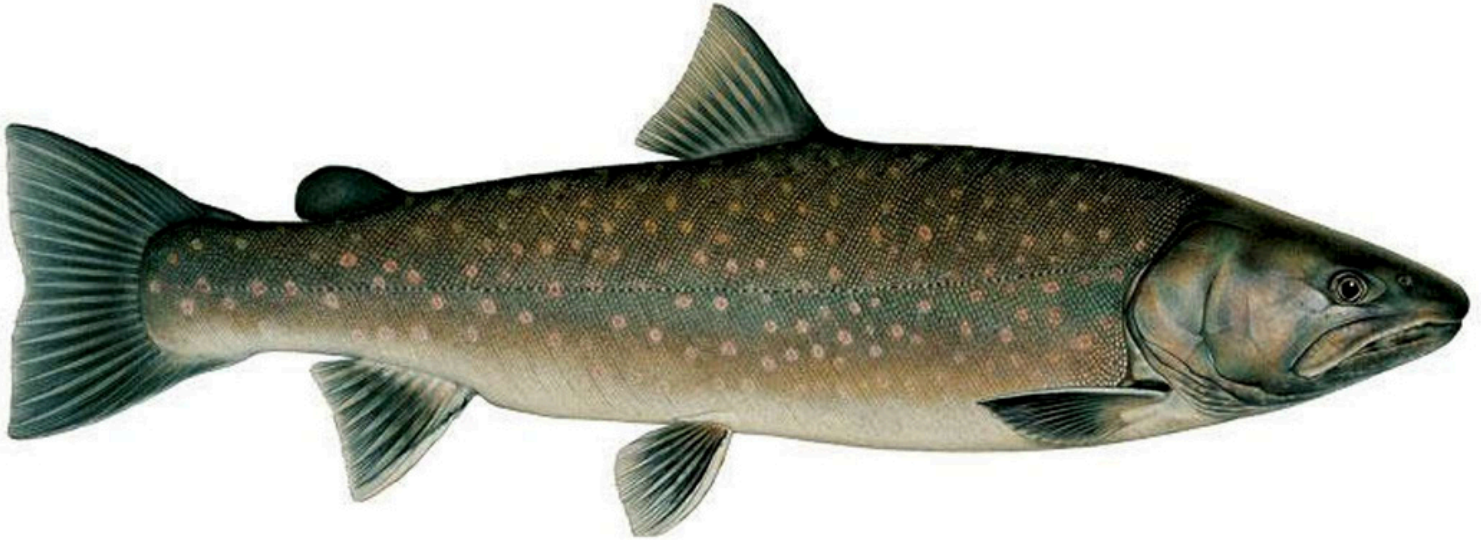


Aquatic Invasive Species District Newsletter



Know the Native Bull Trout

The Bull Trout is native to Western Montana; they can traditionally be found in Clark Fork and Flathead drainages. As adults, they can be recognized by pink, yellow, or orange spots on their sides, white leading edges on the fins, and a slight fork in the tail.

Bull Trout is now considered a threatened species. This is due to the introduction of new species like Brook Trout which predate on native species and outcompete them for resources. Additionally, the changing landscapes impacting cold, clear, and connected spawning streams has led to a decline in the Bull Trout population and their designation as a threatened species.

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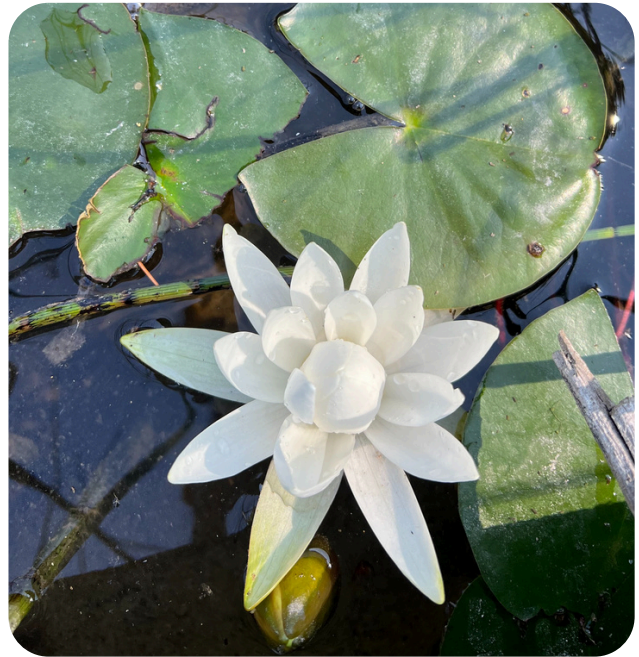
AIS News and Partner
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Holland Creek FWL Managment

In 2017, Beth Gardner, Flathead National Forest Fisheries Biologist first noticed Fragrant Water Lily (FWL) in Holland Lake. This was the first reported case of the lily in the Flathead Valley. By the summer of 2018, FWL had proven its invasive potential. There were hundreds of plants, it had already begun to take over certain bays threatening the native species.

Local groups gathered to physically remove the lily, a challenging task that requires reaching into the sediment of the waterbody and carefully pulling up the root of the lily without breaking it. FWL can produce rhizomally, via stems that spread under the soil surface forming shoots that grow new plants, which means any broken piece of root can create a new population of lilies.



These continued efforts have helped minimize the FWL population in Holland Lake but have not eradicated it. This summer the AIS District participated in a pull event led by Tris Hoffman, the Flathead National Forest Invasive Species Coordinator for the Forest Service. Tris enlisted the help of a Montana Conservation Corps Crew who worked for two weeks pulling out Fragrant Water Lily all across Holand Lake. We joined with 4 members of our Youth in Restoration Program, 1 volunteer student, and 4 staff members to help manage on the population in Holland Creek.

We were able to make a huge impact, filling trash bags full of FWL time and time again. In the first week of September the AIS district will be going out with the FS again to help their dive team dig out deeper plants in the bays at Holland and Lindbergh Lakes.

For more information on Fragrant Water Lily check out our July issue. For more on the history of FWL on Holland Lake NBC Montana and K96 FM Radio both covered the discovery in 2018.

Watercraft Inspection Station Update

August 2025 Review:

Clearwater Junction Station

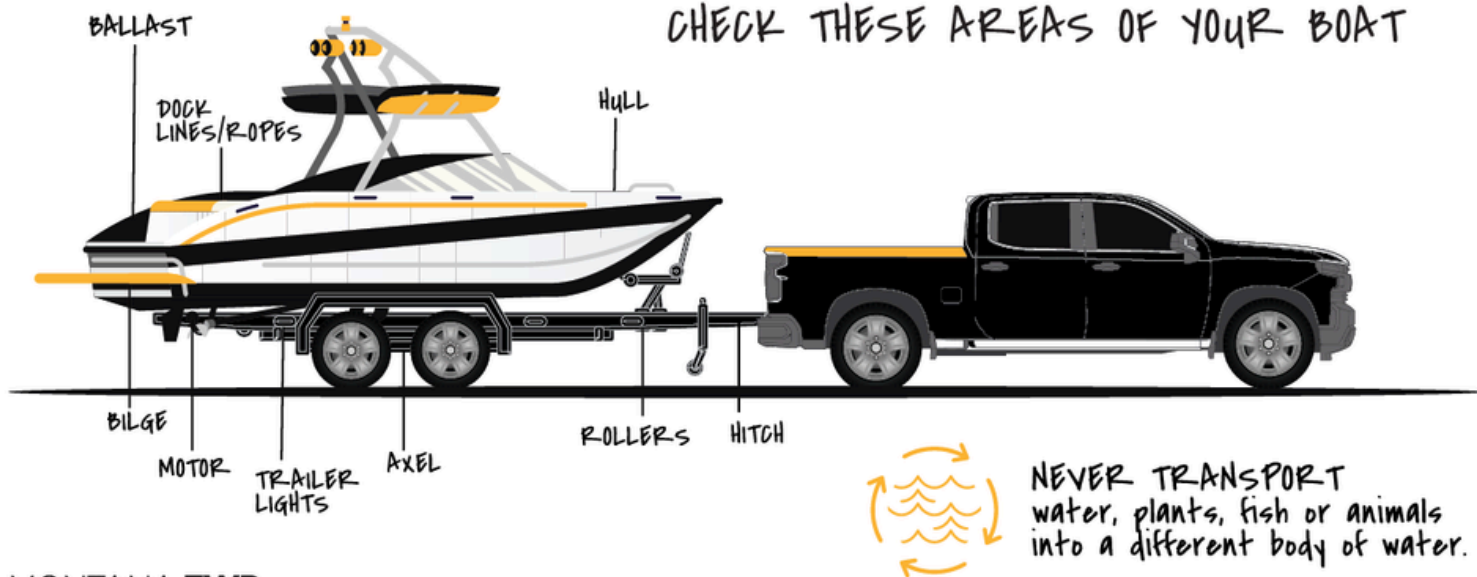
- 5253 watercrafts were inspected throughout the month of August
- 102 standing water decontaminations
- 8 plant decontaminations
- 132 total decontaminations
- 24015 total inspections at Clearwater in 2025

Montana Inspection Stations

- 50,286 inspections conducted across Montana
- 33 mussel fouled boats intercepted across Montana

CLEAN.DRAIN.DRY.

CHECK THESE AREAS OF YOUR BOAT



MONTANA **FWP**

PARTNER HIGHLIGHT!

The Invasive Species Action Network (ISAN) is dedicated to reducing the human caused spread of invasive species. Their Don't Let It Loose program addresses invasive species introduction through the pet trade. Releasing non-native pets into the wild can have serious environmental consequences. Many released pets either die or become invasive, outcompeting native species and spreading disease.



AQUATIC PET REHOMING EVENT

**Save
the date**

SEP. 27

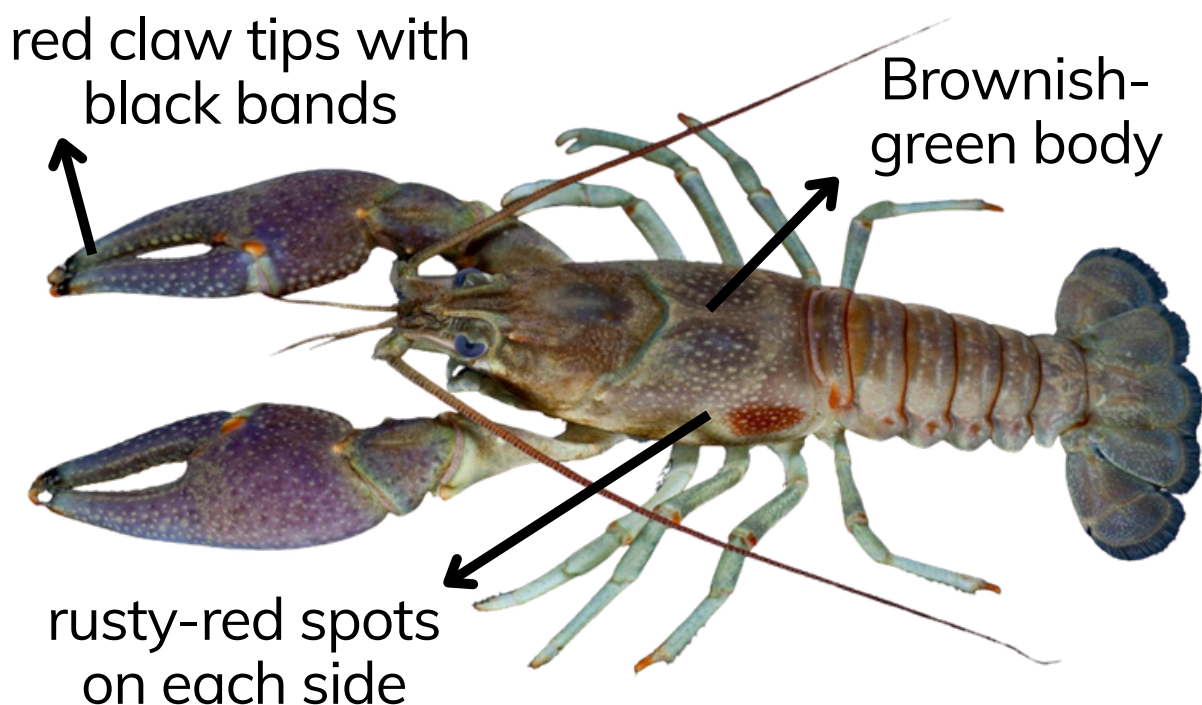
10-3 @ MT WILD, HELENA



ISAN is hosting a free event to rehome aquatic pets. Local pet stores and animal rescues will be on hand to accept fish, turtles, frogs, aquatic plants, and other aquatic species. Montana WILD will be open to the public during the event, featuring interactive displays and educational resources on invasive species from partners across the state.

Events like this one are vital in preventing the introduction of invasive species into Montana's waterways. For more information on rehoming options or to confirm if your pet qualifies, visit dontletitloose.com/rehoming-a-pet or contact info@stopais.org.

RUSTY CRAYFISH



Rusty Crayfish (*Orconectes rusticus*) has a brownish to green body is largely recognizable by the rusty-red spots on either side of its body just above its walking legs. The tips of their claws are red with black banding just below. They grow large, up to 6 inches long. This species is native to the Ohio River basin but is now spread across north America. They are a more territorial and aggressive species than our native signal crayfish. The competition over habitat and resources can result in a decline in native species. Additionally, rusty crayfish can feed on native fish eggs, causing further decline in our native fish populations.

Rusty Crayfish not been documented in Montana but are a species of concern. They are largely spread out of their native zones by people. They are used as bait by some anglers and a part of the pet trade. By releasing rusties people are actively introducing an invasive species. A great reminder of the importance of the Don't Let It Loose initiative and to keep your boats and gear clean, drained, and dry. [Report suspected invasives!](#)

AIS HIGHLIGHT