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Energy & Environmental Protection  
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# 2015 BOATING SAFETY REPORT

*Annual Report of Boating Safety Achievements and Boating Accident Statistics*





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***Department of Energy and Environmental Protection***  
*Susan Whalen, Deputy Commissioner*

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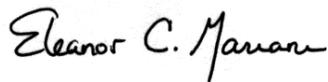
## *Greetings,*

On behalf of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's (DEEP) Boating Division, I am pleased to bring you a summary of work performed to enhance boating safety and the enjoyment of Connecticut waters and to ensure that all boaters have the tools to keep our waters clean. Our state offers many recreational boating opportunities and DEEP's 118 state boat launches are positioned to help you to get to them in a safe manner. The Boating Division is working hard to reach all boaters and inform them about the importance of preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS). Prevention methods include: inspecting boats and removing all plant materials and mud, draining all areas that may have received water from the day out on the water, and drying the boat for prescribed times based on air temperature to ensure that any larval forms of the AIS are killed. By practicing simple steps we can stop the spread of AIS by recreational boaters. Additionally, by using pumpout facilities that are available to remove boat sewage, boaters can directly improve the quality of Connecticut's waters. By implementing these environmentally sound actions, we are protecting Connecticut's waters and ensuring that recreational boating opportunities exist now and into the future.

The Boating Division continues to review boating accident statistics to improve public safety and enhance the recreational boating experience. Specifically, we utilize the statistics to target boating safety education initiatives to reduce the number of fatal boating accidents, accidents with injuries and damage to vessels. Our major initiatives continue to stress the importance of boating sober and the importance of wearing life jackets.

I hope this report serves to inspire good stewardship of our waters and safety on our waterways. If there are things that you believe the Boating Division should be doing to enhance boating safety, improve water quality or augment infrastructure in an area for access to or from the water, please let us know by contacting us at: [deep.boating.division@ct.gov](mailto:deep.boating.division@ct.gov), [Facebook.com/BoatingInConnecticut](https://www.facebook.com/BoatingInConnecticut), or 860 434-8638. Don't forget to get a copy of our [Boater's Guide](#) or access it through our website at <http://www.ct.gov/deep/boatersguide> to stay current on boating laws and regulations.

Sincerely,



Eleanor Mariani  
Director DEEP Boating Division

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

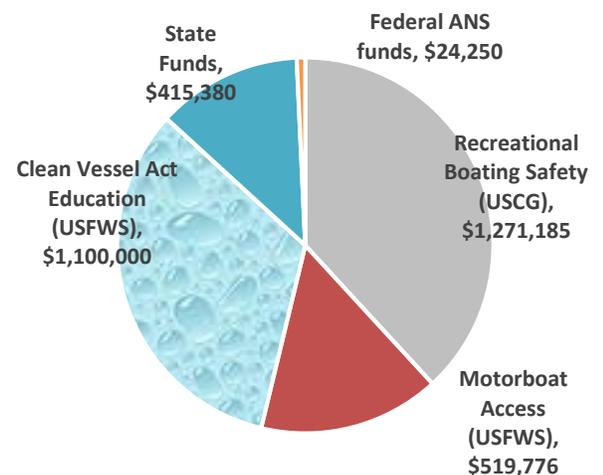
- ↓ In 2015 there were 98,361 registered recreational vessels in Connecticut.
  - ↓ 1.3% decrease from last year when 99,658 recreational vessels were registered.
  - ↓ Registered recreational vessels continued to be composed primarily of boats less than 26 feet (91%).
- ↓ In 2015 there were 67 state reportable accidents that involved 6 deaths, 47 injuries, 16 vessels lost and approximately \$1,158,724 of damage to property as a result of recreational boating accidents.
  - ↓ The fatality rate was 4.07 per 100,000 registered vessels.
  - ↓ The accident rate was 65.07 per 100,000 registered vessels. That is an increase from the previous year which was 41.14.
  - ↓ All six of the boating fatalities in Connecticut were drowning incidents. The victims were not wearing a life jacket.
  - ↓ 47 people were injured in 31 boating accidents. 3 accidents were alcohol related.
- Top contributing factors in all reportable accidents were:
  - ↓ Operator Inattention
  - ↓ Operator Inexperience
- Common types of vessels involved in all reportable accidents were:
  - ↓ Open Motorboats (31%)
  - ↓ Cabin Motorboat (24%)
  - ↓ Personal watercraft (17%)
- When and where were the accidents?
  - ↓ 58 % of reportable accidents occurred between 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.
  - ↓ 39% of reportable boating accidents were on Long Island Sound or coastal waters.
- ↓ There were 10 BUI arrests.
- ↓ 3,448 students graduated from the state combined safe boating and safe personal watercraft handling courses conducted by the Boating Division. That is a 56% increase from 2014. Private providers graduated 7,953 students. A total of 11,401 students received their diplomas.
  - ↓ 7,860 certificates were issued.
  - ↓ The mandatory boating education requirement for registered vessels took effect 23 years ago in 1993.
    - ↓ Since the requirement, the fatality rate has decreased 56.6% and accident rate has decreased 26% for registered vessels.
- ↓ 2,664 new vessel safety checks performed.
- ↓ 7,100 clean boater pledges received.
- ↓ 1,217,687 gallons of recreational marine sewage was pumped from vessels.

## DEEP BOATING

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, Boating Division's (Division) mission is to provide safe access to our waters and to keep our waterways safe and clean for recreational boaters. The Division accomplished this mission by:

- ↓ Managing the waterways with a uniform state waterway marking system.
- ↓ Providing safe access to and from the waters.
- ↓ Providing recreational boaters with educational opportunities to improve their knowledge of key boating safety topics and enhance boat handling skills.
- ↓ Promoting environmental stewardship to reduce the waste stream into our waters and prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.
- ↓ Ensuring that boats are properly numbered, identified with hull identification numbers and meet Federal and State requirements.
- ↓ Advancing safe boating practices through regulation, legislation, administrative procedure and analyses of boating accidents.
- ↓ Staying active in state and national initiatives and with state and national organizations with similar goals of reducing boating fatalities, injuries and property damage.

In addition to state funding, the Boating Division relies on stable funding from the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, which is supported by excise taxes on certain fishing and boating equipment and engine fuels. Funds are then administered by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the US Coast Guard (USCG). Funds are received by DEEP from the USFWS for operation and development of boating access projects for trailerable boats, development of boating infrastructure projects for boats 26 feet and larger (Boating Infrastructure Grant Program and for promoting the use of pumpout facilities by boaters to handle boat sewage (Clean Vessel Act Program). Monies received annually from the US Coast Guard are used to promote recreational boating safety on Connecticut's waters (Recreational Boating Safety Grant). State funding is used to supplement all programs and entirely for programs to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species and to administer the State's abandoned boat program.



Working with a small core staff of 10 people, the Boating Division works to carry out its mission. Funding received by the Division is provided to other Divisions of the DEEP for assistance including Environmental Conservation (EnCon) Police Division, Division of Parks and Agency Support Services. The Boating Division partners with other Divisions within DEEP's Bureaus of

Natural Resources, Water Protection and Land Reuse; Financial and Support Services, Materials Management and Compliance Assurance; and Air Management to support recreational boating activities in Connecticut and with the Department of Motor Vehicles for vessel registration.



## NAVIGATION SAFETY/ACCESS

### UNIFORM STATE WATERWAY MARKING SYSTEM- STATE MARKERS

The Division worked closely with contractors to provide:

- ↓ 6 navigation and 4 regulatory buoys on Candlewood Lake.
- ↓ 37 regulatory buoys on the Connecticut River.
- ↓ 6 regulatory buoys on the Housatonic River.
- ↓ 8 regulatory buoys on the Mystic River.

### PRIVATE MARKERS

The Division reviewed and processed marker permit applications for navigation and regulatory markers for swim areas, speed zones, danger and information markers. Applications were also reviewed and processed for water ski slalom courses and jump markers. A total of nineteen marker permits were issued during 2015.

The marker permits that were issued are:

<b><u>L.I. Sound</u></b>	<b><u>Inland</u></b>
↓ 5 Swim	↓ 4 Swim
↓ 1 Info	↓ 1 Info
↓ 2 Danger	↓ 1 Danger
↓ 2 Speed	↓ 3 Speed

### MARINE EVENTS

The Division requires a permit for all marine parades, regattas, races, tournaments (other than fishing), exhibitions, or other activities held on inland state waters. In addition, a state permit is required on federal waters when using a state boat launch, or when requesting a boating regulation exception. In 2015, 66 permits were issued to various groups for events. The permit requirement continues to improve boating in Connecticut by dramatically reducing user conflicts and overcrowding at popular locations. There is no charge for a marine event permit. Note-Fishing tournaments are issued by the DEEP Fisheries Division.

The marine event permits issued were as follows:

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| ↓ 4 Boat Parades       | ↓ 3 Sailboat Regattas |
| ↓ 7 Boat Races         | ↓ 2 Swimming Races    |
| ↓ 10 Canoe/Kayak Races | ↓ 5 Triathlons        |
| ↓ 18 Crew Events       | ↓ 6 Waterski          |
| ↓ 1 Fishing Tournament | ↓ 8 Misc.             |

## DAM SAFETY

The Division placed and removed barrier floats at 3 state-owned dams and maintains signage at 19 other dams.

## STATE BOAT LAUNCHES

DEEP supplied the standardized regulation and information sign posting system at state boat launches, keeping the boating and fishing public informed of regulations and important safety information. The Division continued to work with maintenance crews to ensure that all state boat launches are in a safe and clean condition. In 2015 the Division had a few projects underway to improve boating operations and provide a safe and efficient launching facility for all boats – trailered or car-top. There was one project completed and several that were in the planning stages to improve boat launches across Connecticut.

Projects completed in 2015:

<b>Boat Launch</b>	<b>Town</b>	<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Completed</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Bashan Lake	East Haddam	Complete Renovation	July	\$225,000.00

**Bashan Lake Boat Launch Ramp and Parking Lot Before Renovations**



**Bashan Lake Boat Launch Ramp and Parking Lot During Renovations**



**Bashan Lake Boat Launch Ramp and Parking Lot Completed**



## BOATING EDUCATION

### BOATS OTHER THAN PERSONAL WATERCRAFT

Residents of Connecticut, persons owning real property in Connecticut or persons with vessels registered in Connecticut must have either a safe boating certificate or a certificate of personal watercraft operation to legally operate any vessel with a motor, or a sailboat 19.5 feet in length or longer.

Exceptions:

- ↓ On inland bodies of water with a 10 hp limit and between one hour before sunrise and one hour after sunset, no certificate is required for a person operating an electric motor (rated at 106 lbs. of thrust or less). However, the vessel must be registered.
- ↓ A person who has a valid operator's license issued by the United States Coast Guard does not require a safe boating certificate to operate a vessel other than a personal watercraft. They must have a copy of the license on board the recreational vessel on which they are operating.

### PERSONAL WATERCRAFT ONLY

Any person operating a personal watercraft must possess either a certificate of personal watercraft operation issued by Connecticut or a certificate issued by a state recognized by Connecticut. Connecticut recognizes certificates from New York, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island for use upon our waters.

### NON-RESIDENT CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENTS

- ↓ Connecticut recognizes a valid safe boating certificate or certificate of personal watercraft operation issued by a reciprocal state (NY, MA, RI or NH) for a non-resident even if they own real property in Connecticut or have a vessel registered in Connecticut waters (because the vessel is in CT waters more than 60 days in a year). Personal watercraft operators **MUST** have a recognized certificate of personal watercraft operation to operate legally.

### COASTAL BOATER ENDORSEMENT

The Coastal Boater Endorsement recognizes recreational boaters that receive additional education in basic navigation and plotting methods. Such education further promotes safety in coastal waters.

The Coastal Boater Endorsement program continued to be popular in 2015. The Division partnered with United States Power Squadrons and United States Coast Guard Auxiliary on this initiative and we continued to promote classes that met the requirements for the endorsement.

Once a course was successfully completed, the endorsement was printed on qualifying print-on-demand boating certificates. In 2015, seventy three received the endorsement.

## EQUIVALENCY EXAMINATION

The Division's equivalency examination is a 50-question multiple choice test that is designed for the experienced boater to qualify for a certificate. The Division recommends that all boaters take a class to ensure they are up-to-date with current boating laws.

In 2015, there were 20 applications were submitted for the equivalency exam, of which 19 people passed.

## DEEP SPONSORED BOATING CLASSES

The Division utilized its team of 32 volunteer instructors to conduct a total of 121 eight-hour combined safe boating and safe personal watercraft handling courses (Boat Connecticut). Volunteer instructors contributed a total of 858 hours to teach classes. The Boat Connecticut course provided a comprehensive introduction to boating safety. During 2015 approximately 3,450 students graduated from this course. This is a 56% increase from the previous year. The courses were held statewide through our community college system and at dozens of sponsoring organizations.

The combined safe boating and safe personal watercraft handling course program was also offered through various local middle schools, high schools, technical schools and aquaculture institutes. Course material was built into the regular science curriculum and taught throughout an entire semester. In 2015, seven classes were completed with 218 students.

The Division conducted 4 stand-alone 2 ½ hour safe personal watercraft handling (SPWH) courses for a total of 32 student graduates. The courses were held statewide at personal watercraft dealerships and at our Boating Division Headquarters in Old Lyme, CT.

In 2015, the Division hosted the National Safe Boating Council's on-water course that develops skills in handling a boat in the close-quarters and open water. Six students participated in the 4 day class which prepared them to teach the classes to recreational boaters in Connecticut.

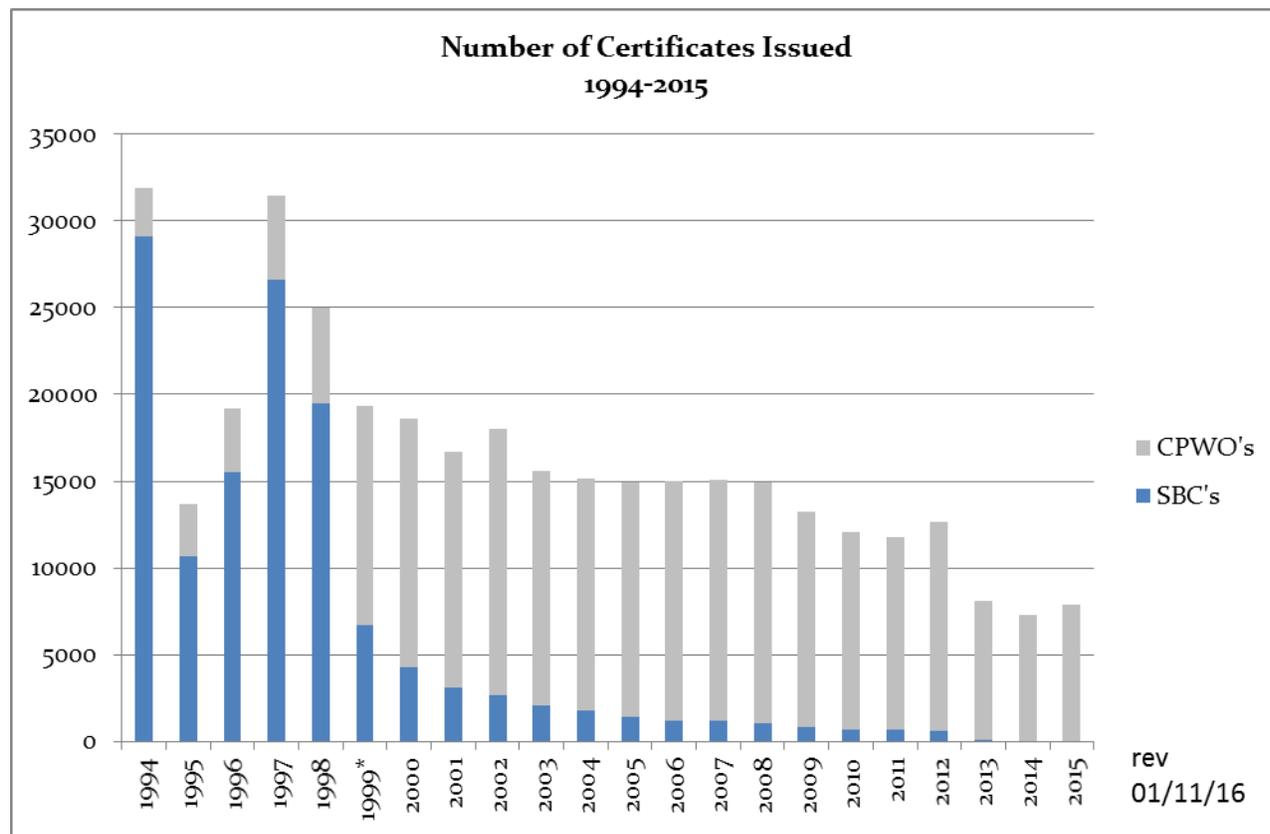
## OTHER BOATING EDUCATION CLASSES

In addition to the Division's classes, the US Power Squadrons, USCG Auxiliary, US Sailing and private providers teach the classes for a fee. For upcoming classes visit our [website](http://www.ct.gov/deep/boating). ([www.ct.gov/deep/boating](http://www.ct.gov/deep/boating)) There were 19 [private companies](#) that were approved by the Commissioner of the DEEP and National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) to teach basic boating safety classes within the state.

The private companies and national organizations graduated 7,953 students in 2015.

## CERTIFICATES

In 2015, 7,860 certificates were issued.



### WHAT'S NEW?

A student ambassador program was implemented. The program provides an opportunity for high school and middle school students to complete senior year or school community projects by delivering important boating safety messages to students throughout their school. The projects were on display at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford during National Safe Boating Week. In its first year, DEEP had 14 schools participate and had 22 students. ([see Attachment A](#))

The Boating Division allocated many hours to the new Public Act 15-25 that was passed during the 2015 legislative session. The new Safe Water Skiing Endorsement (SWE) requirement became effective on October 1, 2015. The Boating staff have been working through the online Sportsman Database System to allow for new and existing customers to obtain the revocable Safe Water Skiing Endorsement. As of October 1, 2015, all boating safety classes taught to satisfy the Connecticut Certificate of Personal Watercraft certification, incorporated the education which qualifies the student for the SWE. The Safe Waterskiing Endorsement statute allows for online education. DEEP staff are developing a Request for Proposal to solicit an online course.

An online course and examination had been created and is available on the DEEP-Boating [website](http://www.ct.gov/deep/boating) (www.ct.gov/deep/boating) for boaters needing the Safe Water skiing Endorsement. ([See Attachment B](#))

## **BOATING EDUCATION AT STATE BOAT LAUNCHES**

In 2015, fifteen boating education assistants (BEAs) were utilized during the boating season to provide boating education at state boat launches. Due to funding reductions, the hiring of BEAs was delayed and there were less interactions with boaters; however the contacts made by the BEAs were still successful.

The BEAs were assigned to the high use launches such as Highland Lake, Lattin's Cove and Squantz Cove on Candlewood Lake, Coventry Lake, Gardner Lake, Lake Zoar and Lake Lillinonah. BEAs also visited the other state boat launches and private marinas throughout the state.

## **VESSEL SAFETY CHECKS (VSCs)**

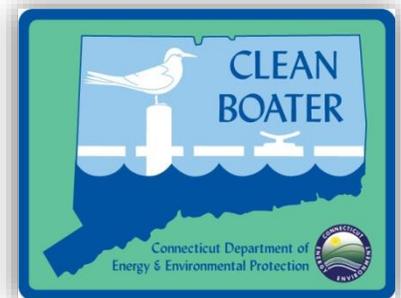
The Division and USCG Auxiliary entered into a memorandum of agreement (MOA) in February 2013 to carry out Vessel Safety Checks. The signing of this MOA has ensured the partnership continues so as to benefit both organizations. Connecticut is the only state agency in the country to perform VSCs.

The BEAs performed 2,664 VSC at state boat launches and reported to the USCG Auxiliary as required. Of those VSCs completed, 2,564 passed and received a VSC decal for their vessel.

A VSC for trailered boats usually takes 10-15 minutes. If all federal safety requirements are met the boater is issued a decal.

## **CLEAN BOATING PROGRAM**

The Division's [clean boating program](#) encourages state boaters to learn about and implement clean boating techniques. Connecticut waters are a valuable natural resource. Our waters provide food, jobs, recreation and beauty, as well as special habitat for fish, birds and wildlife. The cumulative impact of the approximately 165,000 recreational boats on Long Island Sound (LIS), for example, can be considerable, which is why it is important for each boater to share the responsibility for keeping our water clean for activities such as fishing, swimming, scuba diving and viewing wildlife.



Boaters are provided common clean boating practices to help keep pollutants out of our waters and to ensure the future health of Connecticut's waters.

The BEAs distributed spill prevention kits to "clean boaters" at the state boat launches. The kits included an oil absorbent pad, disposal methodology and tips for keeping pollutants out of the water. In 2015 the BEAs collected 7,100 clean boater pledges from recreational boaters. The pledge states that the boater will refrain from disposing trash and sewage in the water as well as preventing the spread of invasive species.

## INVASIVE SPECIES

Over the years, a variety of non-native species (plants, animals, and other organisms) have been introduced to Connecticut. Non-native species are those that are alien to the ecosystem in which they have been introduced and whose introduction can cause harm to the environment or human health. Some non-native species exhibit an aggressive growth habit and can out-compete and displace native species. These are referred to as invasive species and they are a problem in Connecticut and elsewhere.

Efforts have been enhanced at our state boat launches with regard to educating boaters about stopping the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS). Waters especially in western Connecticut are prone to introductions of zebra mussels. While zebra mussels have been in the Twin Lakes in Salisbury since 1998, they more recently were found in the Housatonic River impoundments of Lakes Lillinonah, Zoar and Housatonic.

To heighten the message to boaters to clean, drain and dry their boats to keep AIS from spreading, the BEAs increased their inspection of vessels for aquatic weeds and zebra mussels. Continue to education and enforcement is needed to empower the boater and make the mantra of [clean-drain-dry](#) a normal part of boating. Starting in 2011, boaters were asked several questions regarding their habits. It was the first year that actual boat inspections were performed to check for AIS, 1,260 vessel inspections were performed. In 2015, 4,087 inspections were performed.



