



AISC's 'Don't Let It Loose' Aquarium and Pond Retailer Recognition Program

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Close to Home

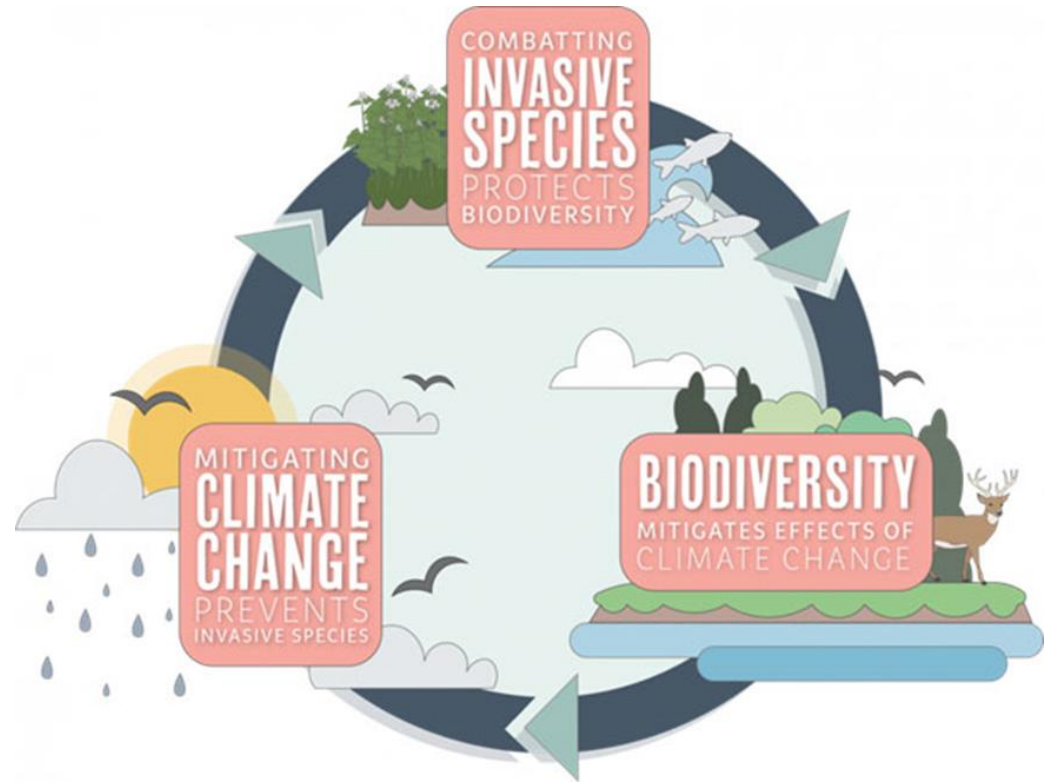
The threat of aquatic invasive species continues to grow as new species are introduced. There are two main methods of introduction: intentional release and accidental transportation.

- Goldfish
- Prussian Carp
- Phragmites
- Flowering Rush



Impacts of Invasive Species

- Reduce biodiversity
- Alter ecosystem processes/characteristics
- Reduce ecosystem resilience
- Spread diseases
- Outcompete native species
- Reduce water quality/availability
- Reduce recreational opportunity
- Infrastructure damage
- Impact ecosystem services
- Impact resource use



Source: SLELO PRISM

Alberta Fisheries Act lists 52 Prohibited species

- 25 invasive fish
- 16 freshwater invasive plants
- 11 other aquatic invasive species



