

Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources

Monthly Highlights

February, 2009

Issue Priorities:

Connect New Yorkers to Nature

I FISH NY Assists with the Nassau BOCES, JASON Project - Throughout the month of February, the I FISH NY program partnered with Nassau BOCES at the Cradle of Aviation Museum in Uniondale to educate Long Island students through the JASON Project. The JASON Project is a nonprofit subsidiary of the National Geographic Society which strives to connect young students with great explorers and great events to inspire and motivate them to learn science.

During the program, 565 students from various schools in Nassau and Suffolk Counties were educated about New York State fish diversity using our Go Fish card game. Students were extremely excited to learn about fish families, how scientists classify fish and other organisms, and the different species that are found in the salt and freshwaters of New York.

Bureau of Fisheries

Amanda Punzi

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I FISH NY Attends Long Island Recreational Fishing Show - I FISH NY staff members offered various activities, such as Velcro fishing and a scavenger hunt, for children at the Long Island Recreational Fishing Show at Farmingdale State University. This year's show was held from Friday, January 30 to Sunday, February 1, 2009. For three days, staff members spoke with local residents about fishing locations and fishing opportunities and disseminated information on fishing regulations, fish contaminants, fishing locations, fish identification and fishing techniques.

Bureau of Fisheries

Malynda Nichol

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Adirondack Chapter Trout Unlimited Talk and Award Presentation - Biologist E. Zollweg gave a program overview to the Adirondack Chapter of Trout Unlimited (TU) at their February meeting. She spoke about the brook trout pond program, the joint venture program to survey small streams by TU and DEC, recent results of the sea lamprey program, and plans for the Batten Kill in 2009. She was also very pleased to award

the Conservationist of the Year Award to Dr. John Braico from the New York Chapter of the American Fisheries Society. Dr Braico was honored for his expertise in natural-

channel-design techniques of stream restoration. He has donated that expertise and countless days of his own time to the Rivermede Project (a Bond Act funded proposal) on the East Branch Ausable River and to White Creek in Washington County. He helped organize/sponsor training in natural channel design for DEC staff, DOT staff, and others. Dr. Braico absolutely deserves the recognition and thanks from DEC and other fisheries professionals.

Bureau of Fisheries

Emily Zollweg

518-623-1264

DEC Cooperative Pheasant Rearing and Release Programs - DEC staff across the state are busy reviewing applications for DEC's long running day-old Pheasant Chick Program and Young Pheasant Release Program. Applicants interested in raising and releasing pheasants apply to receive either day-old chicks or young pheasants 7-10 weeks old. There is no charge for the pheasants. The filing deadline was March 15th. The cooperators agree to raise and release the pheasants on land open to public hunting. DEC staff visit rearing facilities and evaluate release sites to determine participation. Applications are approved or rejected based on the quality of the release site, availability of birds, and statewide distribution goals. Last year, the programs combined to distribute over 74,000 birds to more than 500 cooperating individuals, 4-H youth, sportsmen's clubs, and conservation organizations.

Bureau of Wildlife

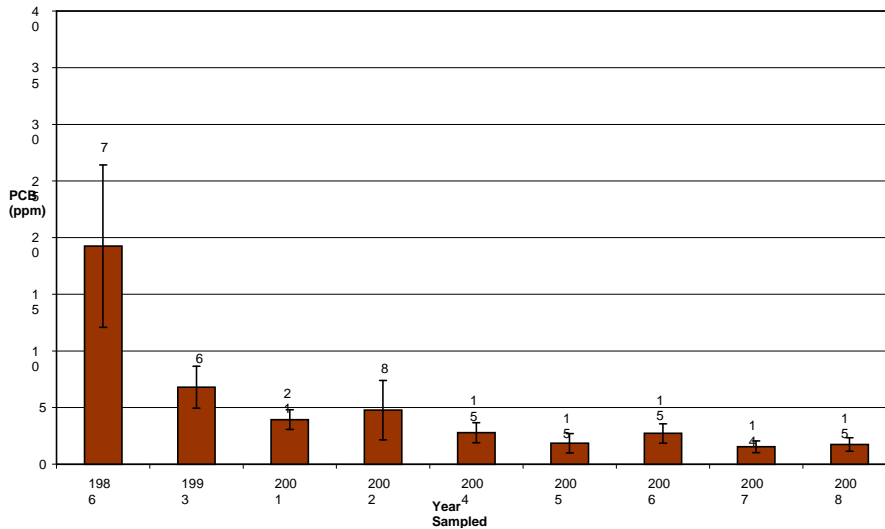
Mike Murphy

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[Promote a Toxic Free Future](#)

