



# VISITOR'S GUIDE TO PROTECTING THE LAKES LAKES ENVIRONMENTAL ASSOCIATION

*All who enjoy these extraordinary and fragile ecosystems must participate in keeping them healthy. Every effort to help is meaningful, especially when multiplied by thousands of visitors and landowners.*

## Going fishing?

Go lead-free! Lead that enters our lakes as lost or discarded fishing gear is a leading cause of death for adult Common Loons. Please don't dump bait fish into the lake - it's illegal, can disrupt food chains and introduce disease. Always carry out fishing line, lures, and litter. Check out [maine.gov/IFW](http://maine.gov/IFW) for more info!

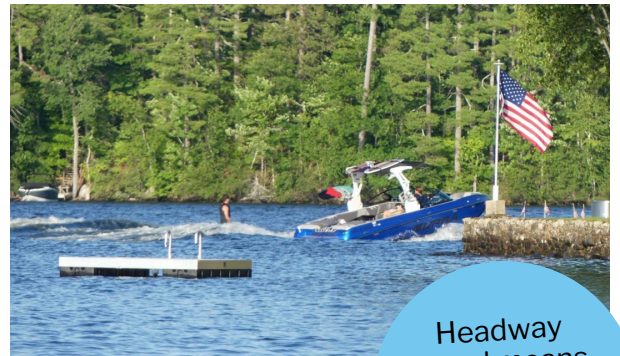


## Use lake-friendly products!

Bleach, drain cleaners, powdered detergents, and paint can harm septic systems and leach into the lake. Use a phosphate-free, biodegradable soap to wash dishes and clothes. Don't flush anything except human waste and toilet paper ("flushable" wipes are not flushable). Never use any kind of soap in the lake!

## Watch your wake

Large wakes can have a BIG IMPACT on the health of our lakes, wildlife, and other people. Large wakes stir up nutrient-rich bottom sediments which feed algae, cause shoreline erosion, damage docks and boats on shore, and make kayaking and canoeing difficult. Also, wake boats that use ballast water tanks can carry invasive plants and animals, even after they are emptied.



Headway speed means  
**NO WAKE**  
within 200ft of  
shore

- Wake surf far from shore — 500 feet out or more is best.
- Wake surf in deep water — prop wash can stir up sediment more than 20 feet down!
- Go slow and keep the bow of the boat down in coves and narrow areas.
- Give people and wildlife space so that your wake does not impact them.
- When you are within 200 feet of shore, stay at headway speed or less. It's the law!

## Admire wildlife from a distance

Wakes and other human interaction can drive off nesting loons permanently. A loon vocalizing at you or splashing across the water is a sign they are stressed.



**For more info about our lakes and local trails, visit our website:  
[mainelakes.org](http://mainelakes.org)**

## Secure your stuff!

Every year our invasive control divers find phones, cameras, clothes, and trash on the bottom of the lakes. Not only is littering illegal, but electronic devices contain toxic chemicals that can leach into the water. Try a floating waterproof case for phones and cameras.



## Going boating?

Safe boating is good for people, wildlife, and the ecosystem! Take the Maine boater's safety course offered FREE at [mainelakes.org/education/boating-safety-course/](http://mainelakes.org/education/boating-safety-course/).

## On shore...

The land within 100 feet of the lake is the "buffer zone" and should be treated with extra care! It is an important part of the lake's ecosystem.



Tag us on Facebook and Instagram!

## Invasives (i.e. Milfoil, Hydrilla)

Milfoil and other aquatic invasive plants are a major threat to Maine's lakes. They can disrupt ecosystems, ruin recreation, reduce tourism, and devalue lakeside property. These plants can spread quickly and infest an entire lake from a small plant fragment. Invasive plants spread when carried on motors, fishing gear, anchor lines, and trailers and can survive out of water for long periods of time.

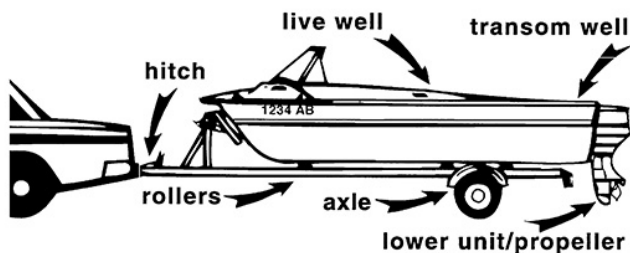
- Check your boat (kayak, canoe, etc.), trailer, gear, and anchor lines thoroughly before and after visiting any lake. (It's also the law!)
- Make sure your boat has a lake and river protection sticker (more info at [maine.gov/ifw/fishing-boating/boating/protection-sticker.html](http://maine.gov/ifw/fishing-boating/boating/protection-sticker.html))
- Remove all plants and plant fragments and dispose of them in trash receptacles or on high, dry land.
- Avoid boating in areas of dense plants.
- Pull the drain plug when transporting your boat.



Invasive Variable Leaf Milfoil

## WATERCRAFT CHECK POINTS

Stop Aquatic Invasive Species From Spreading  
Check Your Boat Each Time You Leave The Water!



## Nearby lakes with known invasives:

- Long Lake
- Brandy Pond
- Sebago Lake
- Sebago Cove
- Songo River
- Little Sebago Lake

## Kick back, slow down, and relax!

We're glad you're here! Enjoy the beauty and serenity that Maine's lakes have to offer.



**Give back to keep our waters beautiful!**  
Consider making a donation to Lakes Environmental Association at [mainelakes.org](http://mainelakes.org)