

Courtesy Boat Inspections

Summary Report

2012 Season

Maine Department of Environmental Protection



Background

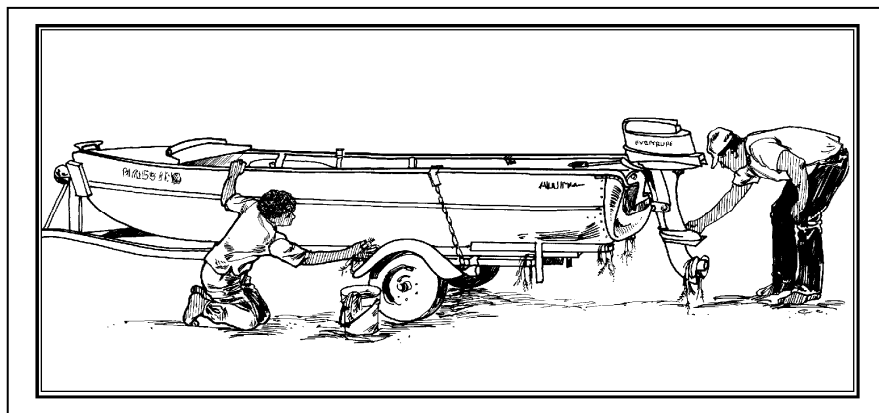
Maine's Courtesy Boat Inspection (CBI) Program completed its 12th year in 2012. The purpose of these voluntary inspections is to reduce the spread of invasive aquatic plants (IAP) by boats, trailers, and associated equipment to Maine waters. Trained Courtesy Boat Inspectors discuss with boaters the risk posed by IAP, show boaters how to inspect and remove vegetation from boating and fishing equipment while urging them to inspect before and after every launch, and answer questions regarding IAP.

The Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) contracted again with Lakes Environmental Association in Bridgton to train volunteers and organize the inspections in 2012.

Courtesy Boat Inspection Results Summary – 2012 Season

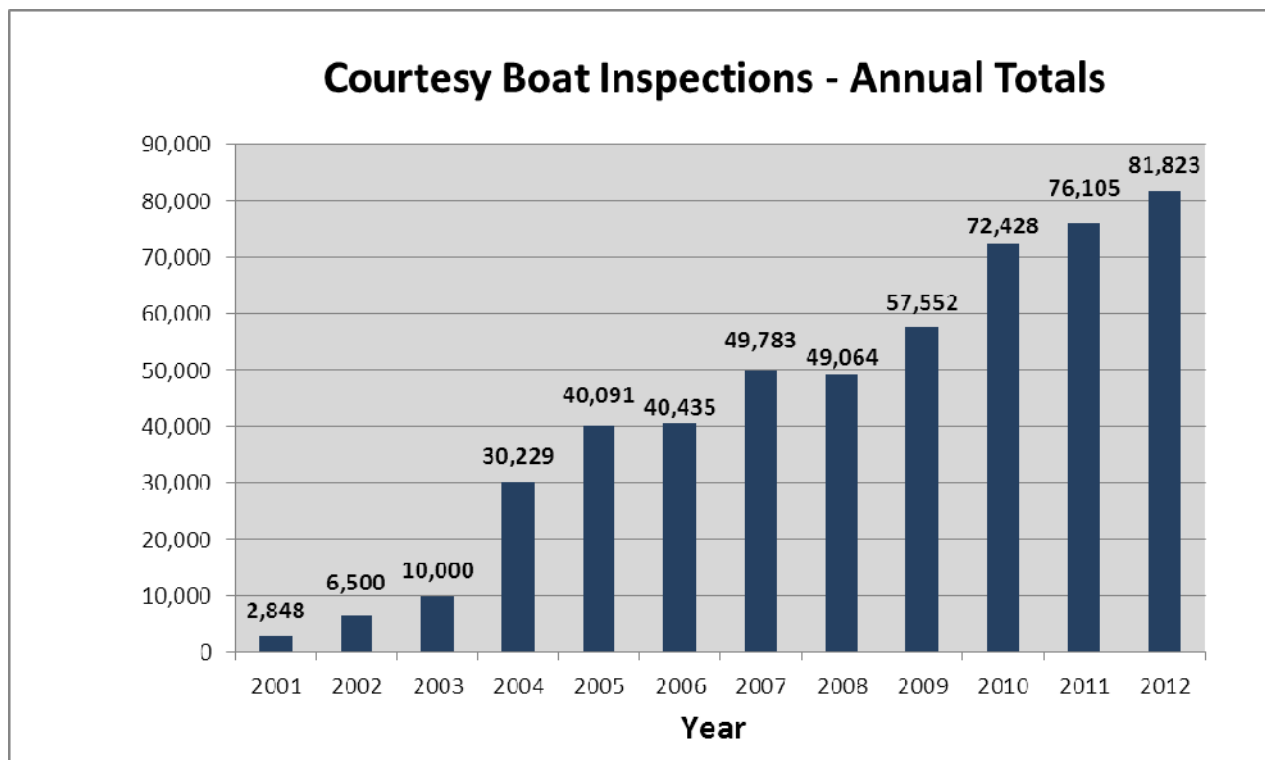
The 2012 boating season was yet again another record-breaker: inspectors conducted 81,823 Courtesy Boat Inspections, an increase of 5,718 over 2011. To achieve this, 1,570 additional inspection hours were logged in 2012 for a total of 41,454 hours, roughly equivalent to 20 full-time employees. Boats 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.