### RESULTS OF THE AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES SURVEY\*

Year	Total Inspections	Self Inspected/Removed	Disposed of Bait	Washed Boats	Drained Boats	Aware of AIS Laws
2011	1,260	84%	73%	62%	84%	89%
2012	1,691	93%	92%	76%	93%	90%
2013	1,563	91%	91%	79%	78%	96%
2014	3,380	**	**	**	**	**
2015	4,087	99.8%	88%	95%	97%	98%

\* Boaters were asked these questions regarding their habits

\*\* Data was not captured.

The Division developed and implemented a training program in 2012 for volunteer ramp monitors that could commit to inspections at local boat launches. The program is called [“invasive investigator program”](#).

## CLEAN VESSEL ACT (CVA)

Since 1993, all of the waters of Long Island Sound (LIS) in Connecticut and New York have been designated by the Environmental protection Agency (EPA) as a federally approved no-discharge area.

The [Federal Clean Vessel Act \(CVA\) grant program](#), has awarded more than \$12 million in grants, funding more than 560 projects in Connecticut. A total of 142 marine sewage disposal facilities (pumpouts/dump stations) have preserved and protected the water quality in LIS, Fishers Island Sound and more recently Candlewood Lake:

- ↓ 98 land-based pumpout facilities
- ↓ 21 dump stations
- ↓ 23 pumpout vessels



This program helps keep coastal waters clean for recreation by safely disposing of millions of gallons of boaters' sewage annually. The marine facilities provide 25% of the cost of each project.

In 2015, DEEP was awarded approximately \$1.1 million to assist marinas, boatyards, yacht clubs, and pump-out vessels ensure that boaters have options for removing boat sewage. A total of 1,217,687 gallons of sewage was removed from recreational boats in Connecticut. That is a 22.5% increase from last year.

### 2015 CLEAN VESSEL ACT HIGHLIGHTS

Grantee	Amount Awarded	Description
Chrisholm Marina Inc., Chester	\$20,016.75	New tow vehicle for a slip-side portable pumpout facility and annual operation and maintenance costs
Echo Bay Marina, LLC, Brookfield	\$40,138.75	New Pumpout Vessel offloading dock and upland holding tank
Mystic River Marina, Inc., Mystic	\$16,770.00	Upgrade of an existing pumpout facility and annual operation and maintenance costs
Pequonnock Yacht Club, Inc., New Haven	\$6,232.50	Upgraded pumpout dock and annual operation and maintenance costs
Thamesport Marina, New London	\$15,262.50	Upgrade to discharge pump plumbing and annual operation and maintenance costs
Town of Westerly, Rhode Island	\$46,188.75	Replacement of one marine engine and annual operation and maintenance of two pumpout vessels

The Division hired a seasonal employee to promote the use of pumpout facilities and the importance of clean water along the coastline. Brochures and promotional items with the pumpout logo were distributed to marinas and boaters throughout the state to remind them of the available

pumpout services and the negative environmental effects of boat sewage. All pumpouts for recreational boaters continue to be free in Connecticut.

During the boating season, program staff distributed hands-free adapter kits for distribution to boaters along the Connecticut shoreline. The hands-free adaptor kits were very well-received by both the marine facilities and recreational boaters.

A new interactive [CVA map](#) created in 2014 to locate the CVA funded facilities and pumpout boats ([www.ct.gov/deep/pumpoutdirectory](http://www.ct.gov/deep/pumpoutdirectory)) was improved and updated in 2015, and continues to be improved for use by mobile devices. The latitude and longitude location/address, hours of operation, contact information, and facility web links are included for boaters to access.

## BOATING INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT PROGRAM (BIG)

The Division administered the [boating infrastructure grant program \(BIG\)](#) on behalf of the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#). Congress created this program (*Federal Register*, 50 CFR 86, January 18, 2001) recognizing that insufficient tie-up facilities exist for transient, non-trailerable boats. Specifically, this program aims to assist boaters to enjoy many recreational, cultural, historic, scenic, and natural resources of the United States.



BIG program funds are made available to public and private agencies, marinas and facilities that provide transient tie-up opportunities for non-trailerable (26' or over in length) recreational boats. Eligible projects include the construction, renovation, and maintenance of publicly or privately owned facilities including docks and moorings; one-time dredging to give transient vessels safe channel depths between the tie-up facility and channels or open water; installation of navigational aids for safe passage to the tie-up facility and education materials.

There are two levels of BIG funding: Tier I - State competitive projects up to \$190,000 Tier II – Nationally competitive projects from \$200,000 to \$1.2 million. In 2015, the Division did not accept applications for new projects. The application process has been modified for 2016 to reflect new Federal rules. Four previously funded projects will be completed prior to the 2016 boating season including:

- ↓ **Saybrook Point Marina, Old Saybrook:** 4 new floating dock transient slips adjacent to the fuel dock at the mouth of the Connecticut River and Long Island Sound, and new gasoline and diesel underground storage tanks for fuel sales to recreational boaters.

- ↓ **Town of East Haddam, East Haddam:** 2 new floating dock transient slips located on the Connecticut River in downtown East Haddam in close proximity to restaurants, shops and the historic Goodspeed Opera House.



- ↓ **S&S Marine, Old Saybrook:** 8 new floating dock transient slips in the Connecticut River and an upland bathroom facility including ADA accessible showers, sinks, toilets and changing areas.
  
- ↓ **Town of Wethersfield, Wethersfield Cove Marina:** 51 new transient moorings, and 7 transient floating dock slips. The marina will also maintain 10 new navigation aids.

## OUTREACH

### PUBLICATIONS

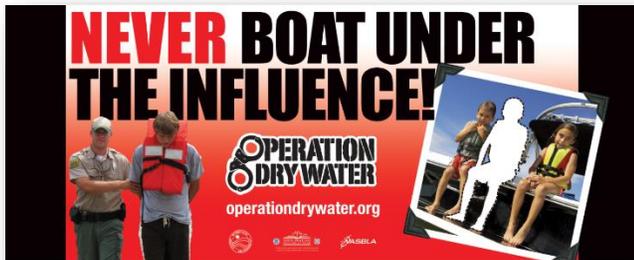
The Boating Division made significant efforts to reach the boating public and promote boating safety. (see Attachments [C](#), [D](#) & [E](#) and media coverage <http://wtnh.com/2015/07/27/officials-advise-how-to-protect-kids-while-boating/>) Ninety-five thousand Connecticut Boater's Guide were printed and distributed throughout DEEP offices, boating classes, boat shows, DMV offices, organizational meetings and town clerks offices. Additionally, it was made available to the boating public in a [digital book](#) format, [PDF](#) format accessible online. The Boater's Guide is a handbook of boating laws and regulations. It also contains registration information, guidelines for a safe boat operation, boat launch information and environmental initiatives. The Guide included ads, therefore reducing printing costs.

The Boating Division and the EnCon Police Division maintained its effort to bring public attention to the dangers of Boating Under the Influence (BUI). The EnCon Police Division focused patrols in areas of high activity to strictly enforce Connecticut's BUI laws. The EnCon Police Division kicked off the recreational boating season just before the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend with Operation Dry Water, a National initiative to bring attention to the dangers of boating under the influence of alcohol or drugs. <http://www.nbcconnecticut.com/news/local/Authorities-Urge-Safety-on-Lakes-Rivers-Over-Holiday-Weekend-311605261.html>). The EnCon Police Division and local police departments participated in additional patrol initiatives focusing on BUI on the lower Connecticut River, Barn Island and Niantic River Access areas and on Candlewood Lake. EnCon Police Division officers arrested nine boaters for BUI.

The Boating Division's priority was to encourage the use of life jackets and the responsible consumption of alcoholic beverages. Utilizing local print ([see Attachment F](#)), radio, TV media, websites and social media networks, these messages were delivered to the public. Radio ads were translated to Spanish and aired on the Hispanic channels. An ad that featured joint patrols and partnership with MADD was printed in 3 magazines. Banners were made and placed on display at the Marine Headquarters.

To increase intoxication awareness at such events, the Boating Division utilized attention grabbing tools such as Fatal Vision® Goggles which educate people of all ages about the consequences of alcohol misuse and abuse. The Fatal Vision® Goggles use special lens technology that allows the wearer to experience a realistic simulation of impairment. The Division utilized 'Intoxi-clock' an

interactive tool used to demonstrate visually how drinking different types and amounts of alcoholic beverages raises a person's blood alcohol concentration (B.A.C.).



## EVENTS

The Division participated in various community events including safety fairs, marine industry trade shows, educational programs and much more around the state. The events are as follows:

- ↓ NASBLA Methods of Instruction training
- ↓ CMTA Hartford Boat Show
- ↓ Hunting and Fishing Show
- ↓ Passenger Vessel Safety Day
- ↓ International Water and Boating Safety Summit and NASBLA Education Committee Meeting
- ↓ SailQuest Boat Show
- ↓ Educational Days at the New Britain Rock Cats baseball games
- ↓ Candlewood Lake Aquatic Invasive Species Decontamination Unit training
- ↓ Great Park Pursuit, No Child Left Behind- Boating Day
- ↓ United States Coast Guard, Sector Long Island Sound Open House
- ↓ Ready, Set, Wear it
- ↓ Law Enforcement Seminar
- ↓ Student Ambassador Appreciation ceremony with Commissioner Klee and Bureau Chief Lambert
- ↓ National Guard Safety Day
- ↓ Mystic Seaport, Safety on Sea & Shore
- ↓ National Safe Boating Council (NSBC) on-water boat handling train the instructor class
- ↓ DEEP Bring Your Child to Work Day
- ↓ Law Enforcement Marine Safety Days
- ↓ Discover Boating in Westbrook
- ↓ On-the- water paddle event with LL Bean
- ↓ Human powered event in New Haven
- ↓ Fish Tales, Sails and Tugs in New London
- ↓ Social media training
- ↓ DEEP Instructor and Private Provider Instructor meetings regarding the Safe Waterskiing Endorsement



- ↓ Invasive Investigator training in Preston
- ↓ Hebron Harvest Fair, Durham Fair, Norwalk Boat Show, Berlin Fair, DEEP Hunting and Fishing Day, Connecticut Day at the Big E
- ↓ States Organization of Boating Access Conference
- ↓ Discover Boating Event at Westbrook Marine Center
- ↓ Mystic Lighted Boat Parade
- ↓ *M/V Prudence*, participated in the Mystic SailFest
- ↓ Oakdale Safety Day

#### *M/V PRUDENCE*-DIVISION'S OUTREACH VESSEL

During the year, *M/V Prudence* was deployed 9 times on Connecticut waters and spent approximately 38 hours on the water with the intent to target recreational boaters.

The Boating Division scheduled *M/V Prudence's* voyages around marine events such as fireworks, concerts, charities and parades, seeking the greatest potential for exposure and impact. The *M/V Prudence's* crew encountered 196 vessels and delivered safety messages to over 770 persons; 652 adults, 30 teenagers and 75 children. The Boating Division obtained promotional items from local retailers to thank the boaters for taking the time to learn about safe boating practices as part of our BOATS (Because Our Acquaintances Think Safety) Program.

