

Ohio Invasive Plant Assessment Protocol - 2015

Botanical Name: *Najas minor*
 Common Name: Lesser Naiad
 Family Name: Najadaceae
 Assessment conducted by: Allison Mastalerz, Theresa Culley

Step I Outcome: **Invasive**
 Step II Score: **42**
 Step II Outcome: **Pending Further Review**

Team Score

Notes

References

Step I

Directions: Place an "X" in the Score column next to the selected answer to each of the four questions.

1. Is this plant known to occur in the state and listed as "noxious" on any federal or Ohio Department of Agriculture plant list?

Yes. Place on invasive plant list, no further investigation needed. **STOP**
 No. Continue on to question 2.

X

2. Has this plant demonstrated widespread dispersion and establishment (i.e. high numbers of individuals forming dense stands) in natural areas across two or more regions in Ohio?^a

Yes. Place on invasive plant list, no further investigation needed. **STOP**
 No. Continue on to question 3.

X

Species occurs in all 5 regions, but information is lacking on individual populations.

1,7

3. Does this plant form self-replicating populations outside of cultivation in Ohio and is it documented to alter the composition, structure, or normal processes or functions of a natural ecosystem?

Yes
 No
 Unknown

U

4. Is the plant listed as invasive in an adjoining state or a nearby state east of the Mississippi within the USDA Plant Hardiness zones 5-6?^{b,c}

Yes
 No
 Unknown

X

WV considers species an "Occasionally invasive species", (banned in MA and CT - check also NY)

1,2,3,4,5,6

If the answer was yes for both questions 3 and 4, the plant is placed on the invasive plant list and no further research is needed. Stop here. If the answer is no for both questions 3 and 4, the plant is not considered invasive and no further investigation is warranted. Otherwise, proceed to Step II.

Step II: Invasion Status

Directions: Place the appropriate numerical score (or "U") in the Score column next to the selected answer to each of these 18 questions.

1. Current Invasion in Ohio

- plant is not found in natural areas (0 pts.)
- plant is found in natural areas but only because it persists from previous planting in that location (e.g. old home sites) (0 pts.)
- plant is only expanding from sites of previous planting (1 pt.)
- plant occurs in natural areas away from site of planting (3 pts.)
- Information unknown (U)

3

Species is not cultivated and occurs in natural areas.

1, 7, 8

2. State Distribution^a

- plant is not naturalized in any region of Ohio (0 pts.)
- plant is naturalized in only one region in Ohio (1 pt.)
- plant is naturalized in two regions in Ohio (2 pts.)
- plant is naturalized in three regions in Ohio (3 pts.)
- plant is naturalized in four regions in Ohio (4 pts.)
- plant is naturalized in five regions in Ohio (5 pts.)
- Information unknown (U)

5

In all 5 regions of OH

1,7,14

3. Regional/US Distribution

- plant is not considered to be a problem in any other state (0 pts.)
- plant has been reported as a widespread problem in another non-neighboring state within the USDA Plant Hardiness Zones 5-6 (1 pt.)
- plant has been reported to be a widespread problem in 1-2 adjoining states (3 pts.)
- plant has been reported to be a widespread problem in 3 or more adjoining states (5 pts.)
- plant has been reported to be a widespread problem in similar habitat outside the US (1 pt.)
- Information unknown (U)

1

Species is not considered a "widespread problem", but an occasional problem in WV. MA and CT however, have banned the plant due to its perceived invasiveness.

1,5

Step II: Biological Characters

4. Vegetative Reproduction

- no vegetative reproduction (0 pts.)
- reproduces readily within the original site (1 pt.)
- has runners or spreading rhizomes that root easily (3 pts.)
- fragments easily and fragments can be easily dispersed (4 pts.)
- has runners or spreading rhizomes that root easily AND fragments easily and fragments can be easily dispersed (5 pts.)

4

This aquatic species can easily spread vegetatively.

9,10,11,12

- Information unknown (U)

5. Sexual Reproduction

- no sexual reproduction (0 pts.)
- infrequent sexual reproduction (1 pt.)
- frequent sexual reproduction, but high variation among years in seed production (3 pts.)
- frequent sexual reproduction (one or more events per year) (5 pts.)
- Information unknown (U)

3

Species reproduces by seed, but information is lacking on variation by year. Seed dispersal is considered secondary to vegetation dispersal, so the 3 point answer was selected.

10,11,12

6. Number of Viable Seeds or Propagules per Plant

- few (0-10) (1 pt.)
- moderate (11-1,000) (3 pts.)
- prolific (>1,000) (5 pts.)
- Information unknown (U)

3

Seed production is abundant, but no specific numbers were found, so the 3 point answer was selected.

9, 10, 11,12

7. Flowering Period

- one month or less per year (0 pts.)
- two months (1 pt.)
- three to five months (2 pts.)
- longer than five months (3 pts.)
- Information unknown (U)

1

July and August

10

8. Dispersal Ability

- low potential for long-distance seed/propagule dispersal (>1km) (0 pts.)
- medium potential for long-distance seed/propagule dispersal (3 pts.)
- high potential for long-distance seed/propagule dispersal (5 pts.)
- Information unknown (U)

5

Spread by water currents, boats, and water fowl. Ref. 10: "Waterfowl are an important dispersal agent, consuming seeds and transporting plant fragments."

