
THE SCIENCE OF FELT: A LOOK AT THE RESEARCH DRIVING THE MOVE TO ELIMINATE FELT SOLED WADERS

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One key to preventing new aquatic invasive species (AIS) introductions is to understand introduction pathways in order to implement prevention strategies. Significant evidence suggests that some AIS are being transported by wading anglers and many new introductions can be traced to this pathway. Research conducted in New Zealand and Montana has provided a better understanding of how AIS are likely spread by anglers and what might be required to reduce the risk of angler transport. The most significant finding is that the felt material glued to the soles of wading boots is a very problematic material and is far more likely to viably transport AIS than any other material used in waders. Based on this research, New Zealand instituted a national ban on the use of felt soles in October 2008. In the US, Alaska has announced a ban for parts of the state beginning in 2011 and New Mexico is considering a statewide ban. This presentation will provide an overview of the research into felt soles and will summarize how companies, agencies, policy makers and the public are reacting to the use of felt.