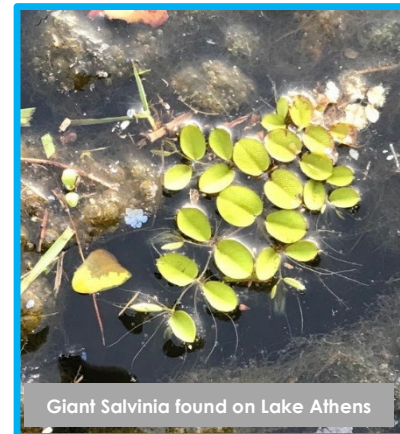


What is Giant Salvinia?

Giant Salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*) is an aquatic fern, native to south-eastern Brazil, and is classified as an invasive, non-native species in the United States. It is believed to have been first introduced to the US as an ornamental aquatic plant, that was dumped when the aquariums were no longer wanted. Giant Salvinia has spread to new water bodies via boats, dumping of aquariums, and other unintentional means.



Giant Salvinia found on Lake Athens

Where else has Giant Salvinia been found?

Giant Salvinia has now spread throughout the southeastern United States, from East Texas through eastern North Carolina. Additional East Texas lakes where Salvinia has been found include Fork, Palestine, Houston County Lake, and dozens of others.

How much, and where was, Giant Salvinia found at Lake Athens?

Lake Athens is fortunate that the confirmed Giant Salvinia found were mostly small, juvenile plants. Most of the plants found were on the very northwestern portion of the Lake (west of the public access boat ramp).

What is the plan to treat the Giant Salvinia?

Texas Parks & Wildlife Department has wasted no time is beginning a treatment, containment, and eradication plan, since the Giant Salvinia was discovered.

TPWD immediately conducted a mechanical (by hand) removal of found plants and conducted a chemical spray treatment of all infected areas. Both mechanical and chemical treatments will continue, on a regular basis.

A containment boom has been set-up to the west of the public access boat ramp.

Can a boater cross the containment boom?

The short answer is yes, as Lake Athens is public waters of the State of Texas.

TPWD has intentionally constructed the boom to where the center section (orange section) is smaller in diameter than the outside sections (yellow sections). This center section (orange) is the only section where you should attempt to cross, if you must cross. Crossing over the larger-yellow sections may pose a risk of damage for propellers and the boom.

It is recommended that you cross the containment boom only when necessary, as few times as possible, and only in spots that are visibly clear of vegetation. It is recommended to idle over the boom

until the outboard motor gets close, kill and raise the motor and ease over the boom, using a trolling motor or paddle for any additional push needed.

If boaters can cross the boom, won't that spread the Giant Salvinia to other parts of Lake Athens?

While that scenario is possible, it is highly unlikely. Since most of the Giant Salvinia that was found on Lake Athens were small juvenile plants, the probability of picking up one of these small plants on a propeller is low.

However, that is why TPWD and AMWA ask that you cross the containment boom minimally, and to visually insure there is no vegetation along the boom if you do cross.

If boaters can cross the boom, why have the boom?

Giant Salvinia can easily spread across the Lake via currents, wind, and wave action. The boom is the last line of defense in these instances.

What is the Athens Municipal Water Authority doing?

AMWA is fortunate to have a great relationship with TPWD. In addition to supporting TPWD's eradication efforts, AMWA will be posting signs, in the water, regarding crossing the boom. AMWA will also be working to educate regarding the State's, "Clean, Drain, Dry," laws and initiatives.

AMWA's Board of Directors will also be discussing changes to local ordinances regarding vegetation and boaters.

What is the best-case scenario for eradicating Giant Salvinia from Lake Athens, again?

The best-case would be that TPWD's treatment plan is successful and that the Athens area has a cold winter. Giant Salvinia is not tolerant of below freezing temperatures.

What can the community do to prevent future introductions of Giant Salvinia and other invasive species?

Cooperation from every boater in Texas is needed to prevent future introductions of invasive species into one of Texas most valuable assets, our lakes and waterways. Unfortunately, the risk of Giant Salvinia, and other invasive species, is present at every lake in Texas.



Every boater needs to be familiar with, and consistently practice, "Clean, Drain, Dry."

CLEAN: Before leaving the ramp, do a quick "walk around" inspection. Remove any plants, mud, and other debris from the boat, anchor, trailer and gear.

DRAIN: Drain your boat, motor, bait buckets and other water-retaining compartments. Keep your drain plug out until the boat is dry.

DRY: Let your boat dry for a week or more before visiting another lake. Leave all compartments open and gear out to air dry. If you can't dry it this long, wash everything thoroughly with high-pressure water at a carwash or at home.

Also, all recreational users of all waters in Texas should be familiar with what Giant Salvinia looks like and report any potential Giant Salvinia to Texas Parks & Wildlife at aquaticinvasives@tpwd.texas.gov

For more information regarding “Clean, Drain, Dry”, invasive species, and TPWD’s efforts to care for Texas lakes, visit:

www.texasinvasives.org

tpwd.texas.gov/landwater/stop-invasives

stopaquaticinvasives.org



Photo courtesy of University of Florida – Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants