

# News Release

## *National Wildlife Refuge System*



### Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### I Spy a Pretty Pink Flowering Invader on the River

Have you seen a new, pink flower growing on the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge (Refuge)? Flowering rush is a plant native to Eurasia but is invasive in North America. Blooms start in mid-June and continue into late summer. It can crowd out native vegetation, which provides better food and habitat for wildlife.

These aquatic invaders negatively impact fish and waterfowl habitats on the Refuge. The US Fish and Wildlife Service wants to know where this plant is growing. Refuge biologists and managers are working on a strategic response to this pretty pest.

Many types of invasive plants can be dug up and removed to control them, but NOT flowering rush! Not only is it prohibited to dig up vegetation on the Refuge without a permit, but this plant breaks apart easily and prefers to spread by these little floating, broken pieces.

If you find flowering rush, DO NOT TRY TO DIG IT UP! The best thing to do is pull out your phone and take a photo, report it on EDDMapS (<https://www.eddmaps.org>), and then leave it alone. The Refuge is monitoring this site continuously to be aware of new occurrences. For other inquiries or reports contact Stephen Winter 402-310-5460.

Flowering rush was probably brought here as a garden plant because of its pretty pink flower. It grows underwater in deeper areas of the river and sticks out of the water in shallower areas.

You can help prevent new invaders from entering the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge! This is a reminder for everyone who uses these valuable natural resources to be diligent in their efforts to not transport invasive and/or exotic species; remove vegetation from boat trailers, empty bait buckets on land, pull your drain plugs, and NEVER release anything from your home into the wild.

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*The Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge is the most visited refuge in the United States. The refuge extends 261 miles along the Upper Mississippi River from Wabasha, Minn. to Rock Island, Ill., protecting and preserving habitat for migratory birds, fish, and a variety of other wildlife. This 240,000 acre refuge was established in 1924.*

*In addition to being the most visited refuge in the country, the “Upper Miss” Refuge has the added complexity of a major navigation system, including 11 locks and dams, within its boundary. It is also a world-class fish and wildlife area which harbors 306 species of birds; 119 species of fish; more than 300 active bald eagle nests; thousands of heron and egret nests; spectacular concentrations of canvasback ducks, tundra swans, and white pelicans; and several threatened or endangered species.*

*The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.*