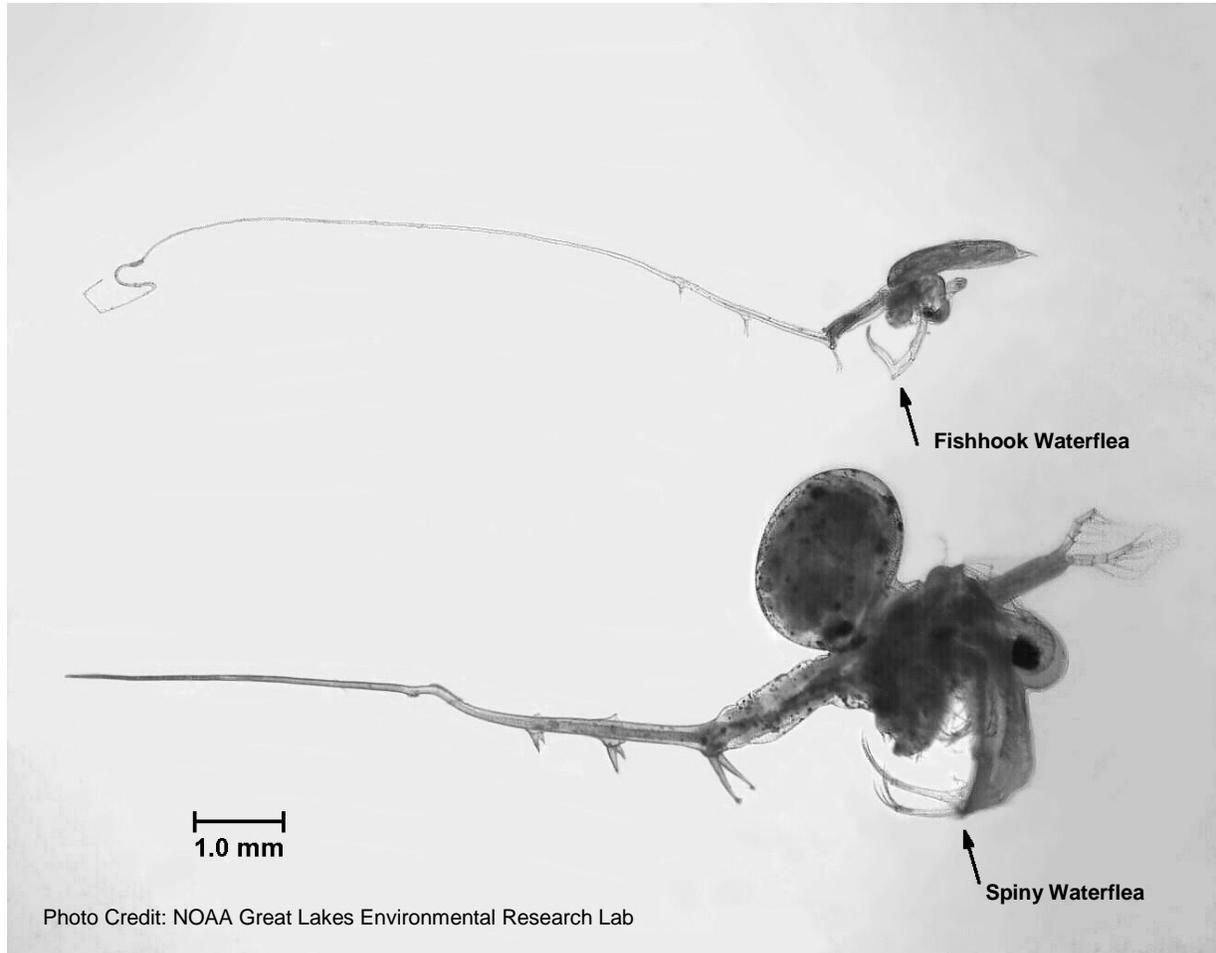


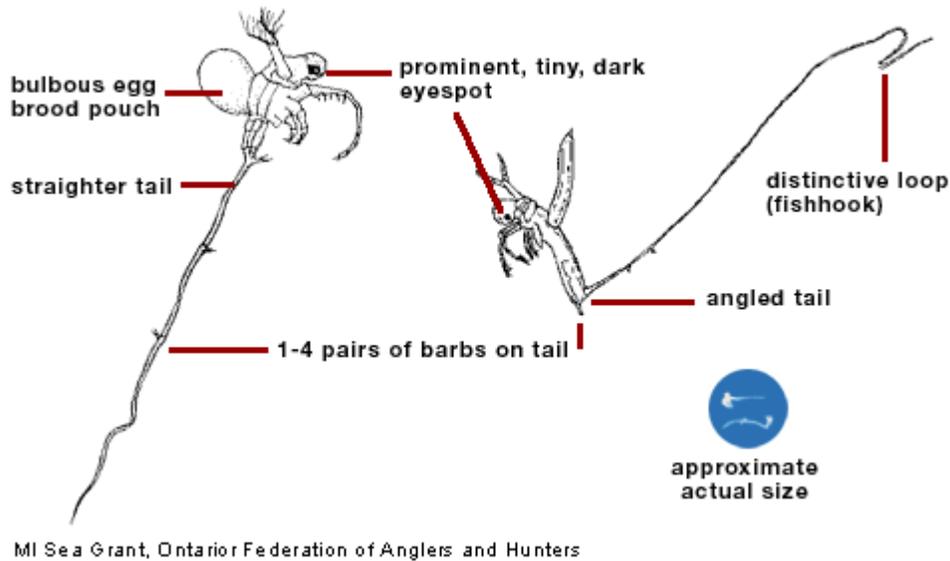
# Fishhook Waterfleas - (*Cercopagis pengoi*) and Spiny Waterflea - (*Bythotrephes longimanus*)



The fishhook and spiny waterfleas are small predacious crustaceans that threaten aquatic ecosystems and fishing by competing with native fish for food and fouling gear. Both arrived in ship's ballast water from Eurasia. Spiny waterfleas were discovered in Lake Ontario in 1982; then spread to all the Great Lakes and some inland lakes. Fishhook waterfleas were first discovered in Lake Ontario in 1998; then spread to parts of lakes Michigan, Erie, and the Finger Lakes of New York.

Anglers often discover new infestations. Both waterfleas collect in masses on fishing lines and downrigger cables. These masses can clog the first eyelet of rods, damage a reel's drag system, and prevent fish from being landed. They can spread to inland waters when fishing gear is contaminated with egg-laden females. While females die out of water, under certain conditions they produce eggs that resist drying, remain viable, and can establish a new population. Eradicating established infestations is impossible. Your help detecting and reporting new infestations is vital for preventing their spread.

## Identification of Invasive Waterfleas:



## General Characteristics:



Spiny Waterfleas collect in masses on fishing lines.

