

# Don't want it? Can't keep it?

## What to do with unwanted aquarium plants and animals

### Donation of Plants and Animals

Trade or give your fish to another aquarist; advertise in your club or association bulletin.

Place an online notice with the Native Fish Conservancy or North American Native Fish Association.

Donate unwanted native plants and fish to a local aquarium society for its raffle or auction.

Donate plants and fish to an aquarium, museum or library in your area.

Donate your native plants and fish to your local elementary, high school or college biology department.

Sell or return unwanted native plants and fish to a local aquarium shop dealer.

### Disposal of Unwanted Plants

Unwanted plants can be dried thoroughly, burned or composted (if applied far from surface water). Live plants can be disposed of in the household trash.

### Destroying Animal Material

If a fish or aquatic animal is no longer wanted, please dispose of it humanely. One of the most humane and practical ways to put down any cold-blooded species is to freeze it. Because it is cold-blooded, the metabolism of a fish or aquatic animal will slow down as the temperature drops until all metabolic function has stopped. Once the water has frozen, the fish or animal will be dead and can be discarded, fed to omnivores or used as fertilizer. Freezing also works v surplus fish eggs.

To avoid stressing the fish as the temperature decreases, you can anesthetize them with alcohol before placing them in the freezer.



### For More Information

The following organizations have further information and ideas on their websites:

N.H. Dept. of Environmental Services  
[www.des.state.nh.us/wmb/exoticspecies](http://www.des.state.nh.us/wmb/exoticspecies)

New Hampshire Fish and Game  
[www.wildlife.state.nh.us](http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us)

Aquaculture Education and Research Center  
[www.teachfish.org](http://www.teachfish.org)

Native Fish Conservancy  
[www.nativefish.org](http://www.nativefish.org)

North American Native Fish Association  
[www.nanfa.org](http://www.nanfa.org)

New Hampshire Lakes Association  
[www.nhlakes.org](http://www.nhlakes.org)

### This project was sponsored by:

N.H. Fish and Game  
 Watershed Education Program  
 "Bass in the Class"  
 (603) 271-3212  
[aquatic-ed@wildlife.state.nh.us](mailto:aquatic-ed@wildlife.state.nh.us)



Aquaculture Education and Research Center  
 Aquarium Adoption Program  
 (603) 926-5446  
[info@teachfish.org](mailto:info@teachfish.org)

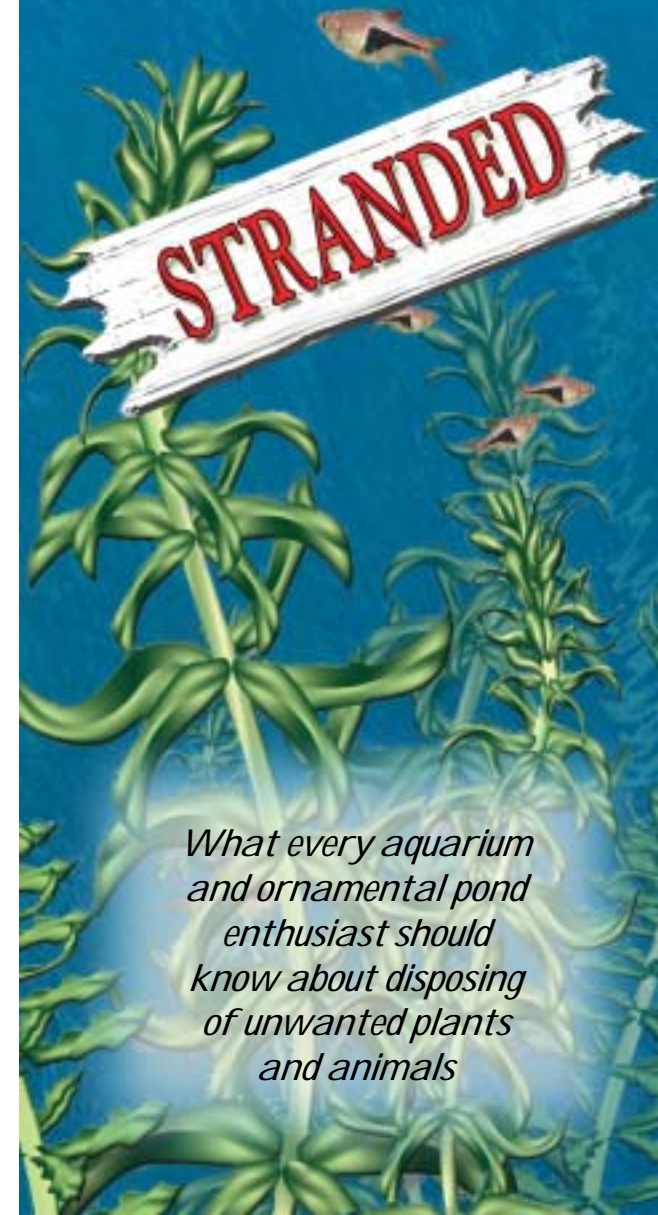


N.H. Department of Environmental Services  
 Clean Lakes and Exotic Species Program  
 (603) 271-2248  
[asmagula@des.state.nh.us](mailto:asmagula@des.state.nh.us)



