



For release on **June 5, 2023:**

Celebrate Alaska Invasive Species Awareness Week

The Alaska Invasive Species Partnership (AKISP) invites all Alaskans and visitors to celebrate Alaska Invasive Species Awareness Week on June 11th-17th, 2023. This week is designated by an Executive Proclamation issued by Governor Dunleavy and celebrates the work that is being done to keep Alaska wild and free of invasive species.

An invasive species is any living thing that is not native to a particular place and causes harm to the environment, economy, and/or human health in the place it has been introduced to. Despite its remote location, Alaska is confronted by a growing number of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species. Early detection and rapid response are critical tools for preventing spread and negative impacts of invasive species in Alaska. Collaborative efforts are currently underway at the Alcan Port of Entry to minimize the risk of aquatic invasive species being introduced to Alaska waters via transportation of watercraft from infested water bodies in the lower 48 and Canada. Last summer at the watercraft inspection and decontamination station operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 50% of the vessels inspected had previously launched in water bodies outside of Alaska known to be infested with zebra or quagga (also known as dreissenid) mussels. To date, dreissenid mussels have not been detected in Alaska, which is great because they are extremely detrimental ecologically and economically in states and provinces where they are established. In the Great Lakes region alone, zebra mussels have caused \$300-\$500 million in damages to power plants and water systems.

Invasive species are constantly on the move and coordinated survey efforts are necessary to monitor for new threats. The most recent invader to Alaska is European green crab (EGC), first detected in Annette Islands Reserve by staff from Metlakatla Indian Community and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in July 2022. EGC is known worldwide as a notorious marine invasive species because it can feed on mussels, oysters, clams, native crabs, and juvenile salmon. EGC destroys nearshore habitats that are important to native marine species. Metlakatla Indian Community is engaged in reducing EGC populations and has collaborated

with other AKISP partners to provide training for new monitors. Community-based early detection monitoring efforts are ongoing across coastal Alaska to detect new invasions and raise awareness to prevent EGC from becoming established and spreading further.

During Alaska Invasive Species Awareness week, the AKISP will be promoting popular nationwide educational campaigns, including: “[Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers! Clean Drain Dry](#)”, “[PlayCleanGo](#)”, “[Buy It Where You Burn It](#)”, and “[Don’t Let It Loose](#)”. These messages are relevant to both Alaskans and visitors to the state.

In addition to these awareness campaigns, the AKISP will be highlighting invasive species reporting tools. Anybody in Alaska can report an invasive species by calling 1-877-INVASIV (468-2748) or by using the [Alaska Department of Fish and Game Online Reporter](#). There are a number of invasive species identification and reporting apps available as well, such as the [Alaska Invasives ID](#) app.

The AKISP partner agencies and organizations will be hosting local events during Alaska Invasive Species Awareness Week to help raise awareness and encourage the public to report invasive species. The AKISP will be promoting these local events while conducting a week-long social media campaign in an effort to share awareness messages both online and in communities across the state.

You can find more information by following the [AKISP Facebook Page](#), by signing up for the [AKISP listserv](#), or by visiting the [AKISP website](#). You can continue to stay engaged with invasive species topics by attending the statewide Alaska Invasive Species [Workshop](#) in Sitka on Nov. 7th-9th, 2023.

The Alaska Invasive Species Partnership is an informal group of individuals representing agencies and organizations statewide. Anyone may participate. The goal of the AKISP is to heighten awareness of the problems associated with non-native invasive species and to bring about greater statewide coordination, cooperation, and action to halt the introduction and spread of invasive species.

Members of the Alaska Invasive Species Partnership available for interviews:

Tammy Davis, Alaska Department of Fish & Game: Aquatic invasive species and European green crab

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Genelle Winter, Metlakatla Indian Community: European green crab

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Images:



STATE OF ALASKA



Executive Proclamation by *Governor Mike Dunleavy*

WHEREAS, the scenic mountains, meadows, rivers, and coastal bays of Alaska are prized for their diverse and abundant wild plants, fish, and wildlife; and

WHEREAS, Alaskans rely on native flora and fauna, cultivated crops, and local livestock to feed their families, meet cultural and traditional uses, sustain the economy, and support food security; and

WHEREAS, when non-native harmful species, known as *invasive species*, are introduced to the lands and waters within Alaska, they alter the balance of healthy ecosystems by disrupting food webs, displacing and preying upon valued indigenous species, reducing biodiversity, and altering ecosystems; and

WHEREAS, environmental disturbances caused by invasive species threaten the sustainability of native species, negatively impact the health or value of crops, promote wildfires, interfere with recreation, and alter water regimes, which causes floods and erosion; and