Status of PCBs in Fish from Nassau Lake Presented to Nassau Town Council - DEC annually collects and analyzes fish from several locations in Nassau Lake as well as along the Valatie Kill and its tributary known as T-11A. PCBs have accumulated in local fish as a result of disposal activities once conducted at the former Dewey Loeffel landfill on Mead Road in the Town of Nassau. The annual sampling is part of a long-term monitoring effort to track the results of remedial cleanup work performed in 2002 and 2003 at the landfill, and along the waterways leading down to Nassau Lake. On February 12, 2009, Michael Kane from the Bureau of Habitat and Mike Komoroske from the Division of Environmental Remediation gave a presentation at the Town Hall in Nassau providing a review of the past remedial work, detailing the results of the 2008 sampling, and examining trends in tissue concentration over time since the remediation. PCB concentrations were, for the most part, very similar to those seen in 2007 and did not show the declines seen at most sampling locations in previous years (see graph). In the question and answer period following the presentation, local citizens were provided an opportunity to ask questions and voice their concerns. The townspeople were disappointed that the downward trend had not continued into 2008 and their elected representatives expressed that fact in interviews as reported in the Albany Times Union (<http://timesunion.com/AspStories/story.asp?storyID=770770&category=&BCCode=&nwsdate=2/17/2009>). Nevertheless, several people expressed their appreciation for the amount of effort that DEC continues to put into sampling fish. The presentation was repeated for the Schodack Town Council on February 26 at the Schodack Town Hall.

**Nassau Lake Bullhead Catfish Average Wet Weight PCB
with 95% Confidence Interval and Number of Samples**



Bureau of Habitat

Michael Kane

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Tracking Those Elusive PCBs with PISCES: Two PISCES (passive in-situ chemical extraction sampler) studies were completed in 2008 for tracking down suspected PCB sources to the Grasse River in Massena, St. Lawrence County, and Sixmile Creek in Rome, Oneida County. The first study was conducted in Massena and used PISCES and young-of-year fish to search for the source of unusual PCB levels in young fish collected in 2003 from a location upstream of the Alcoa aluminum plant in Massena. The 2008 analytical results showed low PCB levels that were more than an order of magnitude lower than in 2003. The cause of the unusual readings is still unclear.



A second PISCES study was conducted in Threemile and Sixmile Creeks near the former Griffiss Air Force Base during summer 2008. The Air Force conducted a cleanup at the Base between 2004 and 2006 to remove contaminated sediments from Threemile Creek and to eliminate sources of contaminants to Sixmile Creek. This 2008 study was prompted by elevated PCB levels in Sixmile Creek fish and by development plans to cover what remains of Rainbow Creek for a new bus terminal and parking lot. Despite the

remedial efforts, the 2008 PISCES data show that PCBs continue to be detected in surface water in both creeks. Based on PCB levels found in a downstream impoundment on Threemile Creek, it appears that an electric substation on the Base continues to be a source of PCB to Threemile Creek. As well, PISCES data demonstrated that Rainbow

Creek, a tributary to Sixmile Creek, continues to be a pathway for PCBs. PISCES sampling also found a larger unknown PCB source further downstream from Rainbow Creek. PCB contributions to Sixmile Creek have continued to cause elevated PCB levels in fish from this trout stream. Additional PISCES track-down efforts in Rainbow Creek and Sixmile Creek are planned for 2009.

