

Land Information

Fact Sheet

August 2004

Weed control in South Island lakes

This fact sheet explains how Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) controls weed outbreaks in the South Island lakes and other waterways it administers.

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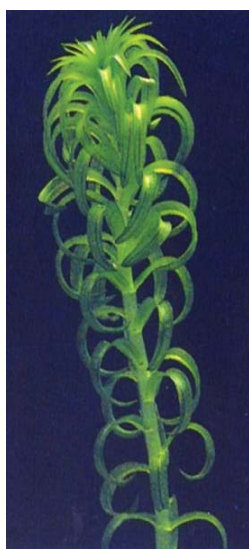
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Lagarosiphon major.

The issue

Lagarosiphon major, or South African oxygen weed, is the main aquatic plant 'pest' in South Island lakes administered by LINZ (*Lagarosiphon major* is also often found in fish bowls and outdoor ornamental ponds).

It's widespread in the North Island and has become established in some significant South Island rivers and lakes, including Lakes Wanaka, Benmore and Dunstan.

While the plant has very specific needs for growing conditions (clear, calm, shallow water), these unfortunately coincide with the type of water frequented by people enjoying aquatic recreation. The plant spreads very easily, and one of the main ways it colonises new areas is courtesy of pleasure boats and trailers.

LINZ's role and strategy

LINZ is responsible for weed and pest control on several areas of Crown-owned land, including most lakebeds. The lakeweed control work is contracted to Landward Management Ltd, which is

working to a five-year plan to manage the weed. The long-term intent is to prevent the weed from spreading to non-infested waterways. A key priority is controlling the weed where it impacts most on the public: boatramps; ski-lane access; swimming areas; and, shorelines.

LINZ's five-year plan is based on a considerable amount of research showing the location of weed infestations over long periods.

Methods of control and results

Generally, there are two main ways of containing the weed:

- killing the weeds with an aquatic herbicide
- mechanically removing the weeds.

Herbicide

Lagarosiphon in Lake Dunstan is controlled by aerial application of a herbicide with diquat as the active ingredient. Control levels achieved with this method have been excellent. The spraying programme has the full support of the Lake Dunstan Management Committee, and it's very cost effective.



Lake Dunstan, before the application of a herbicide. The unsightly weed infestation (arrowed) affected the high-use foreshore area.



Lake Dunstan after the herbicide application.

The herbicide compound used in Lake Dunstan has been used safely for more than 40 years in other New Zealand lakes. Even though diquat has been used regularly for this length of time, scientific studies have shown no long-term detrimental impacts on water, fish or people. It is absorbed by water, leaving no residue.

Before spraying takes place, the public are informed of the timetable via public notices in local newspapers, radio advertisements, signs by the waterway and notices on LINZ's Internet site.

Manual removal

Lagarosiphon major has been established in Lake Wanaka for about 30 years, where there is also an annual weed control programme. However, in this case mechanical weed control is used after consultation with the local community. The main method is suction dredging. A diver checks the dredged areas and removes any remaining weeds by hand.

Suction dredging removes large quantities of weed, but it is more expensive than herbicide control.

Control using mechanical methods needs to be targeted at areas with high use such as boat ramps.

Consultation

The control method used is chosen

after extensive consultation with interested parties. In the case of Lake Dunstan, for example, LINZ's contractor attends meetings of the Lake Dunstan Management Committee and communicates regularly with interested groups.

The weed management plan sometimes involves a balance. For example, some anglers would like LINZ to leave weed beds as protective cover for spawning fish, whereas boaties would like access to ramps and boat lanes cleared. We try to accommodate all users as best we can.

How you can help

LINZ is actively managing the lakes with our contractors. Other agencies such as power generation companies, Fish and Game, Ngai Tahu and regional councils are also involved. If you notice anything, particularly weed in areas where it has not previously been, please call us on free-call number, 0508 244746. The lakes cover huge areas and any information on new sites can be acted upon quickly.

Contact details

- Weed hotline, 0508 244 746
- Contact for further information: Paul Jackson, Manager Crown Property, Land Information New Zealand, via info@linz.govt.nz or 0800 ONLINE (0800 665463)
- Check out LINZ's website, www.linz.govt.nz for more information on our weed control programme. Click on the 'Crown Property' button at the top of any page. When the new page opens up, click on the 'Biosecurity' button on the left-hand side
- NIWA has more information on weed species and management at www.niwa.co.nz/rc/prog/aquaticplants/index.html

The screenshot shows a Microsoft Internet Explorer browser window displaying the LINZ website. The address bar shows the URL: <http://www.linz.govt.nz/rsc/linz/pub/web/root/core/CrownProperty/biosecurity/index.jsp>. The website has a navigation menu with 'Crown Property' selected. The main content area features a 'Biosecurity' heading and a paragraph explaining LINZ's role in pest control. A list of bullet points is visible: 'weed control on Crown land in the North and South Islands', 'rabbit control on Crown land in Canterbury and other areas', and 'weed control in LINZ administered lakes and rivers'. There is also a 'PRINT VERSION' button and a search bar.