

# Protecting Pennsylvania

As you know from reading this issue of PLAY, there are many plants and animals that can be quite a nuisance to people and other aquatic plants and animals. The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission, in cooperation with other state agencies, works to help reduce the spread of aquatic nuisance species by developing and enforcing laws and regulations. For example, permits are required for people who raise and sell baitfish. The species they raise are limited to fish that are approved by the Commission and that already live in Pennsylvania. Some anglers don't consider the undesirable effects of emptying their bait buckets, so this is the Commission's way of stepping in to help protect Pennsylvania's waters from nuisance species. There is also a law that prohibits transporting fish into Pennsylvania from another state, province or country and then releasing them in our waters. Also, fish already in Pennsylvania cannot be transferred from one waterway to another.



The Commission also helps to protect Pennsylvania's waters from nuisance species by working as a partner in a multi-state commission. Pennsylvania, New York, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia each have waters that flow into the Chesapeake Bay. These states work with one another to prevent and monitor introduction of non-native species into the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Species are sometimes

introduced for research or recreational purposes. Whenever someone proposes to introduce a non-native species, this commission reviews the introduction to

determine if harmful effects may occur. The commission then recommends to the individual state whether the introduction should be permitted. Not only does this commission help to protect each state's waters, but it also helps to protect the Chesapeake Bay from nuisance species.

Education is another important way to help prevent the spread of aquatic nuisance species in Pennsylvania. The Fish & Boat Commission encourages boaters to scrub the hulls of their boats, and to be careful about where they drain their bilge water and livewells to prevent the unwanted transfer of aquatic species. Anglers are encouraged to buy bait from responsible and permitted bait dealers, and not to dump their bait buckets into our waters. One way that you can help is to share what you've learned in this issue of PLAY with your family and friends. Help the Commission "stop the invasion" of aquatic nuisance species into Pennsylvania.



- When retrieving your boat for the day, check your boat, motor and trailer for weeds and other things "tagging along."
- Wash your boat's hull with hot water or with a high-pressure spray.
- Drain livewells, bilges and other compartments.
- Drain all standing water from your boat.
- Don't dump leftover bait into the water you're fishing, unless you collected the bait there.

Illustration: Ron Kuhn