Your Guide to Lakeside Businesses and Preventing Aquatic Hitchhikers

Lake Hopatcong Guide Map

Your boating and recreating on Lake Hopatcong and all water bodies, protect our waters by educating yourself about aquatic invasive species prevention and learning what to look for.

CLEAN, DRAIN, DRY.
CLEAN your boat, trailer & equipment after a thorough self-inspection for any visible aquatic plants and species. Be sure to check all water-related equipment including life jackets, rafts, lines, anchors, and fishing gear. Remove and properly dispose of all visible aquatic hitchhikers before leaving. Do not transport aquatic plants or animals. Always wash your boat and equipment after leaving the water body.

DRAIN water from your boat, motor, ballast tanks, live well, bait containers, and equipment before leaving the area. Some invasive species, such as spiny water fleas or zebra mussel larvae, are not easily visible. Draining water before leaving will reduce the chance that any remaining plants and animals survive.

DRY your boat, motor, trailer, and equipment thoroughly. At least five days of drying is generally recommended during the summer season.

For More Information To learn more about aquatic invasive species prevention visit www.protectyourwaters.net/prevention

As a Lake Hopatcong Water Scout, volunteer to learn how to identify, mark and properly remove aquatic invasive species:

"STOP Water Chestnut" brochure, available locally, or download from our website.

If you notice a new invasive plant or animal on Lake Hopatcong, take a photo, note and mark the location, save a specimen, and report it to info@lakehopatcongfoundation.org immediately.

Invasive Species
Aquatic hitchhikers are invasive, non-native plants and animals that threaten our waters and can cause significant environmental and economic damage. They “hitch” rides on boats, trailers, fishing gear, and other equipment and are transported between water bodies unless you take a few simple precautionary measures.

Unlike native plants, which are important to the lake and essential to the basis for all life in the lake, aquatic hitchhikers can spread quickly, overtake native plants, affect fish populations, and make recreational lake activities difficult, if not impossible.

WHAT ARE AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS?

Spiny Water Flea
Spiny water fleas eat small animals (zooplankton) that are an important food for fish. They can spread by attaching to fishing lines, downriggers, anchor ropes, and fishing nets. Their eggs can remain viable out of water and establish a new infestation, so inspection and removal are recommended.

Zebra Mussel
Zebra mussels attach to plants, boats, and native mussels. They can affect the food webs, block water intakes, and cut swimmers’ feet.

Fanwort
Fanwort is a highly competitive aquatic plant capable of rapid growth and spread. It can displace native plants, hinder recreation use, and decrease water quality.

Special thanks to the following partners for their support of this guide map:

• BoatUS Foundation for providing grant funding
• Morris County Park Commission for permission to use the Sportsman’s Map of Lake Hopatcong
• New Jersey Aids to Navigation for updating the navigational buoys and markers on the map

The Lake Hopatcong Foundation is a 501c3 nonprofit organization that was established in 2012 with the mission of improving Lake Hopatcong for all, now and in the years to come. Improving the Hopatcong is a joint effort of 127 organizations that make up the Lake Hopatcong Partnership. To learn more, visit www.lakehopatcongfoundation.org

If boating and fishing equipment cannot be thoroughly dried before use in another water body, use hot (≤ 40° C or 104° F) or salt water to clean your boat and equipment.

Reduction of aquatic hitchhikers

Photocredit: Leslie J. Mehrhoff, UCONN, Bugwood.org

For More Information To learn more about aquatic invasive species prevention visit www.protectyourwaters.net/prevention

Photo Credit: Jeff Gunderson, Minnesota Sea Grant

Photo Credit: BoatUS Foundation for providing grant funding

Photo Credit: Julie Mida Hinderer, Bugwood.org

Photo Credit: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration