

## PRESS RELEASE

Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District

### Contact

Caitlin Stewart

Office phone: 518-548-3991

Email: [hcswcd@frontiernet.net](mailto:hcswcd@frontiernet.net)

### For Release

For Immediate Release

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## Spiny Water Flea Confirmed in Great Sacandaga Reservoir

The spiny water flea (SWF), an aquatic invasive crustacean, has recently been confirmed in the Great Sacandaga Reservoir. This Eurasian native is large in size (3/4 inch) and hatches, grows, and mates within 2 weeks. Not only is rapid reproduction a problem to our native aquatic species, but SWF eggs are extremely hardy. Eggs can dry out for an entire day, and still hatch once re-hydrated. In addition, eggs lie dormant during winter months and hatch when water temperatures increase. Finally, eggs consumed by fish remain viable after excretion.

This organism consumes zooplankton, and as SWF numbers rapidly increase, plankton populations become decimated. Predatory zooplankton are impacted because the smaller plankton they rely on for food are engulfed by the SWF. Fish that eat zooplankton are adversely impacted because their food source becomes depleted. These prey-predator relationships are biomagnified up the food chain; as primary producer populations (plankton) decrease, primary consumers (fish) are impacted, as well as secondary consumers (osprey). The SWF's barbed tail with numerous spines inhibits young fish from eating this invader, but large fish find it palatable.

In 1984, this organism was discovered in Lake Huron, and it is believed that ballast water from a freighter was the introduction mechanism. Fleas are transported to new locations in boat live wells, bilge water and on fishing line, down-rigging cables, anchors, and other fishing, boating, and recreational gear. They damage fishing gear by clogging the first eyelet of the rod and the reel's drag system. Resting eggs cling to fishing tackle, anchor lines, and ski ropes.

Help to prevent the spread of this invader by cleaning fishing and boating equipment, making sure to remove mud, plants, and organisms before leaving access location. Dry fishing and boating gear, clothing, and waders for at least 48 hours before entering another body of water. Take extra precautions if you recreate on the Great Sacandaga Reservoir. Report sightings with exact location to Bill Schoch, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation at (518) 897-1333.

Photos:

Flea.jpg: Spiny water flea

Fleas on line.jpg: Spiny water fleas clump on fishing line