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Otago Regional Council

Freshwater Pest

Lagarosiphon

Why is it a pest?

It's hard to spell and even harder to get rid of. Lagarosiphon was once sold as a pretty decoration for aquariums or ponds and is thought to have been accidentally introduced to our waterways through disposal into drains or ponds.

It now causes trouble for our beautiful lakes. Lagarosiphon has the potential to threaten the aquatic environment because its fast growth means it displaces and shades out aquatic native plants.

Thick areas of lagarosiphon can disturb water flows and cause local deoxygenation (a chemical reaction removing oxygen) of water. Lagarosiphon can choke and block water bodies, increase flood likelihood, and can affect water supply intakes.

It also has negative effects on recreational activities (such as boating, waterskiing and swimming) and aesthetic values, changing the scenery of the area. If lagarosiphon is left uncontrolled, large beds can form and wash ashore, leaving unpleasant heaps.

Lagarosiphon is present in lakes **Dunstan and Roxburgh and parts of Lake Wānaka.** It is also present in the **Clutha River/Mata-Au, Kawarau River and Pūerua River.** Isolated, individual plants are regularly removed from Frankton Arm in Lake Whakatipu, which is thought to be a result of weed transfer by boats from other waterways in the region.

It spreads from the dispersal of stem fragments, either naturally by water movement or by humans through boating, fishing gear, machinery, aquarium and pond waste and deliberate plantings.

What does it look like?

- **Size:** Can grow up to 5 metres long; its long, brittle stems forming dense mats when it reaches the water's surface.
- **Appearance:** Dark green leaves with tiny, pointed edges, arranged spirally around the stem and curve backwards or downwards.
- **Distinctive features:** It is an underwater, bottom-rooted weed.
- **Habitat:** In its native habitat, lagarosiphon produces tiny pinkish flowers; however, as there are only female plants in New Zealand, it does not set seed and flower here.

Common name:
Oxygen weed

Scientific name:
Lagarosiphon major

Management programme:
Site-led management

Site-led programmes have rules for specific pests that only apply in that area. Site-led areas have special biodiversity and other values to protect.

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What are the rules?

Lagarosiphon is managed under a site-led programme in our Regional Pest Management Plan (2019-2029).

Head to **orcnz.maps.arcgis.com** to see a map of the areas covered by the lagarosiphon site-led programme.

- Any person leaving the waters of lakes Dunstan, Wānaka or Roxburgh or the Clutha River/Mata-Au and the Kawarau River must immediately remove and safely dispose of all fragments of lagarosiphon from boats, equipment and all other items in their possession.
- Anyone in Otago must destroy and safely dispose of all lagarosiphon from any pond or aquarium on their land.

The goal of the Regional Pest Management Plan (2019-2029) for lagarosiphon is to:

- Reduce the amount of lagarosiphon in Lake Wānaka and the Kawarau River through progressive containment over the next 10 years.
- Keep the levels of lagarosiphon in Lake Dunstan at a stable level.
- Prevent lagarosiphon establishing in Lake Whakatipu.
- Prevent lagarosiphon establishing in lakes, rivers and tributaries where it is not already present.

What should I do?

Together with other stakeholders, we are working to curb the spread of lagarosiphon and have removed many tonnes since it was first spotted in our waterways in the early 1970s.

Make sure you don't spread any aquatic pests by following the Check, Clean, Dry method.

To prevent the spread of freshwater pests, including lagarosiphon, whenever you move between waterways you must check, clean and dry any equipment that comes into contact with water.

If you're out on the water, take a moment to:

- ☑ **CHECK** YOUR GEAR FOR STOWAWAY PESTS AND REMOVE THEM
- ☑ **CLEAN** YOUR GEAR THOROUGHLY
- ☑ **DRY** IT FOR 48 HOURS BEFORE RELOCATING TO ANOTHER WATERWAY!

Check, Clean, Dry vastly reduces the risk of aquatic pests hitchhiking from one waterway to another aboard our vessels and gear.

For more information, visit **orc.govt.nz/lagarosiphon**