

North Dakota's Aquatic Nuisance Species Program

North Dakota Game and Fish Department



Highlights from 2017

- ❖ No new ANS detected or established
- ❖ Expanded program efforts
 - High priority sampling
 - Vegetation sampling
 - Marinas
 - Pet stores
 - Weed harvesters
 - Increased tournament involvement
 - Bait vendors
- ❖ Regional Coordination
 - Good progress on MO River AC Framework

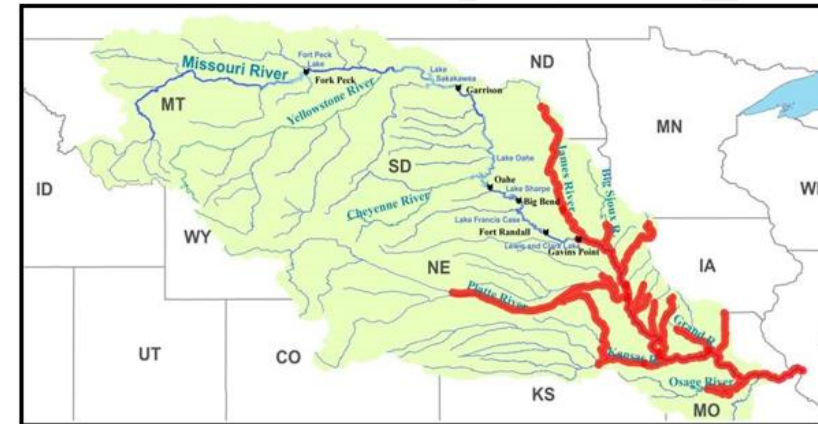
Missouri River Basin Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework

Prepared by

Missouri River Natural Resource Committee

Asian Carp Technical Committee

September 1, 2017



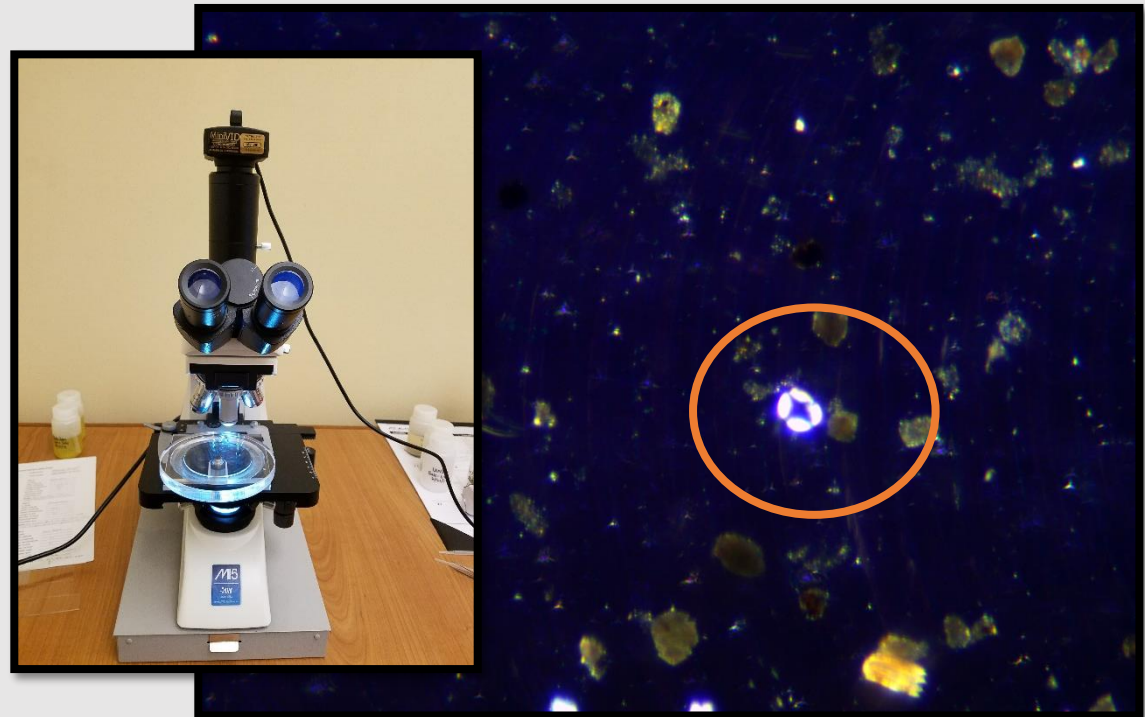
Detection efforts

- ❖ Zebra mussel-specific sampling
 - 32 ND waterbodies (all negative)
 - USFWS hatcheries
 - BOR sampled 4 waterbodies
 - COE adult samplers (negative)
 - High-priority samples
- ❖ Inspections
 - Bait vendors – in-state and importers
 - Construction and drilling equipment
 - Tournaments – volunteer and required
 - Weed harvest permits



