



**Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation**

**Canal  
Corporation**

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## **DEC AND CANAL CORPORATION EXPAND ROUND GOBY RAPID RESPONSE MEASURES FOLLOWING PRELIMINARY POSITIVE eDNA DETECTION**

***Beginning June 24, Champlain Canal Locks between Waterford and Stillwater Will  
Pass Recreational Vessels Three Times Daily***

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and New York State Canal Corporation today announced the expansion of operational changes at Champlain Canal locks between Waterford and Stillwater as a precautionary measure due to a recent preliminary detection of round goby eDNA above Lock C-2 in Halfmoon. eDNA, or “environmental DNA,” is residual genetic material found in air, water or soil. While no physical round goby, an aquatic invasive species (AIS), were captured, DEC and the Canal Corporation are implementing further operational changes in accordance with their joint [Rapid Response Plan](#) that was established in 2022 to help prevent the spread of the round goby to the Lake Champlain Basin.

“Out of an abundance of caution and based on preliminary results, DEC and the Canal Corporation are working with State and federal partners to implement the response plan and prevent the potential spread of the round goby to Lake Champlain and safeguard our waterways and fisheries,” **said DEC Interim Commissioner Sean Mahar**. “Early detection is extremely important in preventing the spread of a suspected new invasive species from entering our environment. DEC will continue to monitor and respond to this situation collaboratively with Canal Corporation to prevent round goby from reaching Lake Champlain.”

The eDNA survey work was collected by U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), analyzed by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and funded by Lake Champlain Basin Program. The data has been peer reviewed and can be accessed [here](#). The Canal Corporation and DEC will continue to work with partners to conduct additional sampling and provide updates as the agencies work to confirm this eDNA detection. Further operational changes may occur as this work continues, in conformance with the Rapid Response Plan.

The Rapid Response Plan for the Champlain Canal identifies appropriate necessary actions if round goby is detected in the Champlain Canal and guides lock operations by the Canal Corporation.

A limited number of scheduled lockings will be implemented at Lock C-1 (Waterford), Lock C-2 (Halfmoon), Lock C-3 (Mechanicville), and Lock C-4 (Stillwater) effective Monday, June 24, 2024. These locks will pass recreational vessels three times daily. Lock C-1 will pass northbound traffic and Lock C-4 will pass southbound traffic daily at 8 am, 10 am, and 2 pm. Locks C-2 and C-3 will pass traffic when the vessels arrive from Locks C-1 or C-4. This schedule will remain in place until further notice, and subject to change depending on results of continued sampling.

Additionally, the Canal Corporation, which has been using a “double draining” procedure at Locks C-1 and C-2 since 2022 to help stop round goby, will expand its use to Locks C-3 and C-4. The forceful water currents created by using this process at the locks deters round goby, a slow swimmer, from entering the locks and possibly traveling further up the Champlain Canal. During “double draining” each lock is maintained in a full condition and emptied twice during locking operations. For northbound traffic, the locks will drain twice before traffic enters the lock chamber. For southbound traffic, the lock will empty and refill once before any vessels are admitted into the lock for southbound passage. The second draining will occur with the vessels in the lock.

Vessels will not be allowed to moor overnight at Lock C-1 (Waterford) and Lock C-4 (Stillwater) approach walls.

**New York State Canal Corporation Director Brian U. Stratton** said, “Any possible spread of the round goby is a concern for all of us and as we work closely with DEC and other partners to further investigate this preliminary detection, the Canal Corporation is taking immediate action to expand our mitigation efforts. We appreciate the patience of mariners and Canal stakeholders as these operational modifications are activated, and we encourage them to learn how they can help us protect our canal waterways.”

Along with monitoring, extensive outreach and education is underway to anglers and boaters using the Canal Corporation and DEC communication channels. Outreach includes distribution of pamphlets and signage displayed at events, waterbody access points, and in-person outreach across the Hudson and Lake Champlain watersheds.

DEC and the Canal Corporation continue to work closely with state, local and federal partners including the Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP), USFWS and USGS, to implement a comprehensive, science-based management strategy to limit the movement of round goby north toward Lake Champlain.

After the round goby was discovered in the Hudson River near Troy, NY in 2021, the initial mitigation measures implemented during the 2022 canal navigation season included scheduled lockings and “double draining” at Locks C-1 and C-2, and genetic analysis to

estimate the number of spawning adults over time to help monitor round goby populations and closely track their movement.

DEC and the Canal Corporation appreciate the patience of mariners and local stakeholders, and [encourage everyone to help mitigate the spread of AIS in New York State](#). All New York residents and visitors have a role to play in protecting state waters from invasive species. Visit DEC's website for [more information on how to Clean, Drain, Dry boats, fishing gear, and other equipment](#). A [step by step guide](#) for ridding boats and equipment of AIS with video can also be found on [DEC's YouTube channel](#).

The round goby is one of the most significant invasive threats to New York State waters, particularly Lake Champlain. DEC lists round goby as a prohibited invasive species in State regulations. Native to Europe and Asia, this fish was introduced in the Great Lakes in 1990 and spread throughout the lakes' system. Round gobies reproduce quickly, outcompete native fish species for food and habitat, eat the young and eggs of other fish, and can transport botulism through the food chain to waterfowl.

Note: Photo and video footage of a recent invasive species awareness event focused on round goby monitoring and prevention can be found [here](#).

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