



## CBI Newsletter

Midsummer Accomplishments

July 2015

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The Courtesy Boat Inspection program is the first line of defense against the spread of invasive aquatic plants. This newsletter is a way for inspectors around the state of Maine to stay connected and informed.

Do you have a great CBI story? Would you like to share your experiences with other CBIs around the state? Submit an article with photo to [mary@leamaine.org](mailto:mary@leamaine.org) and maybe you will be in the next CBI Newsletter!

### This is Why We CBI

By Tamara Whitmore, Executive Director  
Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed

CBI is the acronym for Courtesy Boat Inspections, a program that is the State of Maine's first line of defense in preventing invasive aquatic plants from entering bodies of water. The Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed's (Friends) CBI program is currently in its thirteenth year, employs over 20 area residents, and accounts for over 10% of Maine's boat inspections every year. The following story is a recent reminder of the success of this program, and of why we should all check our boats before they float.

On Friday, July 3, 2015, Sam Onion was on duty at the Wilson Pond Public Boat Launch in North Monmouth. During a routine boat inspection, Sam found an object between the boat and the trailer. Not sure whether the object was a plant or fibers from the trailer's carpet-like covering, Sam looked at the object more closely after the boat had launched and the boaters were on their way. Having been through plant identification training for his work on the Friends' Plant Survey team, Sam immediately recognized the plant's feather shaped divided leaves and the leaves' whorled attachment to the stem, which are both clear indicators of milfoil.



The Friends' Plant Survey Coordinator Shannon Power's assessment of the plant's identification was confirmed by staff of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection's Invasive Aquatic Plant Program. The plant fragment that had almost made its way into Wilson Pond was Eurasian Milfoil.



Eurasian milfoil fragments found  
by CBI

Eurasian Milfoil is a non-native invasive milfoil, one of eight different milfoils found in the state of Maine, six of which are native and considered non-invasive. Variable-leaf milfoil is one of the non-native invasive milfoils and the State of Maine's most prevalent aquatic invasive, located in 39 water bodies, five of which are in the Cobbossee Watershed. While much less formidable looking than Variable-leaf Milfoil, Eurasian Milfoil is more feared as an invasive, as it is known to take over an ecosystem much faster than the Variable Leaf. Currently, only one water body in the state is known to be infested with Eurasian Milfoil - Pleasant Hill Pond near Portland.

So, where did the fragment that almost made it into Wilson Pond originate? Inspection protocol includes asking boaters to provide the last body of water in which their boat was located. The boat entering Wilson Pond on July 3 was last located in the Mystic River in Massachusetts. Follow-up research shows that the Mystic River not only has Eurasian Milfoil, but also includes infestations of Variable-leaf Milfoil, Water Chestnut and Common Reed, all invasive plants.

Public attitude towards invasive aquatic plants is sometimes more laissez-faire in other states than in Maine. With 6,000 lakes and ponds, and only 43 with known infestations of aquatic plants, as well as a robust tourism industry that depends upon pristine natural resources, Maine has everything to lose if we are not diligent in protecting our lakes against these invasive species.

The catch on Wilson Pond proves that the Courtesy Boat Inspection program does work. But what happens when inspectors are not on duty? The most critical part of the program is not actually the inspector doing the work, but the message that is getting to our resident and visiting boaters; it is crucial to check your vessel for hitchhiking plants every time, before you enter a water body and when you leave a water body, if not to protect yourself from the potential of receiving a hefty fine for transporting plants, then for the protection of the lakes, ponds and streams that we all enjoy.

## Infested Sebago Cove adds Inspector

By Mary Jewett

Lakes Environmental Association

For several years Save Sebago Cove has



Invasive Milfoil at Launch

worked to control the variable leaf milfoil infestation in Sebago Cove ([click here for map](#)). The infestation is intense and the risk of spreading the plant is high. This year the Sebago Pines Property Owners Association has joined the prevention effort by hosting an inspector to cover their private boat launch. This launch is the only boat launch on Sebago Cove and milfoil fragments can routinely be found washed up on the launch and the surrounding beaches. Every weekend the new inspector is at the launch checking boats and cleaning up the launch area to lower the risk of boats and trailers picking up plants.



## Startling Discovery for New Inspection Program in Naples

By Adam Perron

Lakes Environmental Association

The Greater Sebago Lakes Region is home to more than a dozen lakes, rivers and streams infested with variable leaf milfoil. The invasive aquatic plant is capable of spreading quickly through fragments and can overtake a lake's shoreline in a matter of a few years. Plants are spread from lake to lake mainly on boats and their trailers but can also become entangled in anchors or fishing gear. Since Bridgton's Lakes Environmental Association helped initiate the launch of the voluntary Courtesy Boat



Suspicious plant at bottom center



Inspection program in 2000, inspectors and LEA's milfoil control team have managed to keep our infestations from spreading to nearby ponds. This summer, the Town of Naples began the areas first mandatory invasive plant inspections on boats entering and leaving the public launch at Kent's Landing on Long Lake.

The new expanded program started just in time for the busiest boating weekend of the year on Long Lake with inspectors on duty from 7:00 am to 9:00 pm beginning July 3. Due to the high number of boats still on the water after the fireworks on July 4th, the town attendants stayed at the launch late. At 10:23 a boat came out which had launched earlier in the day. The inspector on duty found several plant fragments on their trailer which he dutifully bagged and gave to his supervisor, along with the corresponding inspection forms.

