

Courtesy Boat Inspections Summary Report 2014 Season Maine Department of Environmental Protection



Background

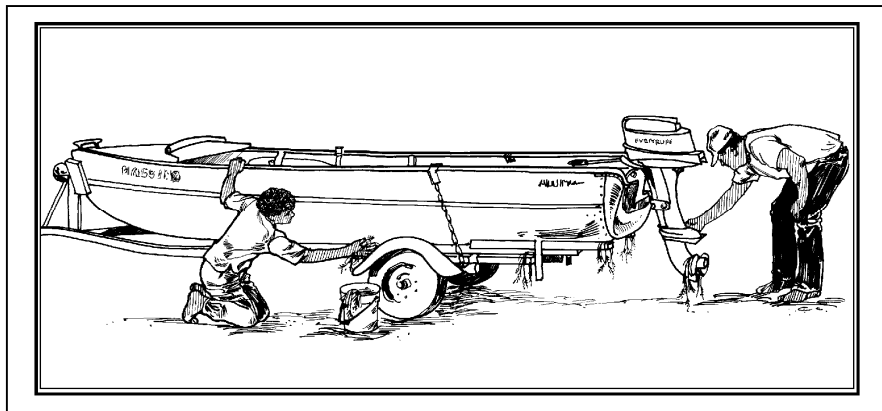
Maine's Courtesy Boat Inspection (CBI) Program completed its 14th year in 2014. The purpose of these voluntary inspections is to reduce the spread of invasive aquatic plants (IAP) by boats, trailers, and associated equipment to Maine waters. Trained Courtesy Boat Inspectors discuss with boaters the risk posed by IAP, show boaters how to inspect and remove vegetation from boating and fishing equipment, and urge boaters to inspect before and after every launch.

The Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) contracted again with Lakes Environmental Association in Bridgton to train volunteers, organize inspections, and manage grant pass through funds to lake groups in 2014.

Courtesy Boat Inspection Results Summary – 2014 Season

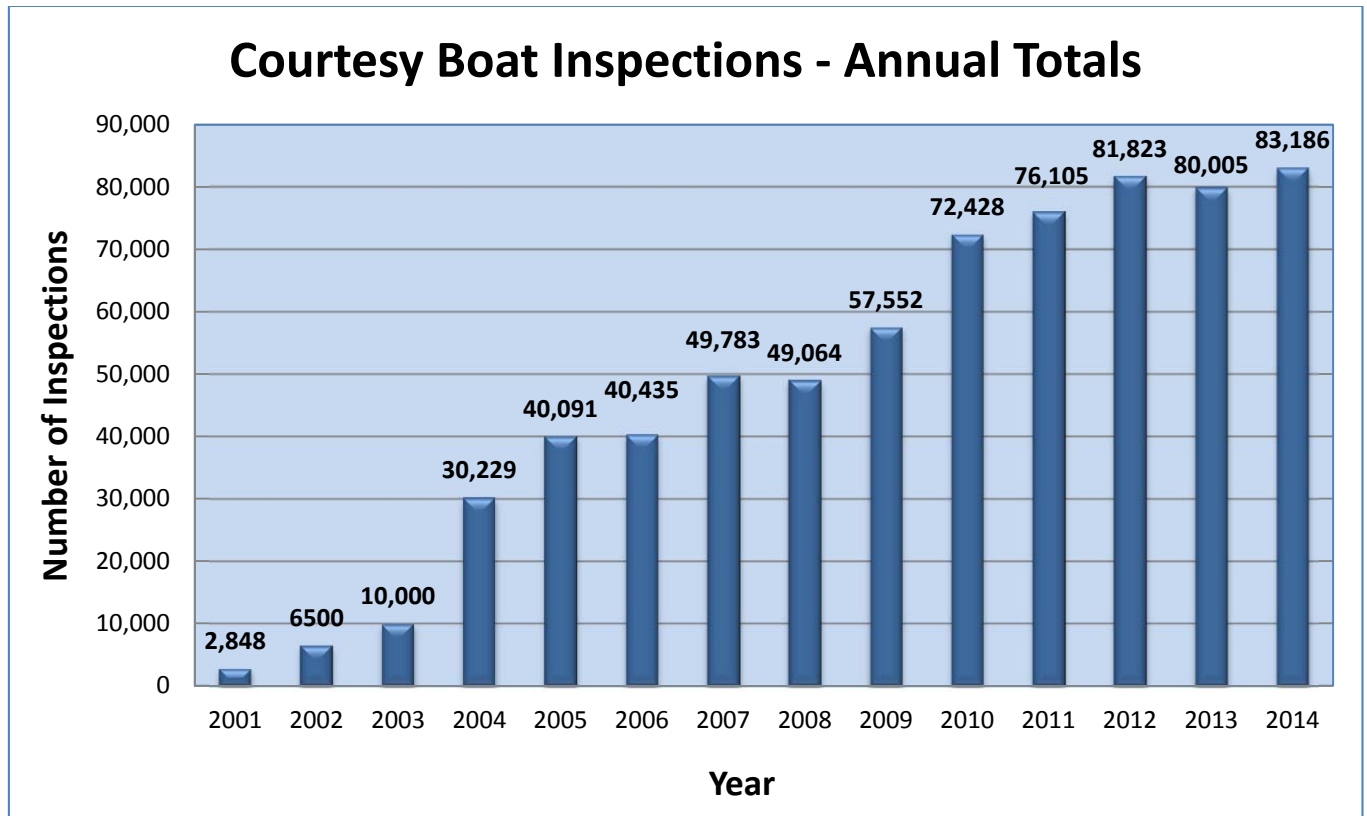
Maine's 2014 Courtesy Boat Inspection program had another busy season, recording 83,186 courtesy boat inspections, an increase of over 3,000 from last year's total. To achieve this, 42,293 inspection hours were logged in 2014, roughly equivalent to 20 full-time employees. Boats were inspected both entering and leaving the water with the majority of inspections (58%) 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 club tournaments were required to conduct inspections as a condition of their permit from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. In 2014, 46 bass clubs conducted 5363 inspections at club tournaments.



