

EnviroScience, Inc. answers to FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. If weevils already occur in a lake, why do more need to be added?

Native populations are typically sparse and unable to keep up with the rapidly growing milfoil. By stocking large numbers of weevils all the same age in close proximity, the newly emerged adults will easily find each other to mate. Those adults can lay eggs for the next generation or two, which will hatch and begin damaging nearby healthy milfoil. This enables more rapid lake wide expansion of the weevil population.

2. Will the weevils become a nuisance?

No, because of their small size and eating habits. The weevils are about the size of a flea and you will not see them unless you look carefully. The weevils only eat Eurasian and Northern watermilfoils and the hybrid cross of the two. The weevils not only rely exclusively on milfoil for their food, but also for completion of their life cycle. The last generation of adults goes to shore in late fall to hibernate during the winter.

3. How many weevils are needed per acre of milfoil?

Weevils are not stocked on a per acre basis but rather on the size of the milfoil infestation, and to some extent how rapidly control is desired. Each water body is different. Long-term monitoring is an important component for any milfoil management program.

4. What is defined as long-term control of milfoil?

Visible signs of long-term control are a vast decrease in milfoil density and abundance, maintenance of any remaining stems below the lake surface at a non-nuisance level, and the increase in native plant species where milfoil once dominated. Milfoil can never be entirely eradicated from a water body, only managed. However, as the natural predator of milfoil, the weevil will return every spring and continue to damage and eliminate milfoil.

5. How long will it take to achieve lake-wide milfoil control?

Many factors play a role in determining the time needed for control, including lake size, quantity and density of the milfoil, and the number of weevils stocked. However, in most stocked lakes, lake-wide control (not eradication) has been achieved in three to five years.

6. When the levels of the Eurasian watermilfoil weed collapse because of predation by the weevils, what will the weevils eat?

Just like all predator/prey relationships, the weevil population in the lake will decrease naturally as the quantity of its food (milfoil) decreases. A low population of weevils will remain on scattered stems. If environmental factors favor milfoil resurgence, the weevil population increases and regains control within one to two seasons.

7. Does fish predation affect weevils?

No. Studies in New York and Michigan in the last five years found that milfoil weevils are not a preferred food choice.

8. Do weevils work in lakes with developed shoreline or high recreational activity?

Yes. EnviroScience has augmented successful long-term control programs in a variety of lakes with heavily developed shoreline and recreational traffic. Prior to installing weevils, it is recommended that the community be informed and educated about the use of weevils. EnviroScience marks the stocking areas with buoys during the first season to minimize propeller damage in the immediate area for a few weeks after stocking while the weevils become established. In addition, there are ways to encourage weevil populations through cultivating a more natural shoreline buffer zone.

9. What can I do to help keep the milfoil from further spreading?

Regardless of the management strategy, boaters can help to prevent further spread of the milfoil by avoiding very dense milfoil that is at the surface of the water. Milfoil fragments created by propellers will re-root themselves to grow healthy mature plants causing a larger infestation. Additionally, lakefront owners who harvest the milfoil on their property should be careful to pick up as many fragments as possible. Milfoil is rich in nitrogen, so use it as compost for your garden.