

Courtesy Boat Inspections Summary Report 2013 Season Maine Department of Environmental Protection



Background

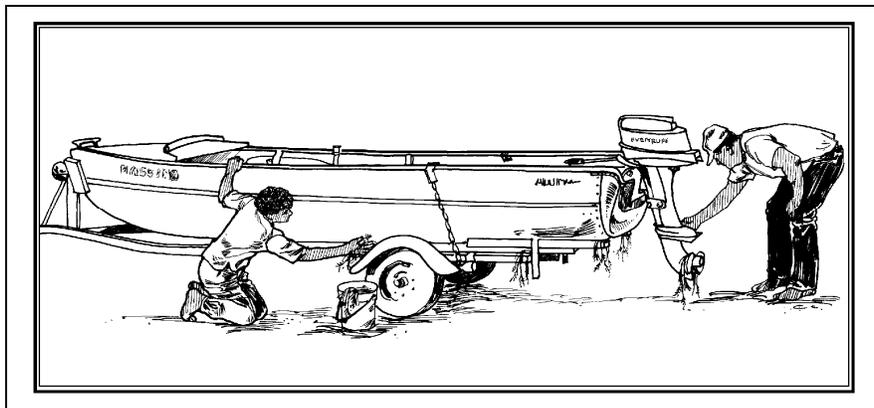
Maine's Courtesy Boat Inspection (CBI) Program completed its 13th year in 2013. The purpose of these voluntary inspections is to reduce the spread of invasive aquatic plants (IAP) by boats, trailers, and associated equipment to Maine waters. Trained Courtesy Boat Inspectors discuss with boaters the risk 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 fund to lake groups in 2013.

Courtesy Boat Inspection Results Summary – 2013 Season

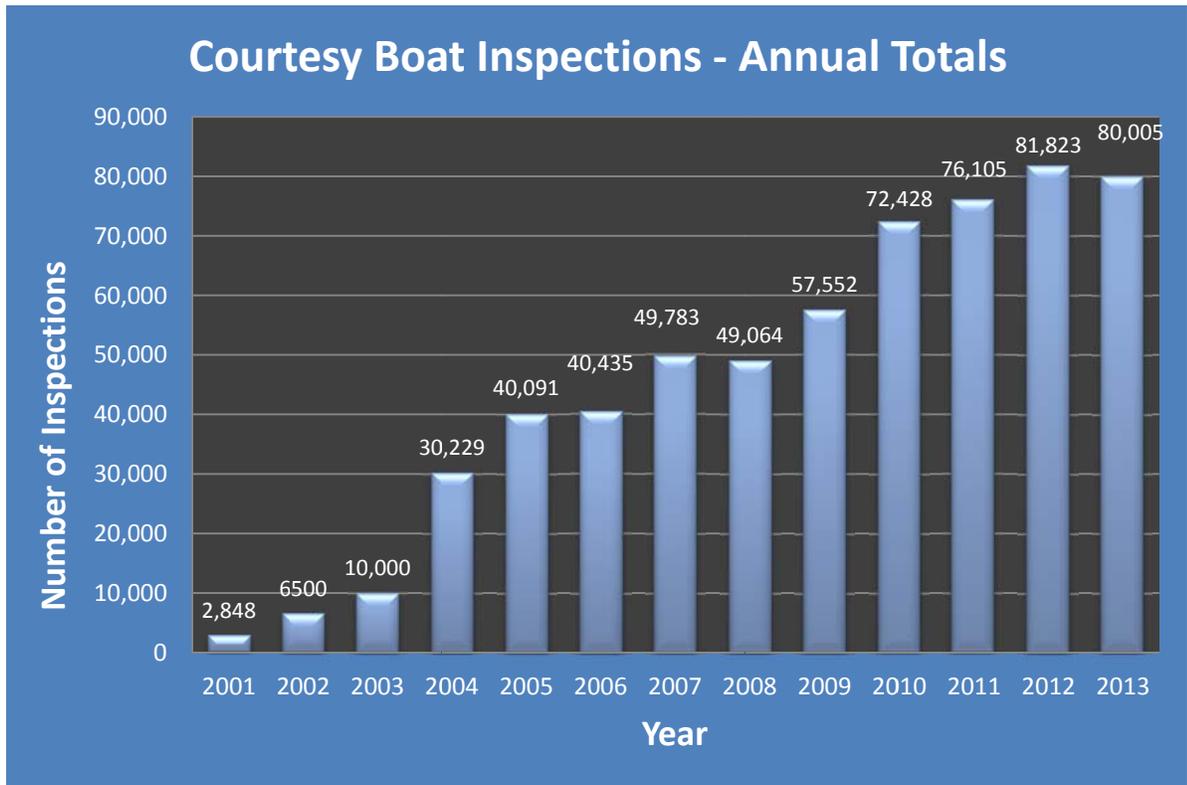
Maine's 2013 Courtesy Boat Inspection program had another busy season, recording 80,005 courtesy boat inspections, just 2000 shy of last year's total. To achieve this, 41,119 inspection hours were logged in 2013, roughly equivalent to 20 full-time employees. Boats were inspected both entering and leaving 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 2013, 49 bass clubs conducted 5,999 inspections at club tournaments.



