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BROOKLINE, JAMAICA PLAIN

Blog tracks 'sightings' of Jessie, a mysterious monster beneath Jamaica Pond

Posted by Matt Rocheleau May 9, 2012 04:02 PM

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(Globe Staff file photo / By David L. Ryan)

Could there be a monster living beneath the serene waters of Jamaica Pond?

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

State officials released some 1,150 fish into Jamaica Pond last month, saying the bounty would feed the imaginations of local anglers as winter gives way to spring.

However, some speculate that [the annual hefty stock of trout and salmon](#) could feed a different hunger: a mysterious monster that lurks beneath Boston's largest body of freshwater.

It's all tongue-in-cheek.



(Globe Staff file photo / Wendy Maeda) **But**
Jessie's annual feeding?

pretending is fun, according to three neighborhood residents who dreamed up and run a [recently-created blog](#) and [Twitter page](#) dedicated to the make-believe sea creature, whose name is inspired by the "Nessie" nickname given to the reputed Loch Ness Monster.

Sightings of "Jessie," as the pretend beast below Jamaica Pond is called, were first reported around the 1850's, and possibly even before then, according to Jamaica Plain residents Sydney Hardin, Scott Roche* and Michael Hensley.

Together they lead the "Jamaica Pond Monster Observation Society."

What "Jessie" is, exactly, is not completely clear. There are some theories.

"We are quite certain that Jessie is a giant beaver, *Castoroides ohioensis*. It's the only thing that scientifically makes sense, and it fits a lot of the observational data," said an e-mail from Harden, an office worker and artist, and Roche, a doctoral student in computer science at Northeastern. "He's about eight feet long, covered in brown fur, and has a large, paddle-like tail."

The cryptid creature's gender and age have also not been pinned down yet.

"We are leaning towards male because males tend to have larger ranges and be solitary, but we don't know," the e-mail said. "There also are multiple reports of loud belching coming from the pond."

Based on the lifespan of modern beavers, the bloggers suggest Jessie may be between 10 and 20 years old.

That's based on the assumption that there have been generations of Jessies. The bloggers believe there may be a family of Jessies, whose members spend time in

Jamaica Pond and other local waterways.

But, if there has only been one Jessie, "he could be ancient."

The bloggers do have an explanation for why they have not been able to compose a more definitive description of the monster.

Despite having received "several thousand reports of sightings" over the past century and a half, "Many of [the sightings] are in the 'unverifiable/drunken at 1 in the afternoon' variety," they wrote. "This is a classic cryptozoology problem! We have lots of blurry photos, videos that could either be of Jessie, a duck, or someone relieving themselves in a bush...very hard to tell."

They expect to soon post artist renderings to the blog.

Some solid video footage of the monster that had been captured by two "JessieCams" stationed around the pond was "accidentally deleted" by an intern.

Releasing information about Jessie via the Internet has "definitely created a bit of a buzz on Twitter, and there were an originally increased number of reports of Jessie sightings," the e-mail said. "I think more people are out looking, and I think it may have made Jessie a bit more shy."

"It's been a few weeks since the last sighting, and we think that he may be hiding out with a relative in Cabot Pond in Brookline, which is on private property and thus much less accessible," they continued.

From time to time, the blog reports, Jessie is known to leave the 60-acre pond that is believed to be tens of thousands of years old. The pond along Boston's border with Brookline features a heavily-used 1.5-mile paved path around its perimeter.

But, the good news for local pond-goers is that Jessie reportedly poses no threat to humans.

"One of our members recently overheard some bugaboo-pushing moms at JP Licks talking about the danger Jessie might pose to their little snowflakes, and we want to say, first and foremost, Jessie is totally harmless!," the society wrote in its first blog post in January. "In over 160 years, there has never been a

Jessie-induced injury, to pet, child, or adult." continued the post on the "Jamaica Pond Monster Blog / El Blog del Jessie."

The bloggers admit to having fabricated Jessie's existence.

"Everyone wants a little magic and mystery in life," their e-mail said.

"In this day and age, we are asked to believe so many improbable tales - that Elvis is dead, that ke\$ha can sing, that we are not ruled by a race of alien lizard overlords - why NOT believe in a giant, prehistoric pond-dwelling beaver?!?"

Still, aside from maybe emptying the pond, there is no way to definitively prove the creature is imaginary.

What better way to keep a secret underwater monster quiet than by stuffing its mouth with a massive serving of sushi each spring?

"As far as we know Jessie is mostly vegetarian," and is known to particularly enjoy "hot chocolate, saag paneer, and fried Mars bars," the bloggers write.

"But would he turn down some nice salmon teriyaki? I'm thinking no."

**(Roche says he sometimes refers to himself as Jonah Elwin, a fictional avatar and biologist by day who hails from Scotland)*

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(AP file photo)

Be careful what you fish for at Jamaica Pond.

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