

Courtesy Boat Inspections

Summary Report

2011 Season

Maine Department of Environmental Protection



Background

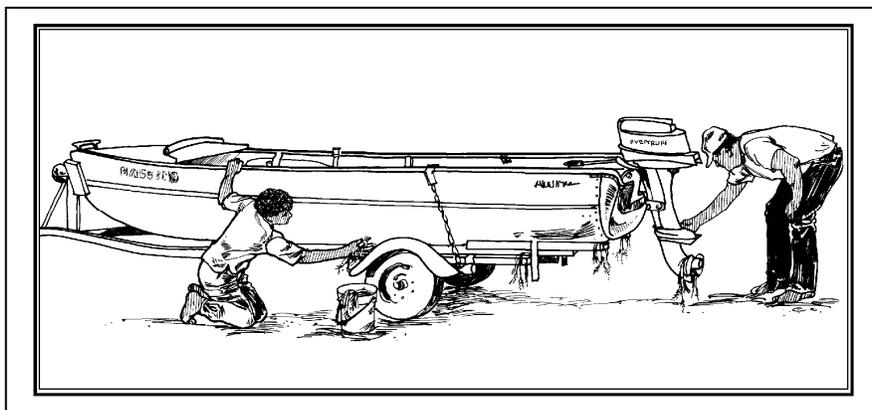
Maine's Courtesy Boat Inspection (CBI) Program completed its 11th year in 2011. The purpose of these voluntary inspections is to reduce the spread of invasive aquatic plants (IAP) by boats, trailers, and associated equipment to Maine waters. Trained Courtesy Boat Inspectors describe to boaters the risk posed by IAP, show boaters how to inspect and remove vegetation from boating and fishing equipment, and answer questions regarding IAP.

The Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) continues to contract with Lakes Environmental Association in Bridgton to train volunteers and organize the inspections; Maine Congress of Lake Associations trains volunteers in northern and eastern Maine.

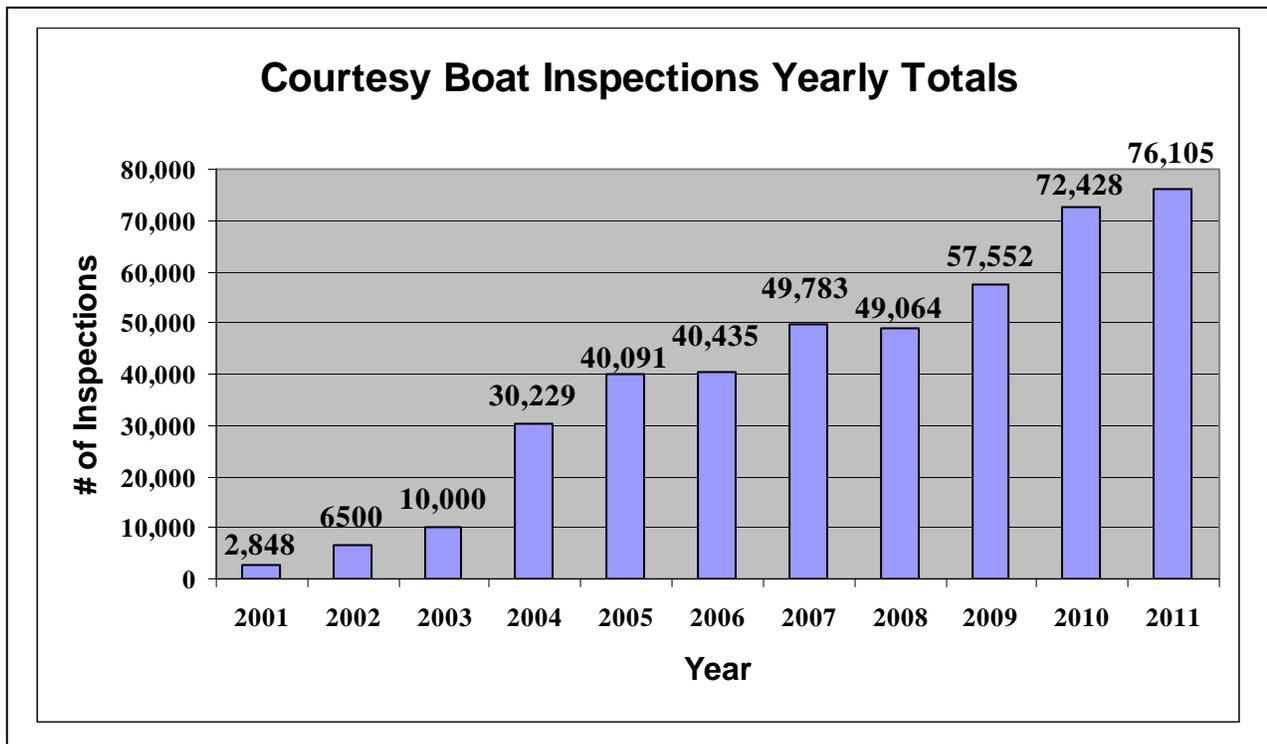
Courtesy Boat Inspection Results Summary – 2011 Season