Bureau of Habitat

Tim Preddice

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[Safeguard New York's Unique Natural Assets](#)

Toxicology and Standards Unit Develops AWQV for Trichloroacetic Acid - An ambient water quality value (AWQV) is the concentration of a chemical in water calculated to be protective of at least 95% of aquatic organisms from both short-term (acute) and long-term (chronic) exposure. At the request of the Division of Water, the Unit derived values for the protection of fish propagation and survival in freshwater and saltwater for trichloroacetic acid. Trichloroacetic acid is a disinfection byproduct that forms when chlorinated effluents from publicly-owned water treatment works (POTWs) mix with naturally-occurring organic materials in the receiving water. Trichloroacetic acid is highly phytotoxic, that is, it is very toxic to plants. In fact, sodium trichloroacetate, the sodium salt of the acid, used to be manufactured as an herbicide until the registration was cancelled by the USEPA in 1991. Trichloroacetic acid is much more toxic to plants than it is to fish or invertebrates, and algae is much more sensitive to this chemical than other types of aquatic plants. The trichloroacetic acid values will be posted in Division of Water's Technical and Operational Guidance Series (TOGS) 1.1.1, and eventually adopted into the State Water Quality regulations the next time the regulations are revised.

Bureau of Habitat

Timothy Sinnott

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DEC Receives EPA Grant to Remap Freshwater Wetlands in Three Watersheds:

Last year, DEC received an EPA Grant to amend the freshwater wetland regulatory maps for the Wallkill, Lower Genesee, and the Oneida/Oswego watersheds. The current wetland boundary maps for these watersheds substantially underestimate the amount of wetland present, and are in need of revision to more accurately reflect the current wetland resource. DEC is partnering with SUNY Universities to have students assist in the remapping effort. Through existing and new MOUs, DEC will utilize students trained in wetlands identification and GIS to work with DEC staff on amending the wetland boundary maps. DEC has completed a mapping methodology for this project, and is working with three SUNY schools to get the project under way. We expect that this project will take three-four years to complete.

Bureau of Habitat

Tim Post

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NY Natural Heritage Program Inventories Riparian Communities in the Catskills -



The New York Natural Heritage Program, in partnership with New York City Department of Environmental Protection and the Greene County Soil

and Water Conservation District, conducted natural community inventories and ecological quality rank assessments along the West Kill main stem in the Catskill Mountains, with the goal of classifying, mapping, and describing a set of reference riparian habitat types within the West Kill Watershed. A final report has been drafted and sent out for review among partners. Seventy-six plots and observation points were sampled across approximately 16 natural community types. The project is collecting data on detailed descriptions, quality ranking, species composition, and abiotic characteristics of frequently inventoried natural community types along the West Kill. For each natural community type, the plot that was assessed to be of the highest ecological quality will be used by partners as references to guide stream corridor restoration projects within the watershed.

Bureau of Habitat

Bud Sechler

402-8953

Chronic Wasting Disease - Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a fatal infectious brain disease that affects deer and elk. This past fall, DEC staff sampled 2,950 free-ranging whitetail deer, including 1,177 from the 20 town containment area in parts of Oneida and Madison counties where there is mandatory testing of all hunter-killed deer. This sampling effort is in response to the detection of CWD in two wild white-tailed deer in Oneida County in April of 2005. To date, just over 29,200 wild white-tailed deer have been tested statewide, including just under 6,500 animals in the containment area with no new cases discovered.

In order to increase confidence in results obtained in the containment area, a targeted winter deer collection in Oneida County is under way to increase sample numbers in close proximity to the original points of detection. Region 6 Wildlife staff began efforts in late January to conduct a small-scale targeted collection of wild deer within two-mile circles (~25 sq. miles) to sample for CWD. This effort includes the collection of 50 deer from the two circles.

Current best science suggests that if CWD exists on the landscape, it will most likely be found within close proximity of known cases. Since 2005, DEC has intensively sampled hunter-harvested and road-killed deer within the 750 sq. mile containment area. Information developed through the targeted sampling effort will better inform managers on decisions to be made concerning future CWD management and possible containment area regulation changes following the 2009 big game season. DEC originally committed to a five-year intensive surveillance effort to determine the prevalence and distribution of CWD on the landscape. New York is the only state or province that has NOT verified additional cases of CWD after the initial discovery despite extensive surveillance.