Monitoring efforts

- ❖ Silver carp monitoring in August
 - Small population of aging fish (2009 year class)
 - New electrofishing settings – no captures
 - Continue annually
- ❖ Zebra mussel monitoring
 - Monthly samples May – October
 - Fargo, Grand Forks, and Drayton Dam
 - Adult searches planned for mid-October
 - Densities pending analysis
 - Density collection next 3 years



Outreach efforts

❖ Printed media

- Articles, advertisements
- Signs, billboards
- Posters, brochures

❖ Digital

- Radio (ND stations, Pandora)
- Webcasts, YouTube videos
- TV segments
- Species fact sheets
- Reporting form added

❖ Personal contacts

- G&F staff talks
- Boater surveys/inspections



NORTH DAKOTA
GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

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ANS Observation Report Form



One of the biggest threats currently facing aquatic natural resources is the establishment of aquatic nuisance species. ANS are nonnative aquatic species that threaten the diversity or abundance of native species, the ecological stability of infested waters, or commercial, agricultural, aquaculture or recreational activities that depend on such waters, and cause negative economic or ecological impacts. In areas where they have become established, ANS have proven expensive to combat and difficult or impossible to control or eradicate. North Dakota currently has a limited number of ANS that threaten our waters and the activities that rely upon those waters. For more information, [see our ANS page](#)

To conserve our natural resources for the future, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department strives to prevent the introduction and spread of ANS into and within the state, as well as to minimize impacts of existing populations. Boaters, anglers, hunters and water enthusiasts such as yourself are paramount to detecting new ANS when they first enter the state or as they begin to establish populations. If you find any fish, plant or other animal that looks out of place, use the form below to report your finding. Even if it turns out not to be an ANS, the information you provide is extremely important.

Tips for what to do if you find a potential ANS

- Take pictures of the organism and where you found it. If possible, place the organism in a plastic bag and freeze.
- Record exactly where you found the organism and get a GPS location if possible.
- Take notes on the finding, including how you found the organism, whether you found it on shore, and details on the site (vegetation, water depth, sandy substrate, etc.)
- Look around to see if any similar organisms are around and if there are a lot or a few.

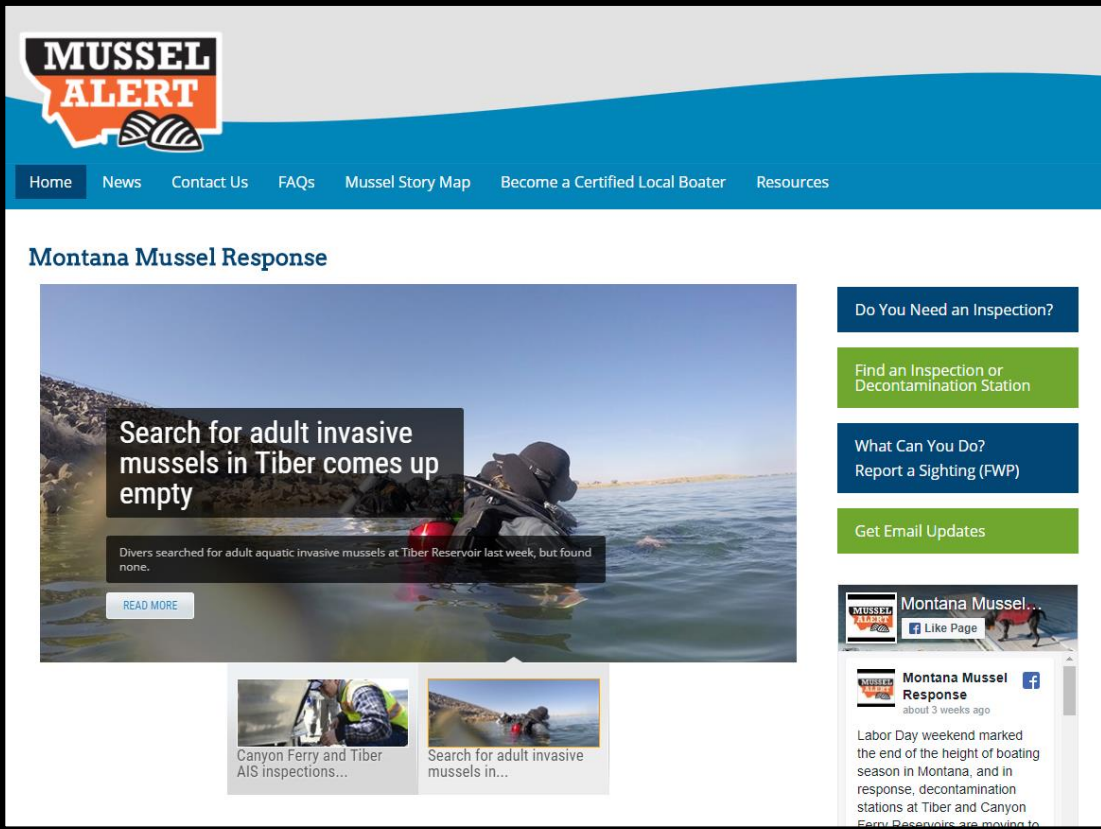
Boater surveys/inspections

- ❖ Increased engagement
 - Handed out drain plugs (survey suggestion)
 - Trailer winch stickers
 - More weekend/holiday efforts
- ❖ Preliminary results
 - >1,100 inspections this year (620 entered, 162 surveys)
 - Increased tournament presence
 - No ANS were found
 - Majority had heard of ZM (96%), other ANS (76%)
 - Few impacts by ANS (6% ZM, 9% other ANS)
 - Many getting NDGFD info
 - Non-residents hearing from local DNR



High priority sampling

- ❖ Montana findings
 - No adults to date
- ❖ BOR findings
 - Likely contamination
- ❖ NDGF response
 - 20 samples/month
 - May through Sept (5 months)
 - Sak, Oahe, and Dickinson
 - All negative so far (11/125 remain)
 - Dickinson May and Sept
 - Oahe Sept



The screenshot shows the 'MUSSEL ALERT' website. The header includes a navigation menu with links for Home, News, Contact Us, FAQs, Mussel Story Map, Become a Certified Local Boater, and Resources. The main content area features a large article titled 'Montana Mussel Response' with a sub-headline 'Search for adult invasive mussels in Tiber comes up empty'. The article text states: 'Divers searched for adult aquatic invasive mussels at Tiber Reservoir last week, but found none.' Below the article are two smaller image thumbnails: 'Canyon Ferry and Tiber AIS inspections...' and 'Search for adult invasive mussels in...'. On the right side, there are several call-to-action buttons: 'Do You Need an Inspection?', 'Find an Inspection or Decontamination Station', 'What Can You Do? Report a Sighting (FWP)', and 'Get Email Updates'. At the bottom right, there is a social media widget for 'Montana Mussel Response' with a 'Like Page' button and a post from 'about 3 weeks ago' mentioning Labor Day weekend.

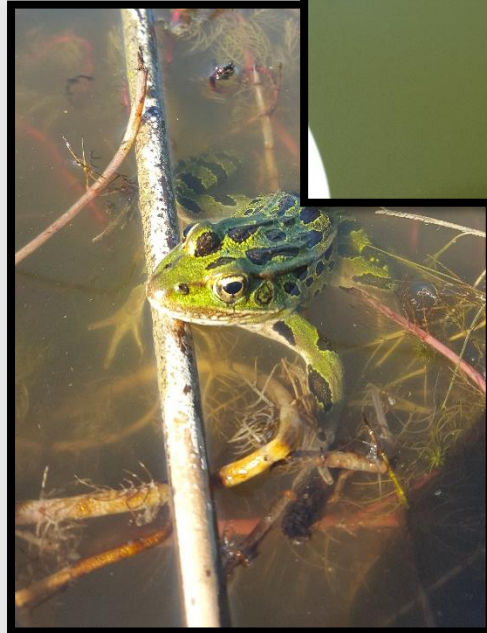
Vegetation sampling

❖ 13 waters sampled

- Non-fishing hunting waters
- No ANS detected
- Non-fishing waters
- Out-of-state hunting pressure
- Submerged vegetation sampled from kayak

