



# ANNUAL REPORT 2025



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Cover Photo: Gary Stone.

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Photo: Gary Stone

# What Are Invasive Species?

Invasive species are plants, animals, or other organisms **found in an area where they do not naturally exist**.

Their introduction to that area does, or is likely to, **cause harm to the economy, environment, and/or human wellbeing**.

**Humans introduce them, either accidentally or on purpose.**



Common pathways of introduction are **trade, travel, recreation, land/resource use change, unwanted/accidental pet release, or e-commerce**, like this treefrog that arrived in a shipment of decorative grasses in Ralston, Douglas County. (Photo: Ben Fox)



## What Makes A Species Invasive?

- Fast growth
- Rapid reproduction + repopulation
- Aggressive spread into new areas
- Difficult to control or eliminate
- High tolerance of changing environmental conditions



Narrowleaf Cattail  
Photo: Chris Helzer

# Nebraska's Landscape Provides...



**23 million acres**  
of rangeland and pastureland



**1.3 million acres**  
of publicly accessible lands



**79 thousand miles**  
of rivers, including 197  
designated as wild and scenic



**Over 6 million**  
migratory birds visit annually

## Status + Impacts from Invasive Species



**36 water-based**  
invasive and noxious  
species threats



**\$2+ million**  
annual forage loss



**57 waterbodies**  
infested with aquatic  
invasive species



**810 at-risk**  
species of  
becoming  
endangered or  
extinct



**108 land-based**  
invasive and noxious  
species threats



**Costs**  
over \$26  
million  
annually in  
damages



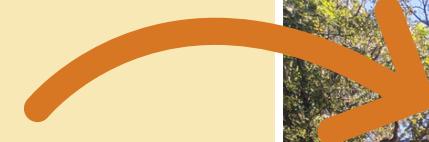
**Threatens**  
biodiversity as  
the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading  
cause of  
habitat loss



**Reduces**  
human health  
and recreation  
opportunities

# Who We Are

The **Nebraska Invasive Species Council (NISC)** was established in 2012 through Legislative Bill 391. The NISC consists of **28 members from 19 different organizations**. We hold **10 public meetings a year** throughout the state about invasive species issues, education, and research.



NISC Meeting at Schramm Park State Recreation Area

# Our Mission

Coordinating statewide efforts to **detect, manage, and minimize the impacts of invasive species** on Nebraska's environment and economy



Tree-of-Heaven removal event at Rudge Memorial Park with Irvingdale Neighborhood Association

# Our Objectives



Recommend action to minimize harmful effects



Develop a statewide adaptive management plan



Provide a forum for discussion and knowledge sharing



Facilitate cooperation at all levels for invasive species issues



Assist with public outreach, education, and awareness



Provide information to the Legislature for decision making

# Our Year In Review



PROJECTS  
COMPLETED  
**110**



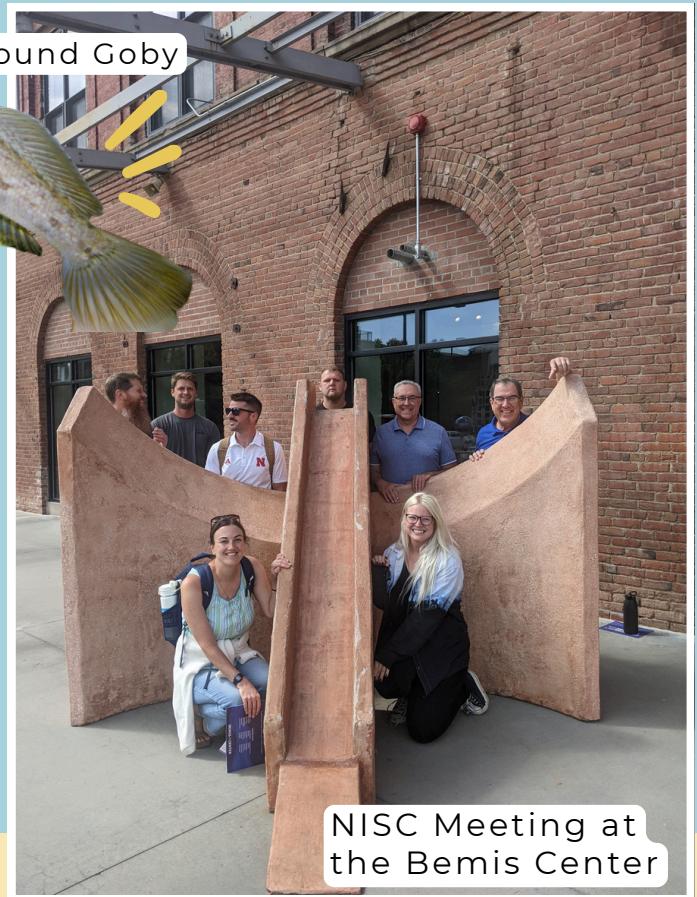
ACRES/MILES  
TREATED  
**114,000**



SPECIES  
TARGETED  
**48**



OUTREACH  
EVENTS  
**109**



NISC Meeting at  
the Bemis Center



European Starling



Guests on KZUM FM  
89.3's How's It  
Growin' in Lincoln



NISC and NWCA  
tabling and  
presenting at  
NAISMA  
Conference



• ...invasive monocultures  
• Reduces biodiversity  
• Alter food web dynamics  
• Impede navigation and  
 recreation  
• Interact with water  
 infrastructure  
• Reduce habitat for native  
 aquatic organisms of multiple  
 taxa  
• Vector for invasive mussels

PARTICIPANTS  
REACHED  
**9,300**



WATERCRAFT  
INSPECTED  
**6,937**

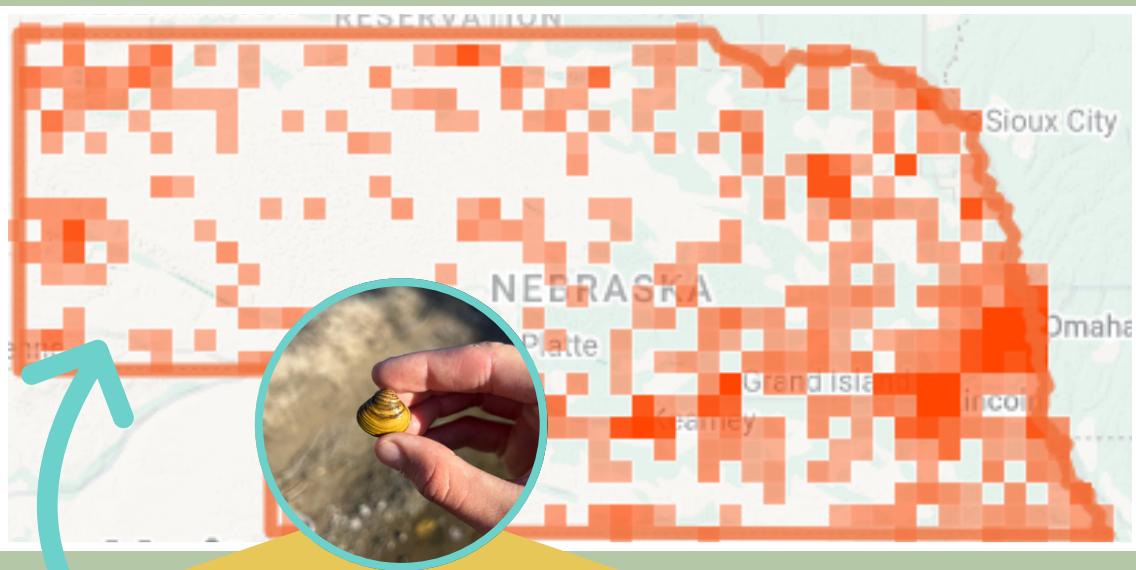


SURVEYS  
CONDUCTED  
**51**



LOCATIONS  
TREATED  
**610**

# Invasive Species in Nebraska



**7,656 sightings  
712 invasive species**

reported by the public on  
iNaturalist.org, like this Asian  
clam found in the Big Blue River.  
(Photo: Owen Reeves,  
iNaturalist.org)