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 The US Fish and Wildlife Service  
 Office for Diversity and Civil Rights Programs External Affairs  
 4040 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 130, Arlington, VA 22203

# Don't leave them



*What every aquarium and ornamental pond enthusiast should know about disposing of unwanted plants and animals*

Do you keep fish, plants and aquatic animals in an aquarium or pond?

## Don't leave them stranded!

Escapees and intentionally released plants and animals from home aquariums can devastate New Hampshire's natural habitats.

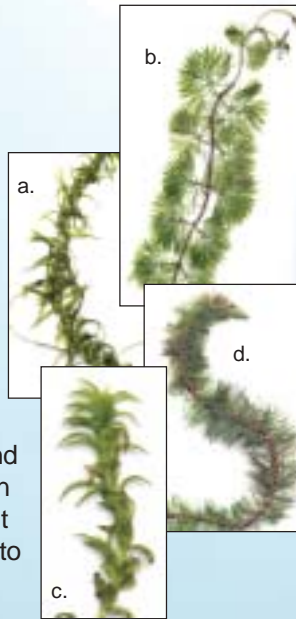
So how can you get rid of unwanted aquatic plants and animals? Follow these basic guidelines and learn how you can protect New Hampshire's natural habitats. Remember, NEVER release aquatic plants or animals into the outdoors.

### Exotic Aquatic Plants

Aquatic plants popular for aquarium use are a growing problem in lakes, ponds, rivers and streams around New Hampshire. The worst offenders: hydrilla, variable and Eurasian milfoil, fanwort and Brazilian elodea. These exotic intruders are choking out native plants and animals, inhibiting recreation areas and lowering lakefront property values. It is illegal to buy, sell or release these plants in New Hampshire. For a full list of illegal plants, check the Exotic Species website:

[www.des.state.nh.us/wmb/exoticspecies](http://www.des.state.nh.us/wmb/exoticspecies).

Pictured above: a) Brazilian elodea, b) fanwort, c) hydrilla, d) variable milfoil



### Exotic Fish

When carp and goldfish become established in local waterbodies, they compete with native fish for food and space. Don't turn them loose—it's against the law.



### Rusty Crayfish

Crayfish are often used by schools for observation and experimentation. Never release them into the natural environment. Not only do they displace native crayfish and alter the food web, but it's illegal.



### Other Species

Non-native plants and fish aren't the only threats to our environment. Here's a list of other species that should never be released into the outdoors or moved from one outdoor habitat to another:

- ✓ Snails
- ✓ Salamanders
- ✓ Frogs
- ✓ Crabs
- ✓ Worms
- ✓ Aquatic insects
- ✓ Microscopic animals like fairy shrimp and "sea monkeys"



Chinese Mystery Snail

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## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q. I bought some snails and crayfish from an aquarium club member in another state, but now I no longer need them. Since they are common species, can I put them in the pond near my home?**

A. No. Releasing species is illegal. See the back page for tips on donation or disposal.

**Q. I don't want my aquarium any more. What can I do with it?**

A. Donate it to a teacher, or give it to the Aquaculture Education and Research Center's "Aquarium Adoption" program, which will accept your whole aquarium with live fish and plants, conduct a health evaluation and find homes for them. Call (603) 926-5446.

**Q: At the end of the school year, what should I do with the fish and plants in my classroom aquarium?**

A. Be sure not to release them outdoors! Donate them to an aquarium club, museum or library, or dispose of them humanely. See back page for more ideas.

**Q. My fish seem to do well with hydrilla in the tank. Since I know hydrilla is not legal to own in New Hampshire, what plant can I use instead?**

A. Use native elodea instead of hydrilla. Ask your pet center to order *elodea canadensis* or *elodea nuttallii*. Or, experiment with other plants offered for sale in pet stores and see what works best in your aquarium.

**Q. Koi (or goldfish) are taking over my backyard pond. Where can I release them?**

A. **STOP RIGHT THERE!** It's illegal to release fish outdoors. Donate the unwanted fish, return them to the store,

or destroy them humanely and put them in the household trash or use as fertilizer. See the back page for more ideas.

**Q. What should I do if I see a store selling a plant or animal that I think is illegal?**

A. Report sales of illegal invasive plants to the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services at (603) 271-2248. In the case of fish or animals, alert the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department at (603) 271-3212.