

Native vs. Invasive Phragmites

The native strain of Phragmites (*P. australis subspecies americanus*) is an important component of a healthy wetland ecosystem. It also grows in marshland habitat but, unlike the invasive variety, it does not develop into dense areas and does not negatively affect habitat.

Following are some basic tips to help you tell the difference between the native and invasive species. Find out more at www.opwg.ca.

NATIVE



Lower-density growth



Red/brown new growth



Stems are smooth and shiny with yellow/green leaves. Leaf sheaths fall off in fall and are easily removed.

INVASIVE



High-density growth



Tan/beige new growth



Stems are rough and dull with blue/green leaves. Leaf sheaths remain attached and are difficult to remove.

Adapted from www.opwg.ca/phragmites/native-vs-invasive.



If you find an injured turtle, call us immediately!

705-741-5000

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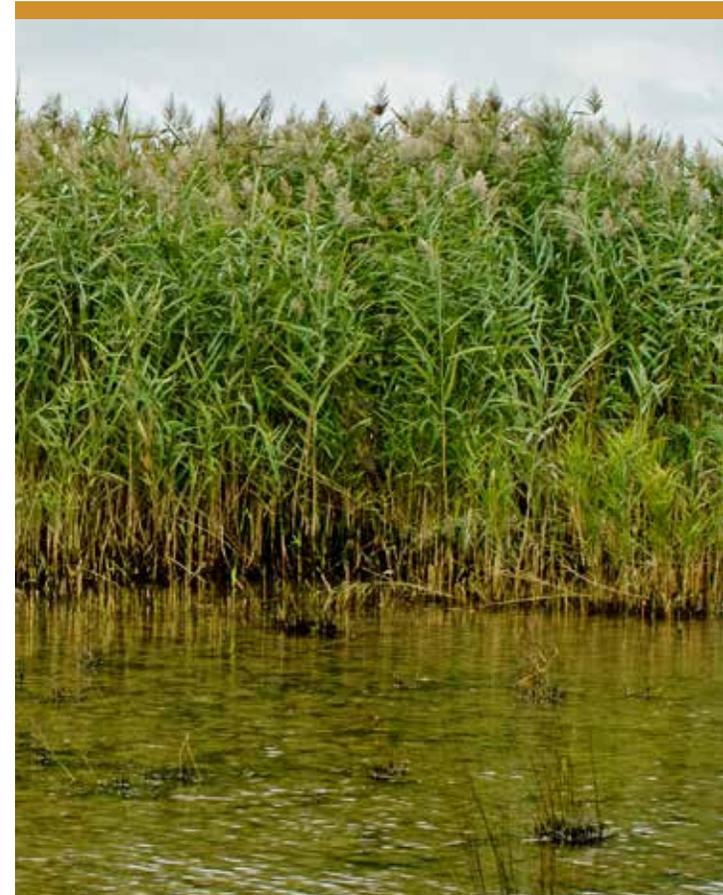


The Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre respectfully acknowledges that it is situated on the treaty and traditional territory of the Michi Saagig Anishnaabeg. We offer our gratitude to the First Peoples for their care for, and teachings about, our earth and our relations.

*The legal name of OTCC is the Kawartha Turtle Trauma Centre.
Charitable Registration # 85752 4409 RR0001*

Invasive Phragmites

A threat to Ontario's turtle habitats



ONTARIO TURTLE
CONSERVATION CENTRE

Invasive Phragmites can take over wetland areas with devastating consequences

The problem with invasive Phragmites

Invasive Phragmites (*Phragmites australis*), also called the 'European common reed,' is found in marsh systems worldwide. It is a very tall plant – up to 5 metres – with a plume-like head. This invasive, non-native species was accidentally introduced here hundreds of years ago and has since spread across North America.

Invasive Phragmites is a very vigorous and hardy plant. Once it is established, it can 'take over,' pushing out native plants, and creating dense and impenetrable areas. This alters the biodiversity of the wetland it is inhabiting and greatly alters the terrain.

Habitat loss affects Ontario's turtles

Ontario's eight native turtle species are all considered "at-risk" federally. There are many reasons for turtle population decline, but habitat loss and fragmentation remain the prime reasons.

Development and roads eat up Ontario's turtle's wetland homes and make travel deadly, but altering the makeup of the habitat also has devastating consequences. Not only can dense Phragmites areas make travel for turtles impossible, but it also affects the environment they need for nesting. In many areas of Ontario, suitable nesting habitat is greatly reduced by Phragmites overgrowth. Phragmites also affects the climate of the nest, which in turn can affect whether the hatchlings are male or female.

What is the solution?

While Phragmites looks to be a long-term problem and it is continuing to invade wetlands across Ontario, there is hope. Wetlands that are 'reclaimed' from Phragmites have been seen to rebound quickly and native wildlife does return once the dense growth has been removed.

Best practices for invasive Phragmites control includes many techniques; consult with experts to learn more. Search 'Phragmites Best Management Practices' for some great resources for effective Phragmites control.

Working together, we can curb the spread of this dangerous invasive species!



Photo: Scott Gillingwater

Wetlands that are 'reclaimed' from Phragmites have been seen to rebound quickly and native wildlife does return once the dense growth has been removed.



How You Can Help

- Learn to identify invasive (non-native) Phragmites.
- If you have invasive Phragmites on your property, visit the Ontario Phragmites Working Group's site at www.opwg.ca to learn methods of control.
- Prevent the spread – clean your gear when participating in outdoor activities, to ensure you are not carrying away invasive seeds or plants.
- Report sightings of Phragmites to the Invading Species Hotline at 1-800-563-7711 or online through EDDMapS Ontario.
- Join the "phrag fighters"! Visit the websites of the Ontario Phragmites Working Group (www.opwg.ca) and Great Lakes Phragmites Collaborative (www.greatlakesphragmites.net) for ways to get involved.