Once again 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 56 bass clubs conducted 6,316 inspections at tournaments.

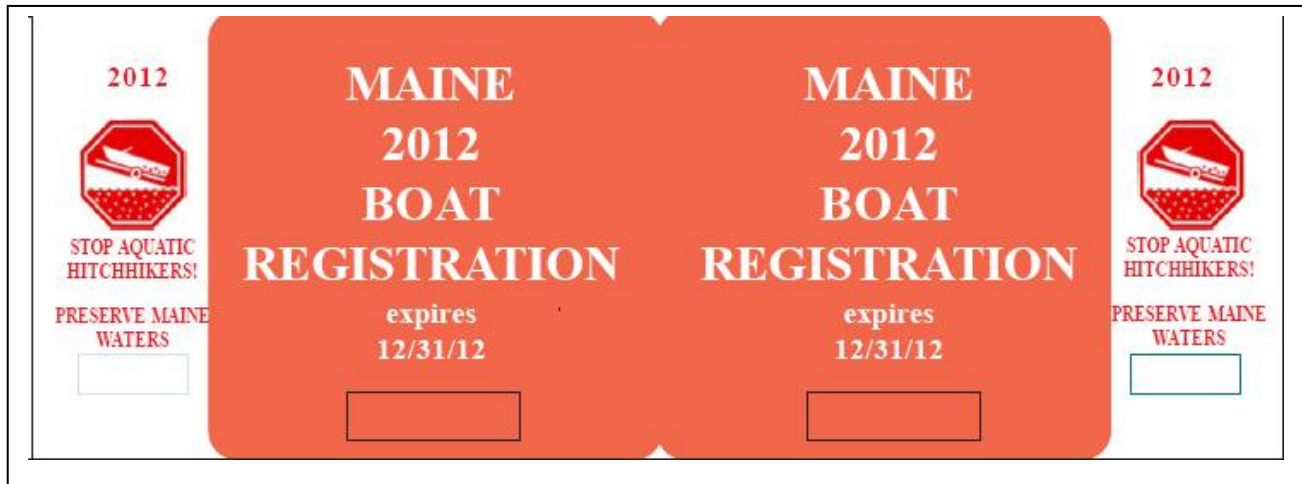


Below is a summary of the information obtained during the 2012 Courtesy Boat Inspection season:

