



Waterfowl Hunter AIS Outreach Campaign 2017

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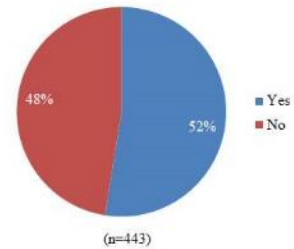
Jeanne Scherer, AIS Outreach and Monitoring Specialist, UW-Extension & WI Department of Natural Resources



- Campaign background and role of LE—Samantha Olsen
- Outreach Tools and evaluation—Jeanne Scherer
- Being the boots on the ground—Chris Hamerla

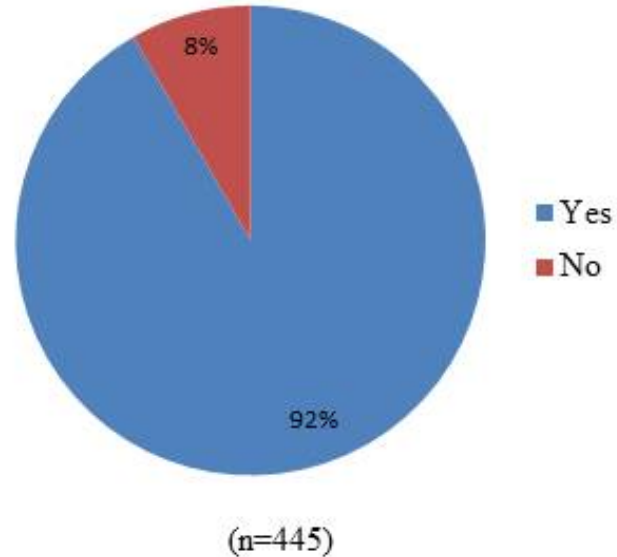
Why duck hunters?

Do Hunters Visit Multiple Waters Within Five Days?



2015 Survey: UW Extension and WDNR

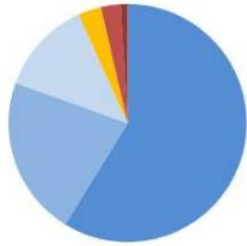
Are Hunters Aware of AIS?



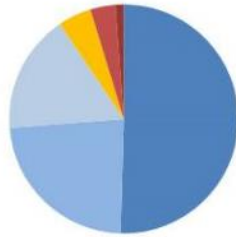
2015 Survey: UW Extension and WDNR

Looks good,
BUT 27% were unaware or unsure that NR40 applied
to waterfowl hunting.
Also, 30% were unaware or unsure that their gear
could transport AIS.

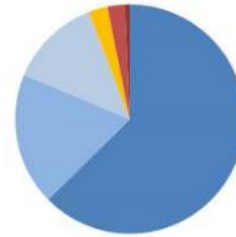
What are Wisconsin Hunters Willing to do to Prevent the Spread of AIS?



Inspect & Remove: Gear



Inspect & Remove: Dog



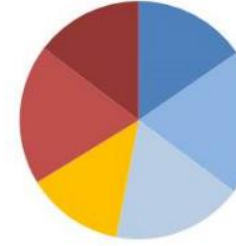
Drain: Gear



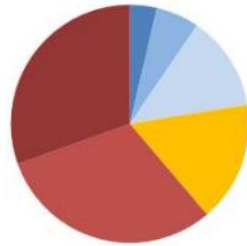
Brush: Gear



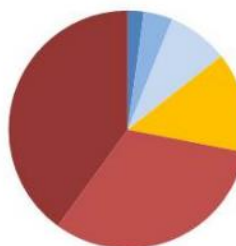
Rinse: Gear



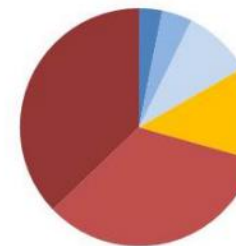
Dry: Gear



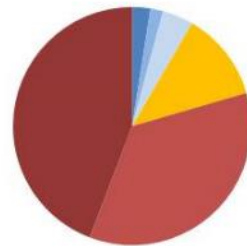
Soak: Hot Water



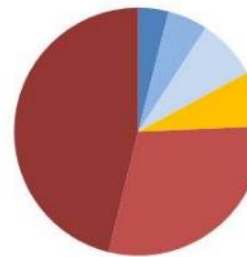
Freeze Gear



Soak Bleach



Soak: Virkon



Switch Gear



Waterfowl Hunter AIS Outreach

- ▶ A partnership of
 - WDNR Law Enforcement, Water Guards
 - Aquatic Invasive Species Partners – professionals and volunteers
 - UW Extension Aquatic Invasive Species Outreach staff





