

# CONSERVATION

# &

# WALLEYE



## What Walleye like...

Walleye flourish in large, shallow, windswept lakes with gravel shoals, but also can inhabit smaller lakes and streams. Walleyes are particular about their surroundings. Their hangouts depend on the season, time of day, water temperature, availability of baitfish, etc...

Walleye are known to spawn on rocky shorelines and in stream systems where there are plenty of gravel and cobble substrates

## What Walleye don't like...

Walleye do not do well in impaired, overly warm waters.

Walleye spawning patterns, and food chains are disrupted in lakes with algae blooms and shoreline sediment erosion issues.

## Threats to Minnesota Walleye lakes.

The primary threats to our fish, by way of the lake, is elevated levels of phosphorus caused by contaminated runoff, erosion, and sediment from over-developed land use. This includes lakeshore over-development, the loss of forests and native vegetation. Improper agricultural or industrial practices near our waters can also add phosphorus and contaminants.

Some lakes are also polluted with chloride, which comes from road salt and water softeners.

Still other lakes are infested with Aquatic Invasive Species, (AIS) such as zebra mussels, Eurasian watermilfoil, starry stonewort, and Asian carp. Non-native aquatic plants and animals cause economic and environmental damage to our lakes. AIS have taken hold in many Minnesota lakes.

## Clean water = good fishing!

It's not difficult to find the connection between clean water and good fishing. One does not exist without the other. Minnesota has a legendary fishing legacy to uphold. Our lakes and rivers have historically been some of the cleanest on the planet! Our fisheries require a certain level of care if we hope to carry on our legacy.

## AIS, what can be done?

- 1 Drain everything!**  
Drain water from boats, motors, live wells, even bait buckets before leaving the lake.
- 2 Clean your watercraft & trailer of all foreign matter.**  
Remove plants, mud, and other debris from your watercraft and trailer. Don't allow any natural matter to be transported to other bodies of water. Remember... watercraft does not just mean boats. Kayaks, canoes, paddle boards, jet skis, etc... they all are capable of transporting AIS.
- 3 Dry it out. It's the law!**  
Any dock equipment moved from one lake to another must be dried on land for at least 21 days before it is placed in new lake. This includes docks, boat lifts and swim platforms.
- 4 Observe & report.**  
If you think you might have spotted an aquatic invasive species... report it! Early detection is the key to limiting the spread.

### Milfoil Madness!

Eurasian watermilfoil is a feathery submerged aquatic plant that can quickly form thick mats that interfere with swimming and entangle propellers, which hinders boating, and fishing.



Photo by Allison Fox, University of Florida, Bugwood.org

### Seeing Stars!

Starry stonewort forms large dense mats of vegetation that often out-compete native aquatic plants and have impacts on boating, fishing and other native animals.



Photo by Tim Drake

### Mini Mussel Mania!

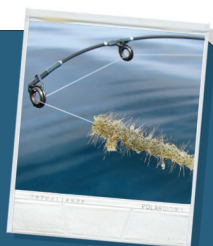
Zebra mussels foul up boats, motors, docks, and equipment left in lakes. Zebra mussels can survive out of water for days, so it is critical to clean, drain and dry docks, and watercraft before moving them to other lakes.



Photo by Paul Carver on iStock.com

### Gelatinous Blob Monsters!

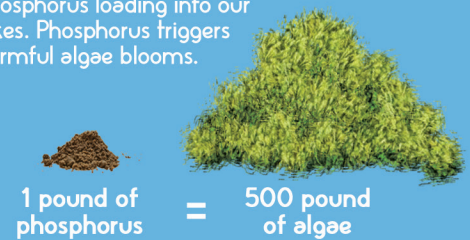
Spiny waterfleas are microscopic animals, that live in open water. They are often found clogged on fishing line in gelatinous blobs. They harm food sources that our native fish depend on.



## Fish and phosphorus

Nutrient-loading within a lake threatens many fish species such as Walleye, Pike, Crappie, and Trout. Fish in our northern climate thrive in cold water with abundant oxygen levels. Decomposing algae on the lake bottom depletes cold water oxygen supplies.

*Phosphorus* is a nutrient found in manure, leaves, soil, and fertilizer. Under natural conditions phosphorus is typically scarce in water. Human activities, however, have resulted in excessive phosphorus loading into our lakes. Phosphorus triggers harmful algae blooms.



## What can be done about phosphorus?

Limit stormwater runoff into waterways. Plant native trees, shrubs, flowers, and grasses! Forests and well vegetated lands serve as a giant natural sponge, filtering and retaining stormwater. A healthy variety of native plants with deep root systems retains soil, soaks up water and filters contaminants. Woodlands protect both groundwater and surface water. Native cover allows proper infiltration of stormwater into underground aquifers. The forests are our lakes best protectors!

## Fight for your fish!

Your local Soil & Water Conservation District can help point you to best management practices to protect our lakes. Whether you own land or just enjoy using our lakes, there are steps you can take to protect your fishing hole and the fishing legacy in Minnesota. Our fish need clean water to thrive!

**Beltrami SWCD | 218-333-4158**

**Report AIS to:**

[dnr.state.mn.us/invasive/ais/contacts.html](http://dnr.state.mn.us/invasive/ais/contacts.html)