

Early Detection Monitoring Verification Process

We will no longer rely on herbariums and museums for verifying our invasive species records with physical specimens. Regional employees have been tested to be verifiers. This draft document outlines the verification process.

1. **Become familiar.** Field staff should become familiar with the target species by reviewing the [Citizen Lake Monitoring Network Wisconsin Aquatic Invasive Species Early Detectors Handbook](#) and [Wisconsin DNR Aquatic Invasive Species Identification Guide](#), and the links in the target species summary sheet.
2. **Check.** Collectors should check what records are known in their work area and whether further verification is needed.
 - a. [Lakes and aquatic invasive species mapping tool](#)
 - b. [Lakes and Rivers with Aquatic Invasives](#)
 - c. [Species Locations](#)
 - d. [Lakes Page](#)
3. **Fieldwork.** Staff and volunteers will conduct monitoring and complete [lake](#), [streams](#), [wetland](#) early detection forms, [Citizen Lake Monitoring Network](#), [Water Action Volunteers](#), [AIS Bridge Snapshot Day](#), [Project RED](#), or incident reports.
4. **Report.** New discoveries will be [reported](#) as soon as possible.
5. **Collect.** Collect 3 specimens of **all NR40 Prohibited** occurrences, high profile species for your area (i.e. Eurasian water milfoil or zebra mussel), unusual specimens (i.e. suspected hybrid milfoil, unusual leaf count, unusual size, etc.), first occurrence in a county, or unknown specimens. Be sure that specimens contain all the identifying characteristics that are highlighted in the AIS Identification Guide (i.e. the root system, leaves, flowers, and seeds if a plant and the entire animal). Place aquatic plants in a bag with damp paper towel. Preserve animal specimens by either freezing or refrigerating in water or by using ethanol. Include internal and external labels. Check with the verifier on their preferred preservation method.
6. **Photograph.** Photograph all new occurrences according to the [guidance](#) for verification and record purposes, though as stated above all new prohibited, high profile restricted species, and unknown specimens do also need a physical specimen. In each photograph include the landscape, population, and identifying characteristics that are highlighted in the AIS Identification Guide. Include the field data sheet in the photographs so that the location is visible.
7. **Submit.** Include a copy of the field datasheet with the specimens. Submit specimens and datasheet to the [Regional DNR AIS Coordinator](#). Photos may be emailed to DNRInvasivePhotos@wisconsin.gov. Specimens and photos of prohibited or high-profile species (i.e. Eurasian water milfoil or zebra mussel populations in the north, or populations requesting a WI Administrative Code NR 107 Aquatic Plant Management permit) must be submitted within 4 days. Populations that will seek Early Detection and Response grants must submit reports within 3 days.
8. **Enter.** Field collectors will enter field data into SWIMS. The regional DNR AIS Coordinator will ensure that incident reports from citizens are entered.
9. **Verify.**
 - a. DNRInvasivePhotos@wisconsin.gov will send the specimen/photo to the [Regional DNR AIS Coordinator](#) and DNR certified [verifiers](#) (Group B in the AIS Communication Protocol – must be DNR staff and DNR computer to access the list of certified verifiers, **first log in to SWIMs**, then click the following link). Two certified verifiers must be consulted (Jeanne Scherer and Maureen Ferry manage the DNRInvasivePhotos@wisconsin.gov inbox and can be one verifier). Suspected prohibited or high-profile species (i.e. Eurasian water milfoil or zebra mussel populations in the

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north, or populations requesting a WI Administrative Code NR 107 Aquatic Plant Management permit) will be sent for verification immediately.

- b. The first verifier will examine the specimen/photo, update the chain of custody on the data sheet (forwarding the initial email that was sent to DNRInvasivePhotos@wisconsin.gov is fine in lieu of printing, completing the form and scanning) and forward the specimen/photo to the next certified verifier.
- c. The second verifier will examine the specimen/photo and complete the chain of custody on the data sheet or forward the email chain to whomever the regional DNR AIS Coordinators tasks with managing ROIs. Verification may be done with photos only if both verifiers are comfortable with photo results. If the second verifier is the regional AIS Coordinator or other person designated to create a ROI, skip to 9 e.
- d. Once the species is verified, forward the photo, fieldwork SQL or scanned datasheet, and any supporting email/documentation to the regional AIS coordinator. They will either create the ROI as needed or send the information/photos on to the designated person for ROI management in their region.
- e. If the verifiers do not agree, they will consult a third verifier and the AIS Monitoring Coordinator. Additional specimens/photos should be requested at this time.
- f. If it is an incorrect field ID, notify the collector to update the SWIMS fieldwork event to change the dropdown answer to 'did you find...' to 'no' and update the comments to the fieldwork event in SWIMS stating that there was an incorrect ID, who verified it, who updated the SWIMS record, and the date it was updated. A ROI will not be created.

10. ROI. If both certified verifiers agree, designated staff will [create a ROI](#) for any newly reported and verified AIS. ROIs for prohibited species or high-profile populations (i.e. Eurasian water milfoil or zebra mussel populations in the north, or populations requesting a WI Administrative Code NR 107 Aquatic Plant Management permit) should be created immediately and ROIs for restricted species can wait to be created until the weekly ROI report is distributed or as time allows (it is okay to wait until the end of field season). The regional AIS Coordinator is tasked with ROI creation but will encourage DNR field staff and regional CLMN Coordinators to help.

- a. Before creating the ROI, remember to check to see if it is a new occurrence.
 - i. If it is new, the designated staff will:
 1. [Create a ROI](#)
 2. Assign the [status](#) as determined by the verifiers
 3. Attach documents such as photos, scanned datasheet, email verifications, etc. to the ROI.
 - a. Check that that appropriate photo naming convention was followed (SPSCODE_ COUNTY_YYYYMMDD_ WATERBODY NAME_(WBIC or STATIONID or LATITUDE_LONGITUDE)_COLLECTOR NAME)
 4. Attach the fieldwork event to the ROI
 5. Add people associations for who verified the ROI
 6. Add comments on who updated the ROI, what you did, why, and the date that you did it
 - ii. If it is not a new occurrence, the observation will be captured in the fieldwork event and the designated staff will.
 1. If needed, update the ROI the [status](#) as determined by the verifiers
 2. Attach documents such as photos, scanned datasheet, email verifications, etc. to the ROI.
 - a. Check that that appropriate photo naming convention was followed (SPSCODE_ COUNTY_YYYYMMDD_ WATERBODY NAME_(WBIC or STATIONID or LATITUDE_LONGITUDE)_COLLECTOR NAME)

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3. Attach the fieldwork event to the ROI.
 4. Add people associations for who verified the ROI.
 5. Add comments on who updated the ROI, what you did, why, and the date that you did it.
- 11. Voucher.** Prohibited species, high profile species (i.e. Eurasian water milfoil or zebra mussel), unusual specimens (i.e. suspected hybrid milfoil, unusual leaf count, unusual size, etc.), unknown specimens, or first occurrence in a county should be [vouchered](#) with the Wisconsin State Herbarium or the Wisconsin Zoological Museum. Designated DNR staff will prepare and submit the voucher or defer to the external partner.
- a. Update people associations to identify where the voucher is housed.
- 12. Discard.** Common specimens may be properly discarded after photographing and verifying.
- 13. USGS NAS.** For prohibited species or species prohibited in the area of the state in which the discovery occurred, the Statewide AIS Response Coordinator will enter the record into the USGS Nonindigenous Aquatic Species online database with as much information as possible.

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