- Difficult to distinguish without magnification 1/4-5/8 inches (5-15 mm) total length
- Clumps look and feel like gelatin or cotton batting with tiny black spots
- Prefer deep lakes, but can establish in shallow waterbodies and rivers
- Abundant during summer (June-September) depending upon water temperatures

## What You Can Do:

- Learn to recognize these waterfleas on fishing gear
- Inspect and remove aquatic plants and animals, including gelatinous or cotton batting-like material from lines, especially where they meet a swivel, lure or downrigger ball connection (plucking like a guitar string helps)
- Drain lake or river water from livewell and bilge before leaving access
- Dispose of unwanted live bait in the trash

- Report new sightings - record exact location; store specimens in rubbing alcohol; in Saskatchewan contact the nearest Ministry of Environment office, the TIP line at 1-800-667-7561 or Ron Hlasny, Aquatic Biologist with Fish and Wildlife Branch at 1-306-953-3242.

## **Know the rules!**

Specimens are needed to confirm sightings, but some jurisdictions prohibit or discourage possession and transport of waterfleas and other invasive aquatic plants and animals. Contact the nearest Ministry of Environment office, the TIP line at 1-800-667-7561 or Ron Hlasny, Aquatic Biologist with Fish and Wildlife Branch at 1-306-953-3242. Unauthorized introduction of plants or fish into the wild is illegal. Protect your property and our waters.