that acts as a lid or covering to close the aperture of a mollusk’s shell when the animal is retracted.

Opposite: Two leaves emerging from one node directly across from one another; leaves occurring in pairs.

Palmate: Having several lobes (typically 5–7) whose mid-ribs all radiate from one common point.

Panicles: A many branched inflorescence.

Pelagic: Relating to the open sea.

Peritonium: The membrane that lines the abdominal cavity and covers most of the abdominal organs.

Petiole: A leaf stalk.

Pharyngeal: Relating to the pharynx, which is the membrane-lined cavity behind the nose and mouth that connects them to the esophagus.

Pistil: The female fertilizing organs of a flower.

Pistillate: Having pistils (female flowers) but no stamens (male flowers).

Plastron: The ventral surface of a turtle shell.

Protocercal: Caudal tail shape; vertebrae extend to the tip of the tail and the tail is symmetrical but not expanded.

Rhizomes: A creeping underground stem.

Rosette: Leaves arranged in a radiating pattern at the base or top of the plant.

Runner: A slender, creeping stem that puts forth roots from nodes, spaced at intervals along its length; new plants eventually grow from the nodes and can become detached from the parent plant.
Scute: A thickened horny or bony plate or large scale, such as on the shell of a turtle, underside of a snake, back of a crocodile, etc.

Sepals: Part of the outer floral leaves; usually green.

Serrate/Serrated: A sharply toothed leaf margin.

Sessile: Sitting directly on a main stem or branch without the support of a leaf stalk.

Sheath: The extension of the leaf that surrounds the stem.

Spike/Spikelet: A flower or fruit bearing stalk.

Stalk: A stem or similar structure that supports a plant part such as a flower, flower cluster, or leaf.

Stamen: The male fertilizing organ of a flower.

Staminate: Having stamens (male flowers) but no pistils (female flowers).

Stipule: A small, paired, leaf-like appendage at the base of a leaf stalk in certain plants, such as roses and beans.

Stolon: A horizontally creeping stem on the surface of the soil.

Submersed: Plants growing with their root, stems, and leaves completely under the surface of the water.

Sutures: A line or junction of adjacent animal or plant parts such as the juncture between whorls of a mollusk shell, or the junction between the valves of a bivalve shell.

Telson: The last segment in the abdomen, or terminal appendage in crustaceans, chelicerates, and embryonic insects.

Terminal: Situated at the end or extremity.

Truncate: Appearing to end abruptly, shortened, cut off at the end.

Tubera: The short, thickened, fleshy, food-storing portion of an underground stem with many surface buds; shaped like a tiny potato.

Turbidity: Muddiness created by stirring up sediment or having foreign particles suspended.

Turion: A young, scaly shoot budded off from underground stems; detachable winter bud used for survival when conditions are unfavorable.

Veges: The free-swimming, planktonic larva of certain aquatic mollusks such as zebra mussels.

Ventral: Relating to the underside of an animal or plant.

Whorl/Whorled: In plants: an arrangement of three or more leaves, flowers, or bracts radiating from a common node, spread at intervals along the stem.

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<tr>
<td>Typha angustifolia</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typha x glauca</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Measurement Conversion

1 centimeter = 0.39 inches  
2.5 centimeters = 1 inch  
25.4 millimeters = 1 inch  
30.5 centimeters = 1 foot  
1 meter = 3.28 feet  
0.914 meters = 1 yard