The *M/V Prudence* is an effective resource to deliver safety messages to the recreational boating public. Even though limited time is spent on-the-water, the impact is invaluable.

#### ↓ NATIONAL SAFE BOATING WEEK-MAY 16-22, 2015



As part of National Safe Boating Week, DEEP partnered with the US Coast Guard, US Coast Guard Auxiliary (USCG AUX), and the United States Power Squadrons (USPS), to renew the state's commitment to promote the importance of making safe and responsible boating choices while on the water. Boaters were reminded to avoid factors that can lead to boating accidents such as inattention, careless or reckless operation, excessive speed, and alcohol consumption.

The DEEP Boating Division hosted a Summer Outdoor Recreation Kickoff at marine headquarters to remind boaters of safety tips.

National Safe Boating Week was promoted by the Boating Division with a press release ([see Attachment G](#)), sign boards on front of local police stations and local media spots. One of the local TV stations filmed a vessel safety check conducted at a local marina. The broadcast was aired during the evening news. (To view the news clip visit: <http://wtnh.com/2015/05/18/things-to-know-for-boating-season/>) Also

a 20 minute boating safety video was aired twice by Mystic Matters during National Safe Boating Week. (To view the video, visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rIzFzN7uiko> )

↓ GREAT PARK PURSUIT-NO CHILD LEFT INSIDE®

The Great Park Pursuit (GPP) began its 10th season in May. The GPP is a State Parks Family Adventure that provides planned recreational opportunities for children as part of the [No Child Left Inside](#) initiative. The activities are located throughout Connecticut in the state parks. The planned events for children and families took place on weekends between May and June.

In May, DEEP hosted a GPP Family Boating Day event at West Rock Ridge State Park. The event attracted 842 individuals. Some of the boating activity stations included:

- ↓ Paddle Smart Game
- ↓ Boating Bingo
- ↓ Canoeing adventure on Lake Wintergreen
- ↓ Keep It Clean
- ↓ Completing a paddling
- ↓ ABC Trail Game
- ↓ Code Flags
- ↓ Snakes
- ↓ Float Your Boat
- ↓ Boating Bean Bag Toss
- ↓ Boating Safety



float plan



GPP was combined with the Ready, Set, Wear It event. The event promotes people on one single day inflating life jackets or just wearing one. Connecticut had the second largest event in the nation.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The Division has over 1,600 followers on its Facebook page. Safe boating posts on the page reached thousands and engaged hundreds of people on a weekly basis.

These messages focused on the importance of wearing a life jacket, boating sober and cold water boating preparedness.

**Facebook.com/BoatinginConnecticut**



In 2015, a Twitter account was created (@CTBoatingInfo) to notify boaters of temporary state boat launch closures and other important information.

## AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

- ↓ Eleanor Mariani completed her year as president of the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) at the 56<sup>th</sup> Annual NASBLA Conference in Wichita, KS. She was presented an award from the National Safe Boating Council for her efforts and accomplishments during her tenure.

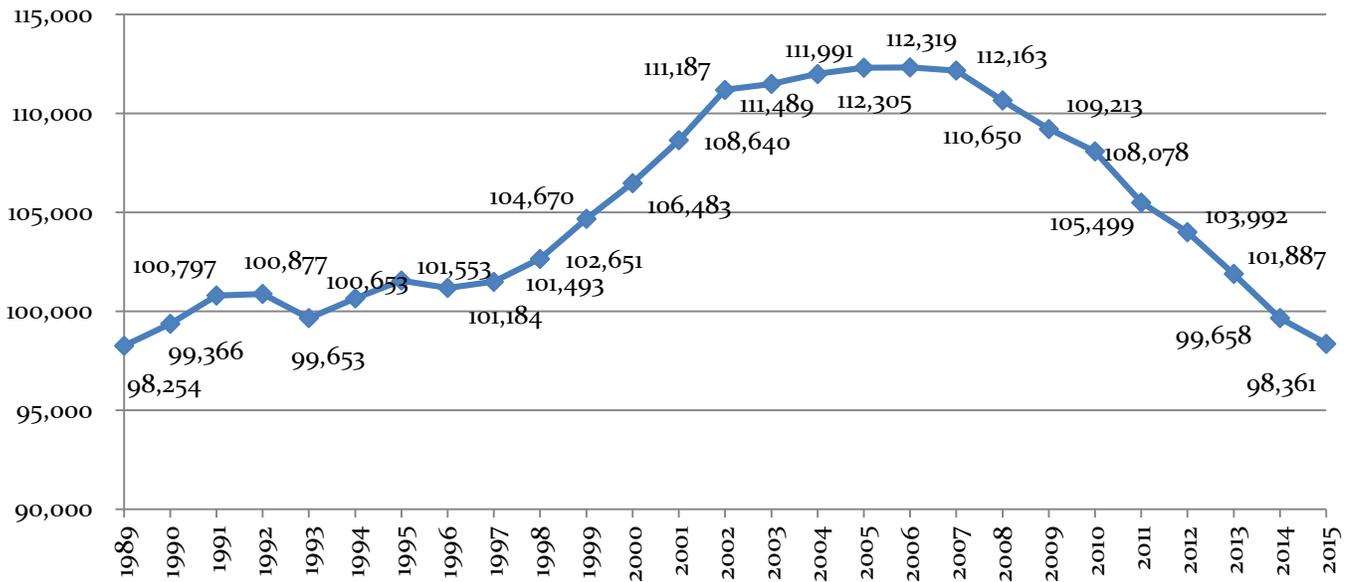


- ↓ EnCon Police Division's Captain, Eric Lundin, was selected for the National Association of State Boating Law Administrator's Butch Potts Boating Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award for 2014. Captain Lundin joined the Connecticut EnCon Police full-time in 1994. He supervises the EnCon Police Boating Accident Reconstruction Unit. He has been actively involved with the International Association of Marine Investigators (IAMI) and NASBLA. Captain Lundin was the first officer in Connecticut to be recognized by Mothers Against Drunk Driving for Boating Under the Influence of alcohol. He is currently a member of the MADD Connecticut State Advisory Board.
- ↓ The DEEP Boating Educator of the Year award was given to Richard and Donna Bendler. The Bendler's have volunteered their time for over 15 years and have educated nearly 2,600 boaters.
- ↓ Wendy Flynn, Boating Education Supervisor, and Kate Brown, CVA/BIG Coordinator received recognition for their assistance in planning the conference through a States Organization of Boating Access (SOBA) Resolution in Appreciation of the Host Agency and Team at the 2015 SOBA conference.
- ↓ Wendy Flynn also received the 2015 Professional Service Award for her work on the Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Task Force and her dedication, effort and timely completion of the "AIS Best Management Practices Manual: Construction and Integration of AIS Prevention Areas at Recreational Boating Facilities".

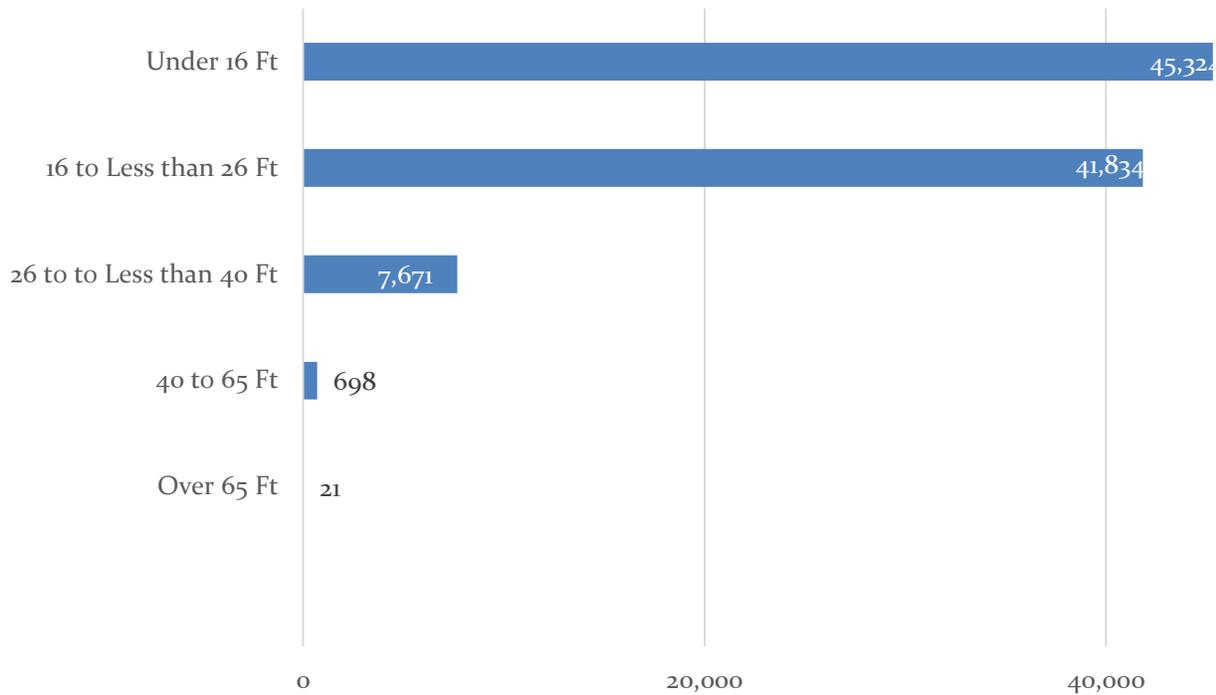
## VESSEL REGISTRATION

In 2015, there were 98,361 vessels registered in Connecticut. 91% of Connecticut numbered vessels are less than 26 feet. All motorized vessels and sailboats greater than 19 ½ feet in length are required to be registered. Vessels displaying Connecticut registration numbers receive a certificate of number. Vessels used in Connecticut waters for more than 60 days and registered in other states or holding a valid USCG documentation certificate, must display a Connecticut certificate of decal. The number of vessels registered does not capture manually propelled vessels, which are not required to be registered. In the [2012 National Recreational Boating Survey](#) conducted by the United States Coast Guard (USCG), the northeast region had the highest percentage (19.2%) of households with one or more persons who either canoed or kayaked. Of those surveyed in Connecticut, 21.8% used either a kayak or canoe.

### NUMBER OF VESSEL REGISTRATIONS-1989-2015



### LENGTH OF VESSELS REGISTERED-2015



## BOATING ACCIDENTS AND REPORTING

All operators of vessels involved in an accident must remain at the scene and assist any other vessel or person involved, if possible, without endangering their own vessel or the people aboard. The operator must also give his/her name, address and vessel identification number to the other operator(s) or owner of the damaged property.

