



# **Invasive Aquatic Plants in Maine**

## ***2012 Infested Waterbodies Update***



For those of us concerned about the spread of aquatic invaders in Maine, 2011 brought both good and bad news. First the bad news . . . two new waterbodies were added to the Maine's infested waterbodies list in 2011. Variable water-milfoil was confirmed in Salmon Falls River Reservoir and the invasive hybrid milfoil was confirmed in Mill Pond, just downstream from the known infestation in Little Sebago Lake. In addition to these new listings, one "de-listed" waterbody was "re-listed" when a young angler detected variable water-milfoil growing in the mouth of a tributary stream on the east shore of Pleasant Lake in Otisfield. Community response to this early detection was swift, and it is hoped that the lake will return to its delisted status soon.

On the good news side, Middle Range Pond was removed from the list of infested waterbodies after three consecutive years of not detecting variable water-milfoil. This delisting is great testimony to the dedication and hard work of a small handful of volunteers on Middle Range. Their success is a benefit and an inspiration to us all.

With other infestations in Maine, the story is somewhat mixed. Here are some examples:

### **Pickerel Pond (Limerick) CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC**

After two consecutive seasons of finding no hydrilla in the 46-acre pond, DEP will likely forgo herbicide treatment in the pond for the first time in nine years. Pickerel Pond residents will participate in VLMP Invasive Plant Patrol training with plans to establish an ongoing citizen-based monitoring effort.

### **Salmon Lake (Belgrade) HOLDING ITS OWN**

No Eurasian water milfoil (EWM) has been detected since treating the 6-acre cove with herbicide in September 2009. Regrowth is viewed as inevitable, but when EWM does rebound, control should be possible with hand-removal and benthic barriers.

### **Damariscotta Lake (Jefferson) CHALLENGES CONTINUE**

DEP and Damariscotta Lake Watershed Association (DLWA) did not lose ground in their battle with hydrilla in 2011; nor did they make anticipated progress. In addition to some technical difficulties associated with isolating and controlling the original infestation, a new patch of hydrilla was discovered in Damariscotta Lake tributary three miles to the north. This new finding triggered a rapid response by DEP and DLWA, involving mapping, manual removal, benthic barriers and a surface use restriction. DLWA has formed the largest IPP Lake Team in Maine with over 100 active patrollers.

### **Great Meadow Stream (Belgrade) RAMPING UP**

DEP and DIFW authorized a surface use restriction to keep all motor boats out of the stream. Belgrade Regional Conservation Alliance (BRCA) and other local lake conservation groups are ramping up fund-raising and volunteer efforts to battle variable milfoil infestation.

At the end of 2011, the Maine DEP announced a new system for listing invasive aquatic plant infestations. The new system went into effect with the printing of the DEP's 2012 infestations map. Shortcomings inherent in the previous system had become increasingly apparent. Under the previous system, in an effort to produce a readable map, some infested waterbodies were "lumped" together. For example, North Gorham Pond, a 94-acre pond within the Presumpscot River drainage, was previously lumped in with the Presumpscot River infestation and not explicitly listed as an infested waterbody. If you were planning a fishing trip on North Gorham Pond, and you had checked the infested waterbodies map last year, you may have come to the reasonable (but mistaken) conclusion that the pond was clear of aquatic invaders.

The previous system also "split" some infestations, listing individual bodies of water that are in reality part of a single infestation that has spread through a connected system of flowing water. Little Sebago Lake and downstream Collins Pond, for example are both infested with an aquatic invader that is uncommon in the state, a hybrid form of variable leaf milfoil. It was no surprise when, in 2011, this same hybrid milfoil was confirmed in Mill Pond, a small pond between Little Sebago and Collins. The three waterbodies are part of an interconnected system of flowing water.

The *new* system *also* lumps and splits, but it does so in a consistent across-the-board manner that results in greater clarity. Infestations that are interconnected by flowing water are shown as one infestation on the map. Under the infestation name, all of the affected waters in the infestation are listed, starting with the primary waterbody (or waterbodies), followed by other affected waters in the infestation (the latter listed alphabetically). Under the "Sebago/Brandy Pond Infestation" for example, the following waterbodies are listed: Sebago Lake, Brandy Pond, Panther Run, Sebago Basin, Sebago Cove, Songo River.

There may be some initial confusion as a result of the new system. The number of infested waters on the list accompanying the map jumps from 33 to 46 but the number of named infestations drops to 23 with little real change in the actual number of confirmed infested waterbodies. The DEP, however, feels the initial confusion will be out-weighed by substantial benefits, which include:

- A more accurate listing of confirmed infestations for boaters, anglers and other users of Maine water bodies. The realm of "other users" includes fire departments and businesses that withdraw water.
- A clearer representation of the interconnectedness of infested waters, and a means of tracking the expansion and, hopefully, the contraction of infestations over time.
- A map that is easier to read and correlate to the list of infestations.