Keep A Lookout!

Aquatic Invasive Species in Western New York

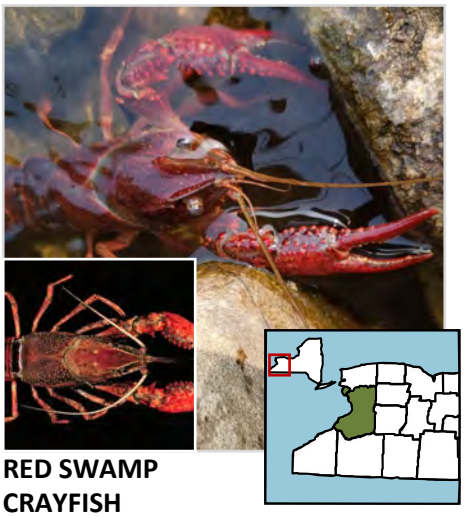
PARTNERSHIP FOR REGIONAL INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT
WESTERN NEW YORK

These species may be spreading in your area. Early detection and management can help prevent invasions and reduce the harmful impacts of these species. Maps show current reported distribution of species in WNY and surrounding counties.*

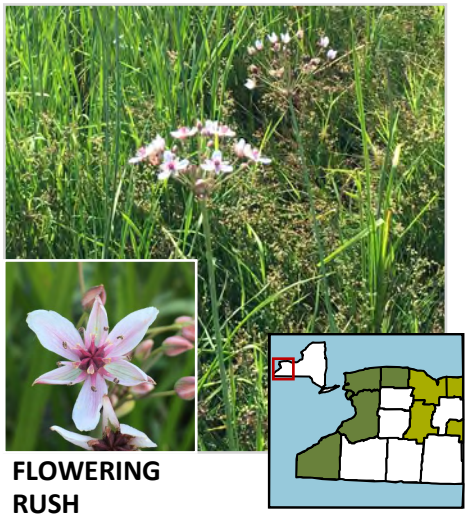
Not present in County | Present in WNY PRISM County | Present in FL-PRISM County | *Updated March 2025

WATER SOLDIERS

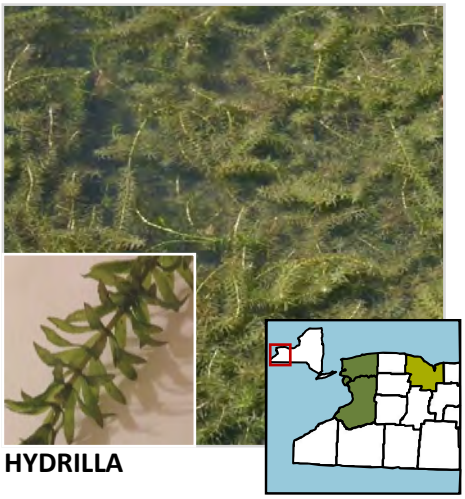
Nearest known location: near Sutton, Ontario, Canada



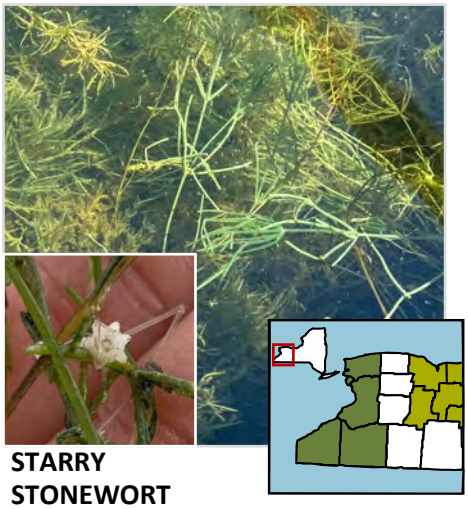
RED SWAMP CRAYFISH



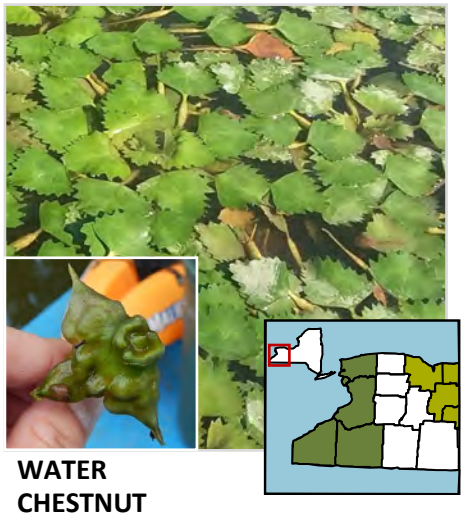
FLOWERING RUSH



HYDRILLA

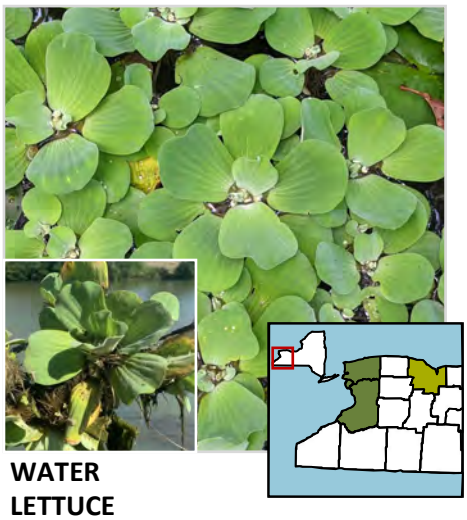


STARRY STONEWORT

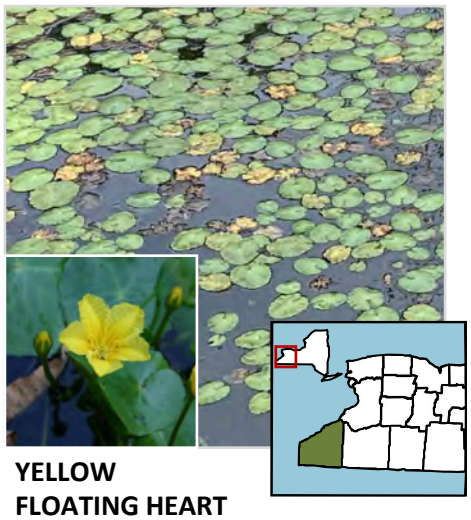


WATER CHESTNUT

WATER HYACINTH



WATER LETTUCE



YELLOW FLOATING HEART

To report a sighting, please login to www.nyimapinvasives.org

iMapInvasives
Sharing information for strategic management

Aquatic Invasive Species Priorities in Western New York

WATER SOLDIERS (*Stratiotes aloides*)
Perennial, submerged, aquatic, herbaceous plant that becomes buoyant and floats on the surface in spring and summer. **Leaves** are sword-shaped with sharp, serrated edges and form a rosette that resembles pineapple or aloe leaves. **Flowers** are white with 3 petals and occur on shoots that emerge above the surface. Reproduces vegetatively by producing offsets. Threatens freshwater ecosystems by forming dense mats, which displace native plants and interfere with recreational uses.

RED SWAMP CRAYFISH (*Procambarus clarkii*)
Crustacean that grows up to 2 to 5 inches in length, is dark red in color and covered with raised, bright red spots. **Claws** are elongated. **Plates** on the body touch at the center of the back. **Head** is elongated with a triangular tip. Able to traverse several miles of dry ground and burrow during dry periods. Threatens freshwater ecosystems by outcompeting native crayfish species for food and habitat. Feeds heavily on fish and amphibian eggs and young, snails and plants.

FLOWERING RUSH (*Butomus umbellatus*)
Perennial, aquatic, herbaceous plant that grows 1 to 4 feet tall. **Leaves** are narrow, pointed, triangular and have smooth margins with parallel veins. **Stem** is erect when in shallow water but will float in deeper water. **Flowers** are pink and have 3 petals with 3 sepals. Umbels have 20-50 flowers. Difficult to identify when not in flower. Spreads through rhizomes and bulbils. Threatens lakeshores and rivers by outcompeting native plants.