Bureau of Wildlife ***Chuck Dente; Steven Heerkens*** ***518 402-8868; (315) 793-2557***

2008 Deer and Bear Harvest - Hunters harvested approximately 223,000 deer in the 2008 hunting season. Take included 105,747 bucks and 117,232 antlerless deer, both slight increases from 2007 takes. Pre-season predictions of a 5-10% increase in take were unmet, primarily due to rough weather during the first week of the Southern Zone regular season during which the majority of our annual deer harvest typically occurs.

Over 15,000 junior hunters took advantage of the “junior hunter mentoring program,” a newly created law signed by Governor David A. Paterson this past summer.

Black bear harvests increased in all of New York State’s bear hunting ranges in 2008, setting new records across the Catskill and Allegany bear hunting areas. Statewide, hunters took 1,295 black bears, a 15% increase from the 1,117 bears taken in 2007. In the Allegany bear hunting area of central and western New York, hunters took a record 193 bears, far exceeding the previous record of 120 bears taken last year. Similarly, the 520 bears taken this year in the Catskill bear hunting area of southeastern New York topped the 2005 record harvest of 494 bears. Harvest increased in the Adirondacks as well, with a total of 582 bears taken in 2008 compared to 544 taken in 2007, and 318 taken in 2006. Hunters reported taking 18 bears in the 13 wildlife management units that were opened for bear hunting this year in central and western New York.

Bureau of Wildlife

Jeremy Hurst

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Bat Hibernacula Surveys and White Nose Syndrome (WNS) Monitoring –

Hibernacula, or hibernation location, surveys are one of the best tools available for tracking the population status of New York’s cave and mine dependent bat species. In addition to planned surveys of known Indiana Bat hibernacula as part of the long-term monitoring of this federally endangered species, a series of bat hibernacula were surveyed throughout the state during the month of February to assess the prevalence of WNS in New York. High resolution digital photography is used to record the bats within the hibernacula during the surveys. The photographs will be analyzed over the next few months to determine the actual number of animals encountered. The most obvious symptom associated with WNS is a white fungus on the surface of some, but not all, of the bats. The white fungus is fairly easy to spot against the dark fur of the bats, so the prevalence of the fungus associated with WNS can also be estimated from an analysis of the photographed bats.

Though analyses are still needed to assess actual numbers, some preliminary impressions and assessments from visits to hibernacula are available. Regional staff visited the Glen Park cave system, located in Jefferson County, in February to perform a census and collect dead bats for white-nose syndrome testing. Only two dead bats were observed and there was little evidence of WNS. However, preliminary estimates indicate that the Glen Park caves have only about half of their usual numbers. Preparations were made for the winter survey at Jamesville hibernaculum, located near Syracuse. Earlier visits to the site have confirmed the presence of WNS, but as yet no mortality has been evident outside the cave. Regional Wildlife and Forestry staff performed a bat hibernacula survey in the Akron mines, located 25 miles east of Buffalo. A count was taken for each of the four species that use the mine. Each bat was inspected for presence of WNS and, fortunately, all appeared healthy. All mine openings were also inspected for dead or dying bats, and none was found. Regional staff, volunteers and central office staff surveyed several additional hibernacula throughout the state.

Bureau of Wildlife

Dan Rosenblatt

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Winter Flounder Moratorium a Probability - A proposed federal rule based on an assessment review of the winter flounder stock in Southern New England and the Mid Atlantic would impose a complete ban on the take and possession of winter flounder in federal waters, and close a large portion of those waters off Long Island to fishing for groundfish. The rule would be an interim rule, in place for one year while the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) works on the next amendment to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan, aka Groundfish FMP. That amendment should also include the ban for at least two more years. The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) is expected to follow suit at its next meeting in early May when they take action on a fast-tracked addendum to their Winter Flounder FMP for state waters. New York would then take action based upon the outcome at ASMFC. Winter flounder stocks are at such low levels that recovery, even with a moratorium in place, may not occur. Commercial groundfish fishermen are objecting strongly to the proposed new rules, which also call for restrictions on other species of fish and fewer days at sea for permit holders. New York does not sit on the NEFMC.

