

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2003, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Hydrilla Eradication Program continued to make substantial progress in eradicating hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*) from California's waterways. The combination of intensive surveys, eradication efforts, and public education has proven to be effective in combating this invasive noxious aquatic weed. As a result, no new infested areas have been detected since 1997, despite intensive annual surveys and extensive public education.

Highlights of the CDFA Hydrilla Eradication Program are as follows:

- 1) In Shasta County, no hydrilla has been detected in the Anderson ponds since 1999. In the Redding golf course ponds, only one hydrilla plant was detected in 2003, compared to eight different infested sites in the largest pond in 2003, and 10 plants in one of the smaller ponds in 2002.
- 2) In Lake County, the number of hydrilla finds in Clear Lake has decreased from 208 finds in 1997 to one plant in 2003. Concurrently, the number of infested management units has decreased from 48 in 1997 to one in 2003.
- 3) In Yuba County, in the Yuba County Water District Canal, the tuber count decreased from 316 tubers per meter-squared in the fall of 1998 to only one tuber per meter-squared in 2003. In 2003, one new infested pond within the project area was detected; herbicide treatments are proving effective in the other ponds.
- 4) In Calaveras County, project personnel continue to detect scattered hydrilla plants in the lowest unit of the Bear Creek project and Mokelumne Hill project. No hydrilla has been detected since 1999 in other units of the Bear Creek project.
- 5) In Madera and Mariposa counties, no hydrilla plants have been detected in Eastman Lake since 1993. In the Chowchilla River, the number of hydrilla plants has declined from 6,484 in 1993 to zero plants in 2003.
- 6) In Tulare County, the number of rooted hydrilla plants declined from a high of 58 in 1999 to zero hydrilla plants in 2002 and zero plants in 2003.
- 7) In Imperial County, the number of infested sites decreased from 67 in 1994 to two in 2003. In addition, in the last few years, only a few hydrilla plants have been found each year at each site.
- 8) No hydrilla has been detected in the Delta or any of the lower reaches of the Sacramento/San Joaquin and Feather rivers since the CDFA initiated boat-based surveys in the mid-1980's. In addition to the annual boat-based survey, in 2003 the CDFA also cooperated with the California Department of Boating and Waterways and the University of California in researching a remote sensing technique (hyperspectral analysis) to survey for aquatic weeds in the Delta, including hydrilla.

- 9) During 2003, Hydrilla Eradication Program personnel gave 22 speeches on hydrilla, and distributed over 1,400 brochures. In addition, personnel attended various functions in which they could answer questions from the public about hydrilla.

The CDFA Hydrilla Eradication Program is administered by the CDFA Integrated Pest Control Branch, but is supported by various federal, state, county and local agencies, Native American tribes, and private entities. The program is an outstanding example of inter-agency cooperation to meet goals and objectives.

The CDFA Hydrilla Eradication Program continued to make significant gains in eradicating hydrilla from California's waterways in 2003. Active hydrilla infestations are under control in all infested areas, and no new infestations have been detected since 1997.