

Zebra Mussels and Spiny Water Fleas

The Galway Lake Preservation Committee 2008 Season Report highlights the potential threat of non-indigenous, invasive species to Galway Lake. Two of the more serious threats are zebra mussels and spiny water fleas. Zebra mussels have smothered native mussels and crayfish, littered beaches with their sharp shells, and clogged water intake pipes. Spiny water fleas are crustaceans that have caused the decline or elimination of some species of native zooplankton, an important food source for fish and other aquatic organisms. In addition they can clog eyelets of fishing rods and prevent fish from being landed.

Zebra mussels and spiny water fleas are spread from one water source to another by attaching to boat hulls and trailers. All boats and trailers that have been used in another water body must be thoroughly washed and dried before being entering Galway Lake. Power washing is preferable, but equipment can be washed with water containing soap and bleach. This cleaning process also pertains to live wells bait buckets and equipment used in a foreign water body.

Anyone interested in participating in the Lake Preservation Committee Invasive Species Monitoring Program can do so by performing the following steps:

1. Suspend a brick on a line into the water from your dock and insure that it does not touch bottom.
2. Inspect the brick for the presence of Zebra mussels, which have black to brownish D-shaped shells with alternating dark and light stripes. Juveniles are about the size of peppercorns; adults are generally less than an inch but some can reach 2 inches. Zebra mussels are the only freshwater mussels that can firmly attach to hard surfaces and have thread-like feet at the base to accomplish this.
3. Inspect the line for Spiny water fleas that appear as a gelatinous glob. Spiny water flea adults range from 1/4" to 5/8" long, have a single long tail with small spines along its length.
4. Email the results of your monitoring the first of each month to ggiokas@nycap.rr.com.
5. If you find a Zebra mussel or Spiny water fleas, freeze and store them in a sealed plastic container and contact George Giokas at the above Email.