Bureau of Marine Resources

(631) 444-0430

Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management for 2009 - Following review of the latest stock assessments, the Mid Atlantic Fishery Management Council and the ASMFC species boards have established recommendations for management of summer flounder, scup and black sea bass for 2009. Coastwide quotas have been established for the commercial fisheries, and recreational harvest limits have been set for the recreational fisheries. Summer flounder will have a slight increase in allowed harvest, while black sea bass harvest will be reduced. For scup, a new stock assessment shows the fishery to be completely rebuilt, with no over-fishing occurring. With new reference points established for fishing mortality (F) and spawning stock biomass (SSB), we find the stock is at 130% of the target SSB and F well below the target. While this is good news, it will not translate to a higher harvest limit until 2010, as the Council and Commission would not take action at their meetings this winter.

The immediate implications for New York's recreational fisheries are that the rules for scup will not change this year, while the size limit for black sea bass will increase one-half inch. New York argued unsuccessfully for a closure of the black sea bass recreational fishery during the spawn as opposed to raising the size limit. Summer flounder recreational rules will again be based on state-by-state conservation

equivalency, with a reduction required due to coastal over-harvest in 2008. New York's measures have not yet been decided upon, but we are faced with a 37% reduction, half of which must come from a shorter season. New York's lawsuit against the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), which would change summer flounder management on the coast, has yet to be decided in court.



Summer flounder have made a dramatic recover from overfishing due to conservative management measures.

Bureau of Marine Resources

(631) 444-4030

Restoring Peconic Estuary Habitats - In February, the Peconic Estuary Program's Natural Resources Subcommittee announced a new initiative to assess the status and remaining restoration needs at sites included in its 2000 Habitat Restoration Plan, to identify new candidate sites for restoration, and to re-invigorate interest in habitat restoration within the Peconic Estuary watershed. The Natural Resources Subcommittee will be holding open public meetings in each of the five East End Towns of Long Island during March and April 2009, and will be compiling information and reviewing new candidate restoration sites during the summer of 2009. It is the goal of the Peconic Estuary Program to advance conceptual restoration designs in an effort to implement at least one (1) new restoration project within each Town before January 1, 2011. The Peconic Estuary and its watershed are home to some of the most diverse, valuable, and rare habitats in the world. More information on this initiative, meeting dates and locations, site nomination forms, and the 2000 Habitat Restoration Plan, can be found at www.peconicestuary.org

Bureau of Marine Resources

(631) 444-0430

Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) Draft Management Plan - DEC received comments from National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), DEC, Department of State (DOS), Office of General Services (OGS), and Office of Parks, Recreation and Historical Preservation (OPRHP) on the draft of this required Management Plan, which was released in December. The plan, a revision of the original 1993 plan, will provide a framework to guide the direction and activities of

the Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve (HRNERR). A final plan will be prepared in the next 60 days for public review. This is revised from January.

Sustainable Shorelines Project – HRNERR is leading this project with the Hudson River Estuary Program; the Nature Conservancy’s Eastern NY Chapter; the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies; the Consensus Building Institute; the Greenway Conservancy; the Department of State; and several other partners. This project will generate Hudson River-specific information about shoreline erosion mitigation alternatives and their tradeoffs in terms of ecological services, costs, structural soundness, and human attitudes about their use. Projections will be developed for the three, sea-level rise scenarios recently adopted by New York City. The third year of ecosystem services research is now under way, and the engineering and cost assessments are just beginning. It is intended that results will fold into several projects seeking to enhance the adaptive capacity of the Hudson River Valley under expected climate change scenarios, and will inform shoreline erosion mitigation policies and programs.

Bureau of Marine Resources

(631) 444-0430

Shallow Mapping Project - The Hudson River Estuary Program, with support from the HRNERR, is advancing a shallow water mapping project focused on the third of the estuary that is shallower than four meters. The goal is to provide context for fish and wildlife management in the estuary, to inform storm surge and flood modeling, and to help understand sediment dynamics and transport.