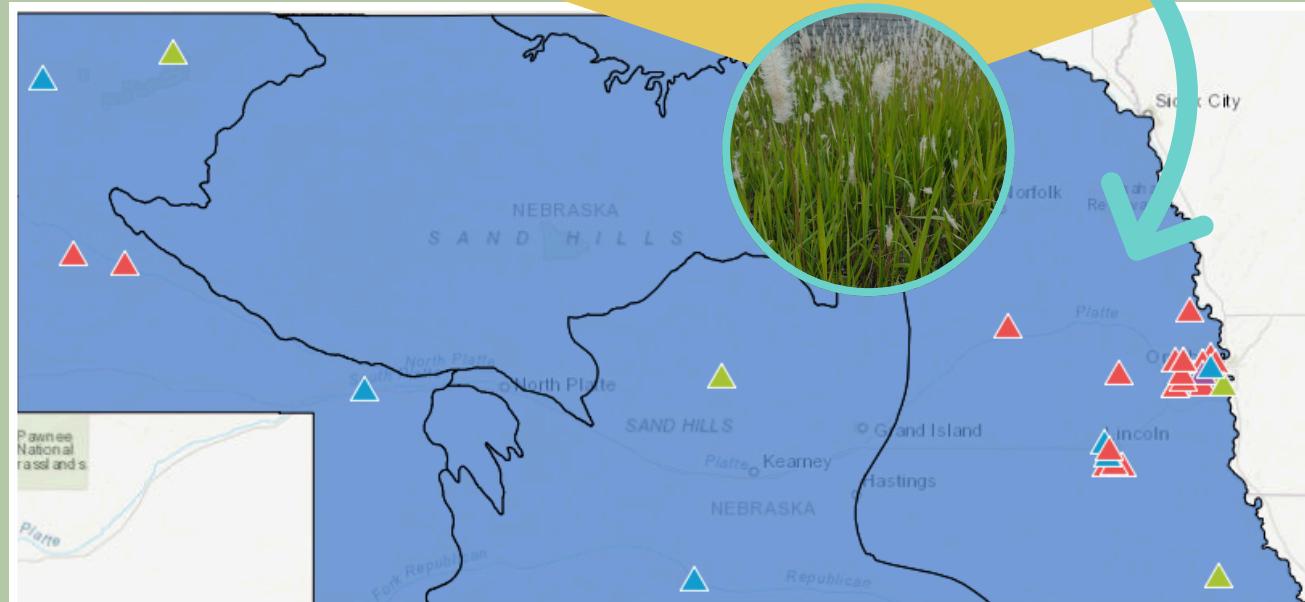


Japanese  
Mystery Snail

**ASIAN JUMPING WORM**  
was reported 12 times,  
more than any other  
species. (Photo: Kandelyn  
Scott)

**43 sightings  
23 invasive species**

reported on neinvasives.com,  
including the first confirmed  
cogongrass sighting, a federally-  
designated noxious weed.  
(Photo: David Kusserow)



# NE-ISAW + Know Your NE Invasives Day

On May 13, Governor Jim Pillen signed a proclamation declaring **May 26-30, 2025** **Nebraska Invasive Species Awareness Week (NE-ISAW)**. The proclamation, submitted by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission in partnership with NISC, kicked off a weeklong celebration of education, prevention, and community action. The week concluded on **May 31** with **“Know Your Nebraska Invasives Day”** at Pawnee State Recreation Area.



Common Mullein



9

PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS



70+

PARTICIPANTS



13

ACTIVITIES

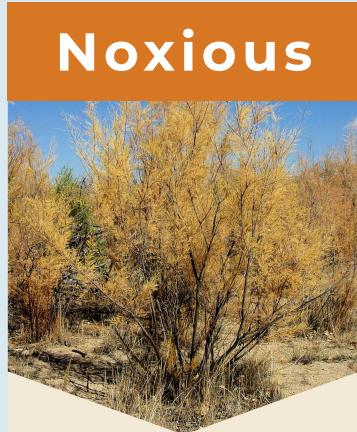
Yellow Bass



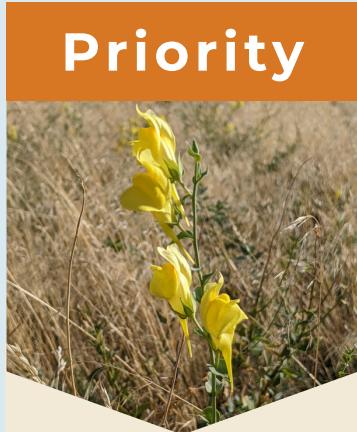
# Land-Based Invasive Plants Updates

While Nebraska has a state-designated aquatic (water-based) invasive species list, we do not have the same for terrestrial (land-based) invasive species. To help fill this information gap, **the NISC created and updated a list of 90 terrestrial invasive plant species under 5 different categories**. This included the addition of a **problematic natives** category, which are native plants that can exhibit invasive characteristics that affect the health of other plants.

