

# SEAPLANE PILOT BEST PRACTICES TO REDUCE THE SPREAD OF AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

Follow these steps to improve your flying safety while preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS)

**Why? AIS can take over waterbodies and crowd out native species, harming native fish and wildlife populations and potentially reducing seaplane access**

## Planning a Flight

Familiarize yourself with AIS at destination water bodies, but recognize that not all water bodies are monitored for AIS— always assume a waterbody has AIS.

If you are departing from a waterbody that has confirmed high-risk AIS, before landing at another water body, consider landing at an airport first to fully inspect and clean your aircraft.

## Before Entering the Aircraft

Inspect and remove any visible vegetation or other debris from the aircraft. Remove any plant growth on mooring lines and dispose of any plants or identified AIS in the trash.

Inspect the following for AIS:

- Floats
- Hulls
- Rudders
- Wires and Cables
- Mooring lines
- Wheel Wells
- Crossmembers
- Exterior paddle
- Your footwear and gear

Visually inspect submerged parts of the aircraft and run your hands, or use a brush, along the surfaces to check for any AIS that may be attached, especially if the aircraft has been moored on a waterbody for more than a few hours.

Pump as much water as possible out of bilge compartments using a pump with an invasive species filter (e.g., [Turbo Pump](#)) to limit the possibility of transporting microscopic AIS.

## Before Takeoff

Just prior to takeoff, **raise and lower your water rudders several times to remove aquatic hitchhikers**, which can cause cable stretch and affect steering.

Avoid taxiing through aquatic plants. If you must taxi through aquatic plants, stop once in open water and manually clear vegetation from floats, hull, and rudders.

## After Takeoff

After takeoff at a safe altitude, if conditions permit, **raise and lower your water rudders numerous times while flying over the water body you are departing** to clear aquatic plants from the water rudders and cables. If aquatic plants remain visible on the plane, return to the waterbody and remove them.

## Storage and Mooring

Thoroughly *Clean, Drain, Dry* the aircraft prior to flying to another waterbody. If the aircraft floats take on water, drain and dry to the extent possible.



## Report Invasive Species

Report any invasive species you see to your state AIS reporting system. Generally, you can contact your local fish and wildlife or conservation agency website for their reporting information.

## Spread the Word about Clean, Drain, Dry

Informed seaplane pilots can make a difference in preventing the spread of AIS. Talk with your colleagues and spread the word about the importance of *Clean, Drain, Dry* and steps pilots can take to minimize the spread of AIS.

Expand your understanding of the types of AIS you might encounter in local and regional waterbodies by visiting <https://nas.er.usgs.gov>.



## Become a Certified AIS-Trained Seaplane Pilot!

Click on the QR code to watch a video created by the Washington Seaplane Pilot Association. After watching the video, take a short test, and earn your annual certificate to become an AIS-trained seaplane pilot.