Below are two summary tables displaying results from the 2013 Courtesy Boat Inspection season:

- 80,005 total inspections on both motorized and non-motorized boats
- 92% of the motorized boats had the Lake & River Protection Sticker
- 156 launch sites on 120 waterbodies had Courtesy Boat Inspections
- 15 infested waterbodies had a Courtesy Boat Inspection Program
- 2350 inspections (2.9%) yielded plant fragments – native or invasive
 - of these intercepted plant fragments, 171 (7%) were “saves” (invasive plants) found primarily on boats exiting infested waters
- 56 organizations conducted courtesy boat inspections – plus 49 bass clubs inspected at their own tournaments
- 721 courtesy boat inspectors (paid and volunteer) worked a total of 41,119 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 = 92% Maine Boats: 96% Non-Maine Boats: 72%

Plant Interceptions and Saves

Inspections that yielded plants – invasive and/or native – on boats *exiting* infested lakes in 2013 ranged from 0% at two of the fifteen infested waterbodies with inspection programs to 67% at Lake Arrowhead in Limerick. The next highest transmission rate was 13% at Sebago Lake State Park ramp in Casco. 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 2,350 plants were found during inspections; 171 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. For the tenth 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. Variable leaf water milfoil, found in both cases, is prohibited by Maine law and as such is considered a threat to Maine waters. This species is the predominant invasive aquatic plant known to be in Maine lakes, ponds, and streams.

Confirmed “Saves” on Entering Boats of Particular Note

LAKE NAME	Town	Number of “saves” entering	Invasive Plant	Last Lake Visited
Great East	Acton	1	Variable-leaf milfoil	Lake Winnepesaukee
Hancock Pond	Denmark	1	Variable-leaf milfoil	Sebago Lake

An additional 22 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” (147 out of 171) were variable leaf milfoil on boats exiting known infested waters with one important exception: Annabessacook Lake in Monmouth is not known to be infested with variable leaf water milfoil. Given the save associated with a boat leaving Annabessacook, the lake association, regional lake groups, and Maine DEP will collaborate on an aquatic plant survey of the lake in 2014. See the table below for all confirmed ‘saves’ in the 2013 boating season.

All Confirmed “Saves” in 2013

LAKE NAME	Town	Number of “saves”	Boat Direction	Invasive Plant
Annabessacook Lake	Monmouth	1	leaving	variable leaf milfoil
Great East Pond	Acton	1	entering	variable leaf milfoil
Hancock Pond	Denmark	1	entering	variable leaf milfoil
Lake Arrowhead	Limerick	14	entering	variable leaf milfoil
		102	leaving	variable leaf milfoil
Lake Auburn	Auburn	1	leaving	variable leaf milfoil
Little Sebago Lake	Windham	1	entering	variable leaf milfoil
Messalonskee Lake	Oakland/Sydney	1	entering	variable leaf milfoil
		4	leaving	variable leaf milfoil
Pleasant Pond	Litchfield	2	entering	variable leaf milfoil
		11	leaving	variable leaf milfoil
Sebago Lake	Raymond	1	entering	variable leaf milfoil
		10	leaving	variable leaf milfoil
Sebago Lake State Park	Casco	13	leaving	variable leaf milfoil
Songo River Locks	Naples	3	entering (upstream)	variable leaf milfoil
Thompson Lake	Oxford	5	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 80,000 inspections in both 2012 and 2013. Courtesy Boat Inspections continue to reduce the risk of spreading invasive plants as evidenced by 171 confirmed "saves" of invasive aquatic plants in 2013 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 2014 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>