

AIS Outreach in IL and IN: Reaching Recreational Water Users



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Northeast Illinois Invasive Plant Partnership

Aquatic Invasive Species

- Non-native to region
- Quickly reproduce
- Few native predators or checks
- High economic and ecological costs



Aquatic Invasive Species

- Role of recreational water users



How can awareness be increased?

- Education and Outreach
- Grassroots support
- Regulations



The Basics...

- GLRI funds from MNSG (2010-2012)
- GLRI funds from IDNR/INHS (2012-2014)
 - “Clean Boats Crew”
 - Quarter time coordinator for two years
 - Multiple site leaders
 - Under \$20,000 per year



Re-Assessment



- Initially focused on creating presence in region at many inland and Lake Michigan sites
- **Illinois**
 - Lake County (2011- present)
 - Cook County (2012 – present)
- **Indiana**
 - Lake County (2011-present)
 - LaPort and Porter County (2012-present)

Total of > 3500 exposures

Not much in the way of volunteers!

Stop Gap for Indiana 2013



- Indiana Coastal Zone Management Funds for June
- Four weekends- Cedar Lake and Portage Marina

New Strategy for Illinois

- Focus on one inland and one Lake Michigan site in each county
- Weekend education and outreach at marinas and boat launches
- Combined with presentations offered at high schools, universities, and associations

Goal: vested interest in program and volunteers to sustain it!



2013

Lake County, IL:

- North Point Marina, Winthrop Harbor
- Chain O' Lakes



Cook County, IL:

- Diversey Harbor, Chicago
- Skokie Lagoons, Cook County FPD

Retaining Methods for Interacting

- One minute speech
- Focus on providing tips for preventing accidental transport
- Additional information on request



Promotion of Program

- Media coverage through Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant, TribLocal, ILMA- Lake Waves, LCHD- Cattail Chronicles, Outdoor Illinois, Patch.com
- Radio coverage during Illinois Invasive Species Awareness Month in May



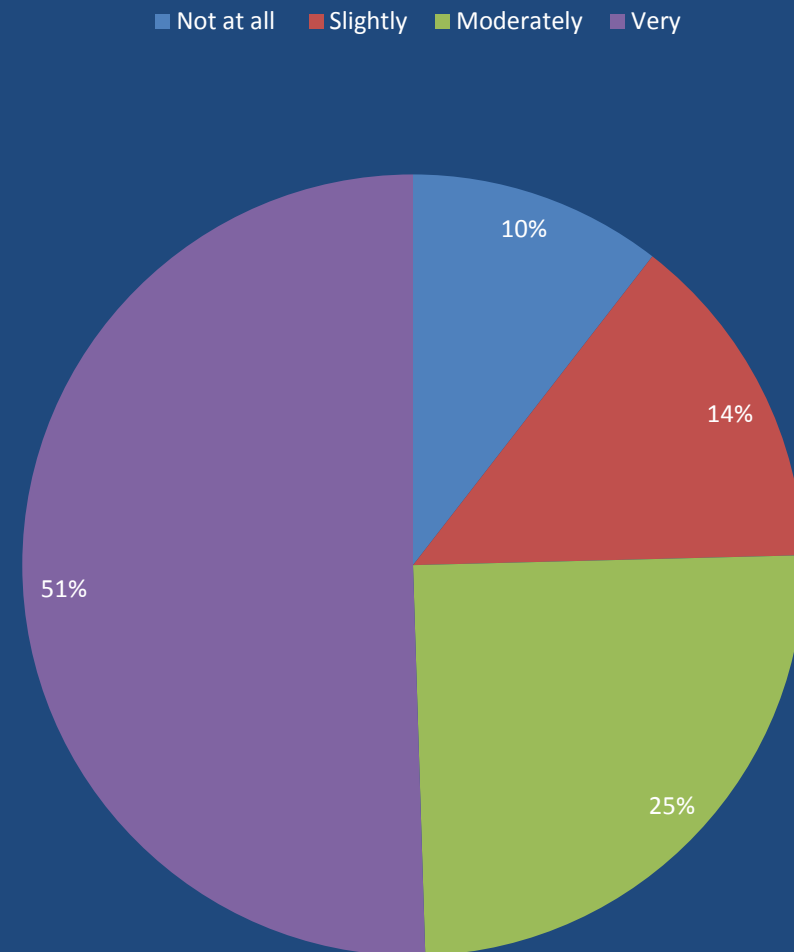
What We've Found

- Wide range of responses from public
- Very wide range of awareness
- Increased interest in presentations