- 81,823 total inspections on both motorized and non-motorized boats
- 93% of the motorized boats had the Lake & River Protection Sticker
- 156 launch sites on 117 waterbodies had Courtesy Boat Inspections
- 13 infested waterbodies had a Courtesy Boat Inspection Program
- 2612 inspections (3.2%) yielded plant fragments – native or invasive
 - of these intercepted plant fragments, 279 (11%) were “saves” (invasive plants) found primarily on boats exiting infested waters
- 52 organizations conducted courtesy boat inspections – plus 56 bass clubs inspected at their own tournaments
- 773 courtesy boat inspectors (paid and volunteer) worked a total of 41,454 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 watercraft registration with the “Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers - Preserve Maine Waters” sticker attached (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 = 93%

Maine Boats: 97%

Non-Maine Boats: 75%



Plant Interceptions and Saves

Inspections that yielded plants – invasive and/or native – on boats *exiting* infested lakes ranged from 0% at four of the thirteen infested waterbodies with inspection programs to 60% at Lake Arrowhead in Limerick. The next highest transmission rate was 41% 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 (unlike the other infested lakes). Statewide, the percent of inspections that intercepted plants ranged between 2.1% and 3.2% since 2004.

A “save” is when an intercepted plant turns out to be one of the plants on Maine’s prohibited list. A total of 2,612 plants were found during inspections; 279 of these were invasive plants. For the ninth consecutive year the Courtesy Boat Inspection Program again confirmed instances of invasive plant interceptions *prior* to boat launching. The table below contains 2 ‘saves’ of particular note because these Maine lakes are not known to contain any invasive plants.

Confirmed “Saves” on Entering Boats of Particular Note

LAKE NAME	Town	Number of “saves” entering	Invasive Plant	Last Lake Visited
Mooselookmeguntic	Richardsontown TWP	2	Fanwort Variable-leaf milfoil	Lost Lake, MA
Mousam Lake	Shapleigh	1	Water chestnut – dried seed pods	Great East/Charles River

The two Mooselookmeguntic saves came from just one boat prior to launching. Each species in the above table is prohibited by Maine law and as such is considered a threat to Maine waters. Variable water milfoil is the predominant invasive aquatic plant known to be in Maine lakes, ponds and streams.

An additional 45 saves of variable leaf milfoil were on boats entering lakes with established populations of that plant (e.g., Lake Arrowhead). All other invasive plant “saves” (232 out of 279) were variable leaf milfoil on boats exiting infested waters with one exception; Eurasian milfoil was found on the carpeted bunks of a boat trailer before the boat was removed from Androscoggin Lake. Since Androscoggin Lake is not known to contain Eurasian milfoil, it is assumed the plant fragment did not come from this lake but instead was trapped between the boat and carpeted trailer bunks when the boat was launched which made it invisible to the inspector at that time (see table below).

All Confirmed “Saves” in 2012

LAKE NAME	Town	Number of “saves”	Boat Direction	Invasive Plant
Androscoggin Lake	Leeds	1	Leaving	Eurasian milfoil
Balch Pond	Newfield	5	Leaving	Variable leaf milfoil
Lake Arrowhead	Limerick	28	Entering	Variable leaf milfoil
		118	Leaving	Variable leaf milfoil
Messalonskee Lake	Oakland/Sydney	4	Leaving	Variable leaf milfoil
Mooselookmeguntic Lake	Richardsonstown TWP	2	Entering	Fanwort; Variable leaf milfoil
Mousam Lake	Shapleigh	1	Entering	Water chestnut
Pleasant Pond	Litchfield	1	Entering	Variable leaf milfoil
		7	Leaving	Variable leaf milfoil
Sebago Lake	Raymond	10	Leaving	Variable leaf milfoil
Sebago Lake	State Park	82	Leaving	Variable leaf milfoil
Songo River	Naples	16	Entering (Upstream)	Variable leaf milfoil
		1	Leaving (Downstream)	Variable leaf milfoil
Thompson Lake	Oxford	4	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 interceptions 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 81,823 inspections in 2012. Courtesy Boat Inspections continue to reduce the risk of spreading invasive plants as evidenced by 279 confirmed "saves" of invasive aquatic plants in 2012.

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 2013 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.maine-lakes.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