

Maine Warden Service: Storm Will Thin Ice; Be Safe!

Any ice on lakes, ponds may become treacherous due to warm temperatures, heavy rains and major winds.

For more information, contact Spokesperson Deborah Turcotte at 287-6008 or 592-1164

AUGUSTA – The Maine Warden Service is urging people to check any ice before venturing out as spring-like conditions, with warm temperatures, substantial rainfall and heavy winds, are weakening ice throughout the state.

According to the National Weather Service, between one to three inches of rain is expected today (Jan. 25, 2010), and temperatures near or above freezing are expected for most of the week.

Significant snow melt is likely, with possible flooding. The heavy rains either will open the water, thin existing ice or create slush, according to Maine Warden Service Major Gregory Sanborn. Inlets and outlets will be dangerous due to runoff from rivers and streams.

“January ‘thaws’ are not unusual,” said Major Sanborn. “However, most of Maine has not had a consistent stretch of sub-freezing temperatures this winter to provide a thick layer of ice that can withstand this wet, warm spell. What may have been moderately safe ice this past weekend may be extremely treacherous this week.”

The Maine Warden Service offers these tips for ice safety: - Never guess the thickness of the ice - Check it! Check the ice in several different places using an auger or some other means to make a test hole and determine the thickness. Make several, beginning at the shore, and continuing as you go out. - Check the ice with a partner, so if something does happen, someone is there to help you. If you are doing it alone, wear a lifejacket. - If ice at the shoreline is cracked or squishy, stay off! Watch out for thin, clear or honeycombed ice. Dark snow and dark ice are other signs of weak spots. - Avoid areas with currents, around bridges and pressure ridges. Wind and currents can break ice. - Parents should alert children of unsafe ice in their area, and make sure that they stay off the ice. If they insist on using their new skates, suggest an indoor skating rink.

If you break through the ice, remember: - Don't panic. - Don't try to climb out immediately - you will probably break the ice again. Reach for solid ice. - Lay both arms on the unbroken ice and kick hard. This will help lift your body onto the ice. Once on the ice, roll, **DON'T WALK**, to safety. - To help someone who has fallen through the ice, lie down flat and reach with a branch, plank or rope or form a human chain. Don't stand. After securing the victim, wiggle backwards to the solid ice.