WHEREAS, invasive species are most often spread to Alaska via human-mediated pathways, including being transmitted by people, vehicles, equipment, and goods, but can also be translocated via natural means, such as wind, flood events, and ocean currents; and

WHEREAS, the most cost-effective and responsible approach to protect our lands, waters, and native organisms is to prevent the spread of invasive species when possible, and when unavoidable, appropriate management decisions must rely on early detection and strategic rapid response for control and eradication efforts to be successful; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Departments of Environmental Conservation, Fish and Game, Natural Resources, and Transportation and Public Facilities work cooperatively with stakeholders to support the natural and unique environment in Alaska by preventing, detecting, managing, and eradicating invasive species in the many environments where they cause harm; and

WHEREAS, Alaskans who are informed about invasive species, motivated to report observations, and support state government in fulfilling their responsibilities to monitor for and respond to invasive species are essential to keeping the Alaska way of life sustainable.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Mike Dunleavy, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF ALASKA, do hereby proclaim June 11 – 17, 2023 as:

Alaska Invasive Species Awareness Week

in Alaska, and encourage all Alaskans and visitors to learn about, prevent, report, and contribute to control of invasive species in the state.

Dated: June 11, 2023



Handwritten signature of Mike Dunleavy in blue ink.

Mike Dunleavy, Governor
who has also authorized the
seal of the State of Alaska to
be affixed to this proclamation.



Alaska Invasive Species Awareness Week

June 11-17



AKISP Awareness Week Announcement. Photo credit: USFWS (top), Michelle Michaud (bottom)

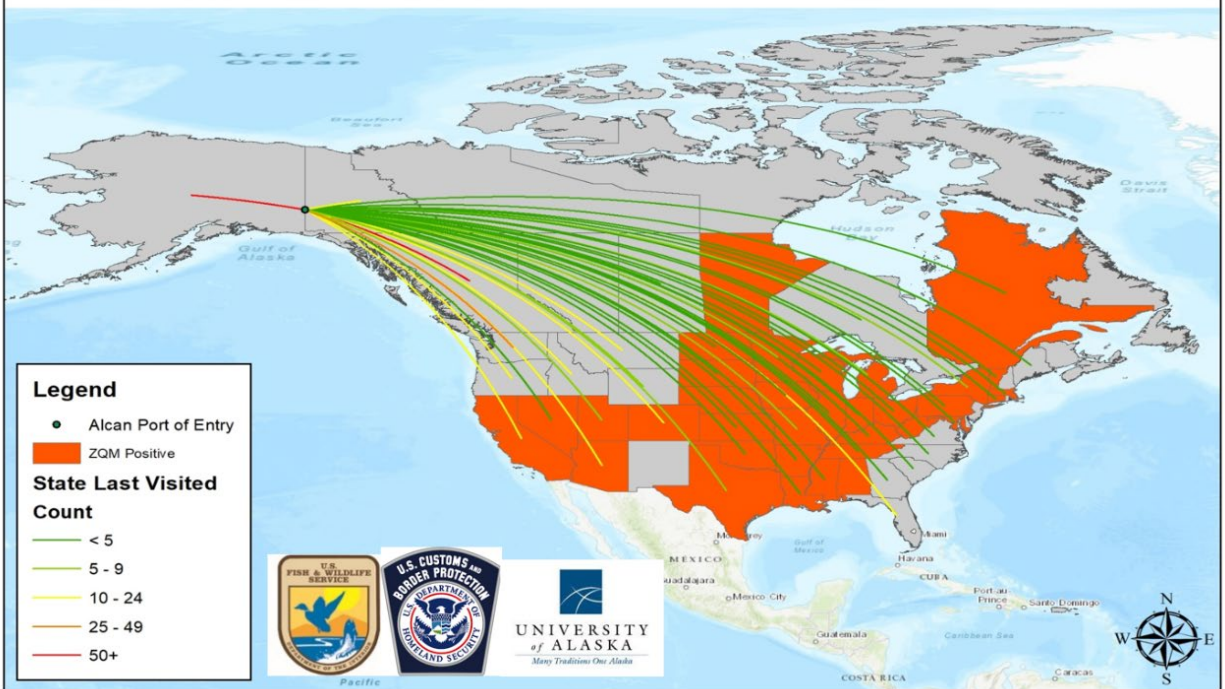


Zebra mussel fouled propeller from Lake Mead, Arizona. Photo credit: NPS.



Invasive green crab carapace and crab molt. Photo credit: Linda Shaw/NOAA.

Reported Last State of Use For Watercraft Inspections At Alcan Port Of Entry in 2022



Location of reported last state of vessel use at watercraft inspection station at Alcan Port of Entry in 2022. Map credit: Mike Buntjer/USFWS.