



# AQUATIC NUISANCE SPECIES TASK FORCE MEETING SUMMARY

**Meeting Dates: July 8-9, 2025**  
**Virtual meeting**

## Overview

The Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Task Force was established by the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act (reauthorized in 1996 with the passage of the National Invasive Species Act) as a multi-agency body dedicated to preventing and controlling ANS (also known as aquatic invasive species, or AIS). On July 8-9, 2025, the ANS Task Force held a virtual public meeting, in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act. The following is a summary of the meeting. Additional details about the meeting, including the agenda and detailed meeting minutes can be found at: <https://www.fws.gov/program/aquatic-nuisance-species-task-force/meetings>.

## Attendance

A full list of attendees is recorded in the detailed meeting minutes. In addition to ANS Task Force members below, representatives from each of the 6 regional panels were in attendance.

### Federal:

- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Department of State
- Environmental Protection Agency
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Coast Guard
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife
- U.S. Geological Survey

### Ex-officio:

- Great Lakes Commission
- Lake Champlain Basin Program
- Chesapeake Bay Program
- San Francisco Estuary Partnership
- Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
- Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
- Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resources Association
- Native American Fish and Wildlife Society
- Smithsonian Environmental Research Center
- Tahoe Regional Planning Agency

## Meeting Agenda Highlights

### Update Reports:

- USGS NAS Database: New Species Occurrences
- Early Detection Rapid Response Framework Implementation
- Golden Mussel Response Update
- ANS / Seaplane Risk Analysis
- EXPLORE Act Implementation

### Discussion Topics:

- Regional Panel Roundtable
- Bait Pathway Assessment
- Ruffe Plan Archival
- Marine Biosecurity
- Outcomes from Rapid Response Efforts
- Protecting the Great Lakes from Invasive Carp

## Decisional Items:

- The ANS Task Force approved the Rapid Response Plan Template.
- The ANS Task Force approved the archival of the Ruffe Control Plan.
- The ANS Task Force approved the Guidance for Aquatic Nuisance Species Control and Management Plans.

## Action Items

- Executive Secretary will meet with relevant agencies and other interested parties to review the 2015 document "Federal Policy Options: Addressing the Movement of Aquatic Invasive Species Onto and Off of Federal Land and Waters" and evaluate if the actions should be updated and/or expanded to align with the direction under the EXPLORE Act.

- Regional Panel Principals will review recent bait related projects, actions and priorities and then consider if there is a need to align efforts across regions.
- Executive Secretary will work on a document with the Control Subcommittee that will supplement the Ruffe Control Plan archival that summarizes the reason for archival, control program objectives that continue to be relevant and conditions that may warrant updating the plan and returning to an active status.
- Executive Secretary and Control Subcommittee will form a Golden Mussel Work Group to evaluate immediate and long-term needs for this new invasion.
- Outreach Subcommittee will distribute the Boater Evaluation Survey template to ANSTF members and regional panels for review and comment.

### Regional Panel Recommendations (abridged)

#### **Western Regional Panel and Northeast Panel: Financial Support**

1. The Western Regional Panel recommends continuing financial support for the regional panels as it is crucial to completing regional collaborative projects, communication, and advancements in achieving AIS management goals established and identified in the ANSTF Strategic Plan.
2. The Western Regional Panel recommends continued federal prioritization and support for the development and implementation of AIS Management Plans is important to the management of AIS nationwide. The fiscal support for AIS State Management plans has been and continues to be vital for all agencies to successfully implement programs within each state with approved plans.
3. The Northeast Regional Panel requests respectfully that funds be identified and secured, or other mechanisms be identified so that panels can request additional grants and funding sources to allow them to be fully operational at levels reasonable and responsive to inflation using an index such as the US Bureau of Labor statistics.

*Response: The ANS Task Force acknowledges the value of the work conducted through the regional panels and state and interstate ANS management plans. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is currently under a Continuing Resolution, but will continue to work through President's budget process to address the Administration's highest priority work identified for ANS. We encourage the regional panels to continue to raise awareness of their work, including successes and barriers to implementing regional priorities to those that can help identify opportunities for additional funding*

**Western Regional Panel: Golden Mussel.** The Western Regional Panel recommends support and leadership on a national scale to address the potential impacts from golden mussel. Federal participation in prioritization and development solutions are needed to protect natural resources and infrastructure from impacts.

*Response: The ANS Task Force agreed that the threat of golden mussels should be addressed at a national scale. Following discussion, the ANS Task Force decided to form a Golden Mussel Work Group to evaluate immediate and long-term needs for this new invasion. This includes working with the Control Subcommittee to determine if a National Control Plan is warranted, consistent with the ANS Task Force's guidance and decision-making process for ANS control plans.*

**Great Lakes Panel: Ruffe Control Plan.** The panel with the 2023 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's summary of actions that recommended archiving the Ruffe Control Plan. The Panel identified two objectives from the plan that remain a high priority, identified a new objective to guide responses to a major range expansion, and identified some mechanisms to achieve objectives. These objectives have been documented and can be incorporated into state or other management plans as regional priorities.

*Response: The other regional panels concurred the recommendation. Following discussion, the ANS Task Force approved the archival of the Ruffe Control Plan. As part of the archival process, the Control Subcommittee will attach a document to the plan stating reason for archival, control program objectives that continue to be relevant, and conditions that may warrant updating the plan and returning it to an active status.*

### For More Information

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