

# Aquatic Invasive Species

FACT SHEET

## Overview

Through this project, we work to understand and minimize the environmental impacts of harmful invasive species arriving in the council region due to oil industry activities in the area.

Harmful invasives are known to cause devastating environmental and economic impacts, such as the European green crab's invasion into the west coast of the United States and Canada.

Early detection and rapid response are critical to preventing harmful invasions. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has provided grant funding support for the past six+ years for monitoring and research.

## Project goals:

One of our largest and most complex monitoring projects, this project has three main goals.

**1. Research & Monitoring:** To promote or participate in research/monitoring of harmful invasive species having the potential to arrive in the council region due to oil industry activities. There is a special emphasis on citizen monitoring for European green crab and tunicates.

**2. Education:** To educate the public about the health, environmental and economic threats associated with transport of aquatic invasive species to Alaskan waters. These species can arrive here through tanker ballast water, sea chests, and growth attached to vessels (known as "hull fouling"). As part of this project, we inform the public of current monitoring, mitigation measures, and legislation governing aquatic invasive species.

**3. Policy:** To closely track and comment on legislation or management strategies that address aquatic invasive species transported to Alaskan and to work with other organizations – statewide, nationally and internationally, to identify and address the issue in a coordinated fashion.

*Photo: Council staffer Jeremy Robida holds a green crab trap during a green crab monitoring expedition near Valdez.*



As part of this project, we track hull fouling/ballast water studies and regulatory issues, fund research and promote invasive species monitoring and education. The council also supports and coordinates green crab monitoring efforts in the region, including setting and retrieving tunicate monitoring plates for the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center. Council staff attend state-wide Alaska Invasive Species Work group monthly teleconference meetings and annual conference.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service grant funding received for this project currently supports work by the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center to identify non-indigenous,

native, and cryptogenic species in Prince William Sound using molecular genetic analysis from zooplankton samples collected in 2011; assess whether any new non-indigenous species invasions have occurred in Prince William Sound; and work to establish a baseline to assess changes in marine communities in Prince William Sound over time in response to many different potential forcing functions.

This project also helps support community-based monitoring, including citizen science monitoring for European green crab and tunicate species in Seward and Resurrection Bay. Local students in Seward and Valdez help us monitor for invasives in their areas.

This project is part of the work of the council's Scientific Advisory Committee.

For more information, contact council project manager, Joe Banta, [banta@pwsrca.org](mailto:banta@pwsrca.org).

On the web: [www.pwsrca.org](http://www.pwsrca.org)

Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council ~ Citizens promoting environmentally safe operation of the Alyeska terminal and associated tankers.



VALDEZ: PO Box 3089 / 130 S. Meals, Ste 202, Valdez AK 99686 ~ toll-free: 877.478.7221 ph: 907.834.5000 fax: 907.835.5926  
ANCHORAGE: 3709 Spenard Rd., Ste. 100, Anchorage AK 99503 ~ toll-free: 800.478.7221 ph: 907.277.7222 fax: 907.277.4523

[www.pwsrca.org](http://www.pwsrca.org)

Project 952