The 2011 boating season was yet again another record-breaker: inspectors conducted 76,105 Courtesy Boat Inspections, an increase of 3,677 over 2010. To achieve this, 2,719 additional inspection hours were logged in 2011 for a total of 39,884 hours, roughly equivalent to 19 full-time employees. Boats were inspected both entering and leaving with the majority of inspections (59%) conducted on boats entering. Maintaining this high level of prevention effort is a tremendous achievement for local and regional groups running the inspection programs.

For the second year in a row, bass clubs participating in bass tournaments were required to conduct inspections as a condition of their permit from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. As a result 65 bass clubs conducted 6,532 inspections at tournaments.



Below is a summary of the information obtained during the 2011 Courtesy Boat Inspection season:



- 76,105 total inspections on both motorized and non-motorized boats
- 92% of the motorized boats had the Lake & River Protection Sticker
- 154 launch sites on 116 waterbodies had Courtesy Boat Inspections
- 14 infested waterbodies had a Courtesy Boat Inspection Program
- 1786 inspections (2.4%) yielded plant fragments – native or invasive
 - of these intercepted plant fragments, 287 (16%) were “saves” (invasive plants) found primarily on boats *exiting* infested waters
- 50 organizations conducted courtesy boat inspections – plus 65 bass clubs inspected at their own tournaments
- 714 courtesy boat inspectors (paid and volunteer) worked a total of 39,884 hours

Maine’s Combined Watercraft Registration and “Milfoil Sticker”



Maine law states that all motorized boats operated on inland (non-tidal) waters must pay to support state efforts to prevent, detect, and control invasive aquatic species. For Maine-registered boats, proof of paying the annual \$10 fee for invasive species work is the “Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers - Preserve Maine Waters” sticker attached to the watercraft registration (see above). Owners of non-Maine registered boats must pay \$20 annually and display the stand-alone Lake and River Protection sticker (below). These fees have been in place since the 2002 boating season. For questions about Maine DEP use of these funds please email milfoil@maine.gov.

While both motorized and non-motorized boats are inspected, sticker compliance results are calculated using just the motorized boats since these are required by Maine law to display one of the two stickers described above.

Total Motorized Boats with Sticker = 92%
 Maine Boats: 96%
 Non-Maine Boats: 77%



Plant Interceptions and Saves

Inspections that yielded plants – invasive and/or native – on boats *exiting* infested lakes ranged from 0% at six of the fourteen infested waterbodies with inspection programs to 59% at Lake Arrowhead in Limerick. The next highest transmission rate was 27% at Pleasant Pond in Litchfield. The high rates are likely due to the fact that these lakes have thick plant colonies, either invasive or native, growing at or near the ramps whereas the other infested lakes do not. Statewide, the percent of inspections that intercepted plants ranged from 2.1% to 3.2% between 2004 and 2011.

A “save” is when an intercepted plant turns out to be one of the plants on Maine’s prohibited list. A total of 1786 plants were found during inspections; 287 of these were invasive plants. For the eighth consecutive year the Courtesy Boat Inspection Program again confirmed instances of invasive plant interceptions *prior* to boat launching. The table on the following page contains 7 ‘saves’ of particular note because these lakes do not contain the plant intercepted by the inspector.

