

Words Have Power: More Effective Aquatic Invasive Species Common Names

Western Regional Panel Annual Conference Workshop, Wednesday, September 21, 2022.

1:30-4:00 PM with breaks, summary, and take-away actions

Workshop facilitators: Sam Chan, Sea Grant Extension, Oregon State University; Cat de Rivera, Portland State University, WRP Coastal Committee; Wei Ying Wong, Alaska Sea Life; Monica McGarrity, Texas Parks and Wildlife, WRP Education Committee; and Tammy Davis, Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Workshop Overview: While thoughtful language use can improve the efficacy for invasive species awareness, prevention, early detection and management, poorly chosen rhetoric can cause confusion and even undermine our mission. Common names for species introduced to a region, which become invasive, are essential communication tools for engaging the public and often with managers in our agencies, towards identification, understanding impacts, prevention and EDRR (Early Detection and Rapid Response) goals. For example, the zebra mussel, common name for *Dreissena polymorpha*, and even the scientific name provides distinguishing identification characteristics. However, some common names can project unintended racism or xenophobia, while some place-based species names are inaccurate and cause people to inappropriately attribute harm to believed places of origin. Repercussions from using these names may include eroded credibility and deflect the public's focus from practicing and sharing best prevention practices, assist in early detection, and support for management policies. Across multiple ecological professional societies (e.g., The Entomological Society of American, American Fisheries Society, North American Invasive Species Management Association), managers, researchers, educators, policy makers and communicators are investigating and implementing more inclusive and effective common names. Increasing awareness and leadership from professional science-based and management communities of practice such as the Western Regional Panel, can effectively drive positive scientific, outreach and socially responsible change. Yet, the reality is that examinations and changes towards better common names and rhetoric (communicating impacts and management approaches) about invasive species are not always easy to institutionalize. Therefore, **the goal of the workshop is to:**

Provide context and tools for WRP participants to effect change within our professional sphere.

- 1) Participants will come away with a clear understanding and credible data on why this discussion matters.
- 2) Build confidence in communicating compelling translations for of better common names and rhetoric to other professionals within your organization and networks.
- 3) Through small group exercises, role play to address negative feedback on problematic common names, learn ways and the process (e.g., need, developing a name, engagement, rollout) to effect change and address barrier towards a better common name for a particular invasive species relevant to the WRP.
- 4) Take away actions for yourself, your agencies, your partners/networks resources and support you may need to proceed for effecting better common names.

1:30 pm	Welcome and Introductions	Cat de Rivera, Portland State University Sam Chan, Oregon Sea Grant
1:40 – 2:05 pm	Understanding the landscape of systemic attitudes/behavior/language as they relate to science	Wei Ying Wong, Alaska Sea Life Center
2:05 – 2:10 pm	Reflection with person seated next to you	
2:10 – 2:25 pm	Criteria for better common names	Sam Chan Cat de Rivera
2:25 – 3:00 pm	Role playing to address institutional and outreach process for effecting changes to problematic names. Identify species frequently encountered, and hurdles. How to anticipate reactions on changes to problematic names (e.g., negative, and positive feedback)	Monica McGarrity, Texas Parks and Wildlife
3:00 – 3:10 pm	Break	
3:10 – 3:45 pm	Discussion: A pathway to introspection. Creating solutions/model case studies /lessons learned	Wei Ying Wong Cat de Rivera Sam Chan
3:45 – 4:00 pm	Take-away tools, case studies, and actions for next steps.	Wei Ying Wong Cat de Rivera Sam Chan Monica McGarrity Tammy Davis