

# HAVE YOU SEEN HORNWORT?

## What is hornwort?

Hornwort is an invasive aquatic weed found in freshwater. It was originally propagated as an aquarium and ornamental pond plant, but is now banned from sale or distribution under the Biosecurity Act 1993.

## What does it look like?

Hornwort has long slender brittle stems that can reach up to 10 metres in height. The leaves are stiff and forked, and are arranged in whorls of 7-12 at each node. It has no roots and anchors itself using branches buried in bottom sediments. It prefers clear, deep water but will grow in a wide variety of aquatic environments.

## Where is hornwort?

Hornwort is currently widely established in the North Island. In the South Island, it has been found in the Moutere stream and some private ponds in Motueka where it is thought to be eradicated. In February 2006, a small population was discovered in Centennial Park Lake in Timaru.



photo courtesy of Rohan Wells



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## How does it spread?

Hornwort is spread through the movement of stems, as they are easily dislodged or broken. The stems can be spread through contaminated boats, fishing and recreational equipment, and can survive for several months in wet spots such as under the floor or in the anchor well of boats.

It can also be spread through the release of aquarium or pond contents into waterways.

## What can I do to stop the spread?

Help contain the spread of hornwort by:

- Cleaning your boat, boat trailer and boating gear when leaving a waterway.
- Removing any fragments of weed from nets and fishing gear before you leave a waterway.
- Not emptying your fish tank into or near a waterway.
- Not draining any ponds into waterways.

## THE THREAT

Hornwort grows rapidly, forming dense weed beds or rafts that choke waterways and are very difficult to eradicate. It shades out other aquatic plants, affecting aquatic invertebrates and fish. Hornwort also affects fishing, boating and other recreational activities, and hydro-electric intakes.

If you suspect you have seen Hornwort in the South Island please call Biosecurity New Zealand on

# 0800 80 99 66