

2016 Pymatuning State Park Pilot Program: Invasive Species Courtesy Boat Inspection Stations

Program Summary



Using models from other states, a voluntary boat inspection program was developed for Pymatuning State Park. Over the course of 2016 a Park Ranger 1, two paid interns, and one unpaid intern surveyed boaters upon their arrival to the various launch locations at PA Pymatuning State Park. Because there are 10 public launches into Pymatuning Lake on the PA side as well as a launch onto the Shenango River, the staff had to rotate between locations. The program also did not include Ohio Pymatuning State Park's five launches. This is a summary of the results from the first year of this pilot program.

A Word of Thanks

Crawford County Conservation District has helped to advise, train, assist in species identification, and in finding resources and grant funding for 2017.

PA SeaGrant has provided the educational flyers, giveaways for participants, and educational coasters for neighboring restaurants.

The Mid-Atlantic Panel on Aquatic Invasive Species has awarded a grant to create a professional and cohesive look to the program in 2017.

Why the program began

The spread of invasive species is a serious ecological threat to both our land and water resources. With the majority of Pymatuning State Park's 3 million visitors coming to enjoy the water resource, invasive species threaten to impair or stop visitors by impeding access and destroying the warm-water fishery. The potential for loss of \$83M estimated in visitor spending would be detrimental to local livelihood. With limited resources for treating invasive species once introduced, the savings in preventing introduction over treatment is tremendous.

In addition to helping prevent introduction of new species into Pymatuning, the goal is also to help prevent the spread of hydrilla from Pymatuning into other area lakes not currently affected including into the Great Lakes.

Invasive Species Present

Currently the following invasive species are known to be present in and around Pymatuning Reservoir:

Hydrilla
Eurasian milfoil
Curly-leaf pondweed
Rusty crayfish
Japanese Mystery Snail
Chinese Mystery Snail
Asiatic Clam
American Lotus
Phragmites
Purple Loosestrife

Pymatuning is actively treating Hydrilla, American Lotus, and Phragmites to control populations and maintain boating / shoreline access.

2,181 Surveys Completed

Over the course of 2016, 2181 surveys were completed. When boaters were approached they were asked if they were willing to participate in a survey and boat check. 88 boaters chose not to participate.

6 Species Found

Aquatic species were removed from 148 boats (7% of those surveyed).

Species removed from boats not last on Pymatuning were:

Eurasian Watermilfoil from Lake Arthur, Conneaut Lake, Raccoon Creek S.P. Lake, Lake Wilhelm, Portage Lake, Allegheny River, Lake Erie, Cross Creek and Lake Arthur.

Elodea from Presque Isle and Conneaut Lake.

Zebra Mussels from Presque Isle and the Ohio River. (Currently not present in Pymatuning Reservoir)

Curly-leaf Pondweed from Mosquito Lake, Moraine, Conneaut Lake, and Lake Erie.

Wild Celery from Conneaut Lake and Howard Eaton Dam.

Fanwort from Conneaut Lake. (Currently not present in Pymatuning Reservoir)

Where Boaters are Coming and Going

Boaters gave 55 locations when asked where they might be using their boat next. Top 3 after Pymatuning: Lake Arthur, Shenango Lake, and Lake Erie.



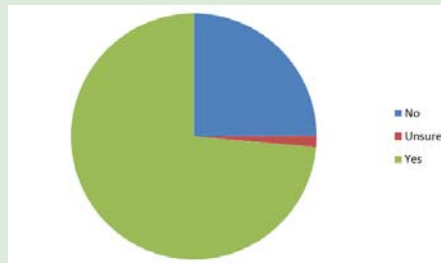
They responded with 82 locations of



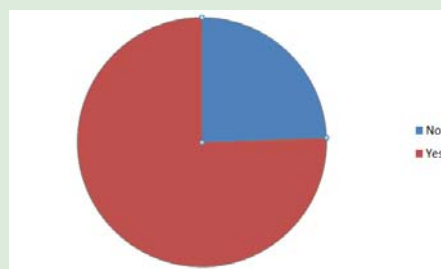
where they last used their boat. Top 3 responses after Pymatuning: Lake Arthur, Lake Erie, and Lake Wilhelm. Inspected boats were registered to: Florida, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana,

Additional Statistics

When boaters were asked if they were **aware of** invasive species and issues that they create: 541 said no, 32 were unsure, and 1599 said yes (**74%**)



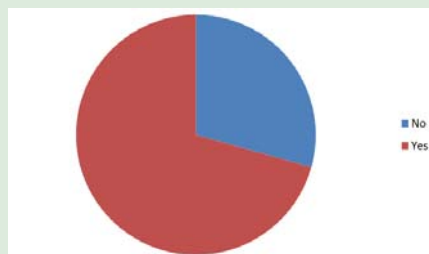
When boaters were asked if they **cleaned, drained, and dried** their boat before coming to Pymatuning: 533 said no, 1648 said yes (**75%**)



88 said they had **clean/drain/dried** their boat but had vegetation found on their boat/trailer.

Over the course of the season 229 boats were surveyed more than once. The most surveyed was 5 times.

When boaters were asked if they **inspected their boats** for invasive hitchhikers before coming to Pymatuning: 638 said no, 1537 said yes (**71%**)



Additional Statistics Continued

89% of boaters reported the reason for their visit was for **fishing**. Other reasons listed were: boating, docking/mooring, fun, selling, maintenance, recreation, sailing, sightseeing

782 of the 2181 (**36%**) boaters reported using their boat **within the 5 day recommended dry time**.

Additional Educational Efforts

Meetings were held pre-season with the six leased boat clubs at Pymatuning providing them with informational sheets about invasive species and “clean, drain, dry” methodology for distribution to their club members.

Interns and Ranger 1’s distributed 5,700 invasive species informational coasters provided through PA Sea Grant to 16 local restaurants.



More Information

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