Campaign Goals

➤ 2016 and 2017:

- Test outreach tools and tactics to increase awareness among waterfowl hunters about their important role in AIS prevention
- Increase AIS prevention behaviors among waterfowl hunters

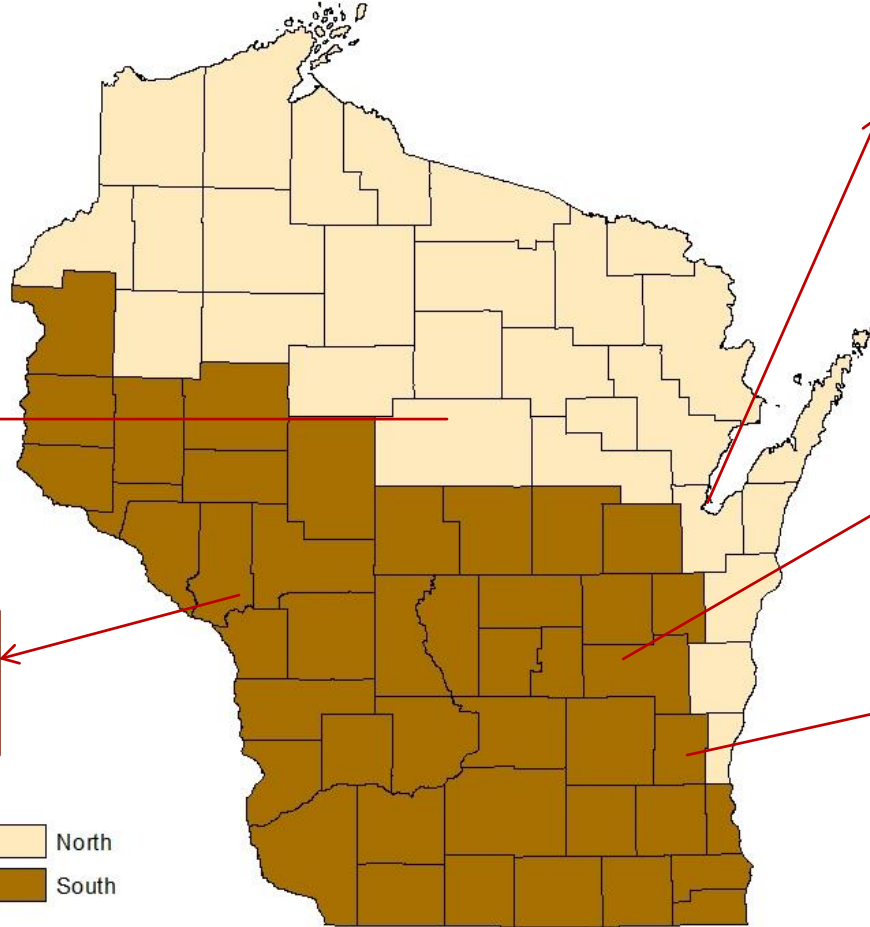
➤ 2017

- Increase outreach-about 11,500 reached in 2016
- Test new tools-revamped survey, duck bands
- Increase awareness by partnering with Office of Communications
- Encourage more volunteers and staff to assist Water Guards

➤ 2018

- Enable more engagement by AIS Partners throughout the state
- Determine which tools are most/least valuable
- Expand the use of social media to get the word out to hunters
- Rebalance the role of WDNR Law Enforcement now that Water Guard program has ended

North and South Duck Hunting Zones: the North Zone opens approximately one week earlier for hunting.



