

Coontail (Native)

Ceratophyllum demersum



Aquatic Native Species Are Under Threat From Aquatic Invasive Species.

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) have a direct negative impact not only on human recreation in Lake Tahoe, they also threaten the very existence of native aquatic wildlife. There are currently several invasive plant, invertebrate, mollusk and fish species in the lake. Oftentimes this species out-compete native species for resources, predate on them, and generally degrade water and ecosystem quality. Research, monitoring, and efforts to manage established AIS populations and prevent new AIS infestations are all crucial to protect native aquatic wildlife of the Tahoe Basin. A diverse group of partner agencies, including TahoeRCD, University of Nevada-Reno, University of California-Davis and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, are dedicated to collaborating on these efforts.

Importance of Coontail in the Tahoe Basin

Canadian Waterweed plays an important role in the Basin ecosystem as a habitat plant for young fish, aquatic insects and other small aquatic animals.

Photo credit: Earl J.S. Rook



Habitat: Prefers nutrient-rich freshwater bodies, can survive at a wide variety of water depths

Characteristics: Perennial herb that floats freely above surface

Leaves: Dark green leaves are forked into 2 flattened segments, often somewhat stiff and arranged in whorls of 5-12. Reach lengths of 0.5-4 cm

Flowers: Tiny submerged green flowers present June-September

Stems: Entirely free-floating with no root system

Spread: Plant fragments (vegetative propagules) and seeds

Native Distribution: North America, U.S. Virgin Islands

Photo credit: AL Dept, of Conservation and Natural Resources

How can I help protect this species?

- ◆ Know your local plants! By being able to identify native from non-native plants, you can avoid disturbing native species.
- ◆ Check for hitchhikers before you go in the water. Boats (motorized and non-motorized) and watersport equipment can pick up invasive species in other water bodies and inadvertently introduced them to the Basin ecosystem.

