



Spiny Water Flea

Bythotrephes longimanus

History

* Spiny water flea was first found in North America in 1984 in Lake Huron

Characteristics

- * Small predatory crustacean
- * Grows up to 0.6 in (15 mm) long
- * Long, straight tail spine is twice as long as body

Habitat

- * Estuaries, lakes, wetlands
- * Upper water column of large and small temperate lakes
- * Can tolerate brackish water
- * Limited to regions where water temperature is 40-86 degrees F and salinity is 0.04-8.0‰

Known Distribution

- * New York and Great Lakes region
- * 2014 discovered in Lake Champlain (NY & VT)
- * Native to Europe and Asia

Impacts

- * Competes directly for prey with juvenile and small fish; implicated as a factor in decline of alewife
- * Substantial impact on zooplankton community structure
- * Can foul fishing lines and downrigger cables



Spiny water fleas (*Bythotrephes longimanus*)
Credit: Emily DeBolt, Lake George Association



Spiny water fleas on fish line
Credit: Emily DeBolt, Lake George Association



Spiny water flea (*Bythotrephes longimanus*)
Credit: Dave Brenner, Michigan Sea Grant College Program