HYDRILLA (*Hydrilla verticillata*)
Perennial, submerged, herbaceous plant, rooted in saturated soil in water up to 20 feet deep. **Stem** is slender, branching and up to 25 feet long. **Leaves** are generally found in whorls of 4-6, closer together on branches located on or near the surface. Toothed leaf margins. Turions found near growing tips in late fall. Tubers present. Reproduces by fragmentation, rhizomes, tubers and turions. Threatens freshwater ecosystems by crowding out native plants and altering water chemistry.

STARRY STONEWORT (*Nitellopsis obtusa*)
Macroalgae, light green in color. Leaf-like whorls branch around stem. Branches feel smooth and are irregular. **Stem** is made of cells held together by nodes. Small, star -shaped, creamy-white **bulbils** appear year round and are located at the base and axils of the main stem. **Rhizoids** are colorless. Reproduces by bulbils. Threatens freshwater lakes by decreasing habitat for insects and freshwater fish.

WATER CHESTNUT (*Trapa natans*)
Annual, rooted, herbaceous plant with a leafy rosette that floats on the surface. **Leaves** float on the surface, are triangular, 1 to 2 inches long and waxy with toothed margins. Submerged leaves are feathery. **Flowers** are small, white with 4 petals. **Fruit** is a thorned nutlet, greater than 1 inch in size. Threatens native plants and biodiversity and impedes recreation.

WATER HYACINTH (*Oshuna crassipes*)
Perennial, free floating, stoloniferous, herbaceous plant. **Leaves** are entire, round, waxy, up to 6 inches wide and variable in length. Floating, air-filled leaf petioles grow in rosettes and support inflorescence. **Flower** is a showy spike of up to 23 light purple individual flowers with 6 petals each. **Roots** can be white or dark purple to black, are feathery and hang beneath leaves. Reproduces by seeds and stolons. Threatens rivers, lakes, ponds and wetland habitats. Forms dense mats that deplete light and oxygen to native plants.

WATER LETTUCE (*Pistia stratiotes*)
Perennial, free floating, herbaceous plant that resembles an open head of lettuce. **Leaves** are thick, dull, light green, covered in dense, white hairs and have ridged, parallel veins. Largest leaves are about 6 inches long. **Flowers** are inconspicuous on a small, fleshy stalk in the center of the rosette. **Roots** are feathery. **Fruit** are tiny, light green berries. Spreads by seed and vegetative reproduction. Threatens lakes and rivers by decreasing biodiversity and impacting transportation.

YELLOW FLOATING HEART (*Nymphoides peltata*)
Perennial, herbaceous plant with stout, branching stems. Covers the water's surface with rounded, heart-shaped leaves. **Leaves** are 2 to 6 inches in diameter, have purplish undersides and rise from underwater rhizomes. **Flowers** are bright yellow with fringed edges, have 5 petals and rise a few inches above the leaves. Reproduces by seed, rhizomes and broken stems. Threatens native plants and blocks waterways. Prefers slow moving rivers, lakes and other waters from 1.5 to 13 feet deep.

PARTNERSHIP FOR REGIONAL INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT WESTERN NEW YORK

Buffalo State Great Lakes Center · Since 1966 ·

NEW YORK STATE Department of Environmental Conservation

For more information and management options for these and other invasive species, please visit: www.wnyprism.org

Special thanks to the Midwest Invasive Plant Network (www.MIPN.org). PHOTO CREDITS: Water soldiers plants and flowers - Invasive Species Centre, https://www.invasivespeciescentre.ca; red swamp crayfish inset photo - Chris Taylor, Illinois History Survey, Bugwood.org; hydrilla infestation and yellow floating heart flower - Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org; all others - WNY PRISM. Taxonomy based on USDA PLANTS Database (http://plants.usda.gov), NY Flora Atlas (www.nyflora.org), The University of Georgia Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health (http://www.bugwood.org), Sylvan Ramsey and Wallace Kaufman, *Invasive Plants.* 2nd ed. N.p.: Stakhole, n.d. Print.