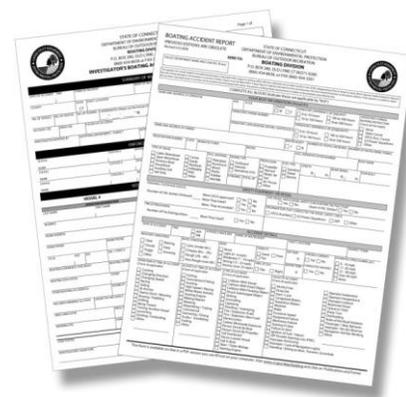
Operators involved in a boating accident which results in any of the circumstances noted below shall immediately notify the nearest law enforcement agency with jurisdiction in the area and, not later than 48 hours after the accident, report the matter to DEEP on a [form](#) provided by the Commissioner.

- ↓ The death of any person from whatever cause.
- ↓ The disappearance of any person from on board.
- ↓ The injury of any person sufficient to require medical attention beyond simple first aid.

Any accident in which the total damages to all property affected is in excess of \$500 must be reported by the operator not later than 5 days after the accident on forms provided by the Commissioner. The [form](#) can be downloaded by visiting the Division's webpage: [www.ct.gov/deep/boating](http://www.ct.gov/deep/boating).

The operator of the vessel must make out the report, if they cannot do so, the owner or a survivor of the accident must initiate the report.

Many accidents are not reported because boaters are not aware of the accident reporting requirements. In an effort to increase boating accident reporting, the Division created a reminder to operators of their responsibility to report an accident: The reminders were inserted ([see Attachment H](#)) in the boater registration envelopes and were handed out at boating events. The insert's intent was to remind operators of the steps they need to take in an emergency and information on how to properly report their boating accident to the authorities. Also a blank boating accident report was included in the 2015 Boater's Guide for use.



## BOATING ACCIDENT STATISTICS

The Division continued to maintain the computerized boating accident database using the US Coast Guard's boating accident report database system (BARD). The fifty states, five U.S. territories and the District of Columbia are required to report recreational boating accident data to the United States Coast Guard (USCG). The national data is available through the USCG at: [http://www.uscgboating.org/statistics/accident\\_statistics.aspx](http://www.uscgboating.org/statistics/accident_statistics.aspx) The standards and guidelines for reporting recreational boating accidents, established by the USCG, are described in [Title 33, Section 173 of the Code of Federal Regulations](#).

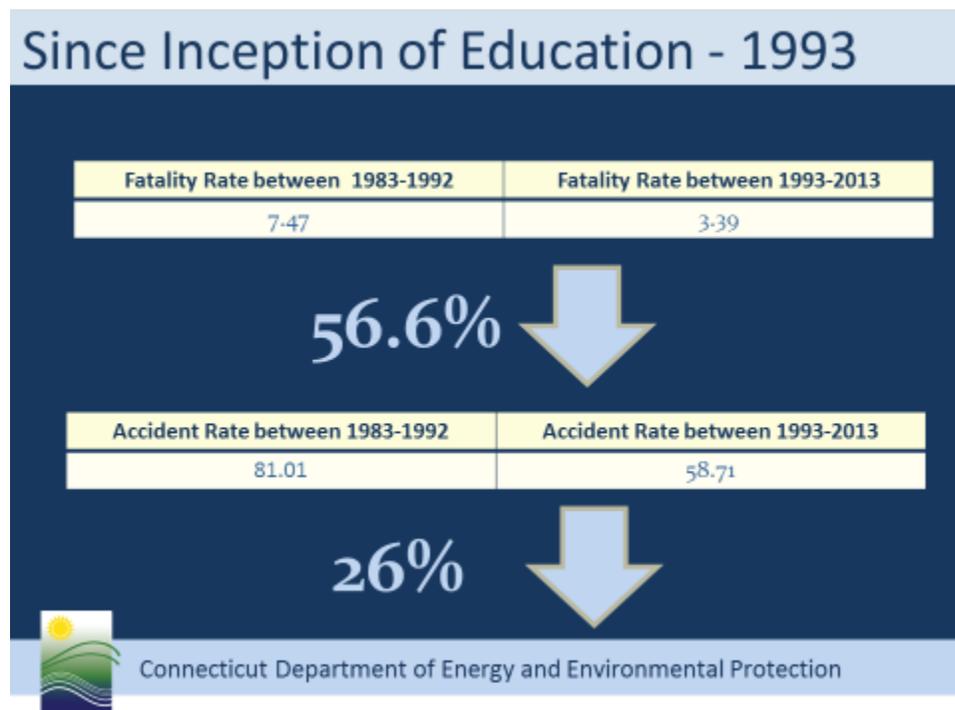
Please Note: Connecticut General Statutes Section 15-149a, requires an accident report to be filed if property damage is \$500 or more. The USCG utilizes \$2000 in property damage as a threshold for reporting.

In 2015 there were 67 reportable accidents (involving 86 vessels) with 31 accidents with injuries for a total of 47 injuries and 6 accidents that resulted in 6 fatalities. All six of the fatalities were a result of drowning. The six drowning victims were not wearing a life jacket.

Last year, there were 48 boating accidents. The increase may have been from our reporting campaign or the increase in boating days due to the great weather CT had.

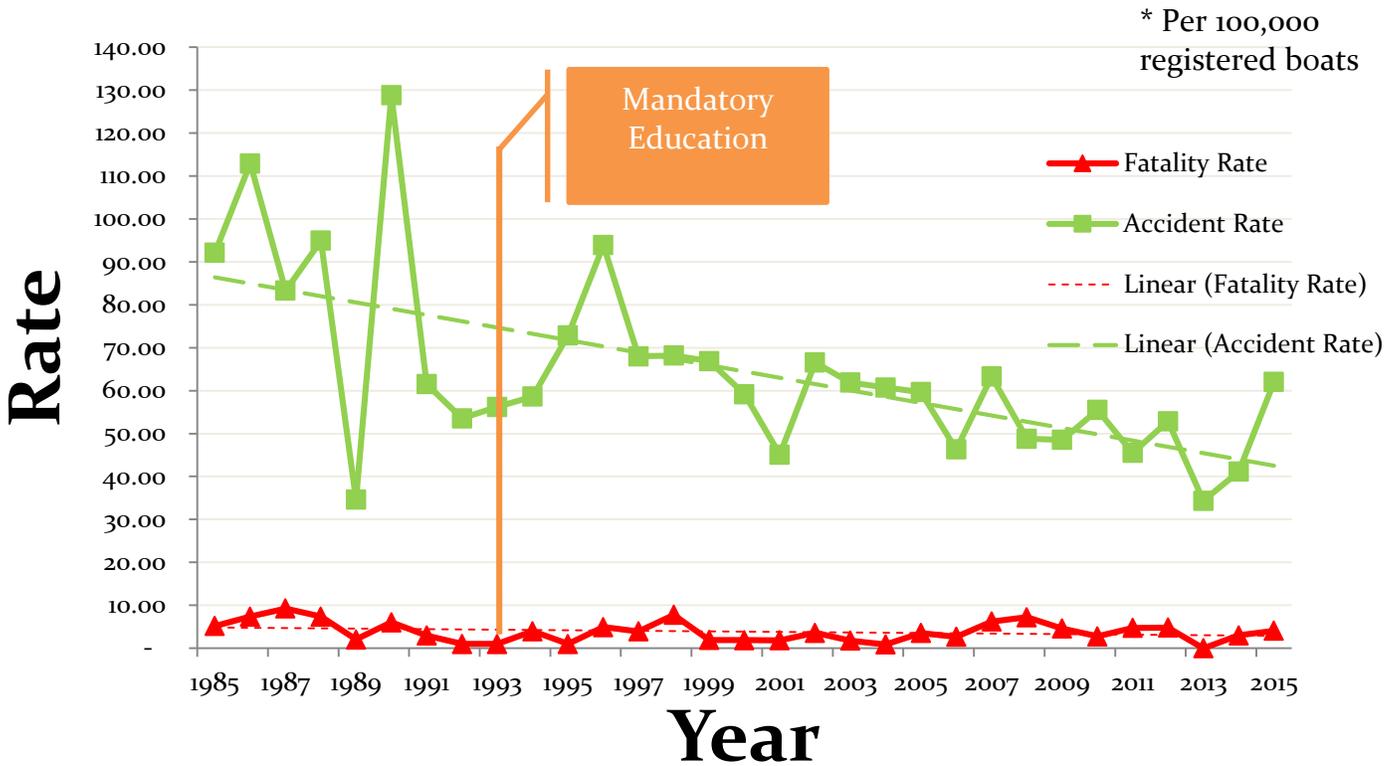
The Division strives to reduce the number of recreational boating accidents, injuries and deaths on Connecticut's waterways and to provide a safe enjoyable experience for the boating public. The purpose of combining boating education, law enforcement initiatives, regulatory and administrative procedures, with visual marking of the waterways is to create a knowledgeable and skilled boating public with safety ethics. The benefits of these efforts is to create a safety environment that results in reduced number of boating fatalities, serious injuries and property damage to boats and reduces user conflicts.

Since the inception of mandatory boating education for registered vessels in 1993, the fatality rate (see page 20) has decreased 56.6% between 1993 and 2013. The accident rate has also decreased 26.0%.



Manually propelled boats are not required to be registered; therefore, there is no requirement for education for the operator and these vessels are not included in the fatality rates and accident rates. The graph on page 20, removed non-registered vessels from the rates.

RATES OF ACCIDENTS AND FATALITIES IN CONNECTICUT PER 100,000 REGISTERED VESSELS-  
1985-2015

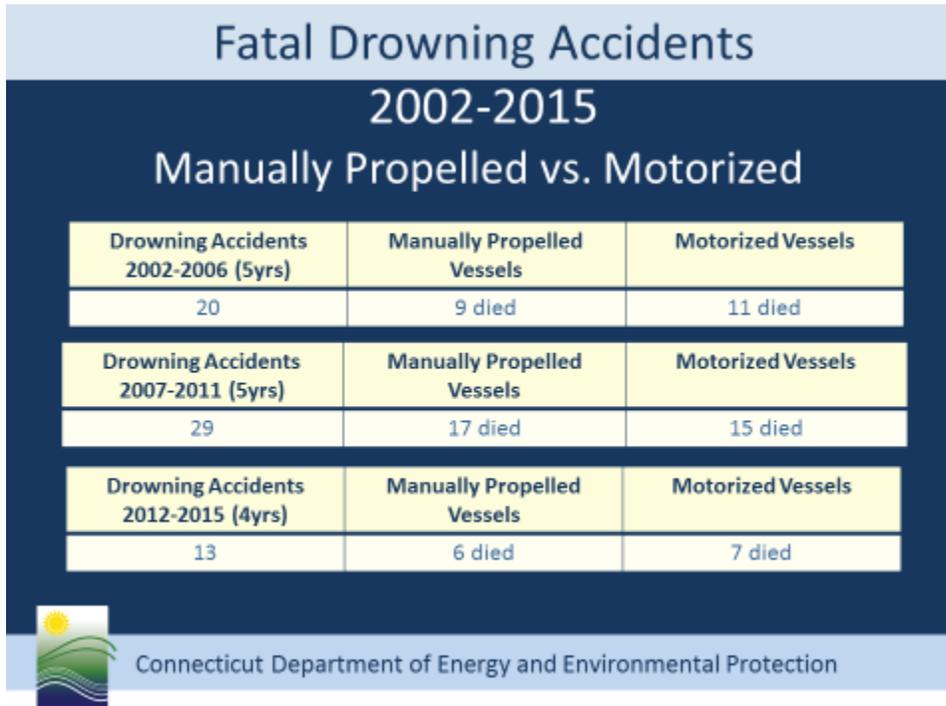


Note: The accident rate only includes *registered vessels* and is calculated using the number of accidents and the number of registered vessels in CT ( $\frac{\text{\#accidents}}{\text{\# registered vessels}} * 100,000$ )

The fatality rate only includes *registered vessels* and is calculated using the number of deaths and the number of registered vessels in CT ( $\frac{\text{\# fatalities (persons)}}{\text{\# registered vessels}} * 100,000$ )

## DROWNING ACCIDENTS

There have been more drowning accidents from manually propelled vessels (non-registered) in the last 5 year period (2007-2011) than motorized (registered) vessels. This is something that the Division will be monitoring in the next 5 year period (2012-2016).



