

## NEWS RELEASE

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**For Immediate Release**

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### **Kansans Can Help Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers** *Asian carp, zebra mussels and other species threaten Kansas' waters*

**TOPEKA, KAN.** – As Kansans take advantage of the warming weather to get out to their favorite lake or river, the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWP) reminds outdoor enthusiasts that they play a critical role in helping stop aquatic invaders that threaten Kansas waters. An informed, watchful public can help protect Kansas waters, so KDWP has a place on its website where people can learn about the threat and what they can do to help – Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers at [ProtectKSWaters.org](http://ProtectKSWaters.org).

Zebra mussels, Asian carp and other aquatic nuisance species (ANS) pose serious environmental and economic threats to the state's aquatic resources. Aquatic nuisance species are animals and plants not native to Kansas that can threaten lake and river ecology, harm native or desirable species, and interfere with our economy. They often hitchhike with unsuspecting people who may unknowingly transport an ANS to a previously uninfested body of water.

"Some people may not realize that these non-native species may affect them even if they don't fish or boat," said Jessica Howell, Kansas Aquatic Nuisance Species Program Coordinator. "Zebra mussels will attach themselves to anything below the water line. In addition to damaging boating and fishing equipment, they'll foul rocky shorelines with their sharp, dime-sized shells, making it hard to walk or wade along the shore. Also, they can clog water intakes and damage power-generating facilities. In early 2012, the city of Council Grove experienced a temporary water shortage due to a thick layer of zebra mussels coating the inside of the intake tank at Council Grove City Lake."

Asian carp are another aquatic nuisance species – actually three species of carp – that threaten waterways and fish populations. They can eat up to 40 percent of their body weight each day, competing with native fish for food and threatening the diversity and quality of other aquatic life. When young, Asian carp resemble native minnows and shad, which is one reason the Kansas Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Commission adjusted the bait fish regulations to limit the use of wild-caught bait fish. When grown, Asian carp can weigh up to 100 pounds, and they are prone to leaping out of the water when disturbed, posing a real physical threat to boaters.

There are three primary ways the public can help stop ANS from spreading:

**CLEAN - DRAIN – DRY** – boats and equipment after every visit to any lake or river  
**DON'T MOVE LIVE FISH** – between bodies of water or up streams  
**DON'T DUMP BAIT IN THE WATER OR DRAINAGE DITCHES** – Instead, discard it on dry land or in an approved receptacle

For more details about these precautions and aquatic nuisance species, visit [ProtectKSWaters.org](http://ProtectKSWaters.org).

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