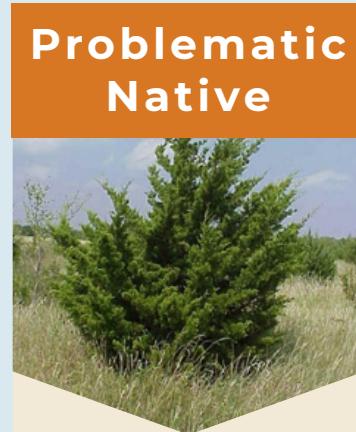
Photos Below, Left to Right: Saltcedar, Dalmatian Toadflax, Eastern Redcedar, Ventenata, Sulphur Cinquefoil



**THREAT:**  
High  
**LOCATION:**  
Statewide  
**LIST TOTAL:**  
12 state, 8 county



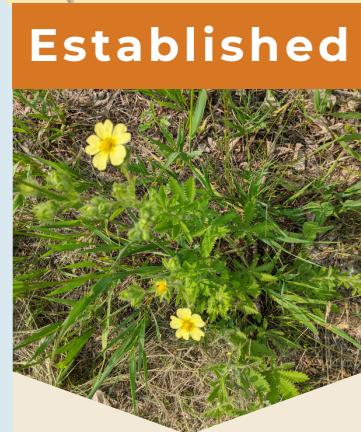
**THREAT:**  
High  
**LOCATION:**  
Statewide  
**LIST TOTAL:**  
18 species



**THREAT:**  
Low-High  
**LOCATION:**  
Statewide  
**LIST TOTAL:**  
6 species



**THREAT:**  
High  
**LOCATION:**  
Not Found in State  
**LIST TOTAL:**  
3 species



**THREAT:**  
Low  
**LOCATION:**  
Statewide  
**LIST TOTAL:**  
43 species

# Nebraska Invasives to Know

Be on the lookout for these highly aggressive invaders in our state. By reporting them, you can help protect Nebraska's vital resources, like water, land, and wildlife from the damage they can cause.



## Zebra Mussels

Form dense colonies on solid surfaces, ruining public infrastructure and clogging intake pipes. Chemical management is costly and mussel introduction into agricultural areas could be economically catastrophic.

(Photo: Nebraskaland Magazine/Nebraska Game and Parks Commission)

## Common Reed

also known as phragmites, grows in tall, dense thickets along waterways. It displaces native wetland plants, blocks waterflow, and limits sunlight for aquatic ecosystem communities. Continued control is essential to protect our state's water supply. (Photo: Chris Helzer)



## Report A Sighting



## Old World Bluestems

are warm-season perennial grasses that invade pastures and rangelands. They outcompete native grasses, reducing biodiversity and forage quality, and decrease livestock carrying capacity.

(Photo: Michelle Villafranca, Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge, Bugwood.org)

# Stop The Spread

Together, we can reduce the impact of invasive species in Nebraska.



By expanding funding for programs, raising awareness, and reporting invasive species, we can protect Nebraska's resources and native wildlife from future harm.



## DID YOU KNOW?

Prevention efforts cost 25 *times less* than eradication efforts, which can save millions of dollars long-term. The effort is worth it!

## WHAT CAN WE DO?



### REPORT INVASIVE SPECIES

Visit our website, [neinvasives.com](http://neinvasives.com), to learn more about how to report aquatic invasive species, terrestrial invasive species, and noxious weeds.



### FUND + SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Prevention is less expensive and more effective than eradicating established invasive species. Funding education, control, and management is vital to keep invasives at bay.



### LEARN HOW TO HELP

Be part of the solution to help make Nebraska invasive-free. Visit [playcleango.org](http://playcleango.org), [cleandraindry.org](http://cleandraindry.org), [dontletitloose.com](http://dontletitloose.com), and [dontmovefirewood.org](http://dontmovefirewood.org) to get started.

# Our Members

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# References + More Information

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- <https://outdoornebraska.gov/conservation/conservation-challenges/invasive-species/aquatic-invasive-species/>
- <https://nfs.unl.edu/eab-faq/>
- <https://newsroom.unl.edu/announce/lancasterextension/17513/95936>
- <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S004896972200496X?via%3Dihub>



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