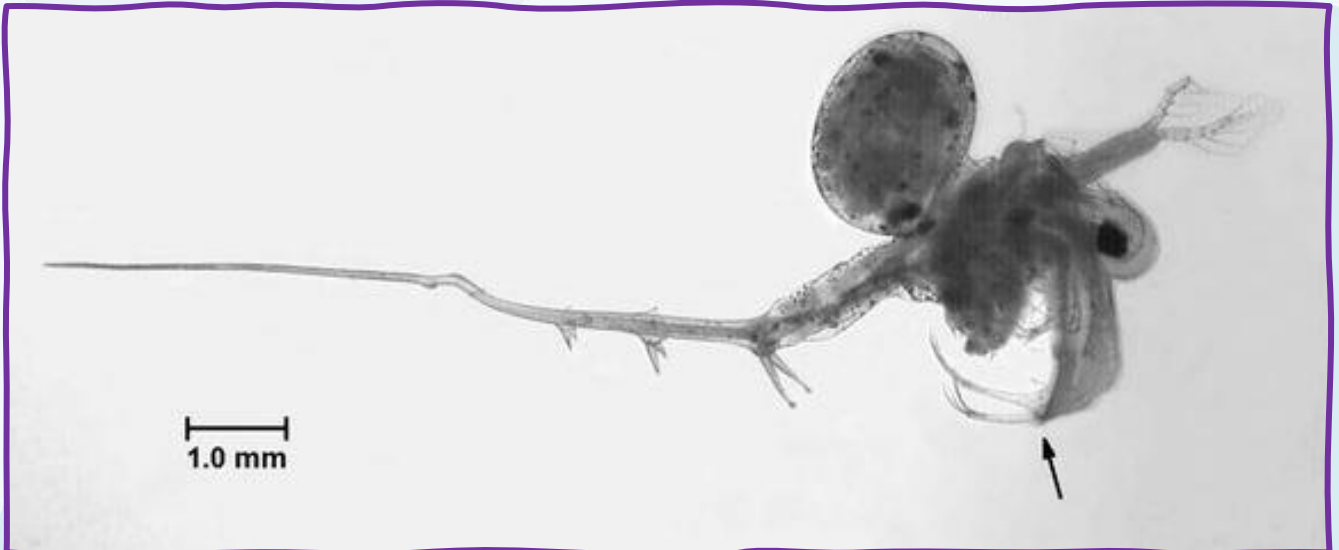


Spiny Waterflea

Bythotrephes longimanus



What is it and Why is it a Problem?

Spiny Waterfleas are tiny aquatic predators that rely on water currents and wind to travel. They live in large, deep, clear lakes but can also live in shallower waters and are capable of reproducing quickly by using sexual or asexual reproduction. Since their diet consists entirely of other zooplankton, they are capable of significantly reducing the food supply for fish. In fact, they can reduce the native zooplankton population in a lake by 30-40%. They also interfere with fishing when their tail spines attach to equipment, making it difficult to reel in fishing lines. They are easily spread between water bodies via contaminated fishing equipment, bait buckets and bilges, and are found in the Great Lakes as well as more than 100 inland lakes in Ontario.



What Does it Look Like?

- Can only be identified properly using a microscope
- Has a single dark eye, four pairs of legs, a large balloon-like egg pouch, and a Y-shaped antenna
- Is 1 - 1.5 cm long
- May have blue, green or orange colouring with a red stripe that runs half the length of the tail
- Has one large tail spine which comprises 60% of the body and has 1 - 3 barbs on it



How Can it be Managed?

- Report sightings of any invasive species online through [EDDMapS Ontario](#), a web-based mapping system which also has an app, or through the [Invasive Species in Ontario](#) project on [iNaturalist.org](#).

- Report sightings of any invasive species online through [EDDMapS Ontario](#), a web-based mapping system which also has an app, or through the [Invasive Species in Ontario](#) project on [iNaturalist.org](#).
- Learn how to identify it so you can avoid accidentally spreading it with your fishing gear and equipment. Inspect your boat, trailer and fishing gear before leaving a fishing spot and before heading to a new fishing spot to remove any mud, plant fragments and animals. Dispose of any animal and plant matter in the garbage. You should clean your boat and equipment with a high-power pressure wash using hot water OR leave it to sit in the sun for a minimum of 5 days. Refer to the [OMNRF's Boater's Action Plan](#) for more information on cleaning your boat and gear.
- Release water from your motor, live well, bilge and transom wells once on land.
- If you happen to catch a Spiny Waterflea or notice one on your equipment or boat, you must destroy it to prevent further growth and reproduction - do not put it back into the water.
- Do not release live bait into the water body - it is illegal to release live baitfish. They may also carry invasive species in their containers from other water bodies that you cannot see. Instead, you can freeze or salt your live bait to save for another use. If you are not going to use it again, you can throw it in the garbage.
- Do not release aquarium or pond contents into water bodies. Oftentimes invasive aquatic animals end up in water bodies when people dispose of them.

References

[Great Lakes Nonindigenous Species Information System](#), produced by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[Ontario Invading Species Awareness Program](#), developed by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR), and the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH).