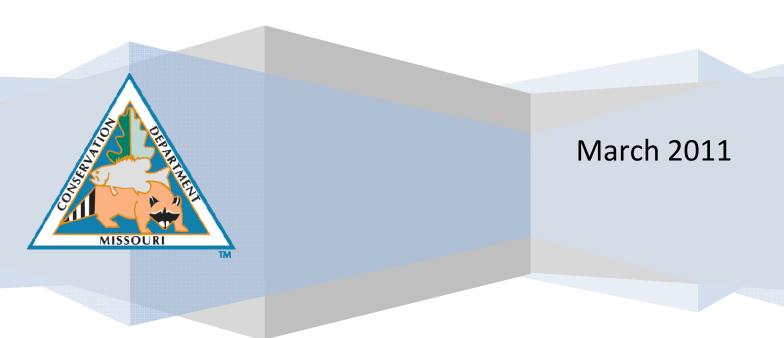
## **Missouri Department of Conservation**

# Missouri Non-Native Aquatic Species and Watercraft Survey, October 2009

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This project was funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Task Force Grant, the Mississippi River Basin Panel and the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC).
Thanks to MDC's Resource Science Division staff Martha McCrary, Julie Fleming and Ron Reitz for their support in conducting the survey and analyzing the data and to Shelly Colatskie for her assistance in compiling this report.

#### **Abstract**

Four thousand thirty-eight (4,038) completed surveys were returned from the 10,000 registered boaters that were mailed a 24-question survey to determine their knowledge and habits related to non-native aquatic species (NNAS) (Appendix A). In October 2009, as many as three separate mailings were made to each recipient, which likely accounted for achieving an excellent response rate. Except for the higher profile species, boat owners generally knew little about NNAS. However, most boat owners recognized that it was very important to prevent the spread of zebra mussels and Asian carp. The top four sources for information about NNAS were reported to be: the Missouri Conservationist magazine; newspapers, magazines or newsletter articles; television news, programs or public service announcements; and signs at a boat launch or marina, respectively. A sense of personal responsibility; the Missouri Conservationist magazine; a desire to keep non-native aquatic species out of our lakes or streams; and signs at boat launches or marinas, respectively were reported as being very effective in getting boat owners to take steps to prevent the spread of NNAS. Bass boats were the boat type most often moved between waters and the majority of the bass boats were in the water one day or less before being moved. Although boats were transported as far away as Alaska, Florida and California, the most common out-of-state destinations for boat movements were to Illinois, Arkansas and Oklahoma. Nearly half of boat owners took precautions to prevent transporting NNAS to other locations. The most common response for not taking precautions was "I don't know exactly what I'm supposed to do". Forty percent of boat owners that used live bait either always or sometimes release their unused bait, while 60 percent never released live bait. Recreational boating and angling were the activities that were most often enjoyed by boat owners and half of the respondents were willing to donate to better manage NNAS. Survey participants consisted of mostly males older than 30. Many participants provided comments and recommendations. Several indicated that more public information and education about NNAS should be included in the *Missouri Conservationist* and in news articles. Signs, billboards, and inspections were suggested as tools that should be used for NNAS education.

#### Methods

Ten thousand registered Missouri boat owners were sent a 24-question survey (Appendix A) by U.S. Postal mail to determine their attitudes and knowledge about non-native aquatic species (NNAS). Twenty-two boat types were grouped into five major groups. Two thousand boat owners were randomly selected from each of the five boat type groupings. To prevent boater owners from receiving survey materials after they returned a survey, each piece of mail was printed with an assigned serial number. In October 2009, the first survey was mailed enclosed with a cover letter and a postage paid return envelope. About one week to ten days later a postcard reminder was sent to boat owners that had not returned the survey. After an

additional period of about ten days the third and final mailing was completed by sending the survey enclosed with another cover letter and postage paid return envelope for the final opportunity for the boat owner to complete and return the survey. All the survey data were entered into Microsoft Access and queries were developed for each question. Responses to each question were analyzed and figures showing the results were constructed (Appendix B).

### **Results**

Out of the 10,000 surveys sent, 934 were undeliverable and 4,038 were completed and returned resulting in an excellent 45% response rate. Sixty surveys were unusable because the serial numbers had been removed. Therefore, 3,978 surveys were used for the survey analysis. Thirty-two additional surveys were returned much later and were not included in the analysis.

