



WANTED: Lake Ontario Bass Anglers

DEC is looking for bass anglers to volunteer in the Lake Ontario Black Bass Angler Diary Program. The annual program provides DEC with valuable information on fishing quality experienced by anglers fishing for smallmouth and largemouth bass in Lake Ontario and its tributaries. Other information collected includes size, sex, and other characteristics of bass caught. The diary program begins at the start of the traditional open season on the third Saturday in June and concludes at the end of September. Visit www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/65533.html for more information on the program and how to participate.

E-Waste Recycling

On April 1st, the new Electronic Equipment Recycling and Reuse Act went into effect. The new law requires manufacturers that sell electronic equipment to register with DEC and establish a convenient program for the free collection of electronic waste from all consumers. The law also requires manufacturers to create a public education program to inform

consumers how to return products such as televisions, computers, keyboards, DVD/VCR/DVR players, and other consumer electronics. In addition, beginning January 1, 2015, individuals and households will no longer be able to dispose of any electronic waste in a landfill. Visit www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/65583.html for more information on the new law.

DEC E-Newsletter

To keep up with happenings related to New York State's environment and natural resources, subscribe to *Environment DEC*, a free, monthly, electronic newsletter covering the spectrum of DEC activities. A recent issue, for example, included an announcement about re-opened Long Island shellfish beds, a short piece on cormorants on Oneida Lake, a request for volunteers to help monitor eels, a call for applications for Environmental Excellence Awards, and a heads-up about migrating salamanders. Go to www.dec.ny.gov/environmentdec/newsletter.html to read the latest issue, and to subscribe to get free e-mail notification when each new edition is posted.

Deer Management Plan

DEC is developing a five-year deer management plan for New York, and is expecting to have it available for public review and comment in early June. The plan will address all aspects of deer management, from setting deer population objectives and hunting quotas to deer-related damage and ecological impacts. The plan will be available at www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7211.html, but check out the link now for preliminary information about the deer management plan.

National Trails Day

Saturday, June 4, 2011 marks the 19th annual National Trails Day. Launched in 1993 by the American Hiking Society, National Trails Day is a celebration of our country's trails and the countless opportunities for recreation and enjoyment they provide. What was once a small celebration has grown so that now each year, every state holds a number of events. You can even register your own events to celebrate trails. Visit the American Hiking Society's webpage at www.americanhiking.org to learn more and to register your event. Also, visit the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference website at www.nynjtc.org to find events and information about New York trails.

James Clayton



BRIEFLY

Keep Cats Inside

As young wildlife venture out this summer, DEC, The Wildlife Society, American Bird Conservancy and other non-profit organizations want to remind cat owners of the risks posed by their feline friends. Even well-fed domestic cats—outdoor and partially outdoor—may be serious threats to defenseless, young animals. Roaming cats can spread harmful diseases to other wildlife and are huge predators of birds and small wildlife. Additionally, outdoor cats tend to live

harsh lives, frequently falling victim to disease, car strikes and predation by coyotes and dogs. Keeping cats indoors, or at least on leashes or in outdoor enclosures, can keep them safe and also reduce the impact they can have on wildlife. You can visit the American Bird Conservancy's website at www.abcbirds.org, and The Wildlife Society's website at www.wildlife.org for more information on the effects that outdoor cats have on wildlife.



REVIEW by Chris Bowser

Eels: an exploration, from New Zealand to the Sargasso, of the world's most mysterious fish

by James Prosek

Hardcover, softcover; \$17.15, \$11.19

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www.harpercollins.com; 212-207-7000

In New York, we're familiar with the seasonal parade of nature: shadbush blooming in spring or the crimson tide of maple leaves each autumn. Many of us are not aware of another phenomenon that happens in almost every New York coastal river and stream each spring: the arrival of thousands of tiny "glass eels."

The eel is a fish that many people have heard of, but few people know. In his book *Eels: an exploration, from New Zealand to the Sargasso, of the world's most mysterious fish*, author James Prosek travels far into the eel kingdom to shed light on this secretive fish.

Prosek covers much of the requisite historical, conservation, and culinary topics often seen in this type of armchair ichthyology (see Kurlansky's *Cod*, McPhee's *Founding Fish*, and Greenberg's *Four Fish* for excellent examples). What *Eels* really excels at is uncovering the strange, endearing, and even mythical relationships people have with this seemingly modest animal.

The eel is the star, but Prosek runs into a unique cast of real-life characters. There's Ray Turner, one of the last great eel weir operators on a Catskill reach of the Delaware River. Ray is a rugged individualist; part commercial fisherman, part spiritual hermit who reveres eels far beyond their dollar value. On the other hand, a shady but likeable Japanese eel trader globe-trots

from Maine to North Korea after the strangest of commodities: juvenile eels that can sell for as much as \$7,500 per pound. Prosek notes that "even in an average year, glass eels are the most expensive food fish in the world."

The eel story gets deeper into culture and spirituality in the South Pacific, home to several freshwater eel species closely related to our east coast *Anguilla rostrata*. In a scene that could be from an ancient folktale, we watch giant eels slither out of a New Zealand pond to gently eat from the hand of a young Maori woman. She is a graduate student in eel biology, delicately bridging the worlds of science and tradition in her community.

Throughout his book, Prosek constantly asks: Does studying this creature strengthen or lessen its mystery? Does the sum of all the research and data and charts really equal the truth of the eel, and what it means (or can mean) to people all over the world? *Eels* demonstrates that there is a place for wonder and philosophy in science.

Reading this book is to rediscover the mystery of nature, of science, and of something more, all wrapped up in a slim, sleek fish that continues to swim through the waterways all around us.

Reviewer **Chris Bowser** coordinates a citizen-science eel project for the NYSDEC Hudson River Estuary Program and National Estuarine Research Reserve, in partnership with Cornell's Water Resource Institute. For more information, check out: www.dec.ny.gov/lands/49580.html