9, 10, 11,12

9. Generation Time

- long juvenile period (>5 or more years for trees, 3 or more years for other growth forms) (0 pts.)
- short juvenile period (<5 years for trees, <3 years for other forms) (3 pts.)
- Information unknown (U)

3

Species is an annual.

10,11,12

10. Establishment

- unable to invade natural areas (0 pts.)
- can only colonize certain habitat stages (e.g. early successional habitats) (1 pt.)
- aggressively colonizes and establishes in edge habitats (3 pts.)
- aggressively colonizes and establishes in intact and healthy natural areas (6 pts.)
- Information unknown (U)

3

Needs shallow water for establishment, disturbance increases species' ability to establish and aggressively spread.

10, 12

Step II: Ecological Importance

11. Impact on Ecosystem Processes

- no known effect on ecosystem-level processes (0 pts.)
- moderate effects on ecosystem-level processes (e.g., changes in nutrient cycling)(3 pts.)
- causes long-term, substantial alterations in the ecosystem (e.g., changing fire regime of an area, changing hydrology of wetlands) (6 pts.)

3

10: "dense mats can reduce light availability, deplete oxygen, and increase sedimentation."

10,11,12

12. Impact on Rare Organisms

- no known negative impact on Ohio State-listed or federal-listed plants or animals (0 pts.)
- negatively impacts some native plants (increasing their mortality and/or recruitment of certain taxa) (3 pts.)

0

13. Impact on Native Animals

- no known negative impact on animals (0 pts.)
- documented direct or indirect negative effects on animal taxa (3 pts.)

0

Dense mats produce conditions (depletion of oxygen when dense mats decay) adverse to fish and waterfowl.

9, 10

14. Impact on Native Plants

- no known negative effects on native plants (0 pts.)
- negatively impacts some native plants (increasing their mortality and/or recruitment of certain taxa) (3 pts.)
- impacts native plants to such an extent that community structure is greatly altered (6 pts.)

3

Dense mats inhibit growth of native plants. 10: "It is apparently more tolerant of turbid and eutrophic conditions than native Najas species, providing it a competitive advantage at heavily-modified sites."

9, 10,11,12

15. Hybridization

- no known instances of hybridization with other plant species (0 pts.)
- can hybridize with native Ohio plants or commercially-available species, but seeds are inviable (1 pt.)
- can hybridize with native Ohio plants or commercially-available species, producing viable seed (3 pts.)

0

16. Population Density

- occurs only as small, sporadic populations or individuals (1 pt.)
- typically forms small, monospecific patches (3 pts.)
- is a dominant plant in area where population occurs (absolute cover 15-50%) (4 pts.)
- forms an extensive, monospecific stand (absolute cover >50%) (5 pts.)

4

Species can create dense mats, but assertion is lacking numerical values, so the 4 point answer was selected.

8,9, 10

17. Role in Succession in Natural Areas

- successional information is unknown (0 pts.)
- is an early successional species that temporarily invades a disturbed site but does not persist as the site matures (0 pts.)
- readily invades disturbed sites and persists, but does not interfere with succession (1 pt.)
- readily invades disturbed sites, persists and interferes with succession of native plants (4 pts.)

0

18. Number of Habitats Invaded

Forestlands: Floodplain forest, hemlock-hardwood forest, mixed mesophytic forest, beech-maple forest, oak-maple forest, oak-hickory forest.

Grasslands: Alvar*, beach-dune community*, bur oak savanna*, slough-grass-bluejoint prairie*, sand barren*, big bluestem prairie, little bluestem prairie (xeric limestone prairie*+), post oak opening*+

Wetlands: Bog*, fen*, twigrush-wiregrass wet prairie*, marsh, buttonbush swamp, mixed shrub swamp, hemlock-hardwood swamp*, maple-ash-oak swamp, white pine-red maple swamp*

* Considered a rare plant community in Ohio by ODW's Biodiversity Database Program.

+ = xeric limestone prairies or cedar glades and post oak openings are unique to the Interior Low Plateau Region of Adams, Highland and Pike counties, and are not included in Schneider and Cochrane (1997).

- not found in any natural habitats in Ohio (0 pts.)
- only found in 1 broad category (1 pt.)
- found in 2 broad categories or 2 rare habitat types (3 pts.)
- found in 3 broad categories or 3 rare habitat types (4 pts.)
- found in 4 or more rare habitat types (5 pts.)

1

Shallow waters of marshes, reservoirs, lakes, ponds, rivers, streams

8,9, 10

Total Score:

42

Number of Unknowns:

0

Outcome:

Pending Further Review

Total Points	Assessment Decision
4 or more U	Insufficient Data
0-34	Not Known to be Invasive
35-44	Pending Further Review
45-80	Invasive