

Harmonizing Great Lakes regulated species lists: reconciling a regional patchwork of approaches and prohibited species.

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Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) threaten the ecology, economy, and quality of life in the Great Lakes region. Great Lakes states (IL, IN, MI, MN, NY, OH, PA, WI) and Canadian Provinces (Ontario, Quebec) have used a variety of processes to create lists of prohibited AIS. It is therefore not surprising that as a consequence there is little consistency across the 10 state and provinces prohibited species lists. A small number of well-known, nuisance species (e.g., zebra mussel) are regulated in the majority of states or provinces and sale and possession is also often prohibited under federal legislation. The lack of uniformity across jurisdictions managing the shared waters of the Great Lakes undermines these prevention efforts and ensures management is only as effective as the regions weakest regulations. However, the need for the development of more harmonious regulated species policies across Great Lakes jurisdictions is recognized and has been identified as a regional priority by the Great Lakes Panel of Aquatic Nuisance Species, and the Council of Great Lakes Governors AIS working group. Here we examine the strengths and weakness of the risk assessment methods that have been used in the region and consider whether collectively they provide a weight of evidence that could be used to develop more harmonious regional regulated species lists.