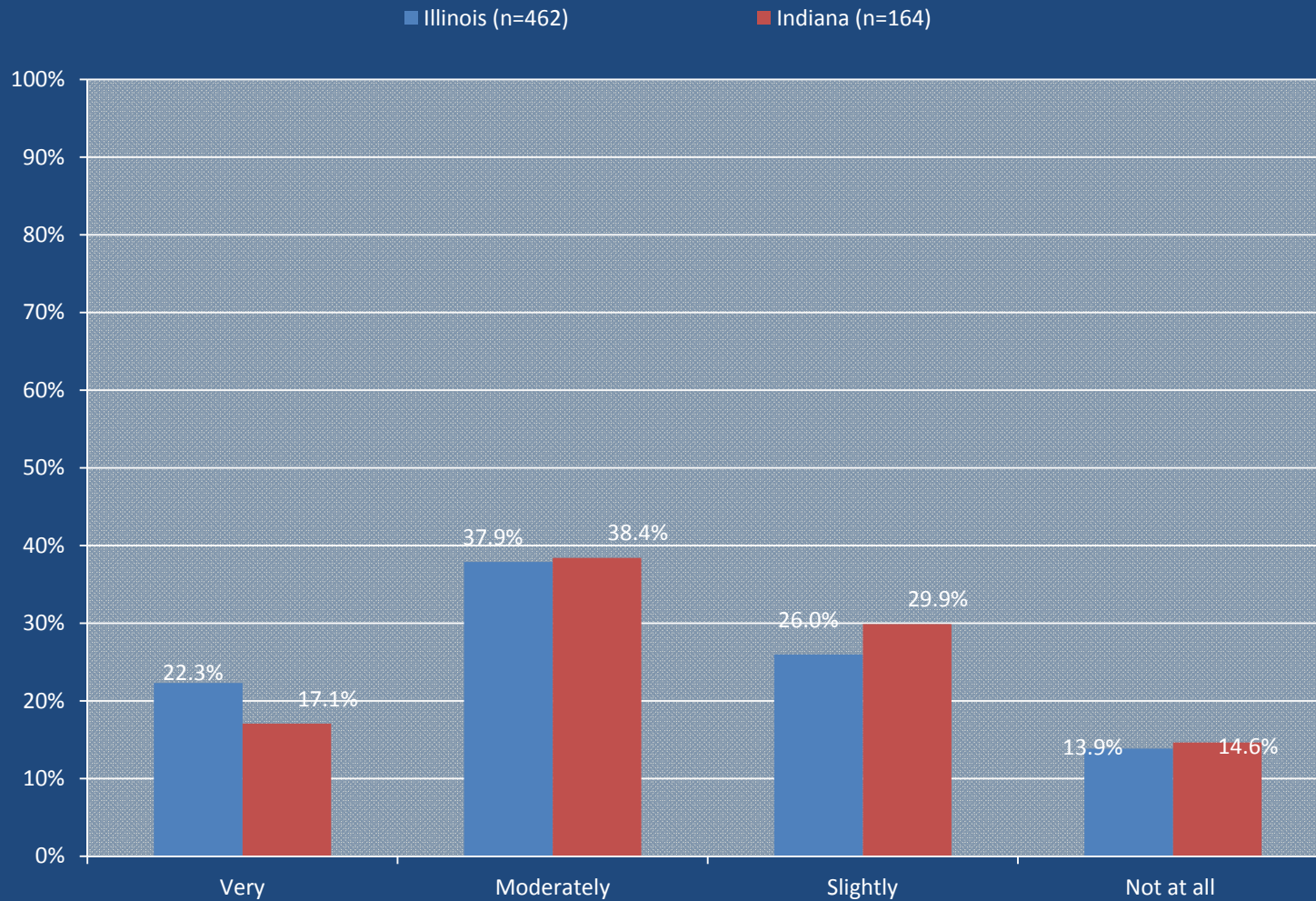


Survey of Public 2012

- “Evaluation of AIS and Recreational Water User Outreach Efforts”
- Association between exposure to AIS info and practicing preventive measures