Except for the higher profile NNAS species, the survey showed that boat owners surveyed did not know much about NNAS. Fifty-eight and 47% of respondents knew at least a moderate amount about zebra mussels and Asian carp, respectively. The vast majority of boat owners that responded were not aware of the other NNAS included on the survey form (Appendix B, Q-1a-1h).

Most boat owners indicated that it was very important to take precautions to prevent the spread of zebra mussels and Asian carp, 74% and 60%, respectively. Only 39% reported that it was very important to take precautions to prevent the spread of the Chinese mystery snails. While only 32% of those surveyed knew anything about northern snakeheads, 57% of boat owners believed that it was very or somewhat important to take precautions to prevent their spread. Less than 1% reported that it was not at all important to take precautions in preventing the spread of NNAS; however, many people did not know whether it was important or not (Appendix B, Q-2a-2h).

The top communications media that Missouri boat owners received information about NNAS issues were: the *Missouri Conservationist* magazine (70%); newspapers, other magazines and newsletters (64 %); television news, programs and public service announcements (50%); and signs and information posted at the boat ramps (47%). Surprisingly, only 16% of boat owners relied on the internet for information about NNAS. Fishing contests, derbies and regattas were the least important for providing NNAS information (Appendix B, Q-3). The *Missouri Conservationist* was mentioned most as being the best source for NNAS information for watercraft owners; followed by newspapers, magazines, or newsletters; television news and public service announcements; and signs provided at boat launches or marinas (Appendix B, Q-4).

A desire to keep NNAS out of our lakes and streams was the top choice out of a list of 17 items for being very effective at influencing boaters to take steps to prevent the spread of NNAS. Articles in the *Missouri Conservationist* were second, followed by a sense of personal responsibility, and signs at boat launches or marinas. When asked to choose the top four items of those that respondents considered very effective, the *Missouri Conservationist* was selected as the most effective, followed by a sense of personal responsibility, a desire to keep NNAS out of our waterways and signs at boat launches, respectively. It is interesting that more boat owners surveyed didn't consider law enforcement and fines to be very effective in preventing boat owners from spreading NNAS (Appendix B, Q-5 & Q-6). Also, it is remarkable that, even though there were no aquatic nuisance species billboards in place in Missouri during 2009, more respondents reported them as being as least somewhat effective in getting boaters to take steps to prevent the spread of NNAS than the Internet.

Eighty-three percent of respondents used their watercraft during the 2009 boating season and 35% moved their watercraft between waters (Appendix B, Q-8 & Q-9a). As one would expect, bass boats were the boat type most often moved between waters (Appendix B, Q-9b). The lengths of time a watercraft was in the water before being moved were: one day or less (69%), two to four days (18%), five to 14 days (6%), 15 to 30 days (3%) and more than 30 days (4%) (Appendix B, Q-10). For the boat owners that moved their watercraft between waters the number one length of time that the boat was out of the water before launching in another water body was five to 14 days (43%) followed by 15 to 30 days (24%), more than 30 days (18%), two to four days (8%) and one day or less (5%) (Appendix B, Q-11).

Of the 1,152 boat owners that indicated they moved their watercraft between bodies of water, 30% reported that they moved the watercraft out-of-state to places including Alaska, California, Florida and Texas (Appendix B, Q-12a). The most common out-of-state destinations for those transporting their watercraft outside Missouri during 2009 were Illinois, Arkansas and Oklahoma, 87, 83 and 51 responses, respectively (Appendix B, Q-12c). Private lakes were the destination for over 300 boat moves in Missouri, followed by 189 moves to Lake of the Ozarks, which is infested with zebra mussels (Appendix B, Q-13). Forty-nine percent of boat owners reported that they took precautions to prevent transporting NNAS from one waterbody to another, while 39% didn't take precautions and 11% reported that they took precautions some of the time (Appendix B, Q-14a). The reasons given by boat owners that did not take precautions were: I don't know exactly what I'm supposed to do (36%); I didn't know there were steps to take (29%); boat washing equipment was not readily available (16%); other (11%); and I don't believe non-native aquatic species are a problem (1%). Of interest is that less than 1% answered that they didn't take precautions, because they did not have time (Appendix B, Q-14b). Thirty-six percent of the respondents indicated that they did not boat on waters that contained NNAS, while 31% knew they boated on waters containing NNAS. However, 32% of

the respondents didn't know if they boated on waters that contained NNAS (Appendix B, Q-15a). When respondents that knew waters that they boated on contained NNAS were asked how they knew, the number one response was signs or brochures at boat ramps, followed nearly equally by heard about it from a friend or relative and media sources. Responses in the "other" category included direct observation of zebra mussels or Asian carp, as well as the *Missouri Conservationist* magazine (Appendix B, Q-15b).

