

**City of Chicago, IL**  
**Invasive Species Ordinance**  
**July 2007**

**Description**

The City of Chicago drafted an ordinance which was passed by City Council that makes it unlawful to possess certain invasive species that appear on a regulated list. The ordinance broadens the City's Snakehead and Asian Carp ordinances passed in 2005 to include a larger regulated list of aquatic invasive species that are invading, or may invade, Lake Michigan and the region's waterways. It establishes penalties for anyone who imports, sells, transports, owns, or otherwise possesses any of the live animal or plant species in a regulated list published by the Commissioner of the Department of Environment in consultation with a panel of scientific experts. It establishes, by regulation, 3 lists: (1) invasive plants, (2) invasive animals, and (3) live transport species, or species that can be transported live but not sold live.

We developed the regulated list with an advisory group composed of experts in the field of aquatic invasive species, including the Illinois Natural History Survey, Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant, Wisconsin Sea Grant, University of Notre Dame, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Shedd Aquarium, and the Chicago Botanic Garden. The scientific community will be engaged annually to discuss additions to the regulated list which is currently limited to aquatic species, but could expand to terrestrial species.

While drafting the ordinance, and after its passage and the regulation's public comment period, we reached out to over 60 businesses and associations that might be affected by the ordinance including aquarium shops, garden centers, bait shops, and live food sellers.

**Background**

Aquatic species that are not native to our area are invading Lake Michigan and regional waterways, causing irreparable harm and millions of dollars of damage.

Invasive plants, if established can:

- displace native plants, which are important sources of food and shelter for wildlife;
- change ecological processes, such as oxygen production because invasive plants can affect water chemistry and flow;
- block drainage pipes;
- impede navigation; and
- hinder commercial and recreational fishing.

Invasive animals, if established can:

- make waters unusable for recreation;
- reduce natural biodiversity;
- degrade ecosystem functions;
- damage commercial and recreational equipment; and
- increase the operating costs of industrial processes such as drinking water plants.

This ordinance is part of a multi-faceted aquatic invasive species initiative in the City of Chicago. In addition to creating and enforcing the former Asian Carp and Snakehead ordinances, the city has collaborated with Illinois Natural History Survey and the Habitattitude campaign to raise awareness about invasive species including proper disposal, advocated for legislation such as the Great Lakes Asian Carp Barrier Act, co-hosted an Aquatic Invasive Species Summit with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and met annually with area fisherman and boaters.

### **Results**

The Invasive Species ordinance passed City Council on May 9, 2007. The public comment period for the invasive species ordinance rules and regulations ended on June 27, 2007, and the ordinance is now enforceable. A flyer, which includes a list of the currently regulated species, was produced for the public that is available by calling us or visiting our website (see below).

### **Contacts**

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**Website:** [www.cityofchicago.org/Environment](http://www.cityofchicago.org/Environment) Go to “Water” under Initiatives and Programs, then go to “Aquatic Invasive Species”