

N.Y. lake putting deep freeze on Asian clams

By Scott Rapp, Post-Standard

Cayuga County has a chilling plan to kill the swelling population of Asian clams at the north end of Owasco Lake.

The county is planning to freeze the critters to death by lowering the winter lake level by one more foot than usual to 709 feet above sea level in November.

Dropping the lake level an extra foot is expected to kill an estimated 90 percent of the tiny mollusks, an invasive species that could wreak environmental and recreational havoc on the lake if left unchecked.

Tens of thousands of the clams are living mostly in sandy-bottomed water less than six feet deep in an area that encompasses about 123 acres at the north end of the lake, according to a recent study. Initially, officials estimated the clams, first spotted in the lake a year ago, had invaded about 15 to 25 acres near Emerson Park.

The clams are tiny but can cause big problems, like those being seen in Lake George and Lake Tahoe. Asian clams can trigger toxic blue-green algae blooms, which can ruin boating and swimming, and can make people sick and cause animals to die. Also, the clams can clog water intake pipes and befoul water quality.

Read the whole story