Seventy-three percent of participants that boated on waters that contained NNAS reported that they are very likely to take precautions to prevent spreading NNAS in the future, while only 3% indicated that it is not very likely or not at all likely that they will take precautions. Another 4% reported that they never boat on infested waters (Appendix B, Q-16). Slightly more than half (54%) of boat owners conducted a visual inspection of boats and equipment for aquatic plants and animals when removing their boats from the water, while 90% reported that they almost always drained the water from boats, live wells, bilge and bait buckets. Excluding the respondents that didn't use live bait, forty percent either almost always or sometimes released their unwanted bait into the water when finished fishing, while 60% never released live bait. Although 57% of respondents almost always removed plants from their watercraft, only 25% of the participants almost always rinsed their boat after use (Appendix B, Q-17a,b,c,d,f & g).

Only 7% of participants indicated that NNAS affected their recreational experience during 2009, while 75% reported that their experience was not affected and 15% did not know if their recreational experience was affected (Appendix B, Q-18). Many respondents offered numerous comments about NNAS. The majority of them were reports of jumping Asian carp and the hazards they represent, as well as the effects that zebra mussels have on Missouri's aquatic communities.

Respondents were equally split between willing to donate and not willing to donate to help support NNAS management. Next to no amount, \$10.00 was the most often reported amount that boat owners were willing to donate to better manage NNAS (Appendix B, Q-19).

Recreational boating (69%) and angling (61%) were the activities that were most often enjoyed by Missouri watercraft owners in 2009 (Appendix B, Q-20). Nearly 2,000 participants commented on what they do with live bait when finished fishing. Many anglers are taking the appropriate actions, while others are still releasing live bait. Many participants also provided general comments and recommendations. Several indicated that they would like to see more public information and education concerning NNAS in publications, the *Missouri Conservationist*, news articles, billboards, signs and inspections.

It is obvious that older Missourians dominate boat ownership in Missouri. Less than 1 percent of the participants were younger than age 18, 2% were ages 18 - 29, 38% were ages 30 to 54,

30% ages 55-65 and 29% were age 65 or older (Appendix B, Q-22). Only 10% of the boats owned in Missouri are owned by females and just 5% of the respondents had any involvement with NNAS. Involvement with NNAS included 27% and 17% of respondents observing Asian carp and zebra mussels, respectively. Five Missouri Department of Conservation employees, three United States Army Corps of Engineers employees and four other governmental employees returned the survey (Appendix B, Q-23 & 24).

### **APPENDIX A**

# Missouri Non-Native Aquatic Species And Watercraft Survey Form

### MISSOURI NON-NATIVE AQUATIC SPECIES

08283



### AND WATERCRAFT SURVEY

A Survey by the Missouri Department of Conservation

Please check the box that corresponds to the answer closest to your opinion or situation.

ALL INDIVIDUAL RESPONSES ARE VOLUNTARY AND WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL.

1) NON-NATIVE AQUATIC SPECIES are plants or animals that enter places where they have not always lived. How much information have you heard or read about each of the NON-NATIVE AQUATIC SPECIES listed below? (check one box for each)

	A Large Amount	A Moderate Amount	A Small Amount	None
Zebra/Quagga Mussels				
Eurasian Watermilfoil			hruser Lyans	
Purple Loosestrife	ing in		orly from	Carl Barry
Asian Carp (bighead, grass, silver, and black)	2001	and a least	That I have	
Water Hyacinth		Train Train		
Rusty Crayfish				
Chinese Mystery Snail				
Northern Snakehead	egi egi		101.0	ar tormoces

2) In your opinion, how important is it that boaters and anglers take precautions to prevent the spread of each of the following NON-NATIVE AQUATIC SPECIES? (check one box for each)