Below are two summary tables displaying results from the 2014 Courtesy Boat Inspection season:

- 83,186 total inspections on both motorized and non-motorized boats
- 93% of the motorized boats had the Lake & River Protection Sticker
- 150 launch sites on 116 waterbodies had Courtesy Boat Inspections
- 14 infested waterbodies had a Courtesy Boat Inspection Program
- 2196 inspections (2.6%) yielded plant fragments – native or invasive
 - of these intercepted plant fragments, 105 (5%) were “saves” (invasive plants) found primarily on boats exiting infested waters
- 55 organizations conducted courtesy boat inspections – plus 46 bass clubs inspected at their permitted tournaments
- 710 courtesy boat inspectors (paid and volunteer) worked a total of 42,293 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 (above left). Owners of non-Maine registered boats must pay \$20 annually and display the stand-alone Lake and River Protection sticker (above right). These fees have been in place since the 2002 boating season. For questions about Maine DEP’s use of these funds please email milfoil@maine.gov or refer to the Courtesy Boat Inspector Handbook located at: <http://www.maine.gov/dep/water/invasives/cbi-handbook.pdf>

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: 96%

Non-Maine Boats: 80%

Plant Interceptions and Saves

Inspections that yielded plants – invasive and/or native – on boats *exiting* infested lakes in 2014 ranged from 0% at three of the fourteen infested waterbodies with inspection programs to 60% at Lake Arrowhead in Limerick. The next highest transmission rate was 19% 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 ramp (unlike some of the other infested lakes). Statewide, the percent of inspections that intercepted plants has ranged between 2.1% and 3.2% since 2004.

A total of 2,196 plants were found during inspections; 105 of these were invasive plants. These are considered ‘saves’. A ‘save’ is when an intercepted plant turns out to be one of the plants on Maine’s prohibited list found here:

<http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/38/title38sec410-N.html>

For the eleventh consecutive year the Courtesy Boat Inspection Program again confirmed instances of invasive plant interceptions *prior* to boat launching. Of particular note is a save at Square Pond

in Shapleigh, Maine where a courtesy boat inspector intercepted a water chestnut seed pod before entering the lake. Water chestnut is not known to be in Maine and this lake does not contain any invasive plants. Water chestnut is prohibited by Maine law making it illegal to possess, import, cultivate, transport or distribute any invasive aquatic plant or parts of any invasive aquatic plant, in a manner that could cause the plant to get into any state waters.

An additional 5 saves of the invasive plant variable leaf milfoil were on boats entering lakes with established populations of that plant. All other invasive plant “saves” (99 out of 105) were variable leaf milfoil on boats exiting known infested waters. See the table below for all confirmed ‘saves’ in the 2014 boating season.

All Confirmed “Saves” in 2014

LAKE NAME	Town	Number of “saves”	Boat Direction	Invasive Plant
Balch Pond	Newfield	1	leaving	variable leaf milfoil
Lake Arrowhead	Limerick	3	entering	variable leaf milfoil
		65	leaving	variable leaf milfoil
Messalonskee Lake	Oakland/Sydney	4	leaving	variable leaf milfoil
Pleasant Pond	Litchfield	1	entering	variable leaf milfoil
		19	leaving	variable leaf milfoil
Sebago Lake	Raymond	4	leaving	variable leaf milfoil
				variable leaf milfoil
Songo River Locks	Naples	1	entering (upstream)	variable leaf milfoil
Square Pond	Shapleigh	1	entering	water chestnut seed pod
Thompson Lake	Oxford/Casco	6	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 more than 83,000 inspections in 2014. Courtesy Boat Inspections continue to reduce the risk of spreading invasive plants as evidenced by 105 confirmed “saves” of invasive aquatic plants in 2014 and the thousands of boater/inspector interactions.

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 2015 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. The state-supported CBI Program can not maintain the current level of support forever; therefore, the long term success of invasive aquatic plant spread prevention efforts will require self-inspection by boaters. For this reason courtesy boat inspectors are trained to urge 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/> 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>