

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### **What is Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA)?**

Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) is an invasive insect that threatens eastern hemlock trees. While not harmful to humans or pets, it can cause severe damage to hemlock trees by feeding on their plant fluids. This feeding can lead to needle drop, twig dieback, and even the death of the tree in as little as four years.

HWA is native to East Asia, particularly Japan, and was accidentally introduced to North America through infested nursery stock. The insect itself is very small, about 1.5mm, but its egg sacs are more visible, roughly the size of a quarter of a cotton swab. Learn more [HERE](#).

### **Where was HWA recently detected?**

HWA was recently detected at St. Johns Conservation Area (St. Johns), which is located on the boundary between Thorold and Pelham. Currently, the insect is found in trees located off hiking trails.

The invasive forest pest was previously detected at Rockway, Ball's Falls, and Long Beach conservation areas. The pest may spread to other sites with hemlock trees, therefore caution and awareness is strongly encouraged.

### **What is the role of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) in the HWA detection?**

The CFIA is the federal authority that validates detections, issues formal notices, enforces movement restrictions, and guides national response measures for HWA, working alongside local partners like conservation authorities. Learn more about their role [HERE](#).

### **What does a "Notice of Quarantine" (NOQ) mean?**

In response to each detection, the CFIA issued a Notice of Quarantine (NOQ) for the affected areas, restricting the movement and removal of any hemlock species and their parts (leaves, branches, twigs, etc.). The notice did not require the closure or rerouting of trails, allowing the public to continue enjoying these areas while containment measures are in place.

The affected trees were under quarantine. The trails and parks were not.

### **What does a Notice of Prohibition of Movement (POM) mean?**

The CFIA issues a Notice of Prohibition of Movement (POM) once lab samples return and it is a confirmed case of HWA. The notice continues to restrict the movement and removal of any hemlock species and their parts (leaves, branches, twigs, etc.) from the infested area to prevent the spread of HWA.

### **How does HWA spread?**

HWA can be spread through wind, wildlife, humans, and the movement of infested wood products such as nursery stock, logs, firewood, and other materials. HWA can attach to clothing, shoes, and accessories, making it increasingly important to brush off and wipe down belongings following visits to conservation areas. Visitors to conservation areas can help prevent the spread by being cautious about what they bring and take from affected areas, and avoiding coming into contact with hemlock trees, including its branches and needles.

### **Why is early detection important?**

Early detection is vital and when the invasive species is spotted early, there is an opportunity to get ahead of it and actively work towards preventing its spread. This proactive approach is crucial to minimizing its impact.

### **What are the signs of an HWA infestation?**

- Cottony white egg sacs at the base of tree needles (about 3-6 mm in size), resembling cotton balls or clumps of snow.
- Swelling at the tips of twigs.
- Twig dieback.
- Grey foliage and defoliation at the stand level.

### **How can I help prevent the spread of HWA?**

Public education is crucial to preventing the spread. By staying informed and following the guidelines, everyone can play a role in helping to reduce the risk of spreading invasive species. Remember, don't actively search for the invasive species—just enjoy your time outdoors while staying on the trail.

Visitors to conservation areas should follow these guidelines:

- Stay on the trails and keep dogs on a leash.
- Do not remove any natural material such as branches, leaves, and twigs from the conservation area.
- Use a lint roller to remove potential crawlers from clothing.
- Avoid placing gear near hemlock trees.
- Brush off hats, coats, and footwear after being outdoors.
- Wash all clothing before entering another conservation area or woodlot.
- Wipe down all equipment with an ethanol-based cleaner.

### **Should I avoid visiting the affected areas?**

Conservation areas where HWA has been detected remain open and there are no concerns to humans or animals. However, we recommend taking precautions if you plan to visit areas with hemlock trees.

Enjoy your time and stay on trails. If you're enjoying the trails with a four-legged companion, keep them on a leash to avoid further spread. Additionally, please refer to the guidelines noted above during and after your visit to a conservation area.

### **Can I remove natural materials like twigs or leaves from conservation areas?**

Visitors are asked to not remove any natural materials such as twigs, branches, or leaves from conservation areas. This is already noted in NPCA's conservation area rules and regulations; however, it's increasingly important in the context of preventing the spread of invasive species, including HWA, to other areas.

### **What is NPCA doing to manage HWA and what other agencies have been involved?**

NPCA is working with the CFIA to determine best containment and control practices and is following their recommendations. NPCA is also collaborating closely with the Invasive Species Centre, who have provided valuable expertise to implement localized action. Guidance from both agencies has helped NPCA take early detection and active response measures to manage invasive species effectively at the conservation areas.

NPCA staff are actively engaged in a Community of Practice with the Invasive Species Centre and CFIA, ensuring that actions are informed by the latest research and best practices. See Invasive Species Centre [HWA Management Guide](#) for more information.

NPCA staff are closely monitoring the ongoing situation at NPCA conservation areas and working to increase community awareness about the infestation and ways to prevent the spread.

Since early 2024, NPCA has been proactively developing a comprehensive HWA management plan. This important work is progressing, with a strong focus on treatment options, ongoing monitoring, and public outreach. Several control measures include spray and injection treatments. These options require specialized licenses, trained personnel, and equipment. Recognizing that invasive species management requires a collaborative approach, NPCA is working closely with municipal partners, the Invasive Species Centre, and the CFIA to align efforts and share resources.

Lastly, NPCA is leading the development of a watershed-wide Invasive Species Strategy with several municipal partners and groups in the Niagara Peninsula watershed to provide high-level guidance and information towards a collaborative approach to invasive species management. An Invasive Species Workshop hosted by NPCA in February 2025 included



discussions about invasive species in the watershed, new and potential invasive species like HWA, and on-going problems with species like Phragmites (Common Reed).

### **How will I know if a trail or park is affected by HWA?**

The NPCA will continue to keep community members informed through social media updates, website, and direct communication to ensure everyone is aware of sites where HWA is detected. Additionally, informational signs will be installed at St. Johns, Rockway, Long Beach, and Ball's Falls.

### **Where can I find more information about HWA?**

For more detailed information about HWA, visit the Invasive Species Centre website or refer to the FAQ section on the [Canada Food Inspection Agency's website](#).

For NPCA specific details, visit [Forest Health and Management page](#) and follow on [social media](#) for updates.

### **What should I do if I spot HWA?**

If you spot HWA or suspect an infestation, you can report it through:

- EDDMapS app or website: <https://www.eddmaps.org/>.
- The [iNaturalist](#) app or website.
- [Invading Species Hotline: 1-800-563-7711](#)
- Email [kroyer@npca.ca](mailto:kroyer@npca.ca) if spotted at NPCA conservation areas not previously mentioned.