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not at all Important	Don't Know
Zebra/Quagga Mussels					
Eurasian Watermilfoil					
Purple Loosestrife					
Asian Carp (bighead, grass, silver, and black)					
Water Hyacinth					
Rusty Crayfish					
Chinese Mystery Snail					
Northern Snakehead					

3) Have you heard of or read about NON-NATIVE AQUATIC SPECIES from any of the following sour (Please check all that apply)					
		Yes	No	Don't Know	
	1. Newspaper, magazine, or newsletter articles				
	2. Missouri Conservationist	ut sait			
	3. Television news, programs, or public service announcements				
	4. Radio, news, programs, or public service announcements	3.8			
	5. Billboards				
	6. Internet Websites	Topical a	SERIES PLAN	Addit to the same	
	7. An educational exhibit or display	mb mile	Contra Contract	1931 6 TO 1941 E	
	8. Fishing contests, derbies, or sailboat regattas				
	9. Booth at a sport show, fishing show, or similar event				
	10. Fishing or boating regulation summaries				
	11. Signs or information provided at a boat launch or marina				
	12. A fishing, boating sporting or environmental organization				
	13. Brochures, species identification cards, fact sheets, or other printed materials				
)	Of the sources of information that you responded "Yes" to	in question	3, which we	re your BEST sou	
	of information about NON-NATIVE AQUATIC SPECIES? ( selected in the boxes provided below)	Write the nu	mber of up to	four items you	
	•				

5) How effective would each of the following be in getting YOU to take steps to prevent the spread of NON-NATIVE AQUATIC SPECIES? (Mark one box for each item). In the last column, please tell us which ones ALREADY led you to take action. (Check Yes or No for each item.)

	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Not Effective	This alre	ady led e action
1. Talking with friends or acquaintances				Yes	No
2. A sense of personal responsibility				Yes	No
3. A desire to keep NON-NATIVE AQUATIC SPECIES out of our lakes or streams				Yes	No
4. Laws and fines to prevent the transport of NON-NATIVE AQUATIC SPECIES				Yes	No
5. Law enforcement checks on the road or at boat launches to catch violators				Yes	No
6. Television news, programs, or public service announcements	Large Co			Yes	No
7. Radio news, programs, or public service announcements				Yes	No
8. Billboards				Yes	No
9. Magazine or newsletter articles				Yes	No
10. Missouri Conservationist				Yes	No
11. Internet Websites				Yes	No
12. Fishing or boating regulation summaries				Yes	No
13. Brochures, species identification cards, fact sheets or other printed materials			d a bas	Yes	No
14. Signs at boat launches or marinas				Yes	No
15. Inspection-education programs on roads or at boat launches	Res Trib	n to a first		Yes	No
16. Videos or other presentations to boating, lake, and sporting associations or clubs				Yes	No
17. Radio broadcasts with frequency displayed on highway signs (such as 1610 AM)				Yes	No
			- 1		

6)	Of the items you said would be "VERY EFFECTIVE" in question 5, which items would be MOST effective
	in getting you to take steps to prevent the spread of NON-NATIVE AQUATIC SPECIES?
	(Write the number of up to four items you select in the boxes provided below)

The next questions are about your recreational use of watercraft during the 2009 boating season. Your answers will help us determine the movement of watercraft between waterbodies. For the purpose of this survey, <u>WATERCRAFT are defined as duck boats</u>, sailboats, personal watercraft (jet skis), fishing boats, and recreational watercraft.

7)	How many of	each of the following type	s of watercraft	do you own?
	<b>Boat Type</b>	Number Owned	<b>Boat Type</b>	Number Owned
	Pontoon		Cruiser	
	Bass Boat		Day Cruiser	
	Run-a-boat		Jetski/Wetbik	e
	Houseboat		Utility	
	Sailboat		Deckboat	·
	Yes No → I		v <u>atercraft duri</u> i	g season?  ng the 2009 boating season, skip to question #18.  during the 2009 boating season, either yourself
9)	•	ruck, trailer, car, etc.) or u		
	Yes, Wi	hich watercraft from above	did you move	MOST OFTEN?
	No → <u>I</u>	f NO, skip to question #18	8.	
10	/	·		n 2009, about how long was the boat typically IN ody? Do NOT include time on a boat lift
	One day	y or less		
	2 to 4 d	•		
	5 to 14	•		
	15 to 30 More t	) days han 30 days		
	Wiole t	iiii oo aayo		

