

# The Reservoir Review

*A Newsletter About Life on Neponset Reservoir*

## OIL SPILL ON NEPONSET RESERVOIR

ON FRIDAY, JUST AFTER THANKSGIVING, it was reported there had been an oil spill on the Reservoir that happened at a residence on Neponset Heights Ave. As it turns out, an above ground tank had sprung a leak and the heating oil found its way into the lake.



*Containment booms floating on Neponset Reservoir working to contain the spilled heating oil*

Immediately, the Foxborough Fire Dept, who is a first responder for these types of hazards until the state Dept. of Environmental Protection arrives, was on the scene to assess the damage and take preliminary precautions.

With the help of Moran Environmental Recovery of Randolph, who was immediately sent out by the DEP, the firefighters were able to put a few floating barriers, known as containment booms, out onto the lake to control the spread of the oil, reduce the possibility of polluting the shoreline as well as try to protect plants, fish and wildlife.

(cont)

## OIL SPILL ON RESERVOIR (Cont)

Because varying water levels can effect how an oil spill behaves, Public Works Director, Chris Gallagher, on the recommendation of the Conservation Commission, lowered the water level to help prevent the oil from spreading.

The homeowner has 60 days from the day of the spill to hire a Licensed Site Professional (LSP) to come in, determine the extent of the damage and come up with a proposed schedule for completing the cleanup. Should the homeowner fail to hire the LSP, the state will take on the task of doing so and place liens on the property.

This accident underscores the need for homeowners to be vigilant when storing anything hazardous on their property. For more information refer to [MA Homeowners Guide to Oil Spills](#).



## WATER LEVELS LOWERED ON RESERVOIR

As mentioned in the above article, the Conservation Commission, on the recommendation of the DEP, had an additional board removed at the dam in order to lower the water level.

While there are, typically, 3 boards removed in the winter, with the oil spill, there are now 4 boards out. This 4th board brought the water level to 32 inches below the mark. Although notably lower than most winters, the level has stabilized with it dropping only 0.5 inches in a 10-day period.

Keeping the water level lower than the usual drawdown will help to prevent additional contamination of the reservoir.



# DO YOU HAVE AN ABOVE OR IN-GROUND OIL TANK?

According to a recent oil heat study, 98% of Massachusetts oil heat customers have their tank located above ground either in their basement or outside their home with 2% of customers having their oil tanks under ground.

If you have either an above ground or in-ground oil tank, you may want to think about getting it removed and placed in your basement, garage or shed. Why you ask?

Many of these tanks are quite old. The industry suggests if it is over 10 yrs old, the chances of it leaking increase with each passing year. Additionally, should you ever go to sell your property, you may have to have it removed prior to the sale.

If the tank should leak, it contaminates the soil around it as well as groundwater supply. When that happens, it can develop into a major environmental hazard and become very expensive to remedy.

The [State of Massachusetts](#) has rules and regulations about underground tanks and the dangers of leaving them in the ground.



# SPOTLIGHT ON....



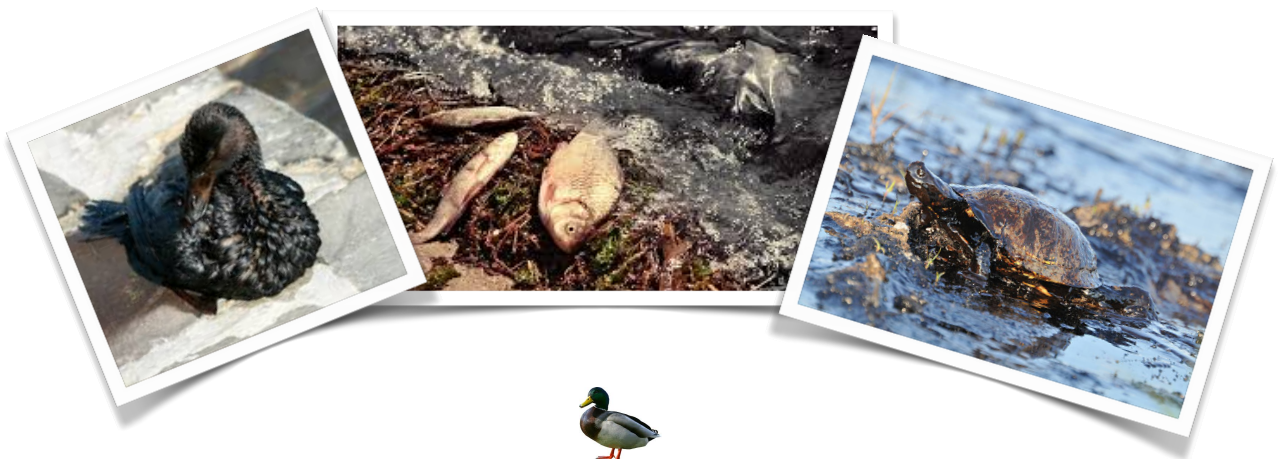
## EFFECTS OF OIL SPILLS ON FISH, BIRDS AND REPTILES

By all accounts, as of this writing, the oil spill has had no known negative results to the fish, birds or mammals that live in, on and around the Neponset Reservoir. Much of that is due to the quick action taken by the Foxborough Fire Dept.

However, that doesn't mean, come spring, effected wildlife and fish couldn't be showing some ill effects.

Let's take a look at just what some of those effects are that could surface.

- In the open water, oil can be toxic to the frogs, reptiles, fish, waterfowl, and other animals that make the water their home. "Oiling" of plants and grasses that are rooted or float in the water also can occur, harming both the plants and the animals that depend on them for food and shelter. Fisheries located in freshwater also are subject to the toxic effects of oil.
- On the surface of the water, water bugs that skim the water surface and floating plants such as water lilies are threatened by oil slicks that spread across the surface.
- In the shoreline habitats of lakes and other bodies of standing water, cattails and other weeds and grasses provide many important functions for life in and around the water. They serve as food sources, nesting grounds for many types of animals, and shelter for small animals. Oil spills can coat these areas, affecting the plants and the organisms that depend on them.





## WINTER COMES TO THE NEPONSET RESERVOIR...



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