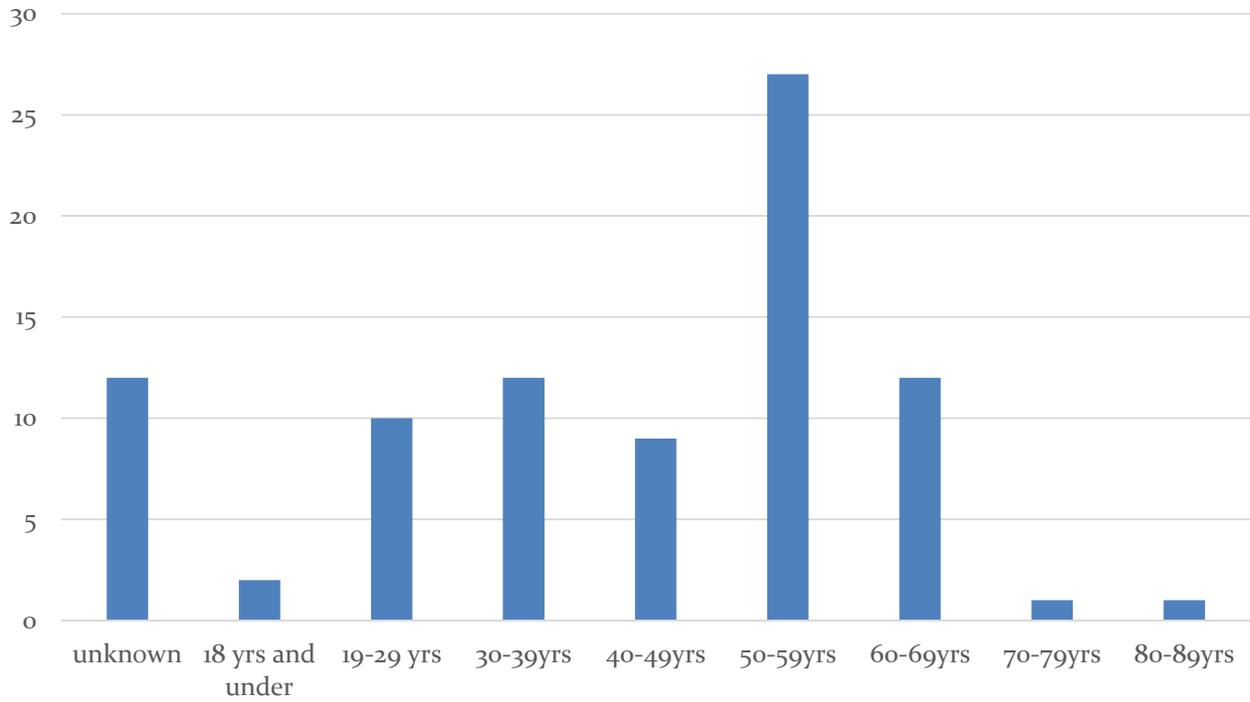
## ALL BOATING (REGISTERED AND NON-REGISTERED VESSELS) ACCIDENTS 2008-2015

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Number of Vessels Registered</b>	110,650	109,213	108,078	105,499	103,992	101,887	99,658	98,361
<b>Accidents*</b>	58	56	63	54	64	43	48	67
<b>Fatalities*</b>	13	8	7	8	6	1	5	6
<b>Accidents with at least 1 injuries</b>				14	21	13	20	31
<b>Accidents with no injuries</b>				32	39	29	26	30

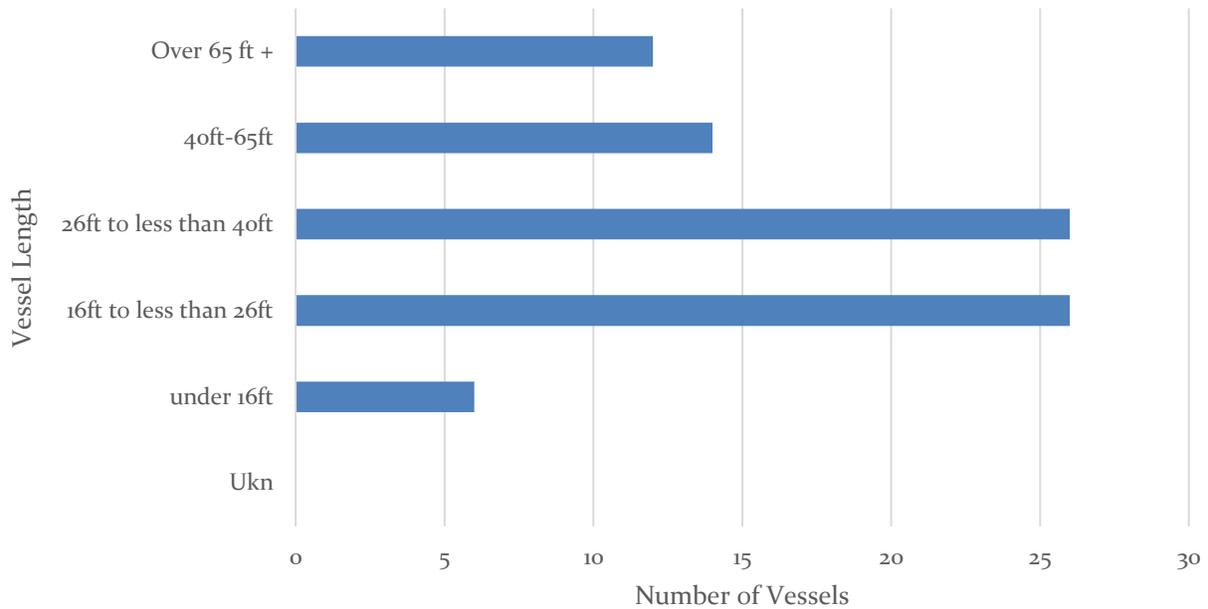
\*Includes registered and non-registered vessels

# 2015 BOATING ACCIDENT STATISTICS

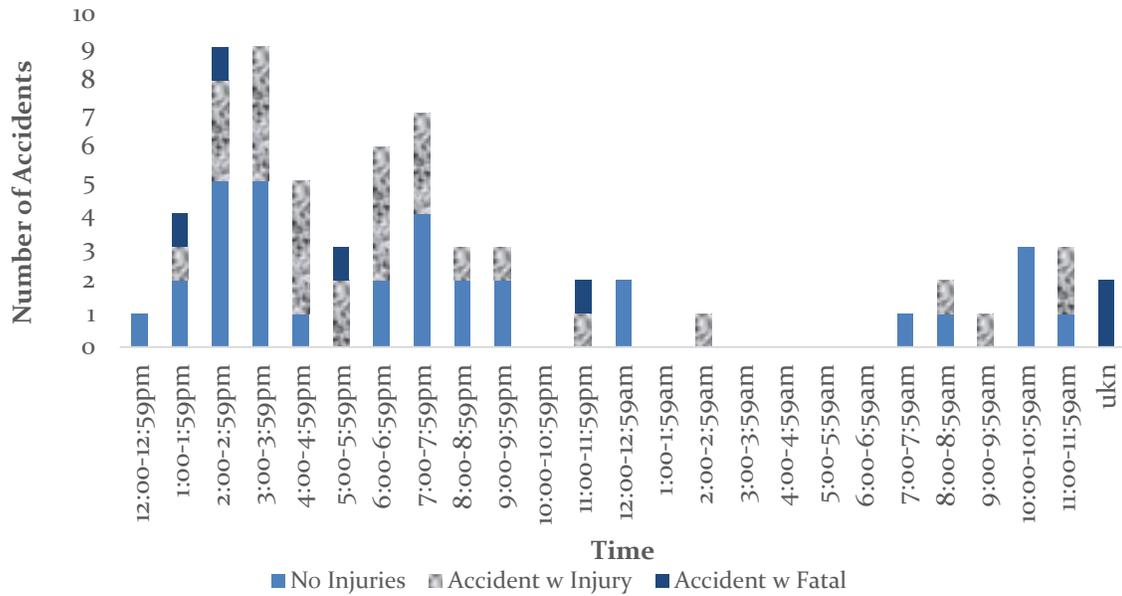
## AGE OF OPERATORS INVOLVED IN ACCIDENTS-2015



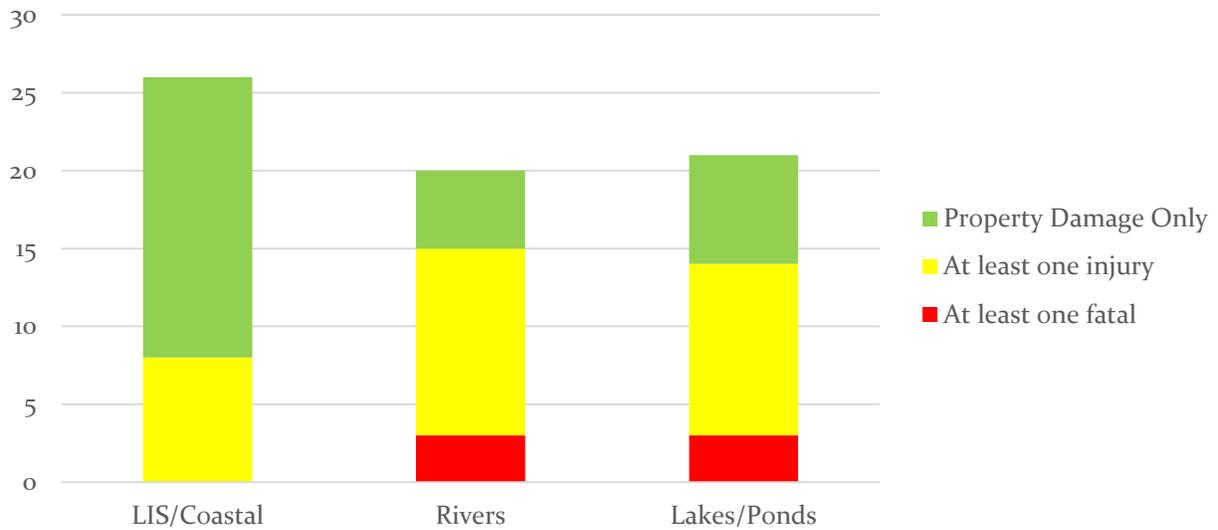
## SIZE OF VESSELS INVOLVED IN ACCIDENTS-2015