11)	*	d MOST OFTEN in 2009, about ho different waterbody? Do NOT inclu	w long was the boat typically OUT OF de time on a boat lift.
	One day or less		
	2 to 4 days		
	5 to 14 days		
	15 to 30 days		
	More than 30 days		
12)	Barrent.	2009 boating season, did you move	it to waters OUTSIDE Missouri?
12)	Yes → If Yes, how many di	The second second second	
	No	White the late of	
		₩	
		(Please list the other states or provinces that you launched in)	
13)	the three most common trips (in	poat, what waters did you move it F include in-state and out-of-state trips). ke or launched in another waterbod	In the third column, indicate y (please name the waterbody).
	FROM	TO	FROM
	Example: Table Rock Lake	Example: Lake of the Ozarks	Example: Table Rock Lake ————
14		craft, do you take any special steps PECIES from one body of water to a	
	Yes	I don't believe it will preven	4
	No → If No, check all that a		SPECIES
	Sometimes	I don't have time	'm supposed to do
		I don't know exactly what I  I didn't know there were sp	* *
		I don't believe NON-NATI	•
		are a problem	
		Boat washing equipment wa	as not readily available
		Other (please specify)	

15) During 2009, did you boat on waters the listed in Question 1 on the front page?	nat you knew contained NON-NATIVE AQUATIC SPECIES							
Yes→ If Yes, how did you know?	Sign or poster at boat launch or marina							
(check all that apply)	Brochure, fact sheet or flyer							
No	Fishing, boating, or waterfowl regulation pamphlet							
Don't Know	Internet Website							
	Watercraft educator/inspector							
	Media sources (newspaper, radio, TV)							
	Heard about it from a friend or relative							
	Other (please specify)							
(Please remember that your answers are	E AQUATIC SPECIES between bodies of water? e confidential)							
Somewhat likely								
	Not very likely							
THE RESERVE OF THE PERSON NAMED IN COLUMN TO SERVE OF THE	Not at all likely							
I never boat on intested waters	I never boat on infested waters							
17) After removing your watercraft from t	he water, how often do you do the following? (check one box for each)  Almost Does Not  Always Sometimes Never Apply							
Conduct visual inspection of boats and equiplants and animals								
Drain water from boats, including live wells and bait buckets	s, bilge							
Release unwanted live bait into the water								
Remove aquatic plants and animals from b and equipment	oats							
Flush motor's cooling system with tap water	er							
Rinse boat with high pressure and/or hot w	rater							
Allow boat to dry for at least five days								

18)		e NON-NATIVE AQUATIC SPECIES affected your recreation 09 boating season?	al experience during the
		Yes→ If Yes, what is the most important effect NON-NATIVE AQUATIC SPECIES have had on you?  No Don't Know	Comments:
19		w much would you be willing to contribute annually to help sup QUATIC SPECIES management? (check one box)	port NON-NATIVE
		\$0	
		\$1	
		\$5	
		\$10	
		More than \$20	
20	) <b>D</b> o	you use your watercraft for the following activities? (check all	that apply)
		Angling	
		Tournament Fishing	
		Recreational Boating (skiing, tubing, sightseeing, etc.)	
		Hunting (boat blinds or transportation to hunting areas)	
		you use yor watercraft for angling or tournament fishing, do yo nat do you do with the extra bait at the end of your trip? (Please	comment below)

<u>-</u>		t recommendations or other comments would you like to make about the spread of ON-NATIVE AQUATIC SPECIES in Missouri waters? (Please comment below)
_		
Fin	ally,	we need to collect some information about you for statistical purposes only.
22)	Your	Age:
		Younger than 18
		18 to 29
		30 to 54
		55 to 65
		Older than 65
(3)	Wha	t is your gender?
		Male
		Female
4)	Do y	ou have any involvement with NON-NATIVE AQUATIC SPECIES issues and/or activities?
		Yes → If Yes, please specify
		No
[ <b>f</b> y	ou wo	ould like more information on NON-NATIVE AQUATIC SPECIES, please visit the sites below:
ittp.	://ww	v.mdc.mo.gov/nathis/exotic/zebra
	- 11	or
ир.	7/WW1	v.protectyourwaters.com

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation. To return this questionnaire, simply fold and place it in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.

### **APPENDIX B**

# Missouri Non-Native Aquatic Species And Watercraft Survey Figures

