

What you can do to protect Damariscotta Lake

Make sure you don't introduce invasive aquatic plants into a water body

Boats are the most common method of introduction of invasive plants. It only takes a few minutes to inspect your boat, trailer, anchor, and fishing gear before entering any water body. Never dump an aquarium into a lake, pond or stream.

Keep your eyes open for suspicious plants

Attend an invasive plant workshop offered by DLWA or educate yourself at www.vitalsigns.org or www.mainevolunteerlakemonitors.org.

Stop invasive plants before they enter or leave the lake

Courtesy boat inspectors take shifts at public boat launches to educate boaters and inspect boats and trailers for plant fragments. Even small fragments can turn into major problems.



Volunteer Ben Thompson inspects a boat for invasive plant fragments.

Become an Invasive Plant Patroller

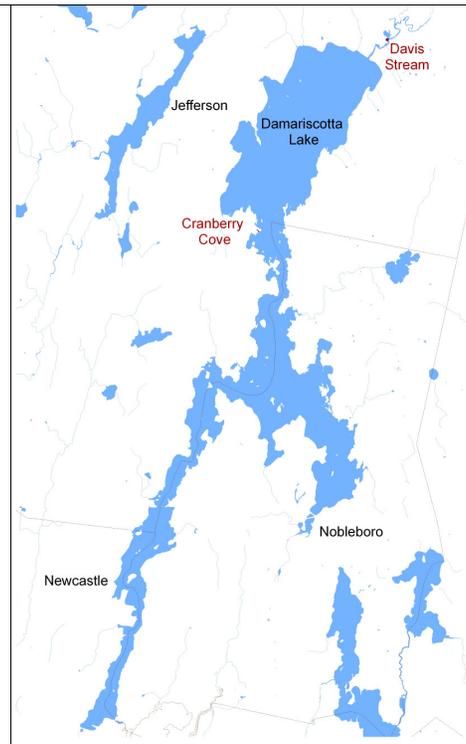
To catch new infestations early, it is crucial to keep checking the shoreline and shallow areas for signs of invasive aquatic plants. Invasive plant patrollers agree to check a small area of shoreline once a summer. DLWA provides training and equipment.

Remove hydrilla from Davis Stream

Controlling hydrilla in Davis Stream will require an ongoing and persistent effort by volunteers to pull up plants and collect floating fragments throughout the summer and fall.

For more information or to sign up as a volunteer, contact the Damariscotta Lake Watershed Association at 207-549-3836 or Julia@dlwa.org.

Hydrilla locations in the Damariscotta Lake watershed



Damariscotta Lake Watershed Association

A nonprofit committed to enhancing the quality of life in and around Damariscotta Lake, assuring enjoyment for all of its natural and human residents.

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COMBATING HYDRILLA: A Community Effort to Protect Damariscotta Lake



Volunteer Fiona Clark surveys Damariscotta Lake for invasive aquatic plants.

“Our family – my parents, my wife and brothers, our children and now grandchildren – have been enjoying Damariscotta Lake for almost fifty years. It is as beautiful as the day I first saw it and I want nothing more than for future generations to continue to experience its magic. I can't think of a better reason to volunteer.”
— The Blake family

Hydrilla is an invasive aquatic plant living in Damariscotta Lake.

Invasive = It is not native to Maine and it aggressively outcompetes native plants that play an integral role in the ecology of the lake.

Aquatic = It grows in the water.

Hydrilla and other invasive aquatic plants pose a danger to the ecology and economy of Damariscotta Lake and the towns that surround it, which is why many people are working to prevent, discover and fight these persistent plants.

The lake needs your help.

What's so bad about hydrilla?

Hydrilla is called the worst invasive aquatic plant in North America because of its aggressive growth habits. Once it becomes established, it is very difficult to remove. It spreads in numerous ways, grows in a variety of condition, and out competes native plants.

A significant hydrilla infestation has many negative impacts on a lake and the communities surrounding it, including:

- Destroying quality habitat for fish and other animals;
- Clogging up areas of open water with plant matter, thus making them unavailable for swimming, boating, fishing and other recreational activities;
- Decreasing water quality as large amounts of plant matter decompose;
- Decreasing property values for lake front houses, which in turn increases property taxes for town residents who don't own property on the lake;



A thick infestation of hydrilla in Pickerel Pond in Limerick, Maine.



Hydrilla grows underwater. It has narrow, blade-shaped leaves arranged in whorls of four to eight.

- Endangering the local tourism economy.

Infestations of other invasive aquatic plants, such as milfoil, can have similar impacts.

The history of hydrilla in Damariscotta Lake

In September 2009, volunteer Invasive Plant Patroller Dick Butterfield noticed a thick patch of a suspicious-looking plant near his home on Damariscotta Lake. It was confirmed as Maine's second infestation of hydrilla. The Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) moved quickly to contain and remove as much of the hydrilla as possible.

In 2010 the Damariscotta Lake Watershed Association (DLWA) mobilized a large team of volunteers passionate about protecting the lake. Around 175 volunteers checked more than 95 percent of the shoreline and shallow areas of the lake for invasive plants. DLWA provided training, equipment and maps. No more hydrilla was found! DLWA volunteers also increased



DLWA intern Tim Merten uses a scope to look for invasive aquatic plants.

their presence at the public boat launches to educate boaters and check boats for plant fragments.

In 2011 DLWA again mobilized a group of dedicated volunteers, with the goal of covering all areas missed in 2010 and re-checking at least one third of

the shoreline and shallow areas. Volunteer invasive plant patrollers exceeded this goal so that by the fall, 100 percent of the lake had been surveyed over the last two years and around 50 percent of the shoreline had been re-checked. Due to this community effort, DLWA was awarded the "Invasive Plant Patrol Team of the Year" from the Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program in 2011.

More hydrilla found

Some bad news came in September 2011, however, when



Ray Hayes recognized hydrilla when he saw it while kayaking in Davis Stream.

local resident Ray Hayes discovered a second hydrilla infestation in Davis Stream in Jefferson. Davis Stream is one of the major tributaries to Damariscotta Lake, and it is a popular place for boaters, fishermen, duck hunters, and others who enjoy the outdoors.



DEP staff and DLWA staff and volunteers work together to remove hydrilla from Davis Stream.

DEP and DLWA responded to this news by working together to remove hydrilla by hand do a thorough survey up and down stream to gauge the extent of the infestation.

Though the infestation wasn't huge, the hydrilla will grow back from its underground tubers in 2012. Controlling this infestation will require an ongoing and diligent effort on the part of volunteers and staff.

Why join the community effort?

"[The invasive plant patrol was] well organized and run, made a challenging project fun, and united all the residents on the lake for a common purpose and goal."

— Bruce & Lynn Sedgwick

Getting involved is a great family activity! It's a fun way to spend time outdoors, meet your neighbors, and make a positive impact.