



Salvinia

The threat: Salvinia can seriously affect our native freshwater plants and animals, block drains, and stop people from enjoying water-based recreation.

Why is Salvinia a pest?

Salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*) is a rapidly growing freshwater plant that forms large dense floating mats that can completely cover entire waterbodies. It can double its size in just two weeks in the sub-tropical temperatures of Northland. In warmer conditions, it can double its weight in just over two days.

The dense mats of salvinia crowd out native water plants and cause the loss of open water and nesting sites for waterfowl. They also shade and decrease oxygen levels in the water, affecting water quality and submerged plants and animals such as freshwater mussels.

The floating mats can affect flood control and block hydro electricity turbines and irrigation systems. They also increase the risk of drowning for people and livestock and prevent boats and other recreational uses of water bodies.

Salvinia is spread by water currents, by animals and by contaminated equipment such as boats and trailers.

Salvinia is one of the pests being eradicated under the National Interest Pest Response programme led and funded by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) in partnership with regional councils and the Department of Conservation. It is both a notifiable organism and an unwanted organism under the Biosecurity Act 1993 and is banned from sale, propagation and distribution.

Where is it found?

Salvinia is found mostly in the warmer areas of the North Island, although sites have been recorded as far south as Christchurch.

It has the potential to establish in most lowland areas of the North Island and warmer coastal regions of the South Island.

What does Salvinia look like?

Salvinia is a free-floating fern that forms rosettes. Young plants have small pale green leaves that lie flat on the surface of the water and are attached to a horizontal stem just below the water surface. Mature plants are brown and more crowded, form dense mats and have root like structures hanging down into the water.

You can help us to get rid of Salvinia.

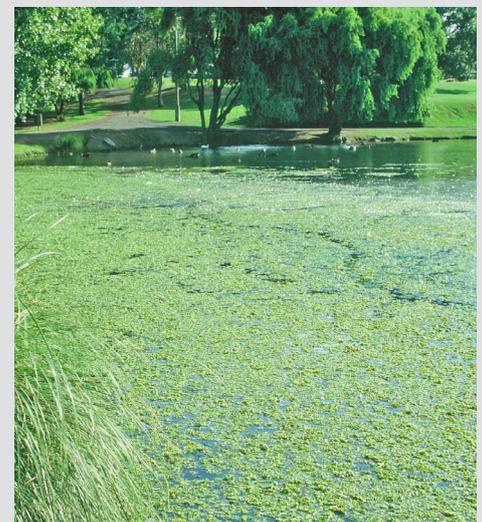
If you have seen it or suspect you have seen it, please contact the Biosecurity New Zealand Exotic Pest and Disease Hotline on **0800 80 99 66** or online at: report.mpi.govt.nz/pest



Underwater view of Salvinia plants.



Salvinia forms dense floating mats.



Salvinia infestation.