



COMMON AQUATIC INVASIVE ANIMALS OF NEW YORK

WHAT ARE INVASIVE SPECIES?

Invasive species are non-native species whose introduction can or is likely to cause harm to the environment, economy, and/or human health. These species can be plants, animals, pests or pathogens.

WHY ARE INVASIVE SPECIES A THREAT?

Invasive species effect nearly every aspect of our world and are one of the greatest threat to New York's biodiversity. The spread of invasive species eventually leads to a reduction in biodiversity, including the loss of native fish, wildlife, plant, and tree species. Invasive species are the greatest threat to endangered plants and animals while also contributing to habitat destruction.

HOW DO INVASIVE SPECIES IMPACT SOCIETY?

Invasive species cost millions of dollars to manage and have devastating consequences on New York State's ecosystems, economy, and human health. Invasive species cause damage to our crops, livestock, and food supply. They have large impacts on our forest industry. Invasive species can cause a decrease in recreational opportunities along with the aesthetic enjoyment of our environment. In rare cases, can cause diseases in humans.

CHINESE MITTEN CRAB (*Eriocheir sinensis*)



Characteristics: Equal – sized claws with white tips and hair. Has eight legs with a smooth round carapace (upper shell) that has four spines on the side. Has a brownish to olive color and can grow up to 10 cm

Habitat: Found in both freshwater and saltwater

Distribution: Currently found in the Hudson river





SPINY WATER FLEA (*Bythotreoges longimanus*)



Characteristics: Less than 1.25cm with long barbed tails

Habitat: Found in freshwater and brackish (fresh and saltwater mix) lakes

Distribution: Lake Erie, Lake Ontario, Lake George, Saratoga Lake, Lake Champlain and a number of smaller water bodies in New York

Look – Alike: Fishhook water flea (invasive) which likes cooler water temperatures and has a hooked tail rather than a straight one

FISH HOOK WATER FLEA (*Cercopagis pengoi*)



Characteristics: Has an angled tail – spine that looks like a fish hook at the end. Body length is 1-3 mm and with the tail, the length is 6 – 13 mm

Habitat: Found in both freshwater and brackish lakes with cooler water temperatures

Distribution: Lake Erie, Lake Ontario, Lake George, Saratoga Lake, Lake Champlain and a number of smaller water bodies in New York are infested

Look – Alike: Spiny water flea (invasive) which likes cooler water temperatures and has a straight tail rather than a hooked one



BLOODY RED SHRIMP (*Hemimysis anomala*)



Characteristics: Has a long sharply pointed spine at both corners of the telson (last segment). Grows to about 1.5 cm, is ivory in color with red – orange patterns, and has eight pairs of legs

Habitat: Found in both freshwater and brackish reservoirs and lakes. Sometimes found in moving bodies of water such as rivers and streams.

Distribution: Originally found in the Great Lakes

ROUND GOBY (*Neogobius melanostomus*)



Characteristics: Small, brown, and black in color and have frog – like heads. Their dorsal fin, the fin on the back of the fish, has a black spot. Grows to about 30cm, and has fused pelvic fins

Habitat: Bottom dwellers of freshwater or brackish water bodies. Can be found in open sand the rocky bottoms

Distribution: Found in the Erie Canal and the Mohawk River

Look – Alike: Can be confused with native sculpins which do not have the fused pelvic fin



NORTHERN SNAKEHEAD (*Channa argus*)



Characteristics: Long bodies, up to 3 feet, with one fin running down their back. Are brown with dark splotches, have a flat head and a large mouth containing many teeth

Habitat: Shallow stagnant, non – flowing water, like ponds, swamps, reservoirs, and lakes

Distribution: Found mostly in Queens

Look – Alike: Can be confused with the native bowfin. This fish has a shorter anal fin, the last fin on the underside of the fish, and a rounded tailfin.

ZEBRA MUSSEL (*DREISSENA POLYMORPHA*)



Characteristics: Very small in size, usually smaller than an inch long, and have the “D” shape of a clam. Has a yellowish to brownish color with dark stripes

Habitat: Found in slow moving water where they can attach to a hard surface underwater.

Distribution: Originally found in the Great Lakes, but now in the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers as well as the bodies of water fed from these rivers, and the Finger Lakes.

Look – Alike: Can be confused with the quagga mussel. This mussel is slightly larger, rounder in shape, and lighter in color with dark rings on its shell rather than stripes like zebra mussels.



ASIAN CARP (*HYPOPHTHALMICHTHYS SPP.*)

Characteristics: Has a very large mouth that is toothless. The eyes are at the front of the head and are lower on the head than most fish. The fish is a dark grey color.

Habitat: Found in freshwater lakes and rivers

Distribution: Found in the great lakes regions and adjacent bodies of water

Look – Alike: The silver carp does not have dark blotches and has a bigger and slightly rounder body



SILVER CARP (*HYPOPHTHALMICHTHYS MOLITRIX*)

Characteristics: Has a very deep belly and is silver in color when young. Mature fish remain silver on the belly, but greenish on their back

Habitat: Found in freshwater lakes and rivers

Distribution: Found in the Great Lakes regions and adjacent bodies of water

Look – Alike: Can be confused with other species of carp such as the bighead carp which does not have as deep of a belly and is darker in color



GOLDFISH (*CARASSIUS AURATUS*)

Characteristics: Has two sets of paired fins and is typically orangish in color although can vary greatly

Habitat: Found in undisturbed bodies of water

Distribution: Found throughout New York State except for the Adirondack State Park

Look – Alike: There are around twenty different species of goldfish, all varying in size, color, and fins