Common Name	Scientific Name	Conditions for import and possession exemptions to apply
Bowfin	<i>Ameiurus calva</i>	Dead and eviscerated
Green sunfish	<i>Lepomis cyanellus</i>	Dead
Pumpkinseed	<i>Lepomis gibbosus</i>	Dead
Bluegill	<i>Lepomis macrochirus</i>	Dead
Snakehead (whole family)	<i>Channidae</i> spp.	Dead
Alewife	<i>Alosa pseudoharengus</i>	Dead and eviscerated
Oriental weather loach	<i>Misgurnus anguillicaudatus</i>	Dead
Red shiner	<i>Cyprinella lutrensis</i>	Dead
Utah chub	<i>Gila straria</i>	Dead
Black carp	<i>Mylopharyngodon piceus</i>	Dead and eviscerated
Largescale silver carp	<i>Hypophthalmichthys harmandi</i>	Dead and eviscerated
Silver carp	<i>Hypophthalmichthys molitrix</i>	Dead and eviscerated
Bighead carp	<i>Hypophthalmichthys nobilis</i>	Dead and eviscerated
Orfe or ide	<i>Leuciscus idus</i>	Dead
Common Rudd	<i>Scardinius erythrophthalmus</i>	Dead
Tench	<i>Tinca tinca</i>	Dead
Round goby	<i>Neogobius melanostomus</i>	Dead
Tubenose goby	<i>Proterorhinus marmoratus</i>	Dead
Black bullhead	<i>Ameiurus melus</i>	Dead
Yellow bullhead	<i>Ameiurus natalis</i>	Dead
Brown bullhead	<i>Ameiurus nebulosus</i>	Dead
White perch	<i>Morone americana</i>	Dead
Ruffe	<i>Gymnocephalus cernuus</i>	Dead
Zander	<i>Sander lucioperca</i>	Dead
Western mosquitofish	<i>Gambusia affinis</i>	Dead

Why do we work with pet and aquarium retailers?



Organisms In Trade

- The pet trade is one of the major pathways for aquatic invasive species to spread
- In 2021, zebra mussels were detected in moss balls in Alberta
- In 2022 and 2023, multiple stores in the states found crayfish and bullfrog hitchhikers unintentionally shipped with feeder fish



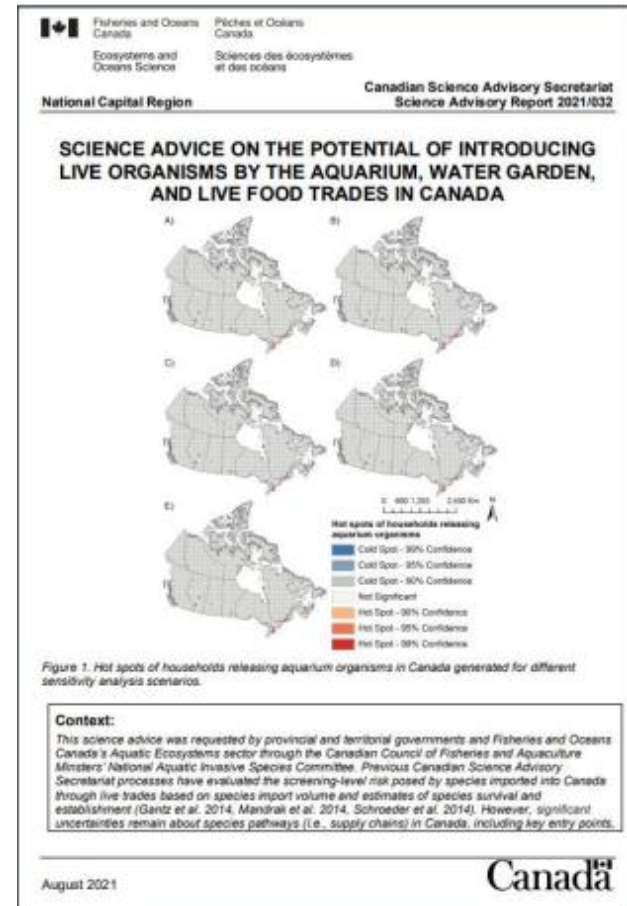
2021 Zebra Mussel Case

Stores contacted	813
Stores with Moss Balls	48
Stores with Zebra Mussels	17
Moss Balls voluntarily surrendered	2529



2021 Federal Advisory Report

- Public Release in August 2021
- Tracking movement of live aquatic organisms into and within Canada
- Calgary was one of the top ports of entry
- Organisms were not tracked after being received by customers



Program Background

- The 'Don't Let It Loose' campaign creates awareness that releasing aquarium pets, plants, live food, or water is not only damaging, but it is also illegal.
- Retailer Pilot started in 2022 with a goal to “train the trainer”



Program Background

The AISC works with the aquarium and pond industry to:

- provide store owners and staff with training materials, and educational resources.
- Support aquarium and pond stores that take the pledge to stop the spread of AIS.
- Increase EDRR of prohibited species through organisms in trade



Our Retailers



Target Audience

This program is focused on the aspect of intentional release, and therefore we target:

