

Starry Stonewort (*Nitellopsis obtusa*)

Locations in Beltrami County

Waterbody name	Year listed as infested	Year species was first confirmed, or connected water body	DOW number
Beltrami	2019	2019	04-0135
Cass	2016	2016	04-0030
Moose	2016	2016	04-0011
Turtle (Big Turtle)	2016	2016	04-0159
Upper Red	2016	2016	04-0035-01
Wolf	2018	2018	04-0079

What is starry stonewort?

Starry stonewort is a grass-like algae that is not native to North America. Native to Europe and Asia, starry stonewort was first observed in the St. Lawrence River in 1978. The plant was first confirmed in Minnesota in Lake Koronis, near Paynesville in Stearns County, in late August of 2015. Plant fragments were probably brought into the state on a trailered watercraft from infested waters in another state. In August of 2016, starry stonewort was confirmed in several north-central Minnesota lakes in Beltrami, Itasca and Cass counties.



How to identify starry stonewort?

Starry stonewort is similar in appearance to native grass-like algae such as other stoneworts and musk-grass. Native stoneworts and musk-grass are both commonly found in Minnesota waters. Starry stonewort can be distinguished from other grass-like algae by the presence of star-shaped bulbils.

If you suspect you have found a new infestation of starry stonewort, or any other invasive species, note the exact location, take a photo or keep the specimen, and contact Beltrami County's AIS Lake Technician.

Why is Starry stonewort a problem?

Starry stonewort can interfere with recreational and other uses of lakes where it can produce dense mats at the water's surface. These mats can interfere with boating, fishing, waterfowl hunting, swimming and other recreation. Starry stonewort may choke out native plant communities.

Like all plants, starry stonewort may grow differently in different lakes, depending on many factors. At this time, we cannot predict how it might grow in any one Minnesota lake.

How does it spread?

Only male starry stonewort has been documented in the United States, so no "seeds" are produced. Starry stonewort is believed to be spread from one body of water to another by the unintentional transfer of plant fragments and bulbils, the star-like structures produced by the plant. These fragments, or mud containing them, can be transferred on trailered boats, personal watercraft, docks, boat lifts, anchors, or any other water-related equipment that is not properly cleaned.

