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# ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet

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## Freshwater Jellyfish in New Hampshire: They Do Exist!

Have you ever seen a freshwater jellyfish? Are you aware they exist? Very few of us have been lucky enough to catch a glimpse of the freshwater jellyfish. They are infrequently found in lakes and ponds throughout New Hampshire.

### What are freshwater jellyfish?

*Craspedacusta sowerbii* (freshwater jellyfish) was noted for the first time in England in 1880. It was first discovered in the United States in 1908 and has been reported in many of the contiguous 48 states and is most common in the eastern temperate states. Typically, this creature appears in small ponds; however, there are conflicting reports stating in what types of waterbodies they are most commonly discovered. Some literature says they are found in old quarries, while other literature indicates that they thrive in new reservoirs. Wherever they are found, many scientists agree they are elusive.

In its polyp form, the jellyfish is fewer than two millimeters long. It is often unnoticed by the naked eye, mostly because it resides in the mucky bottom of a pond. As the polyp creeps along the substrate, it eats tiny invertebrates like zooplankton. The polyps can reproduce by asexual reproduction. Small buds are produced and, before too long, the adult jellyfish are found floating freely in the water. The freshwater jellyfish can also reproduce sexually, although the populations are rarely of mixed sexes. For the most part, all male or all female congregations have been observed. Sexual reproduction has been reported through controlled scientific experiments within a laboratory environment.



A colony of three polyps.



Three medusae.

The freshwater jellyfish medusa is about the size of a quarter. It is translucent, but may appear white or green. Its sex organs, which hang from the center of the bell, make the jellyfish more visible. The tentacles around the bell are used to capture prey. Due to their small size, they are not harmful to humans; only small fish and invertebrates are susceptible to their stings. In this stage, the creature may be visible for only a few months in the summer time, usually from July to October. It seems they prefer the warmer waters that late summer has to offer. Don't count on seeing

them in the same pond two years in a row; they may appear again in a few years or not at all! This is one aspect that has made researching the freshwater jellyfish so difficult.

**Where have freshwater jellyfish been found in New Hampshire?**

To date, sightings have been reported to NHDES at 63 waterbodies in New Hampshire.

Lake Name	Town	Lake Name	Town
Angle Pond	Hampstead/Sandown	Loch-Lyndon Reservoir	Sutton
Armington Lake	Piermont	Lowd Pond	Madison
Baboosic Lake	Merrimack	Lower Dan Hole Pond	Ossipee
Bear Pond	Alton	Marches Pond	New Durham
Bearcamp Pond	Sandwich	Merrymeeting Lake	New Durham
Big Island Pond	Hampstead	Mirror Lake	Tuftonboro
Big Pea Porridge Pond	Madison	Mirror Lake	Woodstock
Captains Pond	Salem	Naticook Lake	Merrimack
Clark Pond	Canaan	New Pond	Canterbury
Clement Pond	Hopkinton	Newfound Lake	Bristol
Country Pond	Kingston	Onway Lake	Raymond
Crescent Lake	Acworth	Oyster River	Durham
Crystal Lake	Manchester	Private Pond	Belmont
Dream Lake	Amherst	Province Lake	Effingham
French Pond	Henniker	Purity Lake	Madison
Frost Pond	Jaffrey	Rock Pond	Windham
Gilmore Pond	Jaffrey	Sandy Pond	Wakefield
Goose Pond	Canaan	Shaw Pond	New Durham
Granite Quarry	Milford	Silver Lake	Belmont
Harrisville Pond	Harrisville	Squam Lake	Holderness
Harvey Lake	Northwood	Stone Pond	Marlborough
Indian Pond	Orford	Sunset Lake	Greenfield
Knights Pond	Alton	Sunset Lake	Hampstead
Knowles Pond	Northfield	Swains Lake	Barrington
Lake Ivanhoe	Wakefield	Turkey Pond	Concord
Lake Massabesic	Auburn/Manchester	Turtle-town Pond	Concord
Lake Massasecum	Bradford	Unknown Lake	Penacook
Lake Warren	Alstead	Wason Pond	Chester
Lake Winnisquam	Laconia/Meredith	Wheelwright Pond	Lee
Lake Winnepesaukee	Alton	White Oak Pond	Holderness
Little Island Pond	Pelham	Whittemore Pond	Bennington
Little Pea Porridge Pond	Madison		

Dr. Terry Peard, retired professor of science education at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, continues to collect information on freshwater jellyfish. To find more information and report

sightings, go to Dr. Peard's [Freshwater Jellyfish website](#). There are many pages of information and links to other researchers around the globe. The photos used in this document are courtesy of their research.

If you observe one of these creatures in your lake or pond, please let us know. We are always looking to extend our list of waterbodies with known populations of jellyfish. Please email the information about your sighting, and include the lake/pond name, town, date, plus any other pertinent information to [beaches@des.nh.gov](mailto:beaches@des.nh.gov).