The forms and sample were brought to the Lakes Environmental Association Monday morning for an initial inspection. While most of the plants in the bag were native, there was one fragment which was considered suspicious. With their extensive experience managing variable leaf milfoil (VLM), two LEA staff members tentatively identified the invader and followed the protocol for suspicious plants (outlined on page 7 in the [CBI handbook](#)) by sending the sample to the Volunteer Lakes Monitoring Program for verification. At the time of this publication the sample is out for DNA testing. Stay tuned for the next CBI Newsletter to learn the results of that testing.

This incident marks the first time milfoil has been seen leaving Long Lake and begs the question, where did the fragment come from? The most likely scenario is that the plant was carried from Brandy Pond or the Songo River. Even though very few plants remain in those locations after more than a decade of milfoil control by LEA, they are still present and management of the infestation is ongoing. The fragment was removed from the boat's trailer so it could have come from another infested area entirely like Thompson Lake or Sebago Lake. What is certain is that this red flag warranted a rapid response from LEA's Milfoil Control Team. Less than two hours after becoming aware of the find, LEA began to survey the immediate area around the boat ramp. Between the afternoon of Monday the 6th and the end of the day Thursday the LEA dive team surveyed nearly two miles of Long Lake's southern shoreline turning up no sign of variable leaf milfoil.

The lakes are arguably the most precious resource to our community and this incident should serve to remind all of us that we are constantly at risk of seeing them change forever. Prevention and cooperation are key components of preventing the spread of aquatic invasive plants like variable leaf milfoil. Keep your eyes out for

yellow clad courtesy boat inspectors at our boat launches; they are working hard for all of us.

## Birdwatching and CBIing

By Karen Holmes

Cathance Lake Association

The belted kingfisher startled me with its loud and raucous chatter. I turned around as it dove down into the nearby cove of Cathance Lake. It failed to snatch up a small fish in its bill and had to hover and dive again. This time it was successful and flew off with either a baby alewife or smallmouth bass. It probably had hungry babies in a tunnel-like nest somewhere on the Lake shore. Just another interesting and beautiful wildlife moment while Courtesy Boat Inspecting/CBIing at the Public Boat Landing at Cathance Lake in Maine!

I am the volunteer CBI Coordinator for the Cathance Lake Association. Whenever boats enter or leave the Lake, a CBier inspects for invasive plants or animals. You check the boats inside and out, the entire trailer and any fishing gear. You teach the boat owner how to do it themselves. Various aquatic plants such as Eurasian milfoil and hydrilla can quickly spread from just one section. Also non-native animals can upset the natural ecological balance of the waterway.

So far the CBI program during the spring and summer months has helped prevent any successful invasion of Cathance Lake.

Sometimes there are few boats to inspect. But I am never bored when I am at the Lake. I have always believed that "sight is a sense, but seeing is an art." When you are a naturalist who constantly watches for "wildlife moments", you are never disappointed there.



Photo by Mary Jewett


A young bull moose with velvet on new antler growth trotted by. Red squirrels and chipmunks bounded about nervously looking for food. A snowshoe hare in brown summer pelt and with huge hind feet nibbled on tall grass. It kept looking around and it should have been wary. I have found the scat of coyotes, bobcats, and foxes there. The Cathance Boat Landing slopes down into shallow

water and empty shells of mussels are leftovers of nocturnal raccoon feasts. Muskrats, river otters and beavers have swum by. There are many kinds of amphibians and insects too. Cathance Lake is one of

the most pristine lakes in Maine. But it is the number of bird species I have seen CBIing at the Cathance Public Boat Landing that show the incredible biological diversity there. The common loons chase fish underwater like living submersibles. Common nighthawks, which to me resemble flying boomerangs, and the graceful tree swallows fly overhead catching insects on the wing. Common mergansers and other ducks like wood, black and mallard swam past, often with an entourage of ducklings. Bald eagles often seek these young birds along the shoreline, diving down and grasping them in their talons. They fly off to feed their young eaglets.

Such is the web of life. I have admired the "jewels of the bird world", the wood warblers in gorgeous spring breeding regalia. In a spring migration "warbler wave" in one tree were Tennessee, northern parula, ovenbird, black-throated green, black-throated blue, common yellowthroat, yellow-rumped and American redstart warblers! Amazing! Black and white warblers for two nesting seasons built a nest in the same tree roots and I watched them successfully raise their nestlings. Red-eyed and blue-headed vireos loudly sang from the treetops, proclaiming their own nesting territories. So did the Eastern phoebes, least, alder and olive-sided flycatchers. When I heard the differences in the drumming patterns and the calls, I knew that hairy, downy, pileated woodpeckers, northern flickers and yellow-bellied sapsuckers were busily seeking insects in the tree trunks and branches. One early morning I saw a lark sparrow. I had never seen one before and it was what birders call a vagrant. It had probably strayed from its normal far western United States habitat. A storm that had happened the day before caused it to veer far east in its strong winds. The real lark species of birds sing while they fly. This is why lark sparrows were named as they do this same behavior. This one would fly up from the roadway and sang a wonderfully melodious song. I felt so lucky to have seen it and I hope it was able to find its way back west!

So far I have identified over 60 species of birds at the Cathance Lake Public Boat Landing. I think it is so interesting to be able to see so many species at one spot when sitting or walking around there. Being the CBI Coordinator, I decided that I should keep written yearly records of wildlife sightings there. I enjoy sharing these "wildlife moments" with others.

 [Forward to a Friend](#)