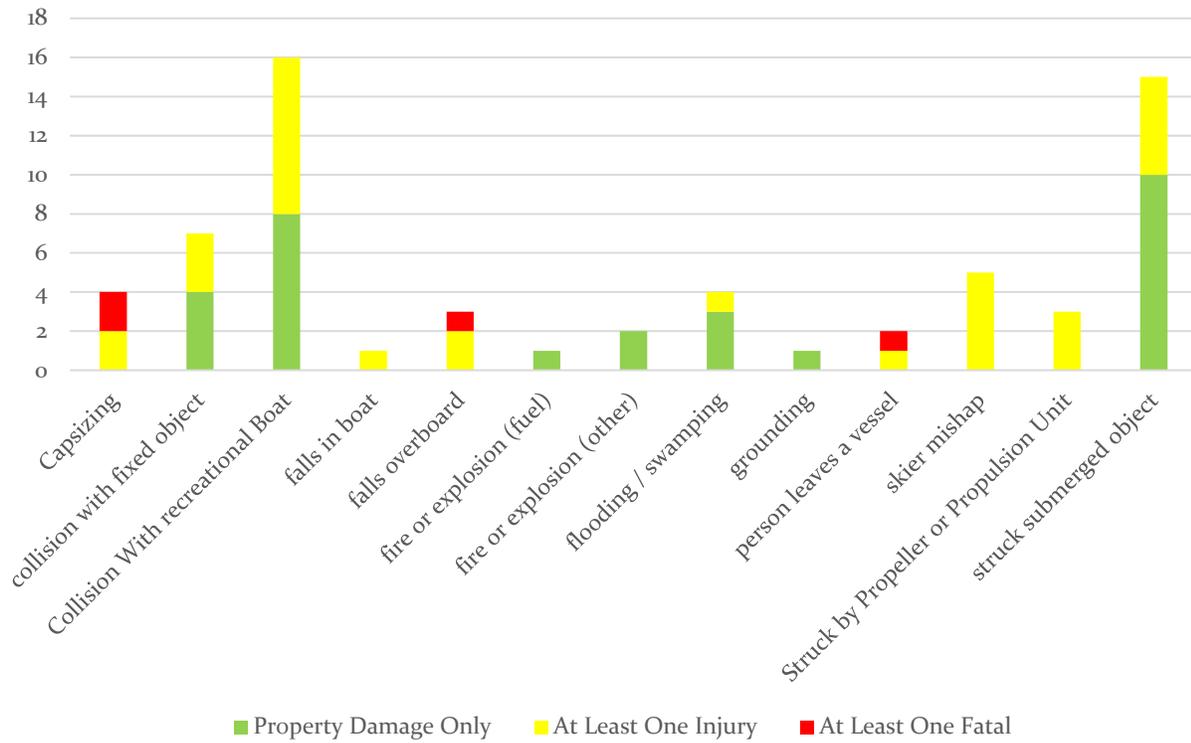
## TIME OF DAY THE ACCIDENTS ARE OCCURRING-2015



## WHERE ARE THE ACCIDENTS OCCURRING?-2015



## TYPE OF ACCIDENTS OCCURRING-2015



## CAUSE OF THE ACCIDENT-2015



ACCIDENT TYPE AND VESSEL OPERATION-2015

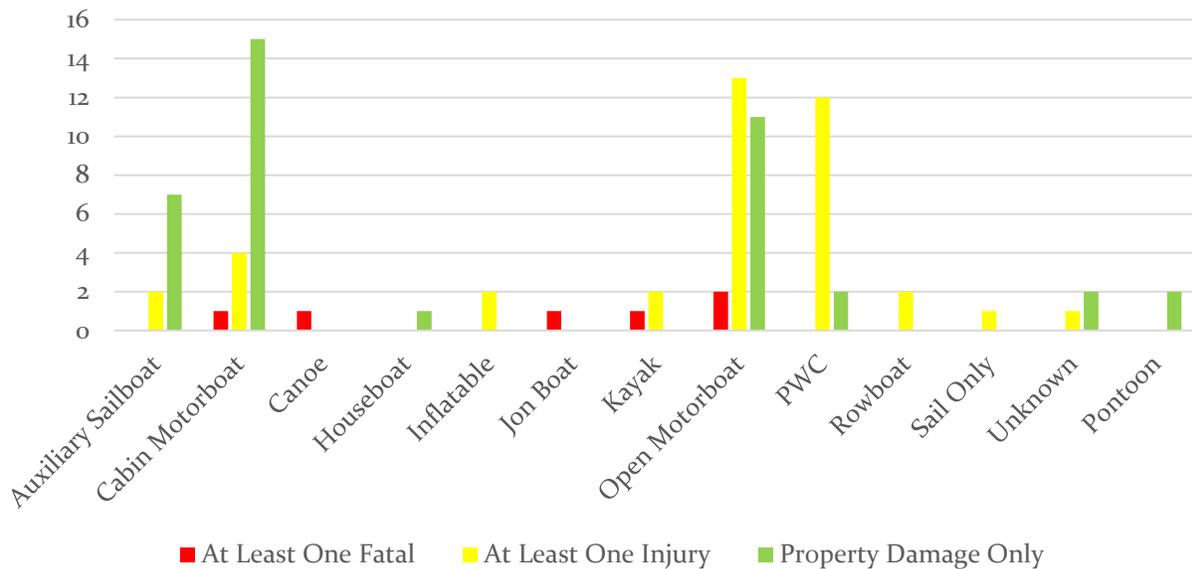
Accident Type	Vessel Operation	Vessels Involved	Accidents with at least on Injury	Accidents with at least on Dead
<b>Capsizing</b>	sailing	1	1	0
	rowing/paddling	2	0	2
	At anchor	1	1	0
<b>Collision w/ Vessel</b>	cruising	10	5	0
	unknown	1	0	0
	docking/undocking	3	0	0
	tied to dock/moored	6	0	0
	drifting	3	1	0
	towing	1	1	0
	At anchor	4	0	0
	Wake Jumping	2	1	0
	Retrieving a PWC at launch	1	1	0
<b>Struck Submerged Object</b>	cruising	13	4	0
	changing speed	2	1	0
<b>Other</b>	cruising	2	1	0
<b>Falls In Boat</b>	cruising	1	1	0
<b>Flooding/Swamping</b>	cruising	3	1	0
	drifting	1	0	0
<b>Grounding</b>	cruising	1	0	0
<b>Collision w/ Fixed Object</b>	cruising	7	1	0
	Docking/undocking	1	1	0
	Tied to dock/moored	1	0	0
<b>Falls Overboard</b>	Rowing/paddling	1	1	0
	drifting	1	0	1
	unknown	1	1	0
<b>Fire/Explosion ( Fuel)</b>	cruising	1	0	0
<b>Fire/Explosion ( other)</b>	cruising	2	0	0
<b>Person leaves a vessel</b>	drifting	1	0	1
	Shifting in/out of gear	1	1	0
<b>Skier mishap</b>	towing	4	4	0
	Changing speed	1	1	0
<b>Unknown</b>	Unkown	3	0	2
<b>Struck by propeller</b>	cruising	1	0	0
	drifting	1	1	0
	In reverse, changing direction	1	1	0

Of the 67 reportable accidents, there were 16 accidents involving collisions with 31 vessels. Of those thirty-one vessels, there were:

- 12 vessels (39%) that were not moving. (i.e. tied to dock/moored, docking/undocking, at anchor, drifting)
- 5 vessels (16%) that were traveling at a speed between 0-10 mph.
- 4 vessels (13%) that were traveling at a speed between 11-20 mph.
- 6 vessels (19%) that were traveling between 21-40 mph.
- 1 (3%) vessel was on plane
- 3 (10%) unknown speeds

11 out of the 16 collisions with vessels (69%) were in close quarters i.e. docking or undocking maneuvers, tied to a dock or moored or retrieving a vessel on a trailer.

#### VESSELS TYPES INVOLVED IN ACCIDENTS-2015



## Fatality Data

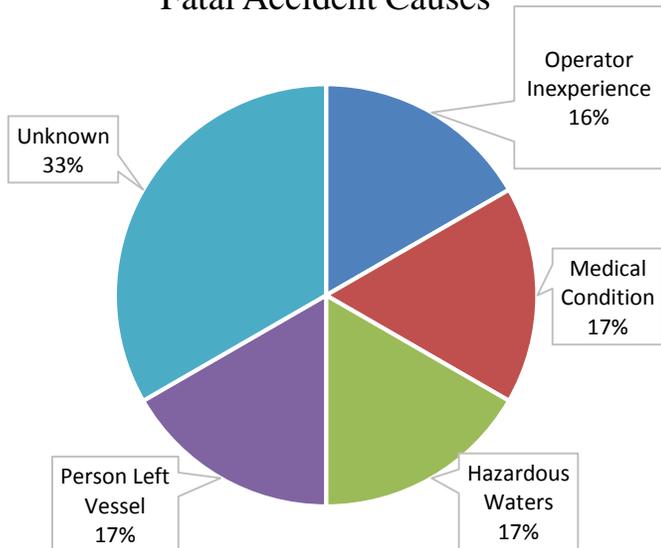
### Fatal Accidents by Accident Type and Body of Water

Body of Water	Accident Type			
	Capsizing	Falls Overboard	Person Left Vessel	Unknown
Shetucket River	1			
Merrimam Pond		1		
Housatonic River	1			
Lake Beseck			1	
Lake Waramaug				1
Connecticut River				1

### Life Jacket Usage in these Accidents

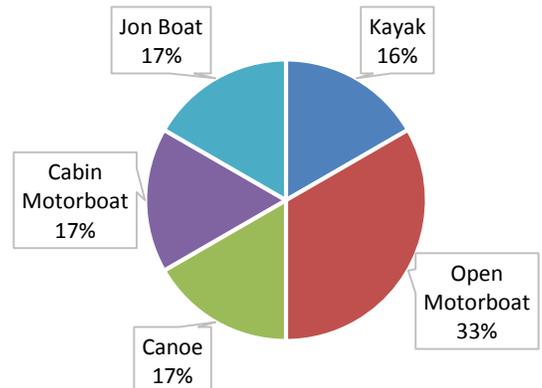
Vessel Type	Life Jacket Worn	Cause of Death
Kayak	No	Drowning
Canoe	No	Drowning
Jon Boat	No	Drowning
Cabin Motorboat	No	Drowning
Open Motorboat	No	Drowning
Open Motorboat	No	Drowning

Fatal Accident Causes



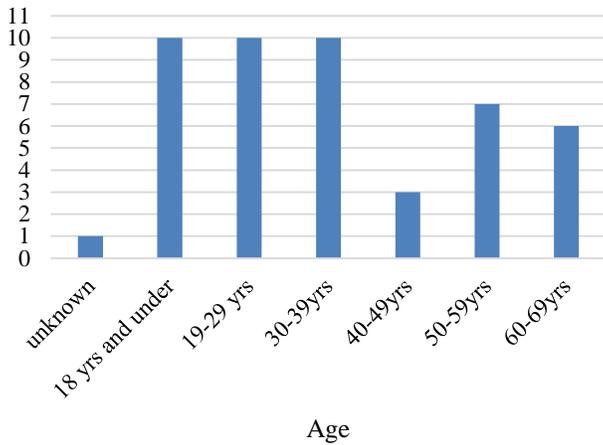
The cause of death for all 6 of the victims was drowning. Six of the fatality victims were not wearing a personal floatation device (PFD) prior to the accident. All six victims were male. Victims ranged in age from 17 to 53, with the average age being 39.5.

