

## Invasive of the Week Watch: Spiny Water flea

By: Tanner Ruechel

The spiny water flea was discovered in Lake Mendota in 2009 and has been present in the Great Lakes for even longer. Special concern is given to this invasive because of its physical attributes, population density, and location. The largest this flea will get is 15mm making individuals very hard to see with the naked eye and easily transported in small amounts of water. Lake Mendota houses one of the largest densities of Spiny Water Flea in the world, both in native and invasive environments. Our local Lake Redstone is a meager 60 miles away from this haven for the spiny water flea.



As the name suggests, the spiny water flea has a large spine that projects from its back preventing fish from eating it. This predatory flea eats a native organism called daphnia, which is an essential part of the food chain for fish. Daphnia also play an important role by being the primary consumer of algae, increasing visibility and preventing algae blooms. Consequently, if spiny water fleas invade Lake Redstone then daphnia populations will decrease causing fish populations to plummet while leaving the lake vulnerable to algae blooms.

If you would like to help prevent Spiny Water Fleas and other invasive species from finding their way into Lake Redstone, please offer to volunteer a few hours on a weekend this summer with the Clean Boats Clean Waters by contacting Tanner Ruechel through email [ruechelt@gmail.com](mailto:ruechelt@gmail.com) or phone (920) 621-3282.