



For release on **June 7, 2024:**

## **Celebrate Alaska Invasive Species Awareness Week**

The Alaska Invasive Species Partnership (AKISP) invites all Alaskans and visitors to join us in celebrating Alaska Invasive Species Awareness Week, June 9 -15, 2024. 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 where introduced. Despite perceived remoteness, Alaska is confronted by a growing number of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species. Collaborative efforts are currently underway across the state to minimize the risk of aquatic invasive species being introduced to or spread within Alaska waters. Early detection and rapid response are critical tools for preventing spread and negative impacts of invasive species in Alaska.

The importance of surveying was highlighted with the detection of invasive Elodea on the Kenai Peninsula. The Kenai Peninsula was thought to be Elodea free until it was recently found in Crescent Lake, a remote alpine lake in the Chugach National Forest. One infestation was found at the lake outlet which flows into Crescent Creek, a tributary of Quartz Creek and Kenai Lake which are both productive spawning habitats. Elodea is a freshwater invasive plant that outcompetes native vegetation and degrades salmon habitat. Elodea has been found to decrease the zooplankton food source for juvenile coho salmon which in turn reduces juvenile coho salmon growth. The ecological impacts turn into economic impacts as well, as Elodea negatively impacts recreational opportunities and decreases property values. [University of Alaska- Fairbanks researchers](#) estimate that Elodea, if left unmanaged, could cost the commercial sockeye fishing industry \$159 million annually!

Invasive species are constantly on the move and coordinated survey efforts are necessary to monitor for new threats.

1. July 19th is designated as European Green Crab Awareness Day! European Green Crab response trapping and surveys continue around Annette Island to reduce the established population. To detect new invasions, community-based monitors set traps monthly, spring through fall, in many coastal communities in Southeast and Southcentral Alaska. The AKISP European Green Crab Subcommittee partners revised the Rapid [Response Plan](#), [conducted a workshop](#), and released an [educational video](#).
2. Invasive northern pike control and survey are on-going in Southcentral Alaska. The AKISP-developed [Invasive Pike Management Plan Guide](#) [Technical Guidance and Management Plan for Invasive Northern Pike in Southcentral Alaska: 2022 – 2030](#) has been an important tool for prioritizing work.
3. European bird cherry and Mayday trees are the “pretty plant to avoid” targeted by AKISP members. The spread into undisturbed forests combined with the concern over impacts to moose forage and riparian habitat makes this a priority species for survey and control.
4. Orange hawkweed continues to spread in the communities where established. Invasive plant managers stress the importance of early detection and control as the species spreads into subalpine habitat and into western Alaska and the Aleutian Islands.

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 Fairbanks, November 12-14, 2024.

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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

- Email: [tammy.davis@alaska.gov](mailto:tammy.davis@alaska.gov)
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Gino Graziano, University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service: Terrestrial invasive plants

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Kate Mohatt, US Forest Service Ecologist: Crescent Lake Elodea

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**Images:**



**STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!**  
Be A Good Steward.  
Clean. Drain. Dry.  
[StopAquaticHitchhikers.org](http://StopAquaticHitchhikers.org)



*Catlin Clark with the Chugach National Forest finds Elodea in Crescent Lake during an early detection survey. Photo Credit: USDA Forest Service.*

# 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, drawing more than two million visitors annually; and

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

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

WHEREAS, invasive species cause environmental disturbances that threaten the sustainability of native species, negatively impact the health or value of crops, promote wildfires, interfere with recreation, and alter water regimes, causing floods and erosion, and invasive species are most often spread to Alaska through the movement of people, vehicles, equipment, and goods; and

WHEREAS, the most cost-effective, efficient, and responsible approach to protect our lands, waters, and native organisms is to prevent the spread of invasive species when possible, and when impossible to practice early detection and strategic rapid response for control and eradication; 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 unique and undisturbed ecosystems of 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.

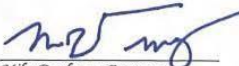
NOW THEREFORE, I, Mike Dunleavy, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF ALASKA, do hereby proclaim June 9 – 15, 2024 as:

### *Alaska Invasive Species Awareness Week*

in Alaska and encourage all Alaskans and visitors to learn about, report, and contribute to the prevention of invasive species in our State.

Dated: June 9, 2024



  
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 9-15, 2024



*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 - characteristics used in identification. Photo credit: Genelle Winters, MIC.*