

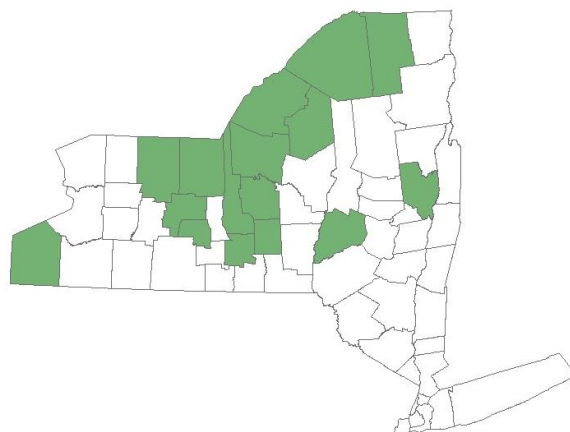
STARRY STONEWORT

Nitellopsis obtusa

Starry stonewort is an algae with a plantlike structure that is native to Eurasia. It was likely introduced to the Great Lakes from ballast water and has spread to inland lakes in New York. It was first discovered in the United States in the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1978. Stonewort is associated with several social and economic impacts throughout the Great Lakes.

Where is starry stonewort located?

Starry stonewort has been reported in fourteen counties in New York State: Cayuga, Chautauqua, Cortland, Franklin, Jefferson, Lewis, Monroe, Onondaga, Ontario, Oswego, Otsego, St. Lawrence, Tompkins, Wayne, and Yates. Unfortunately, starry stonewort is difficult to distinguish from closely related muskgrasses and stoneworts, so there may be places where it has not yet been detected.



How do I identify starry stonewort?

Starry stonewort has four to six long branches growing around each stem, and it can reach over 7 ft. (2 m) tall in water more than 30 ft. (10 m) deep. It forms dense, pillow-like mats (with plants of different heights) along the bottoms of still, alkaline ponds and lakes. It is tolerant of both salt and fresh water and tends to grow on sand and gravel in both shady and sunny areas.

How does it spread?

Starry stonewort is named for its star-shaped reproductive structures, or bulbils, which can be transported in mud. Starry stonewort can also spread by fragments and is often found near docks and marinas, indicating that watercraft likely transport this algae from site to site.

What are its impacts?

Researchers studying the impacts of starry stonewort indicate that it can potentially impact native species in several ways. It may outcompete native plants and phytoplankton (small aquatic plants) that provide food and shelter for native invertebrates and fish. The dense mats may also hinder the spawning of native fish species.



Photo: Scott Brown, Michigan Lake and Stream Association

What are the tools for management?

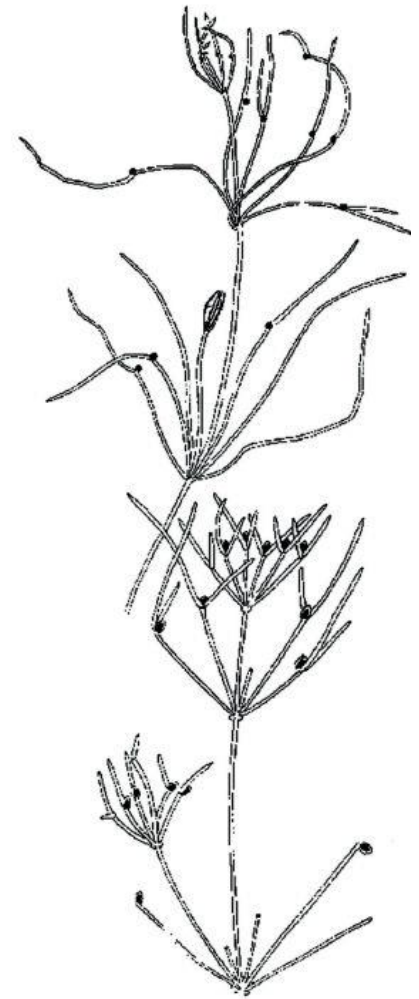
Preventing the spread of this invasive plant is critical. Both chemical (herbicide) and manual (hand-pulling and harvesting) controls have been used with varying success. Research on best management practices is being conducted throughout the Great Lakes region.

What can I do to help?

- Clean, drain, and dry your watercraft, trailer, and equipment before and after each use. Regulation 6 NYCRR Part 576 (<http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/99141.html>) requires everyone who uses watercraft on public waters to follow this protocol.
- When possible, use the following methods to fully decontaminate your equipment. (Consult DEC's website regarding this protocol: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/48221.html>)
 - Clean the outside of the watercraft and trailer with high pressure (2500 psi) hot water (140°F) for 10 seconds.
 - Flush the inside of the motor and all compartments (bilge, live well, bait buckets, ballast, etc.) with hot water (140°F) for two minutes.
 - Soak fishing gear and equipment in hot water (140°F) for two minutes.
- If you think you've found starry stonewort, please take several photos and submit a report to iMapInvasives (www.imapinvasives.org).



Photo: Progressive AE via Michigan.gov



USDA NRCS

CONTACT INFORMATION

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