

The HACCP Approach to Prevent the Spread of Aquatic Invasive Species by Aquaculture and Baitfish Operations

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The potential exists for aquatic invasive species (AIS) to spread to uninfested waters through the transport of wild harvested baitfish and aquacultured fish. Baitfish and aquaculture industries are diverse and complex, as are their risks of spreading AIS. Most industry segments pose no or very low risk of spreading AIS. To deal effectively and fairly with this potential vector, it is important to characterize the industry according to their risks of spreading AIS. Without adequate risk assessment of individual operations, regulations could be imposed which would unnecessarily negatively impact the economy of these industries and still not effectively reduce the risk of spreading AIS. One approach to this problem is to apply the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) concept similar to that used by the seafood industry to minimize seafood consumption health risks. The advantages of this system are that it can effectively deal with a diverse industry, it has proven to be a good partnership between industry and government regulators, and when properly applied is effective. The HACCP approach concentrates on the points in the process that are critical to the safety of the product, minimizes risks, and stresses communication between regulators and the industry. The baitfish and aquaculture industries have been proactive in using the HACCP approach to prevent the spread of AIS by participating in training programs and implementing HACCP plans that are specific to their operations