Green Bay

Mead
Wildlife
Area

Horicon
Marsh

Mississippi
River

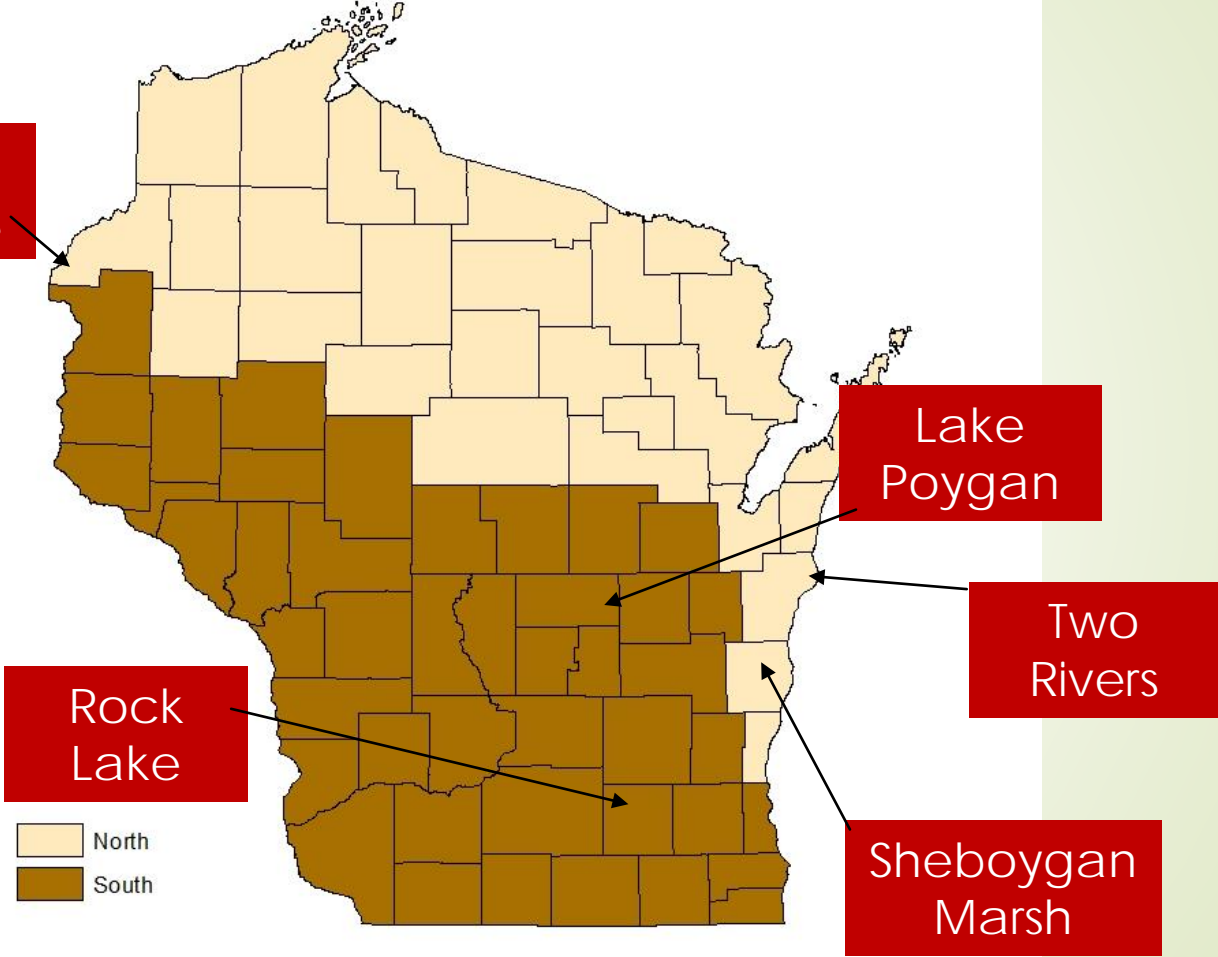
Big Lake
Muskego

North
South

**2016 Pilot Campaign Locations
Repeated in 2017**

North and South Duck Hunting Zones: the North Zone opens approximately one week earlier for hunting.