Confirmed “Saves” on Entering Boats of Particular Note

LAKE NAME	Town	Number of “saves” entering	Invasive Plant	Last Lake Visited
Damariscotta Lake	Jefferson	2	Eurasian water milfoil	Conesus Lake, NY
Great Pond	Belgrade	1	Curly-leaf pondweed	Great Pond, ME
Great East Lake	Acton	2	Eurasian milfoil; Variable leaf milfoil	Winnepesaukee, NH & Cayuga, NY
Kezar Lake	Lovell	1	Eurasian water milfoil	Tripp Lake, ME
Salmon Lake	Belgrade	1	variable leaf milfoil	Messalonskee Lake, ME

Each species in the above table is prohibited by Maine law and as such is considered a threat to Maine waters. Eurasian water milfoil, curly-leaf pondweed, and variable water milfoil are known to be in lakes, ponds and streams in Maine.

Tripp Lake (Poland) was identified as the last lake visited by the boater entering Kezar Lake (Lovell) with a Eurasian water milfoil fragment. As a result, the VLMP Invasive Plant Patrol First Responders conducted a complete shoreline survey of Tripp Lake for invasive plants within three weeks of the inspector’s save in Lovell. Fortunately these volunteer surveyors did not discover Eurasian water milfoil or any other invasive plants. It is possible that the fragment originated in another lake but remained on the trailer during the Tripp Lake visit or that the boater remembered incorrectly. In the unlikely event that a colony of Eurasian water milfoil was overlooked during the survey in late June and July of 2011, Tripp Lake will be monitored for invasive aquatic plants again in 2012.

An additional 38 saves on entering boats were variable water milfoil on lakes with established populations of that plant (e.g., Lake Arrowhead). Finally, the majority of invasive plant “saves” (242 out of 287) were variable milfoil on boats exiting infested waters (see table below).

Confirmed “Saves” on All Other Boats 2011

LAKE NAME	Town	Number of “saves”	Boat Direction	Invasive Plant
Balch Pond	Newfield	1	Entering	Variable leaf milfoil
		6	Leaving	Variable leaf milfoil
Lake Arrowhead	Limerick	26	Entering	Variable leaf milfoil
		129	Leaving	Variable leaf milfoil
Messalonskee Lake	Oakland/Sydney	8	Leaving	Variable leaf milfoil
Pleasant Pond	Litchfield	3	Entering	Variable leaf milfoil
		12	Leaving	Variable leaf milfoil
Sebago Lake	Raymond	6	Leaving	Variable leaf milfoil
Sebago Lake	State Park	1	Entering	Variable leaf milfoil
		79	Leaving	Variable leaf milfoil
Songo River	Naples	7	Entering (Upstream)	Variable leaf milfoil
		1	Leaving (Downstream)	Variable leaf milfoil
Thompson Lake	Oxford	1	Leaving	Variable leaf milfoil

Other reported invasive plant saves could not be confirmed by state program experts either because definitive identification was not possible or because the suspicious plant was not sent in for identification. These saves are not recorded.

Conclusions

The CBI Program owes its success to the dedicated volunteer inspectors and to those who coordinate their organization's boat inspection efforts. The yearly catches of invasive plants by observant inspectors display this as does the dramatic increase in inspections since the Program's inception - from 2,848 inspections in 2001 to over 76,000 inspections in 2011. Courtesy Boat Inspections continue to reduce the risk of spreading invasive plants as evidenced by 287 confirmed "saves" of invasive aquatic plants in 2011.

The inspections are also an effective method to educate the public about the threat of invasive plants to our lakes. Inspections provide one-on-one interaction with the public and inspectors provide immediate responses to the public's questions. In all cases the volunteer and paid inspectors have a vested interest in protecting the lake they live and play on and therefore are strong advocates for inspecting boats.

DEP will again offer small grants for local courtesy boat inspection programs on uninfested waters in 2012 using a portion of the funds generated by the annual Lake and River Protection Sticker. In addition, DEP will continue to arrange for inspections at public ramps on infested lakes to reduce the risk of spread between Maine waters. But the long term success of invasive aquatic plant spread prevention efforts will require self-inspection by boaters since the state-supported CBI Program can not maintain the current level of support forever. Therefore, courtesy boat inspectors are urging boaters to self-inspect every time they launch and remove their boat.

For more information concerning Maine's Courtesy Boat Inspection Program, visit the Maine DEP's Invasive Aquatic Species Program web site at <http://www.maine.gov/dep/water/invasives/index.html> or the Lakes Environmental Association web site at www.mainelakes.org/, or email DEP at milfoil@maine.gov.

To see Maine's CBI training video visit <http://www.maine.gov/dep/water/invasives/inspect.html> or http://www.mainevlmp.org/wp/?page_id=446