



JUNE 2012

FACT SHEET MINK INJURY INVESTIGATIONS FOR THE HUDSON RIVER NRDA 2012-2013

HUDSON RIVER NATURAL RESOURCE DAMAGE ASSESSMENT

Past and continuing discharges of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) have contaminated Hudson River natural resources. While the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is continuing with cleanup plans, federal and state trustee agencies - the U.S. Department of Commerce, the U.S. Department of the Interior, and New York State - are conducting a natural resource damage assessment (NRDA). These agencies are responsible for evaluating the injuries associated with hazardous substance contamination to natural resources and determining appropriate actions to restore those resources. Natural resource damage payments provide a means for the Trustees to restore injured public resources to the condition they would have been in but for the release of hazardous substances to the environment, and to compensate the public for lost services provided by those resources.

This fact sheet provides information on a proposed field investigation of Hudson River mink being conducted as part of the Hudson River NRDA.

WHY STUDY HUDSON RIVER MINK?

Many species of mammals, including mink, rely on the Hudson River and its floodplain for food and shelter. Previous studies have shown that PCBs can injure mink, reducing kit survival and causing jaw lesions, among other effects. Hudson River mink are exposed to elevated levels of PCBs. Mink collected by trappers in the vicinity of the river contain relatively high concentrations of PCBs in their bodies.

MINK FIELD STUDY

The Trustees plan to compare the abundance and density of mink associated with the Upper Hudson River to the abundance and density of mink associated with a reference river (the Mohawk River). The study will use two techniques to collect physical samples from mink. Neither technique involves killing mink or trapping mink, nor will either technique adversely affect mink. In the first technique, mink scat (droppings) will be collected from the field using highly-trained dogs that specialize in locating such material. The second technique uses small tubular devices that collect a few hairs from mink that pass through the device. All collected scat and hair samples will be genetically analyzed. Genetic analysis permits the identification of individual mink, which provides data the Trustees will use to estimate mink abundance and density in the Hudson and

Mohawk study areas. Work will be conducted in 2012 and 2013. Initial scat collection will occur in 2012 with expanded collection in 2013. The hair collection work will be piloted in 2012 and potentially revised in 2013 based on results of the 2012 work.

Pursuant to the Hudson River NRDA plan, peer and public review of a draft study plan has been conducted, resulting in a final study plan that will be implemented. That final plan has been released to the public. A Responsiveness Summary responding to public comments has also been released to the public.



Dave Brotherton/Dreamstime

MORE INFORMATION

Materials pertaining to the mink field study are available on the following Trustee websites. These websites also contain a variety of additional reports and documents relating to the overall Hudson River NRDA.

- <http://www.fws.gov/contaminants/restorationplans/HudsonRiver/index.html>
- <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/25609.html>
- <http://www.darrp.noaa.gov/northeast/hudson/>

To add yourself to the [Hudson-NRDA](#) listserv:

1. Send a message to: requests@willamette.nos.noaa.gov
2. Write in subject: [Subscribe hudsonnrda](#)

If you have questions about natural resource damages, or want to submit a restoration project or be placed on the Hudson River NRDA mailing list, please contact one of the individuals listed below:

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