Crex Meadows



Lake Poygan

Two Rivers

Rock Lake

Sheboygan Marsh

North
South

Additional locations in 2017

Outreach Tools

- ▶ **Statewide**
 - ▶ Articles provided to Lake Tides, Wisconsin Waterfowl Association and Ducks Unlimited
 - ▶ Statewide Press release: UW Extension and WDNR Office of Communications
 - ▶ Social media-Office of Communications
 - ▶ Interviews-Partners locally shared, Media alerts by Office of Communications
- ▶ **At access points**
 - ▶ New boat inspection survey
 - ▶ Prompts: bird bands
 - ▶ New talking points
 - ▶ More background on duck hunting for the boat inspectors



Talking Points

Waterfowl Hunter AIS Prevention Step Prompts to Assist Inspector

If hunters are not familiar with the prevention steps or have questions, help them understand the reasons for taking these actions. You can use the prompts below to assist you in your explanation and discussions at the boat landing/hunting access point. **Remember the goal is to make this as relevant as possible to the hunter by localizing the issue and making it relevant to their recreational activities through the conversation.**

Steps 1 & 2 – INSPECT AND REMOVE

Why this is important:

Plants and animals can easily attach to boat/equipment/dogs/decoys or become entangled in boat motors and blinds and then be moved to another lake or wetland. Mud on anchors and other equipment is also a prime hiding place for AIS. This is a concern in this area because- **(ADD LOCAL CONCERNS HERE)**

Step 3 – DRAIN BOAT AND EQUIPMENT

Step 4 – DRAIN DECOYS AND ANY CONTAINERS

Why this is important:

Many organisms such as Faucet snails or plant fragments (example: bulbils of starry stonewort) are tiny, even invisible to the naked eye and easily transported in water from one waterbody to the next. We know that many of the hunters that frequent our lake/wetland also spend time at- **(ADD LOCAL CONCERNS HERE)**

IMPORTANT HUNTING GEAR MESSAGES

Dogs, decoys and more:

Dogs, push poles, decoys, decoy bags and decoy anchors can easily be covered by mud, tiny snails, larvae of zebra mussels, seeds and plant fragments. Besides in their fur, AIS can hide under a dog's vest or collar. Decoys need to be drained. Mud needs to be removed.

Blinds: Know what county you are in. Non-native phragmites is restricted in some counties, primarily eastern counties. It is not a violation of NR40 to use dead stems for blinds. No roots/rhizomes or seed heads can be used. This is true for any plant used. If the hunter visits counties where NN phragmites is prohibited, they must use a different material/plant for blinds.



Prompts

-remind water users of the Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers! message because they are designed with common branding

The bird band prompt honors the hunters' tradition of collecting duck bands that they save after reporting that they have harvested a banded duck.



Results

Survey results:

Waterfowl Hunter 2018 AIS Campaign	
Staff	48
Launch hours	263
Boats in other waters within last 5 days	19
Hunters surveyed	558

Approximately 300 more hunters heard the message from Law Enforcement and others who did not use the survey

In addition to the five primary locations, outreach was also conducted at Crex Meadows, Rock Lake (Jefferson Co.), Two Rivers, Lake Poygan and Sheboygan Marsh in 2017.

Getting the word out

- ▶ Press releases
 - ▶ Basic release provided to AIS Coordinators to be adapted for local release
 - ▶ Statewide press release-finalized and coordinated by the WDNR Office of Communications
 - ▶ Newsletters: Lake Tides, Wisconsin Waterfowl Association
- ▶ Other media
 - ▶ Media alerts- notification of local media for day of the event interviews
 - ▶ Social media-WDNR Facebook and Twitter
 - ▶ AIS Partner Interview



