Waterfowl Hunter AIS Outreach Campaign 2017

Chris Hamerla, Regional Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator, Golden Sands Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc.

Samantha Olsen, Natural Resources Specialist, WI Department of Natural Resources

Jeanne Scherer, AIS Outreach and Monitoring Specialist, UW-Extension & WI Department of Natural Resources
• Campaign background and role of LE—Samantha Olsen
• Outreach Tools and evaluation—Jeanne Scherer
• Being the boots on the ground—Chris Hamerla
Why duck hunters?

B. Steckart

2015 Survey: UW Extension and WDNR

Do Hunters Visit Multiple Waters Within Five Days?

- 48% Yes
- 52% No

(n=441)

2015 Survey: UW Extension and WDNR
Looks good,  
**BUT** 27% were unaware or unsure that NR40 applied to waterfowl hunting.  
Also, 30% were unaware or unsure that their gear could transport AIS.
What are Wisconsin Hunters Willing to do to Prevent the Spread of AIS?

- Inspect & Remove: Gear
- Inspect & Remove: Dog
- Drain: Gear
- Brush: Gear
- Rinse: Gear
- Dry: Gear
- Soak: Hot Water
- Freeze Gear
- Soak Bleach
- Soak: Virkon
- Switch Gear

Legend:
- I already do this
- Very Likely
- Likely
- Unsure
- Unlikely
- Very Unlikely

2015 Survey: UW Extension and WDNR
Waterfowl Hunter AIS Outreach

- A partnership of
  - WDNR Law Enforcement, Water Guards
  - Aquatic Invasive Species Partners - professionals and volunteers
  - UW Extension Aquatic Invasive Species Outreach staff
Campaign Goals

- **2016 and 2017:**
  - Test outreach tools and tactics to increase awareness among waterfowl hunters about their important role in AIS prevention
  - Increase AIS prevention behaviors among waterfowl hunters

- **2017**
  - Increase outreach—about 11,500 reached in 2016
  - Test new tools—revamped survey, duck bands
  - Increase awareness by partnering with Office of Communications
  - Encourage more volunteers and staff to assist Water Guards

- **2018**
  - Enable more engagement by AIS Partners throughout the state
  - Determine which tools are most/least valuable
  - Expand the use of social media to get the word out to hunters
  - Rebalance the role of WDNR Law Enforcement now that Water Guard program has ended
North and South Duck Hunting Zones: the North Zone opens approximately one week earlier for hunting.

2016 Pilot Campaign Locations Repeated in 2017
North and South Duck Hunting Zones: the North Zone opens approximately one week earlier for hunting.
Outreach Tools

- **Statewide**
  - Articles provided to Lake Tides, Wisconsin Waterfowl Association and Ducks Unlimited
  - Statewide Press release: UW Extension and WDNR Office of Communications
  - Social media-Office of Communications
  - Interviews-Partners locally shared, Media alerts by Office of Communications

- **At access points**
  - New boat inspection survey
  - Prompts: bird bands
  - New talking points
  - More background on duck hunting for the boat inspectors
### Survey

**Watercraft Inspection Report**

**Watershed Hunter AIS Outreach 2017**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Waterbody Name</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Landing/Access Location</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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**Questions to Ask Boater**

- Have you been contacted by a watercraft inspector this season?
- Are you willing to answer a few questions?
- Was boat used during the past 3 days on a different waterbody?
  - IF YES, where?
  - Waterbody Name
  - County/State

**Discuss Following Prevention Steps with Hunter**

- Wi Law requires waterfowl hunters on lakes and wetlands to take the following steps when leaving an access point:

  **Steps 1 & 2:** Inspect boat, trailors and equipment and remove any attached plants/animals, including from decoys and dogs.
  - Have you heard of this before? (see prompt)

  **Step 3:** Drain all water from boats, vehicles, and equipment. Remove all mud.
  - Do you have any questions? (see prompt)

  **If hunter uses decoys, blinds, dogs:** state following steps:

  **Step 4:**
  - Drain water from decoys, check your blinds and dogs for seeds, plant fragments, much and plants.
  - This is a relatively new law. Were you aware that this is required? (see prompt)
  - Do you use live plants for blinds? (If YES, share message below)

  **Phraamille Massage:** Only dead stems can be used, no seed heads or root material. Ok in Restricted county. No phraamille can be used at all in Prohibited counties.
  - Do you have any questions on this law as it can be a little confusing? (If yes, see Prompt and offer bird band/brochure/watch cards)

  *Duckweed and watermeal are exempt from NR-40.*

**TOTALS:** Enter the totals & waterbody information into SWINIS at http://dnr.wi.gov/take外表/bow-data

**Comments:**

- [ ]
  - [ ]

**Inspector Name:**

**Date:**

**Start Time:**

**End Time:**

**Total Hours Spent:**

**Paid:**

**Volunteer:**
Talking Points

Waterfowl Hunter AIS Prevention Step Prompts to Assist Inspector

If hunters are not familiar with the prevention steps or have questions, help them understand the reasons for taking these actions. You can use the prompts below to assist you in your explanation and discussions at the boat landing/hunting access point. Remember the goal is to make this as relevant as possible to the hunter by localizing the issue and making it relevant to their recreational activities through the conversation.

