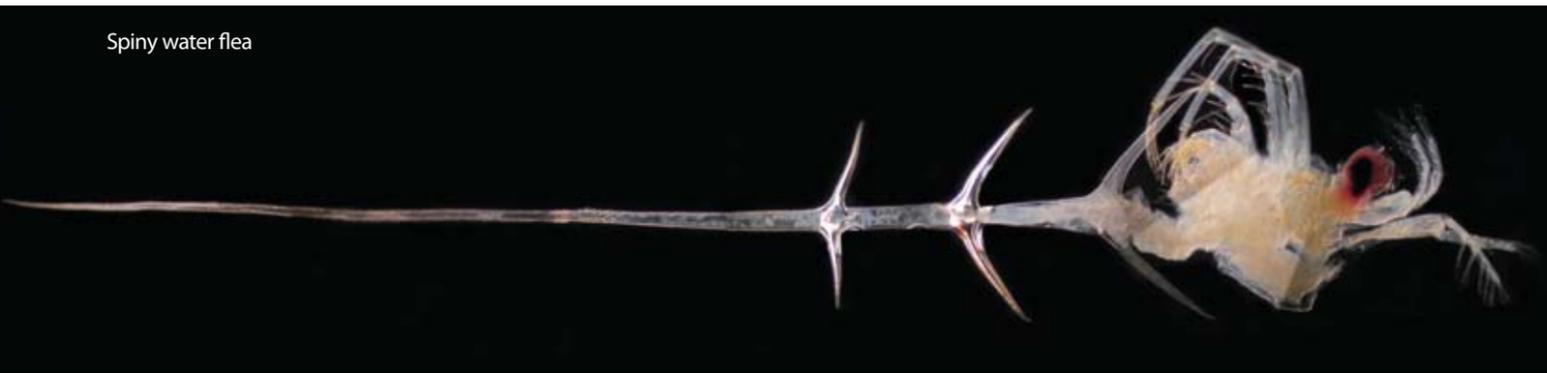


Spiny water flea

Howard Webb



Spiny Water Flea Found

Last year, the spiny water flea (*Bythotrephes longimanus*), was found in Great Sacandaga Lake in the southern Adirondacks—the first confirmation of this invasive species in a New York water body other than the Great Lakes. The tiny crustacean pictured above is native to Europe and was first discovered in Lake Huron in 1984, most likely the result of ballast water discharge from ships traveling up the St. Lawrence Seaway. How or when it spread into Sacandaga Lake is unknown, but it is a threat to the lake's native species. The flea can grow from egg to full maturity in as little as two weeks, and feeds on tiny crustaceans and zooplankton that native aquatic organisms depend on for survival. In addition, their tail spines catch on fishing lines and muddle up fishing gear. Currently, the only way to limit the flea's impact is to prevent its spread. DEC recommends thoroughly inspecting and cleaning fishing and boating equipment, and drying or disinfecting equipment before using them in another body of water. For more information about the spiny water flea, see the US Geological Survey's Spiny Water Flea Fact Sheet at <http://nas.er.usgs.gov/queries/FactSheet.asp?speciesID=162>. For more information about invasive species, visit www.dec.ny.gov/animals/265html on DEC's website.

Environmental Excellence

The NYS Environmental Excellence Awards program honors businesses, not-for-profit organizations, governments (local, state and federal), educational institutions and/or individuals achieving environmental excellence through innovative and environmentally sustainable practices or partnerships. Previous award winners have made great improvements to New York's environment, including eliminating 2.01 million pounds of hazardous waste, recycling 324 million pounds of solid waste, and preserving 149,000 acres of land.

You are invited to get recognition for your efforts to solve environmental challenges! DEC is especially interested in projects that achieve significant environmental benefits by applying cutting-edge pollution prevention technologies; initiatives to make schools and businesses more "green;" energy conservation and green energy production efforts; waste reduction and recycling efforts; storm water management and watershed planning; environmental protection and restoration efforts; and land conservation. Completed applications must be postmarked no later than Friday, June 12, 2009. For more information, contact Michelle Hinman of DEC's Pollution Prevention Unit at (518) 402-9469, or email eeawards@gw.dec.state.ny.us. You can also visit the DEC website at www.dec.ny.gov and search "Environmental Excellence Awards."

Birders of the Future

Imagine traveling all across the state, trekking through dense woods and thick marshes, watching and documenting New York's birds, and all with people who appreciate and enjoy it as much as you do. The New York State Young Birders Club does just that, and much more. The club provides a community of friendship and fun for young people between the ages of 12 and 19 who have a passion for birds and the conservation of their habitats. Members enjoy field trips throughout the state, have access to a club website, and participate in other exciting activities. Members can also contribute to a quarterly newsletter filled with articles, artwork and photographs by the members. Visit www.nysyoung-birders.org for more information about this opportunity, and how to join.