Making the Outreach Work-Boots on the Ground



The Mead Wildlife
Area Team

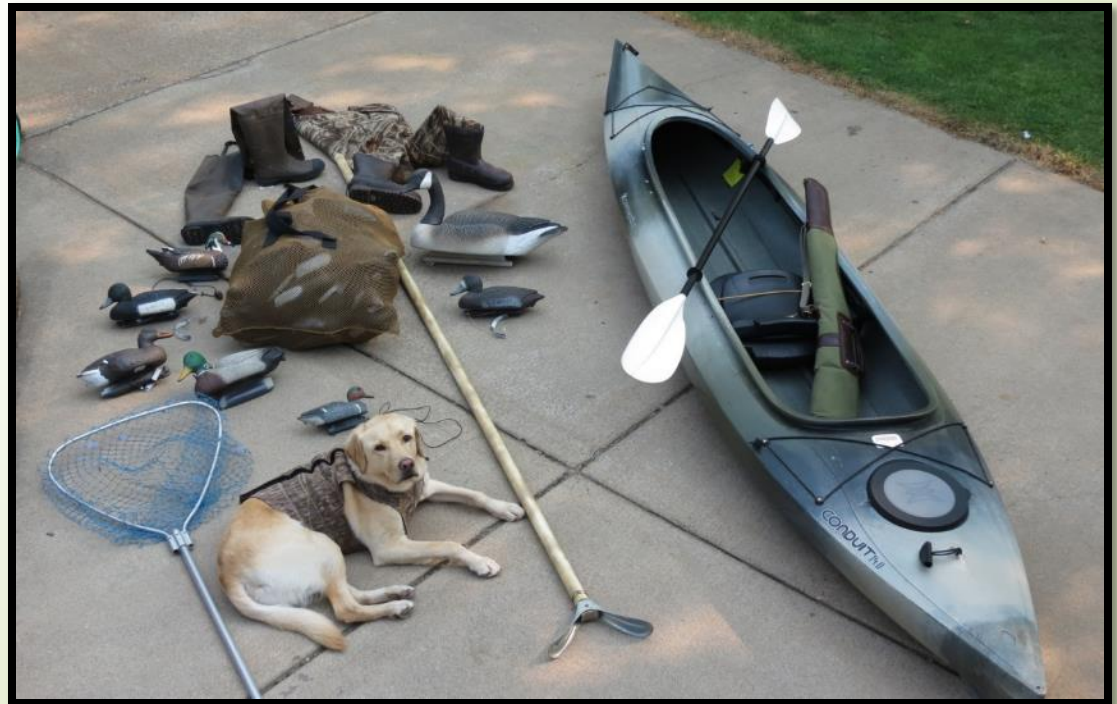
Coordinating staff and volunteers

- Staff:
 - Law Enforcement
 - Local AIS Partnership and WDNR AIS Staff
 - Volunteers-a potential pool
 - Schools organizations- ex. UW Stevens Point Law Enforcement Club or wildlife/ecology clubs
 - Wisconsin Waterfowl Association and Ducks Unlimited members and family members who don't hunt, but know the sport
 - Students in need of volunteer hours
 - Area Friends groups- ex. Friends of Mead
 - Master Naturalists



Volunteers-setting them up for success

- ▶ Utilize campaign training materials in our “toolbox”
 - ▶ In person training and practice
 - ▶ Talking points, survey
 - ▶ Duck ID
 - ▶ Getting to know waterfowl hunting tools



Volunteers-setting them up for success

- ▶ Getting those boots on the ground
 - ▶ Determine their comfort level with the tasks and assign access points accordingly
 - ▶ Pair experienced with inexperienced people
 - ▶ Coordinator should check in during the day



Timing can be everything!

- ▶ Hours:
 - ▶ In general, 9am-2pm and 6am-closing
- ▶ Weather:
 - ▶ Warm and sunny nice for the beach, not for duck hunting
 - ▶ Overcast days mean more hunters and longer days...
 - ▶ Unless there's a Packers game on!



Going Forward

- ▶ 2018
 - ▶ All zones open on Sept. 29th
 - ▶ Enable more engagement by AIS Partners throughout the state
 - ▶ Determine which tools are most/least valuable
 - ▶ Expand the use of social media to get the word out to hunters
 - ▶ Rebalance the role of WDNR Law Enforcement now that the Water Guard program has ended



Thank you!



Photo credits:
Chris Hamerla and Brad Steckart