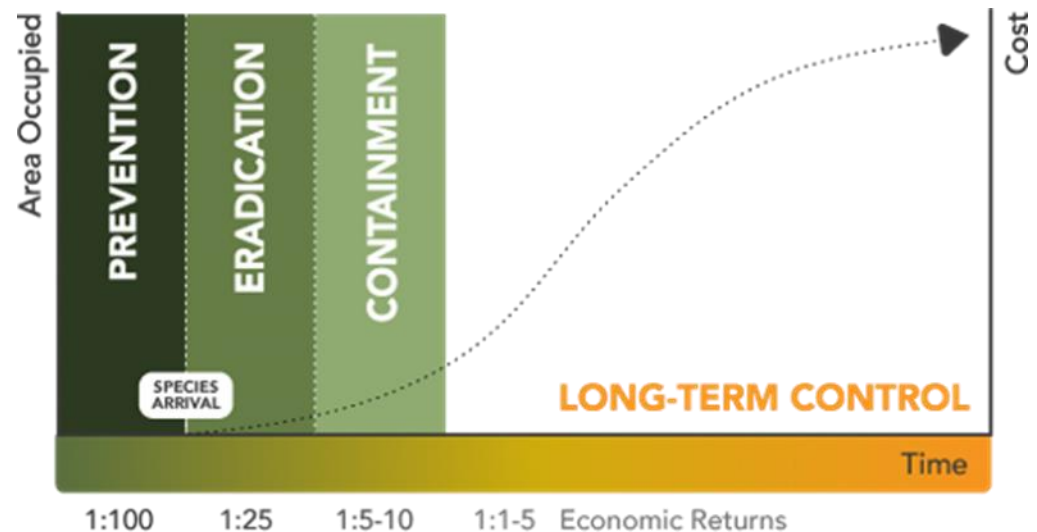
- Pet and pond retail owners/staff
- Customers/pet owners

Research shows effectiveness of point-of-sale interactions.



Driving Behaviour Change

- Prevention is key!
- Management will not be effective without prevention
- It is critical to stop further introductions of these species



Source: Invasive Species Centre

Don't Let It Loose and C.A.R.E.

Preventing the introduction of common aquarium species into the wild.

Be responsible and C.A.R.E.:

C - Contact

A - Act responsibly

R - Report

E - End ownership

TAKE THE PLEDGE!
STOP AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

Invasive species are plants, animals, and microorganisms that are not native to a particular area. It is illegal to introduce any aquatic species into a body of water where it is not native, unless authorized under federal, provincial or territorial law. When outside of their normal range, these species can cause damage to the economy, the environment, and to human health.

DON'T LET IT LOOSE

Your pledge to stop the spread of invasive species allows each person to:

- C:** CONTACT someone to adopt your pet or plant, use online classified ads, research humane societies or science centres, or contact the pet store you purchased it from to see if they'll take it back.
- A:** ACT RESPONSIBLY by researching pets and plants before adopting and make sure you're willing to commit to their lifetime of care. Know which species are legal to own, native to your region and buy from reputable retailers. Ensure any water from aquariums, ponds or water gardens is done on land and away from drains, sewers or other bodies of water.
- R:** REPORT any animals, pets or plants that may be of concern to the Aquatic Invasive Species Hotline or EDDMap5.
- E:** END OWNERSHIP by contacting a qualified veterinarian to euthanize your pet or bury it instead of flushing it down the toilet so it can't spread diseases. Dry and freeze plants in a sealed bag before throwing them in the trash - do not compost them!

FOLLOW THESE STEPS AND SPREAD THE MESSAGE TO FRIENDS AND FAMILY!

Program Updates

- Program now being expanded on a national scale.
- Two new retailers have joined the program!
- Working with Don't Let It Loose!
- Working closely with our partners at the provincial and federal governments



Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Pêches et Océans Canada

Program Updates

We have added new resources on our website, including:

- Program Code of Conduct
- Implementation Guide
- Retailer booklet
- Social Media Toolkit

We're also started a rehoming network for unwanted pets and have partnered with 7 rescue organizations across the province!



What's Next?



Responsible pet ownership guides



Further engagement with citizen science



Driving behaviour change

How Can you Help?

Don't Let it Loose!

Report aquatic invasive species!

- EDDMapS
- Alberta AIS Hotline

For any business or organizations interested in joining the program, or promoting the Don't Let It Loose message please contact:

Email: ais@abinvasives.ca

Phone number: 647-981-4044



EDDMapS
find • map • track



+1 855-336-BOAT (2628)

Questions?



Thank you!



@abinvasives