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David G. White, a recreation and tourism specialist with New York Sea Grant, demonstrates correct procedures and safe boating measures for canoers and kayakers Tuesday at the boat launch in downtown Sackets Harbor.

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Boat-safety program focuses on invasive species

By **SARAH HAASE**
TIMES STAFF WRITER
WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, 2011

SACKETS HARBOR — Anglers, paddlers in nonmotorized boats and aquatic invasive species are the focus of this year's New York Sea Grant's boating-safety program.

David G. White, a recreation and tourism specialist with Sea Grant, once again is taking boats on the road to help spread the word about safe boating and preventing the transport of invasive species.

"Kayakers and other sport paddlers are one of the biggest growing groups of boaters," Mr. White said.

Even though paddlers don't usually transport baitfish or fish off kayaks, they still carry the risk of contaminating bodies of water. Mr. White said washing off the boats and paddles with clean water is an effective way of keeping the spread of invasive species such as quagga mussels, round gobies and milfoil to a minimum.

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"Anything you take from one body of water could infest another body of water," Mr. White said. "Boaters have done a great job hosing off their boats and their trailers, but it's the things you wouldn't normally think of that need to be washed, too. Fishing poles, kids' swimming fins, fishing nets, even boat shoes: these will fill with water, and if they aren't washed off properly, can spread the invasive species."

Stephen W. Litwhiler, spokesman for the state Department of Environmental Conservation, said programs such as this one help boost boater education and awareness of the spread of unwanted

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species.

"Ever see a boat trailer come out of the water? They're usually loaded with weeds," Mr. Litwhiler said. "There are small insects as well that can be transported, like the spiny water flea."

To help keep spreading to a minimum, DEC supplies boat launches with invasive species disposal stations.

Mr. Litwhiler said the stations are gravel-filled boxes where seaweed can be discarded.

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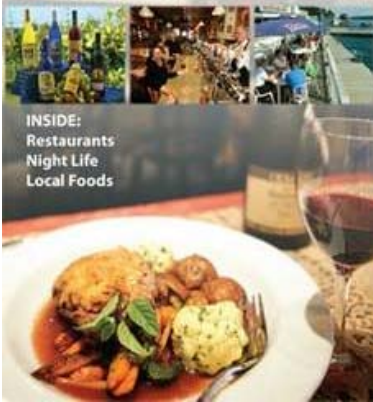
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