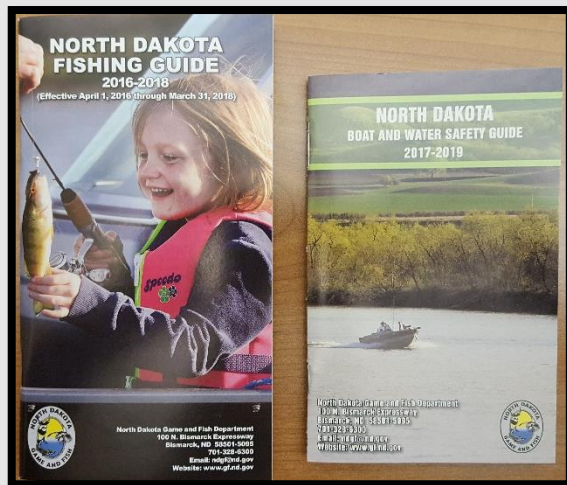
❖ Results

- No ANS detected
- 7 submerged spp. across lakes
- 1-5 spp. per waterbody
- Top 3 species:
 - Sago pondweed
 - Northern milfoil
 - Clasp leaf pondweed



Marina engagement

- ❖ ND marinas
 - Identified 28, 21 actual
 - Visited marinas in person
 - Delivered educational materials
- ❖ Follow-up
 - Survey for slip holders
 - Data to follow



NORTH DAKOTA GAME AND FISH REMINDS BOATERS:

On the Water:

- **Wear It!**
Life jackets save lives.
- **Boat Sober**
Alcohol is a major contributor to boating accidents.
- **Be Prepared**
Boating safety is everyone's responsibility.

*Know the rules and regulations.
Enroll in a boater education course.*

Off the Water:

- **Inspect**
Boat, motor, trailer and other equipment thoroughly.
- **Remove**
Plants, drain plugs and aquatic nuisance species.
- **Drain**
Livewells, baitwells, bilges and all other water.

*Every time you leave the water.
Protect boating from aquatic nuisance species.*

NORTH DAKOTA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
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Pet store engagement

❖ Partnership with Invasive Species Action Network (MT)

- Work directly with pet store owners in ND
- “Don’t let it loose!” campaign expanding in region
- 12 ND stores using materials
- ND page in development
- NDGFD working to supply materials into future



HOME MONTANA RESOURCES Q

Why releasing a pet into the wild is never the right thing

Most pets released to the wild do not survive, and many suffer before they die. Pets are usually unable to find food or shelter in the wild and they are often an easy meal for another creature. If it does manage to survive, your pet becomes an invasive species that native wildlife may not have the defenses to compete against. Invasive species cause harm to the environment and the economy.



What to do if you can no longer care for a pet



It's simple. If you have a pet you find you can no longer care for, you need to find it a new home – and never, ever, release your pet to the wild. If you are not able to place your pet with another caring owner, your best course is to contact an animal shelter, agency or even a pet store near you. The knowledgeable personnel in these places can help you find the right place for your pet. Use the resources on this website to locate the help you need!



DON'T LET IT LOOSE!

RELEASING A PET TO THE WILD IS NEVER THE RIGHT THING

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

If released, most pets don't survive and many suffer before they die. Pets are usually unable to find food or shelter in the wild and they are often an easy meal for another creature. If it survives, your pet becomes an invasive species that causes harm to the environment and economy.

INSTEAD OF RELEASING

- CONTACT A LOCAL PET STORE - THEY MAY BE ABLE TO HELP
- GIVE/TRADE WITH ANOTHER AQUARIST, POND OWNER, OR WATER GARDENER
- IF YOU HAVE A DOG, CAT OR OTHER SMALL MAMMAL CHECK WITH THE HUMANE SOCIETY OR LOCAL ANIMAL SHELTER
- SEAL AQUATIC PLANTS IN PLASTIC BAGS AND DISPOSE IN THE TRASH
- CONTACT A VETERINARIAN OR PET RETAILER FOR HUMANE DISPOSAL GUIDANCE

WWW.DONTLETITLOOSE.COM

DON'T LET IT LOOSE!
BE A RESPONSIBLE PET OWNER

2018 planned efforts

- ❖ Clean, Drain, Dry
 - New outreach slogan
 - Consistent nationally
 - Update outreach materials
- ❖ Program needs
 - Assess gaps and needs
 - Update operational plan (AISC)
- ❖ High-risk sampling
 - Continue for 2 more years; re-evaluate

SPREADING THE AQUATIC NUISANCE SPECIES MESSAGE

By Jessica Howell

Reminders concerning the steps that need to be taken to prevent the spread of aquatic nuisance species are prominent at boat ramps across the state.

