

**Happy New Year! New year, new adventures, same us! We plan on participating in some familiar events such as mobile boat washes, Earth Day events etc. But, we are hoping to make new connections and partnerships this coming year! If you have events you think might complement invasive species outreach, have a classroom, or are seeking a speaker for a meeting, please reach out!**

## A Deep Dive Into Rock Snot: An Invasive Algae!

Some of you may have heard about a weird sounding invasive species referred to as “rock snot” or didymo. This species is actually a freshwater algae (*Didymosphenia geminata*) found in cool freshwater streams with rocky substrates; however, it is not fully clear what the extent of their native range is. It is native to northern Europe and Asia, northern Canada, and potentially native to Lake Superior and other areas of Canada and USA. This one-celled microscopic algae (diatom) is problematic as it forms thick mats on hard surfaces such as rocks and can attach to the surface of boats, fishing gear, traps etc. Cell walls are made of silica and shaped like a bottle. As the algae forms mats, they look like fiberglass and feel like wet wool. Contrary to the name, it does not feel slimy.



*Didymo mats can look yellowish brown and even white, and feel like rough wet wool when touched. Photo credit: Michigan.gov*

Didymo has been documented in the region, but nuisance algal blooms are relatively recent, starting in 2015 in the St. Marys River, followed by blooms found in the Upper Manistee River (2021), and recently in Boardman River (2022). Climate change is thought to be behind these nuisance blooms. This species is problematic in that it can change the habitat and alter invertebrate communities from large to smaller species<sup>1</sup>, which could impact trout or other valuable fish species. No effective method has been found to manage large algal blooms, so prevention strategies are important! Didymo can survive up to 40 days in dark, damp, and cool environments. Soaking equipment in hot water, 2% bleach solution, or 5% soapy water solution is effective. Designate porous equipment (such as waders and rope) for use in infested waters only, and drain and dry all equipment.

### Reference:

1. Chow. D. 2014. "Rock Snot" Has Been Native to Much of the World for Thousands of Years. Scientific American. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/rock-snot-has-been-native-to-much-of-the-world-for-thousands-of-years/>

## Invasive Species Spotlight—Japanese Barberry

- *Berberis thunbergii* is an introduced ornamental shrub
- Small oval leaves grow in clusters, turn red in fall, and have thorns at each node
- Pale yellow flowers turn into edible red egg-shaped berries
- Found in forests and near disturbed areas
- Can raise the pH of soil
- Takes over natural areas



Photo Credit: S. Singh

## Native Species Spotlight—Trumpeter Swan

- *Cygnus buccinator* is our largest native waterfowl and can stretch up to 6 ft tall
- Males average over 26 lbs
- They form pair bonds when three or four old, and many mate for life
- Clutch contains 4-6 eggs; will incubate eggs with their feet on top
- Prefer shallow ponds, lakes, rivers, and marshes; they also feed in agricultural fields

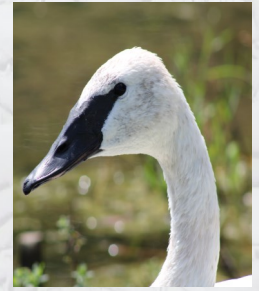


Photo Credit: S. Singh

## Upcoming Events

**JLW Cisma Wall Calendar**—If you are interested in purchasing our monthly wall calendar, please see details on our website:

[jlwcisima.weebly.com/calendar-ordering-information.html](http://jlwcisima.weebly.com/calendar-ordering-information.html)

**January 18th**—NAISMA webinar: The Blue Ribbon AIS Commission – Process, Participation and Final Report, 1pm to 2pm CST. Registration required: [naisma.memberclicks.net/webinar-jan-2023](http://naisma.memberclicks.net/webinar-jan-2023)

**February 1st**—**JLW Cisma webinar:** Adaptive Responses to Red Swamp Crayfish Invasions in Michigan (Dr. Brian Roth). 6:30pm to 7:30pm. Registration required: [tinyurl.com/RothRS](http://tinyurl.com/RothRS)



## Website of the Month

The Stewardship Network Events Calendar is a great place to see what local environmental programming is taking place in the area. You can add your own events here as well!

[stewardshipnetwork.org/events](http://stewardshipnetwork.org/events)

**If you have questions, please contact JLW Cisma Coordinator Dr. Shikha Singh at [shikha.singh@macd.org](mailto:shikha.singh@macd.org) or (517) 395 - 2089.**

**Visit our website for more events and resources: [jlwcisima.weebly.com](http://jlwcisima.weebly.com)**



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