INVASIVE SPECIES IN CENTRAL WISCONSIN

Spiney and Fishhook Waterflea:
Small predacious crustaceans that compete with native fish for food and foul fishing gear. Anglers often discover new infestations. Both waterfleas collect in masses on downrigger cables and fishing lines. (See photo at left.)

Curly Pondweed:
Aquatic plant, usually found in lake water 3 to 10 feet deep. Wavy leaves with fine-toothed edges make it appear "crispy." Grows in cold temperatures, even under ice. Begins growing early in spring, and shades out native plants, forming dense mats that impede recreational uses. Dies back in mid-summer, releasing nutrients, which can cause algal blooms and other problems. (See photo at left.)

Purple Loosestrife:
Perennial. Mature plants may have many stems. Height 3 to 7 feet. Spike covered with many flowers. Leaves usually paired (opposite). Spreads rapidly in wetlands, lake shores, river banks and ditches. Thick stands of purple loosestrife crowd out native plants and degrade wildlife habitat. (See photo at left.)

Eurasian Water Milfoil:
A feathery aquatic plant that can quickly form thick mats in lakes and rivers, interfering with recreational uses, affecting property values and altering the aquatic ecosystem, affecting fish and wildlife. Distinguished from native milfoils by counting pairs of leaflets along midrib. Eurasian has 12 to 21 pairs, Northern Milfoil has 7 to 10 pairs. (See photo below.)

Zebra Mussel:
Small, "D"-shaped mollusks, usually under 1" long. Often grow in clusters. The ONLY freshwater mollusk capable of attaching itself to solid objects – submerged rocks, pipes, docks. (See photo below.)

Common Carp:
Can reach 15 to 22 inches. Olive green on back, yellowish belly. Omnivorous. Browse on underwater plants, uprooting plants and muddying water. (See photo below.)

Rusty Crayfish:
Adults generally 3 to 5 inches (nose to tail). Dark, "rusty" spots on sides. Harm fish populations by eating their eggs and young. Graze on and eliminate aquatic plants. (See photo above.)

Species descriptions sources:
MN Sea Grant WATCH cards, WI DNR WILDCARDS