

Invasive species jeopardize vital wildlife and fish habitat, threatening two of Nebraska's oldest traditions—hunting and fishing. Nebraska offers some of the best hunting and fishing in the country, so it is critical to protect the habitats that support wildlife and fisheries.

With upcoming hunting seasons, sportsmen and sportswomen have the opportunity to help protect wildlife habitat against the impacts of invasive species:

- **Waterfowl Hunters:** Invasive Phragmites and purple loosestrife in wetlands and along shorelines have devastated waterfowl habitat.

Tip: Before leaving an area, thoroughly check waders, boots, decoys, boat, dogs, clothing and anything else that came into contact with water. Remove as much of the mud and vegetation as possible before heading out. Bulb-shaped decoy anchors can help reduce snagging of aquatic plants. Use native plants, instead of Phragmites, for blinds.

- **Upland Hunters:** Invasive species such as houndstongue and musk thistle are threatening the habitat required by upland species.

Tip: Sidestep infested areas. Avoid driving or walking through areas infested with invasive species; take a different route. Clean mud, seeds, and vegetation off vehicles, pets and boots before going to the next favorite spot.

- **Big Game Hunters:** Garlic mustard and European buckthorn are becoming all too familiar in woodland habitat, but some invasive species are not here yet—such as the emerald ash borer. This and other invasive insects can wipe out Nebraska's forest habitat.

Tip: Do not move firewood. Invasive insects and diseases are easily transported to new areas in firewood. Burn firewood where it is bought.

“Invasive species cost the Midwest millions of dollars in damages and management efforts each year,” Nebraska Invasive Species Project Coordinator Karie Decker said. “Sportsmen, perhaps more than any other group, are uniquely positioned to expand and promote the fight against invasive species. If you come across invasive species, let us know. Reporting problem areas will help us maintain healthy habitats.”

Visit apps.bugwood.org to download the free MRWC–EDDMapS invasive species reporting app for Android and iPhone. Reports are sent to the appropriate authorities for verification.

For more information, or to report an invasive species, visit the Nebraska Invasive Species Project at <http://snr.unl.edu/invasives>.