

## ***What are invasive species and how did they get here?***

The term “invasive species” refers to non-native plants and animals that cause economic or environmental damage or harm to human health. Many non-native plants and animals are transported on ships or boats or are purchased over the Internet for gardens and aquariums. Other species have been introduced through natural events such as water currents, flooding, or wind. Bivalves, fish, and invertebrates are often transported to new areas by bait buckets, live wells, boating and fishing gear.

## ***How do invasive species impact Oneida Lake?***

Aquatic invasive species have caused dramatic changes to New York State lakes and streams, and have resulted in significant economic hardship. Invasive plants such as water chestnut form dense floating mats on water surfaces. The mats out-compete native vegetation, restrict boating and swimming, provide mosquito breeding grounds, and reduce habitat for native fish and birds.

Invasive plants in Oneida Lake and other upstate New York lakes also deplete oxygen levels needed by fish and other aquatic organisms. Invasive organisms can harm native fisheries by causing a shift in food web interactions, depleting food supplies for fish, plankton and invertebrates, and by competing with native fish for spawning areas.

Non-native species have impacted food web interactions on Oneida Lake, especially since the Erie-Barge Canal was built in 1918. Early invaders included sea lampreys, European faucet snails, Eurasian milfoil, and white perch. Other non-native fish that have played a prominent role in Oneida Lake’s history are carp, gizzard shad, and freshwater drum.

## ***How you can help***

Select only native plants and animals for use in gardens and aquariums. Carefully wash your boat, propellers, bait buckets and all fishing gear before moving to another lake. Notify a NYS Department of Environmental Conservation or County Cooperative Extension office if you notice unusual plants or animals. Support state legislation to reduce the impacts of exotic species.

## ***Where to find additional information***

Information about invasive species is available at the New York Invasive Species Clearinghouse (<http://nyis.info/>), the Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management ([www.fingerlakesprism.org/](http://www.fingerlakesprism.org/)), and the Oneida Lake Watershed Education Initiative ([www.oneidalakeinfo.org/](http://www.oneidalakeinfo.org/)).