photo courtesy of New York State Young Birders Club

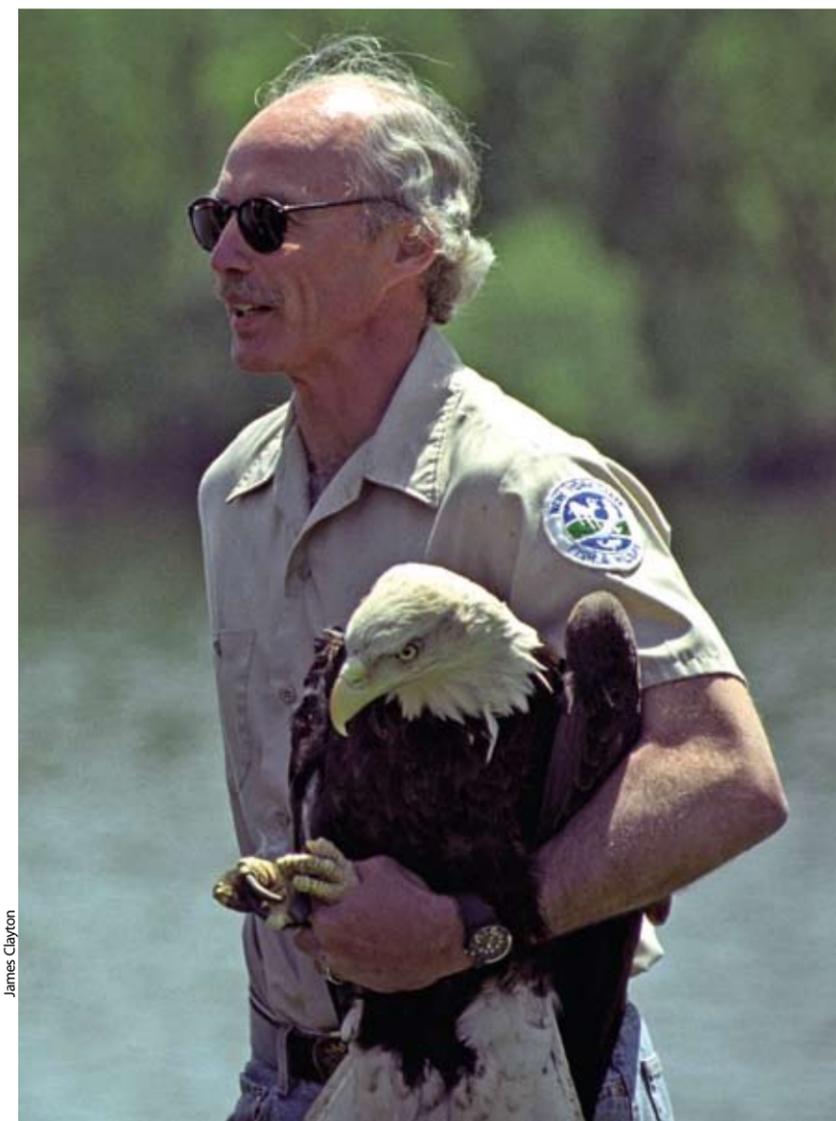


New York State Conservationist, April 2009

Mercury of Concern in Bald Eagles

Supported by a grant from The Nature Conservancy, the BioDiversity Research Institute from Maine and DEC's Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources teamed up to check mercury levels in adult and nestling bald eagles throughout New York State. Biologists collected hundreds of blood and feather samples. Results indicated elevated levels of mercury in some eagles, particularly within the Catskill region. Mercury levels could be generally linked to areas with high mercury pollution histories, largely due to atmospheric deposition. Research supports the claim that the Catskills receive some of the

highest rates of atmospheric mercury deposition in the country. These high rates are the result of air pollution traveling from smokestack and coal-fired industries west of New York. Airborne mercury eventually returns to the earth in rain, snow and fog, and as a result, fish and wildlife are exposed to the element. Through their mostly fish diet, bald eagles accumulate mercury, which at elevated levels is known to have negative effects in other birds, like common loons. Thankfully though, no reproductive problems have yet been noted here due to mercury, and eagle chicks sampled outside the Catskill region did not show levels of concern. DEC will continue to monitor mercury periodically in the future.



James Clayton

Discover Green

To find ways to explore and learn about the environment, be sure to read DEC's Outdoor Discovery newsletter on our website. You can subscribe for free; just go to our website at www.dec.ny.gov/public/43355.html. And don't forget to visit DEC's Green Living pages at www.dec.ny.gov/public/337.html for tips on how to make environmentally conscious choices everyday.

Ask the Biologist

Q: During the past few springs, I've had a cardinal repeatedly fly into my windows. The bird sits in a tree or bush next to the house, and then periodically flies at the window. It does this three to four times a day. Is this part of its mating habits? Or is there another reason for this behavior?

A: Cardinals and robins, and probably other birds, see their reflection in a window and mistake it for a rival for their mate, or an invader of their territory. In the wild, the intruder is always driven off, but the window reflection keeps fighting back. Sometimes, after many repeated attacks, the window gets covered with bird "whitewash," and the bird stops attacking.

I have friends who are awakened each morning at 5 a.m. by this annoying habit. If you can eliminate the reflectivity of the window, the bird will stop the behavior. With the warmer weather, a window screen instead of the glass might work, as would hanging something in front of the window, such as netting, an outdoor banner, flag, or strips of ribbon.

—Frank Knight, DEC Environmental Educator