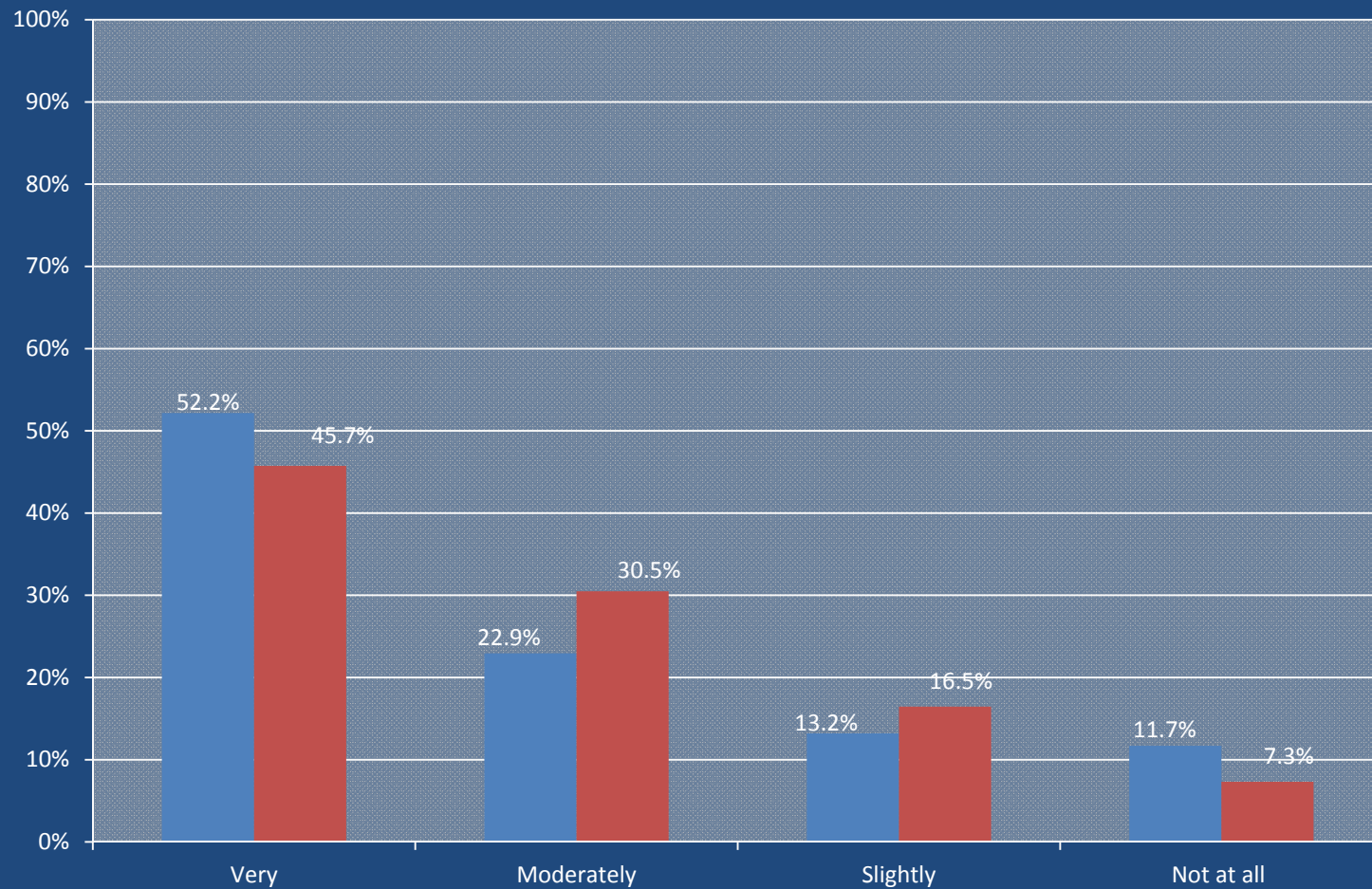
Knowledge of AIS 2012



Personal Responsibility 2012

■ Illinois (n=462)

