

Animals Always Come First!

Habitattitude™ is a “conservation state-of-mind” that commits to environmental protection by not releasing unwanted fish or aquatic plants into public areas. Habitattitude™ is a national initiative developed by the Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Task Force in partnership with the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Sea Grant and NOAA.

Protecting Our Environment

In order to continue enjoying our natural resources, we must protect them. Individuals as well as commercial and governmental groups have knowingly and/or accidentally introduced aquatic invasive species to our waters. An invasive species or “aquatic hitchhiker” is a species not native to a body of water and causes ecological harm. If these species become established, they can cause environmental damage, degrade aquatic resources and make waters unusable for recreation. Collectively these species, both terrestrial and aquatic, cost our county billions of dollars in damages every year. Their impact reduces fish populations, ruins boat engines, makes lakes/rivers unusable by boaters and swimmers, increases operating costs of water treatment, power and industrial processing plants, reduces native species, degrades ecosystems, and reduces property values.

What You Can Do to Help

Aquarists, pond owners and water gardeners all share a common responsibility to our water resources and to the live species they own. By having these species, we must accept certain responsibilities:

- To care for the species well-being and provide a suitable environment.
- To maintain and take the appropriate steps to keep the species in our privately-owned enclosures contained.
- To properly relocate these species, fish or plants, if they are not native to our aquatic system.
- To follow the laws of your state regarding the acquisition, collection, possession, purchase, sale, release and transfer of ownership of these non-native plant and fish species.

If you have acquired an undesirable, nonnative aquatic plant or fish species for your aquarium or water garden, it is important not to release these plants or fish into the environment including not flushing them into the city sewer system.

Habitattitude™ encourages you to choose one of these alternatives:

- Contact the store where the plant or fish was purchased for proper handling advice or possible return.
- Give or trade with another aquarist, pond owner, or water gardener.
- Donate to a local aquarium society, school, or aquatic business.
- Seal aquatic plants in plastic bags and dispose in trash.
- Contact a veterinarian specializing in exotics for guidance on humane disposal of fish.

Habitattitude™ is about consumer awareness and responsible behaviors. We must all work together to prevent the proliferation of harmful plants, fish and other animals throughout our country. Stopping the spread of these species represents one of our greatest natural resource challenges.



Habitattitude™

PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT
DO NOT RELEASE FISH AND AQUATIC PLANTS

PIJAC • U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE • NOAA'S SEA GRANT

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