Bureau of Marine Resources

(631) 444-0430

Hudson River Fish Habitat Studies - Hudson River Fisheries Unit, Inland Fisheries, and HRNERR staff are working together to understand relationships between fish species and their physical environment. This includes tracking tagged fish and exploring correlations between fish locations and the sediment environment as mapped in earlier phases of river-bottom mapping. To the extent that many fish species may utilize the shallows for spawning, food and refuge, it is critical to have detailed maps of the physical environment of the shallows in order to manage these species (see above).

Bureau of Marine Resources

(631) 444-0430

Distance Learning at Norrie Point - River ice was thick on the Hudson this winter, but local students got to see some of its live inhabitants through videoconferencing visits to Norrie Point Environmental Center. Since January 2009, 500 middle school students have tuned in to Reserve educators for lively Hudson River Estuary lessons.

Bureau of Marine Resources

(631) 444-0430

Energy Enhancements Under way at Norrie Point - Designs are nearly complete to insulate and repair the building envelope, install more “smart” lights, and install shades to

conserve energy year-round at this windblown site. Also on the drawing board are plans to install solar panels and possibly other renewable energy sources.

Bureau of Marine Resources

(631) 444-0430

Estuary Training Program Offers Courses for Decision-Makers - In early March, the Estuary Training Program offered two courses at Norrie Point from the NOAA Coastal Services Center: Public Issues and Conflict Management, and Negotiating for Coastal Resources. Upcoming NOAA courses include: Project Design and Evaluation, and Planning for Meaningful Evaluation. For further information, contact Emilie Hauser (eehauser@gw.dec.state.ny.us).

Bureau of Marine Resources

(631) 444-0430

Hudson River Environmental Conditions Observing System (HRECOS) - Water quality and weather conditions along the Hudson are being broadcast in real-time throughout the HRECOS network (www.HRECOS.org). Several stations, including the HRNERR site at the Norrie Point Environmental Center, were outfitted to be deployed throughout the winter, and for the first time this year logged data from under the ice.

This provided valuable data documenting the impact of winter storm events (precipitation) on the transport of suspended particles (turbidity) in the Hudson River.

Bureau of Marine Resources

(631) 444-0430

Foster Green and Healthy Communities

Approval of North American Wetland Conservation Act Project Proposal - We received notice from the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture announcing the approval of a North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant for the Northern Montezuma project. The grant request was for \$663,000, with non-federal partner contributions of \$1,346,220. This wetland restoration project will protect, restore, and enhance 1,146 acres of wildlife habitat by funding the restoration of emergent and forested wetlands and adjacent grasslands on state-owned lands that are currently idle or being farmed. This project will continue the Montezuma Wetlands Complex partnership's work to restore and enhance wetlands in the area, which have a proven track record of use by large numbers of breeding and migrating waterfowl, waterbirds, and shorebirds. The project area provides a critical "stepping-stone" of habitat, as it nearly connects Lake Ontario to the Finger Lakes, which due to their length and depth, typically hold tens of thousands of priority waterfowl species in the winter. The Montezuma Wetlands Complex is one of the most important wetland areas in the Lower Great Lakes region, supporting continentally significant concentrations of waterfowl, waterbirds, shorebirds and landbirds, including hundreds of thousands of geese, tens of thousands of northern pintails and ring-necked ducks, breeding black terns, and high densities of breeding cerulean warblers in floodplain forests. The project builds upon existing protected lands of approximately 17,000 acres including the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, Northern Montezuma Wildlife Management Area, and significant acreage of private lands already restored in

partnership with Ducks Unlimited, the Nature Conservancy, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Bureau of Wildlife

Jim Eckler

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Organizational Priorities:

Workforce, Science and Technology

Department's BTA Program Presented at Annual AFS Meeting - Steam-Electric Unit staff member Michael Calaban gave a presentation at the annual meeting of the New York Chapter of the American Fisheries Society in Owego. The presentation "Minimizing Fish Kills at Steam-Electric Power Plants" was germane to the 2009 conference theme: Energy and Fisheries. Steam-electric plants are vital components to New York's energy mix (producing more than 70% of the electricity we use) and the fact that millions of fish killed each year through operation of their cooling water intakes is not widely known. In fact, this came as a surprise to a number of conference attendees. The presentation briefly discussed the program's legal framework, and focused on the magnitude of the impact and the technologies and operational measures being used to minimize mortality to fish at power plant cooling water intakes.

Bureau of Habitat

Mike Calaban

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Fisheries Genetics Workshop - On February 4, 2009, a workshop titled "Genetics for Fisheries Professionals: Tools and Decisions" was conducted at the DEC suboffice in Cortland. Dr. Meredith Barton from the USFWS and Dr. Chris Wilson from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources instructed 98 fisheries professionals and students from throughout the state on the topic of fish genetics. Of these 98 attendees, 70 were DEC employees. The high attendance can be attributed to the interest in the topic, to the availability of participation through video conference, and to the lack of registration cost. The New York Chapter of the American Fisheries Society sponsored and funded the event by covering the travel expenses of Dr. Wilson. DEC's facilitation of the video conference allowed the workshop to be viewed from 10 remote locations, saving the State thousands of dollars in travel expenses. Of the 98 attendees, 58 participated via video conference.

The field of fisheries genetics has been growing rapidly as techniques have evolved to allow greater utility, and fisheries professionals are being challenged to keep up with these advances. Genetic analysis has proven valuable in such aspects as strain preservation, hatchery production, and phylogeography. Analysis through use of microsatellites now allows biologists to answer questions that previously could not be addressed.

Bureau of Fisheries

Chris VanMaaren

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Awards

Bureau of Marine Resources

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Alvin Breisch, of the DFWMR, Receives Two Prestigious Professional Awards:

The **Stuart Free Award** of the New Chapter of The Wildlife society is awarded periodically in recognition of an individual or group who has "exhibited tenacious effort and diligent professional service in a manner that is inspiring to their peers; and a cumulative contribution that has been overlooked or taken for granted." This year, this prestigious award was presented to Alvin R. Breisch, in recognition of his leadership and dedicated work for conservation of the amphibians and reptiles of New York. For 25 years, Al has contributed significantly and demonstrated leadership in advocating for the conservation of the reptiles and amphibians of New York. In addition to serving in a leadership role for the conservation of the state's endangered, threatened, and special concern amphibians and reptiles, he initiated and managed the (soon to be completed) *Atlas of Amphibians and Reptiles of New York State*, the first of its kind in North America. He also has served regionally and nationally in the organization Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC).

The **Outstanding Conservationist Award** of the New York Chapter of The Wildlife Society is awarded periodically to an individual(s) for significant contributions that have notably enhanced the conservation of wildlife resource in New York State. This year, the award was presented to the team of authors responsible for the book, *The Amphibians and Reptiles of New York State: Identification, Natural History, and Conservation*, published in 2007. Working together, James P. Gibbs, Alvin R. Breisch, Peter K. Ducey, Glenn Johnson, John L. Behler, and Richard Bothner produced the first comprehensive treatment of the natural history and conservation needs for all species of amphibians and reptiles of New York. Widely acclaimed by professional herpetologists and naturalists, the book brings together in one comprehensive, easy-to-read volume important information that is essential for guiding future research and conservation needs for two important groups of vertebrates.

Nancy Heaslip, of the DFWMR in Region 4, Receives Prestigious Professional Award

The **Outstanding Professional Award** of the New York Chapter of The Wildlife Society is awarded to a wildlife professional for outstanding professional accomplishments in the wildlife. Nancy was recognized for her decades of work as a dedicated and innovative regional wildlife biologist, who also worked on projects with statewide significance. Nancy has consistently demonstrated leadership and ingenuity in the performance of her duties. She serves as an excellent team leader for some projects and as an invaluable member of others. Nancy's scope of duties spans the full range of activities that could be asked of regional biologists: she has worked on endangered species and deer, on wetlands and nuisance wildlife, on management and regulation. She can dart a moose or

gingerly pluck a bat from a mist-net. What sets Nancy apart, besides her diversity of interests, is her willingness to challenge the status quo. She launched an effort that streamlined how we review wetlands permits statewide and staunchly embraced the need to protect endangered species habitat.