Vessels Involved in Fatalities



## Injury Data

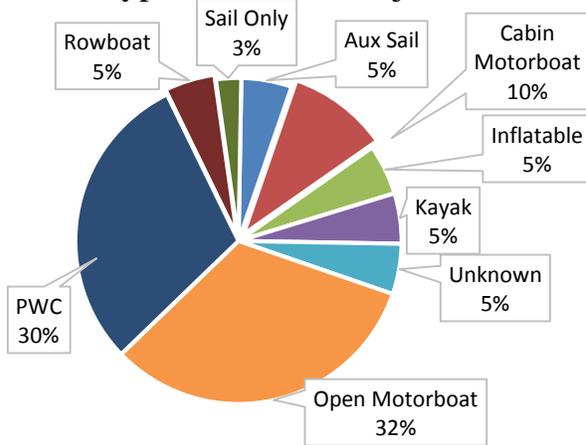
### Age of Injured Victim



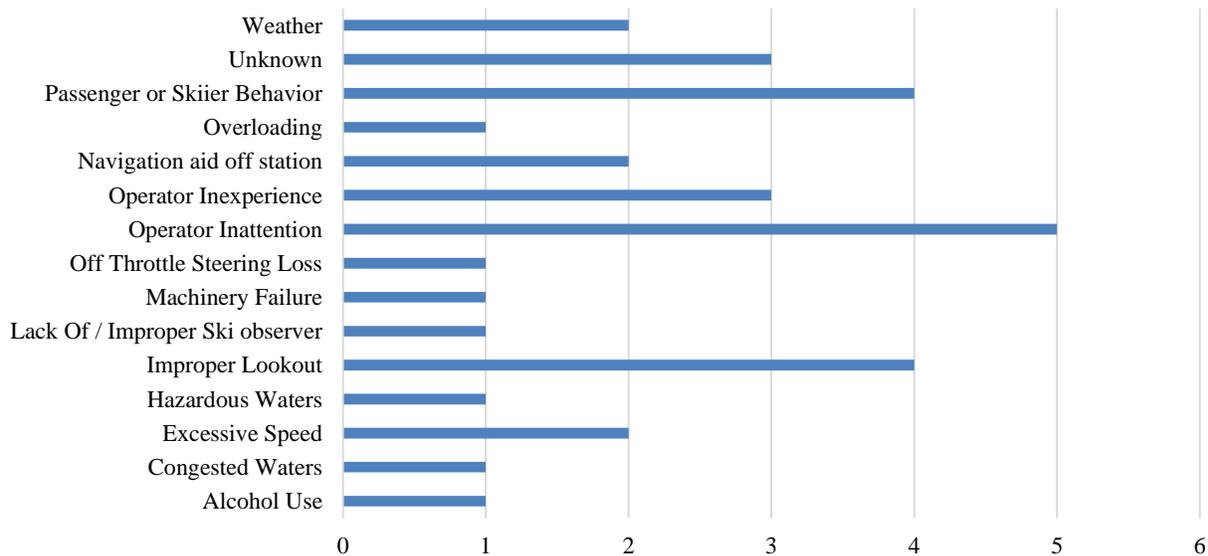
There were 41 vessels involved in 31 accidents that resulted in 47 injuries.

Collision with a vessel accounted for 28% (9) of these accidents; capsizing, a fall overboard, flooding/swamping, or a person leaves a vessel accounted for 19% (6) of these accidents; and 16% (5) of these accidents were skier mishaps.

### Vessel Type Involved in Injuries



### Causes for Accidents Resulting in an Injury



## BOATING UNDER THE INFLUENCE (BUI)

The Division and law enforcement maintained its effort to bring public attention to the dangers of boating under the influence and focus patrols in areas of high activity to strictly enforce Connecticut's boating under the influence laws. The Environmental Conservation (EnCon) Police Division participated in additional patrol initiatives focusing on boating under the influence in August. EnCon Police Division officers arrested nine boaters for boating under the influence.

### ALCOHOL RELATED ACCIDENTS -2006-2015

Of the 589 boating accidents that occurred between 2006 and 2015, alcohol was involved in the following:

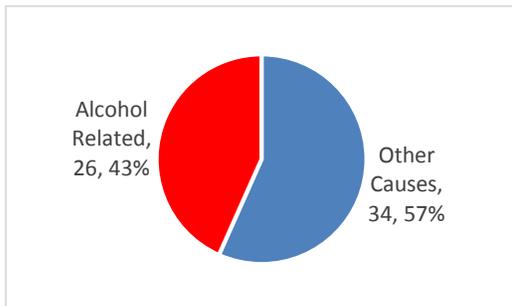
- ↓ 3% of the accidents with PROPERTY DAMAGE ONLY. (9 accidents out of 327 accidents)
- ↓ 15% of the accidents with at least one injury. (33 accidents out of 216 accidents)
- ↓ 43% of the fatal accidents. (26 accidents out of 60 accidents) In 2014, the national average was 21%.

The number of BUI arrests:

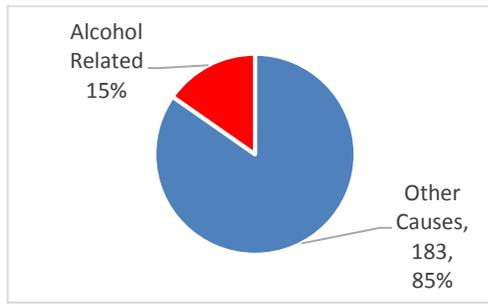
- ↓ 2008-6
- ↓ 2009-4
- ↓ 2010-15
- ↓ 2011-15
- ↓ 2012-12
- ↓ 2013-9
- ↓ 2014-4
- ↓ 2015-10

Accidents involving alcohol by the vessel's occupants shows that as the seriousness of the accident increases, so does alcohol involvement. (2006-2015)

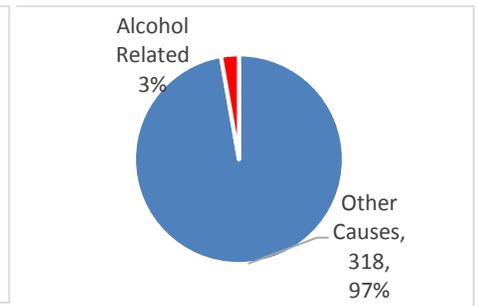
ACCIDENTS WITH AT LEAST 1 FATALITY



ACCIDENTS WITH AT LEAST 1 INJURY



ACCIDENTS WITH PROPERTY DAMAGE ONLY



The Division's priority was to encourage responsible consumption of alcoholic beverages. Utilizing local print, radio, TV media, websites and social media networks, like Facebook and Twitter, these messages were delivered to the public. An ad that featured joint patrols and partnership with Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) was printed in 3 magazines.

To increase intoxication awareness at such events, the Boating Division utilized attention grabbing tools such as Fatal Vision® Goggles which educate people of all ages about the consequences of alcohol misuse and abuse. The Fatal Vision® Goggles use special lens technology that allows the wearer to experience a realistic simulation of impairment. The Division utilized 'Intoxi-clock' an interactive tool used to demonstrate visually how a person's level of intoxication changes with increasing levels of alcohol consumption and the rate at which a body metabolizes alcohol given the person's weight, gender and drinking pattern.

The Boating Division coordinated efforts with the EnCon Police Division and added another Operation Drywater weekend in July as part of the BUI campaign.

## **BOATING LEGISLATION**

The Division provided a legal structure that promoted safe boating practices and ensured consistency with federal and state requirements pertaining to boating safety and boat operation. The Division tracked eight proposed legislation initiatives for boating, assessed impacts, and provided testimony to the DEEP Commissioner.

Other noteworthy legislation:

- ↓ [HB-5030](#)- An Act Concerning Handicap Accessibility At State-Owned Fishing Areas.
- ↓ [HB-5142](#)- An Act Concerning The Minimum Age For Obtaining A Safe Boating Certificate Or A Certificate Of Personal Watercraft Operation.
- ↓ [HB-5692](#)- An Act Requiring The Furnishing Of Boating Safety Information To Persons Purchasing Or Renting A Watercraft That Does Not Require A Boating Safety Course Prior To Operation.
- ↓ [SB-353](#)- An Act Concerning The Coastal Jurisdiction Line For Tidal, Coastal Or Navigable Waters Of The State.
- ↓ [SB-645](#)- An Act Concerning Definitions Of "Deadly Weapon" And "Dangerous Instrument".
- ↓ [SB-699](#)- An Act Establishing A Minimum Age For Towing Any Person By Vessel And Requiring The Completion Of Safe Towing Instruction Prior To The Issuance Of A Safe Boating Certificate.
- ↓ [SB-787](#)- An Act Providing Funds For The Dredging Of Ports Along The Connecticut Shoreline.
- ↓ [SB-868](#)- An Act Regulating The Use Of Jetted Articulated Vessels And Certain Water Skiing Devices.

Other Relevant legislation was adopted during the session:

- ↓ PA 15-25- Safe Waterskiing Endorsement
- ↓ Transfer of DOT responsibilities regarding harbor masters and some navigation issues to DEEP, June Sp. Sess., Public Act No. 15-5

The Boating Division continued to promote boating safety through advancing a uniform regulatory structure that enhances safe boating practices consistent with federal and state requirements pertaining to boating safety and boat operation. The Boating Division proposed:

- ↓ Modifications to Connecticut law to expand the definition of waterskiing to take into account the other activities occurring behind a vessel. This advanced through one house but was not called for a vote in the other.
- ↓ Modifications to state law to safely accommodate levitation unit attachments that are gaining popularity with personal watercraft operators, including requiring both the operator and observer to have a Certificate of Personal Watercraft Operation. This advanced through one house but was not called for a vote in the other.
- ↓ Modifications to current state regulation to expand a Slow-No-Wake area in the Squantz Cove portion of Candlewood Lake, New Fairfield.

The Boating Division completed the regulatory process to create a new Slow-No-Wake area in Lake Waramaug in the vicinity of the State Park in Warren.

The Division reviewed and provided comment on revisions to 3 municipal ordinances.

## **MARINE DEALERS**

The Division conducted site visits for new marine dealer registration numbers (MDRNs) applicants. The Boating Division inspected and approved 9 new marine dealers for receipt of MDRNs. In 2015, Connecticut issued a total of 299 MDRNs to 168 marine dealers and marine surveyors. Approved dealers may display assigned numbers temporarily on vessels in the water that they may be selling or fixing.

## **ABANDONED BOATS**

The Division recently amended its abandoned boat law which went into effect January 1, 2015. The Division received inquiries about abandoned boats and provided assistance for removing approximately one hundred-thirty abandoned vessels in 2015.