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# Dive teams come up empty

WATERVILLE -- Dive teams searched the icy Kennebec River and Messalonskee Stream in connection with the disappearance of missing toddler Ayla Reynolds Wednesday, but did not find anything.

BY [BEN MCCANNA](#)



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Two dive teams — one from the Maine Warden Service and one from Maine State Police — searched the Kennebec River below Hathaway Creative Center on Water Street and below Carter Memorial Bridge as well as portions of Messalonskee Stream, Lt. Kevin Adam of the warden service said.

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ADDITIONAL PHOTOS



**HARD SEARCH:** Maine State Police diver Jarod Stedman encountered sunken wood and floating pieces of ice while searching underwater for signs of missing toddler Ayla Reynolds in the Kennebec River near the boat launch off Water Street in Waterville on Wednesday. *Staff photo by David Leaming*





INTO THE COLD: A diver heads back underwater as a search boat motors above the Carter Memorial Bridge in the Kennebec River as state police and the Maine Warden Search conducted an extensive search of the river for signs of missing toddler Ayla Reynolds on Wednesday. *Staff photo by David Leaming*



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A total of 19 divers participated in the daylong search, working in rotation.

Adam said the focused search was not the result of a tip.

“We’ve had tips for bodies of water all over the place, but there’s no specific tip,” he said. “This is just us expanding our search area, trying to think of scenarios and doing what we can do to find Ayla.”

He said sunny skies made it a good day to see things in the water and it was also a good time to do it

logistically.

In December, it would have been too difficult to coordinate ground and water searches at the same time, he said.

Adam wouldn't say if the water search would continue today.

"We'll see what we learn and we'll re-assess again," he said.

Early on Wednesday, Justin DiPietro, Ayla's father, said he learned about the search the day before.

"I spoke with investigators last night. They said, 'Don't be alarmed,'" DiPietro told the Morning Sentinel.

Police said they have received about 600 tips during the criminal investigation into the 21-month-old's disappearance.

"All leads have been followed, and we're looking for more," Department of Public Safety Spokesman Steve McCausland said during a press conference Wednesday. "We've ruled out no scenarios, and ruled out no one."

McCausland declined to discuss details of the investigation, but clarified that the night Ayla disappeared there were three adults and two children in the Violette Avenue house where Ayla lives with her father.

McCausland added that Ayla's family has been cooperative throughout the investigation.

"They have done everything we have asked them to do," he said. "They have been available every time we have a question."

He declined to say if any family members have been asked to take polygraph exams.

McCausland also said he wanted to clarify a misunderstanding between police and the DiPietros. Police are no longer asking the DiPietros to avoid media appearances.

On the contrary, he said.

"Very early on in the investigation, in the first couple of days, we asked the principals involved not to speak to the media until we had a chance to talk to them firsthand," he said. "Then I think there was a misunderstanding on their part, that there was a permanent ban on media. There is not."

On Tuesday, police told DiPietro and his mother, Phoebe DiPietro, that they should talk publicly about Ayla's disappearance.

“We are encouraging all family members, both here in Waterville and southern Maine, to keep her story in the forefront and to keep her name in the headlines.”

McCausland said investigators are making progress, but their expectations have been tempered.

“I can tell you honestly that as the days go on, our concern grows, as it has been 26 days,” he said. “But, I can also tell you that we remain hopeful that we’ll bring her back to her home.

“This is the most intense investigation we have been involved in during the last two decades in Maine,” he said. “It has had a huge effect on the investigators.”

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