**Steps 1 & 2 – INSPECT AND REMOVE**

Why this is important:
Plants and animals can easily attach to boat/equipment/dogs/decoys or become entangled in boat motors and blinds and then be moved to another lake or wetland. Mud on anchors and other equipment is also a prime hiding place for AIS. This is a concern in this area because—(ADD LOCAL CONCERNS HERE)

**Step 3 – DRAIN BOAT AND EQUIPMENT**

Why this is important:
Many organisms such as Faucet snails or plant fragments (example: bulbils of starry stonewort) are tiny, even invisible to the naked eye and easily transported in water from one waterbody to the next. We know that many of the hunters that frequent our lake/wetland also spend time at—(ADD LOCAL CONCERNS HERE)

**Step 4 – DRAIN DECOYS AND ANY CONTAINERS**

**IMPORTANT HUNTING GEAR MESSAGES**

Dogs, decoys and more:
Dogs, push poles, decoys, decoy bags and decoy anchors can easily be covered by mud, tiny snails, larvae of zebra mussels, seeds and plant fragments. Besides in their fur, AIS can hide under a dog’s vest or collar. Decoys need to be drained. Mud needs to be removed.

Blinds: Know what county you are in. Non-native phragmites is restricted in some counties, primarily eastern counties. It is not a violation of NR40 to use dead stems for blinds. No roots/rhizomes or seed heads can be used. This is true for any plant used. If the hunter visits counties where NN phragmites is prohibited, they must use a different material/plant for blinds.
Prompts

-remind water users of the Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers! message because they are designed with common branding.

The bird band prompt honors the hunters’ tradition of collecting duck bands that they save after reporting that they have harvested a banded duck.
Results

Survey results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Waterfowl Hunter 2018 AIS Campaign</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launch hours</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boats in other waters within last 5 days</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunters surveyed</td>
<td>558</td>
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Approximately 300 more hunters heard the message from Law Enforcement and others who did not use the survey.

In addition to the five primary locations, outreach was also conducted at Crex Meadows, Rock Lake (Jefferson Co.), Two Rivers, Lake Poygan and Sheboygan Marsh in 2017.
Getting the word out

- Press releases
  - Basic release provided to AIS Coordinators to be adapted for local release
  - Statewide press release-finalized and coordinated by the WDNR Office of Communications
  - Newsletters: Lake Tides, Wisconsin Waterfowl Association

- Other media
  - Media alerts- notification of local media for day of the event interviews
  - Social media-WDNR Facebook and Twitter
  - AIS Partner Interview
Making the Outreach Work-Boots on the Ground

The Mead Wildlife Area Team
Coordinating staff and volunteers

- **Staff:**
  - Law Enforcement
  - Local AIS Partnership and WDNR AIS Staff

- **Volunteers - a potential pool**
  - Schools organizations - ex. UW Stevens Point Law Enforcement Club or wildlife/ecology clubs
  - Wisconsin Waterfowl Association and Ducks Unlimited members and family members who don’t hunt, but know the sport
  - Students in need of volunteer hours
  - Area Friends groups - ex. Friends of Mead
  - Master Naturalists
Volunteers-setting them up for success

- Utilize campaign training materials in our “toolbox”
  - In person training and practice
  - Talking points, survey
  - Duck ID
  - Getting to know waterfowl hunting tools
Volunteers-setting them up for success

- Getting those boots on the ground
  - Determine their comfort level with the tasks and assign access points accordingly
  - Pair experienced with inexperienced people
  - Coordinator should check in during the day
Timing can be everything!

- **Hours:**
  - In general, 9am-2pm and 6am-closing

- **Weather:**
  - Warm and sunny nice for the beach, not for duck hunting
  - Overcast days mean more hunters and longer days...

  - Unless there’s a Packers game on!
Going Forward

- **2018**
  - All zones open on Sept. 29th
  - Enable more engagement by AIS Partners throughout the state
  - Determine which tools are most/least valuable
  - Expand the use of social media to get the word out to hunters
  - Rebalance the role of WDNR Law Enforcement now that the Water Guard program has ended
Thank you!

Photo credits: Chris Hamerla and Brad Steckart