■ Indiana (n=164)



Association with Clean Boats Crew

Illinois

- Perceived themselves to be very familiar with AIS (32.0% versus 10.8%)
- Feeling very responsible for helping to prevent the spread of AIS (63.2% versus 39.2%)

Indiana

- Perceived themselves to be very familiar with AIS (27.5% versus 4.1)
- Feeling very responsible for helping to prevent the spread of AIS (57.1% versus 31.5%)

Convergence

Illinois Boat Registration and Safety Act

- **Effective January 2013**
- Prohibits transport of aquatic plants and animals on recreational water vehicles and equipment
- Enforced by IDNR
- Fines involved



Additional AIS Outreach

- Boat ramp signs
- Bait shop posters



STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!


Invasive species like silver carp, zebra mussels, and the fish disease VHS harm our lakes and rivers. You can help prevent their spread...

Before leaving launch:	After leaving launch:
<p>Remove plants, animals and mud from equipment.</p> <p>Drain all water from equipment including live wells.</p>	<p>Dispose of unwanted bait and fish parts in trash—never in the water.</p> <p>Dry equipment for at least 5 days. OR</p> <p>Rinse all equipment with high pressure, hot water.</p>

Report unfamiliar species and large numbers of dead or sickly fish by calling IL DNR (217) 785-8772.



This material was made possible, in part, by a Cooperative Agreement from the United States Department of Agriculture's Forest and Wood Health Emergency Service (LAPFES). It may not accurately represent APFES' views.



DO NOT DUMP BAIT


INSPECT bait minnows for hitchhikers

REMOVE visible aquatic plants, non-bait fish, and other prohibited species

DISPOSE of unwanted bait in the trash

DRAIN bait bucket before moving to another waterbody

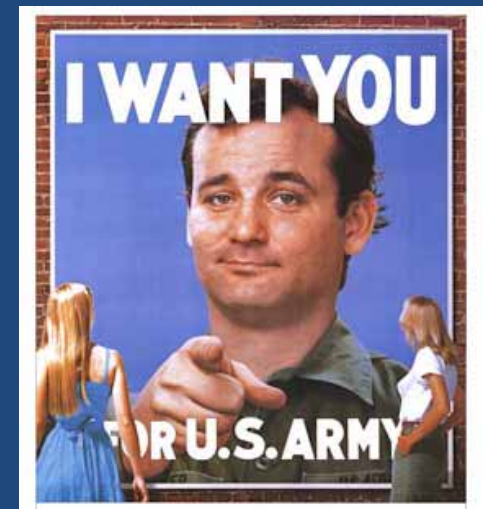
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The Hope

- Statewide expansion of volunteer program is still dependent on funding and a host agency in both Illinois and Indiana
- **ULTIMATE GOAL:** An army of volunteers and a full-time program coordinator for each state



Future Efforts

- Funding for 2014 and beyond
- Outreach to high schools, universities, colleges
- Outreach to homeowner and Lake Associations
- Continued media campaign
- Informal assessment of how Boat Act affects public knowledge



Acknowledgments

Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant

- Sarah Zack, AIS Specialist



Minnesota Sea Grant/Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

Wisconsin Clean Boats Clean Waters Program

Michigan Clean Boats Clean Waters Program



IL Department of Natural Resources

- Kevin Irons, ANS Coordinator



Assistant Coordinators/Site Leaders

- Elsa Holden, Valbona Kokoshi
- Gregg Zink, Brian Vallesky
- Dave Srebro, Hanna Mrozek
- Greg Tselepis, Elliott Heiney

Volunteers

Lynn Buchmeyer, VLMP (IL)



Thank you!

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