



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Portland, Maine**

For more information:

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**Judy Pederson**, MIT Sea Grant or **Jim Carlton**, Williams College - invasives experts – will be in field

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## **Scientists Survey Maine Coast for Marine Invaders**

PORTLAND, MAINE - For three days beginning July 28th, 20 researchers will scour docks and piers along the coast from Wells to Rockland, searching for non-native species of plants and animals that could harm Maine's marine environment, economy and public health. Scientists participating in the project include taxonomists hailing from the Netherlands, Brazil, and Canada as well as from Maine and throughout the U.S.

The inspection of permanently floating docks and piers in Casco Bay, Damariscotta River, and Boothbay Harbor is coordinated by the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership in conjunction with the Massachusetts Bays Program and MIT Sea Grant (<http://web.mit.edu/seagrant/>). Research takes place in South Portland at Spring Point Marina and Portland at the Maine Yacht Center July 28; the Darling Center in Walpole and the Department of Marine Resources in Boothbay July 29; and Wayfarer Marina in Camden and Rockland July 30.

Maine's three-day sweep is part of a seven-day effort to collect, identify and catalogue plants and animals in coastal waters from Woods Hole through Maine's mid-coast. Goals of the study include developing a baseline inventory of marine species, identifying plants and animals

recently introduced to local ecosystems, and helping natural resource managers prevent and control future invasions of non-native species.

Similar surveys of marine invasive species in Maine in 2000 and 2003 revealed 34 introduced organisms, several of which were identified for the first time in New England coastal waters. The European green crab and Asian shore crab prey on commercially valuable shellfish, while other invasive species damage piers and pilings and clog pipes. Of particular concern is recent discovery of the fast-growing sea squirt on the highly productive shellfish beds of Georges Bank. With the potential to cover the sea floor like a mat, this species threatens to impact scallop fishing. To see the report of the 2003 survey, visit

[http://web.mit.edu/seagrant/pubs/Marine\\_Invaders\\_in\\_the\\_Northeast\\_1.pdf](http://web.mit.edu/seagrant/pubs/Marine_Invaders_in_the_Northeast_1.pdf)

Casco Bay Estuary Partnership, part of the USM Muskie School, works to protect and restore the Casco Bay ecosystem while sustaining compatible human uses. For more information, visit [www.cascobayestuary.org](http://www.cascobayestuary.org)

Other organizations providing funds and support for this week's survey include the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Maine Marine Invasives Working Group, and the New Hampshire Estuaries Project.

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