

# Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources

## Monthly Highlights

### May, 2009

#### Issue Priorities:

#### Connect New Yorkers to Nature

**Spring 2009 Wild Turkey Season and Youth Hunt Update** - The sixth annual Youth Turkey Hunt was held April 25-26, and was once again greeted with enthusiasm by young hunters and their adult mentors. Junior hunters reported taking about 616 birds, a decrease of about 22% from the previous year. This decrease may be related to several factors including fewer jakes (juvenile male turkeys) available to hunters due to below-average production during summer 2008, and unseasonably warm weather in many regions during the two-day hunt.

Through May 27, the spring 2009 reported harvest was about 7,900 birds, very similar to last spring (down about 1% overall); however, not all birds taken were reported (although it is a legal requirement), so we will adjust this figure using data from the turkey hunter survey over the next few weeks to more accurately represent the actual harvest. Based on good production in summer 2007, followed by below-average production in 2008 and a relatively mild winter, we anticipated a harvest similar to or slightly lower than last year.

This spring, the Bureau of Wildlife created a Hunting and Trapping Photo Gallery for successful junior hunters (ages 12-15), young trappers (under age 16), and hunters who have harvested their first big or small game animal. The Gallery and instructions for submitting photos can be found at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/54055>.



(Photo: Devon Morris, age 12, Youth Turkey Hunt 2009, Washington County)

*Bureau of Wildlife*

*Mike Schaivone*

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**Nature Trail and Bridge Repaired** - A foot bridge on the universally accessible nature trail at Lake Alice Wildlife Management Area (WMA) had fallen into a state of disrepair

and a large hole measuring three-feet wide by two-feet deep had opened up in front of one of the abutments forcing visitors to have to jump over the hole to continue on down the trail, and making the trail unusable by those who could not. Since this trail is extremely popular and the only universal access on the WMA, its repair was deemed a priority. Wildlife Technician B. Ferns made the necessary repairs to the bridge and filled in the hole with a stone and gravel mix. The repaired section of trail was then top dressed with stone dust to ensure a smooth and hardened entry to the bridge.



*Bureau of Wildlife*

*John O'Connor*

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**Tagged Muskellunge Survives Plunge over Falls -** A muskellunge tagged and released in the Upper Niagara River near Navy Island in 2008 was caught by an angler in March of 2009 in the Lower Niagara River. Although the fish could have traveled by way of the Welland Canal to the Lake Ontario system, biologists feel a more likely route was via Niagara Falls. Previous fish studies have also documented muskellunge movements from the Upper to Lower Niagara Rivers.



*Bureau of Fisheries*

*Mike Wilkinson*

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**South Otselic Fishing Heritage Day -** Staff from the South Otselic Fish Culture Station, in conjunction with Region 7 Fishing Promotion Biologist Jim Everard, volunteers from the Chenango Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited, and staff from Rogers Environmental Education Center, took part in the first annual South Otselic Fishing Heritage Day on Saturday, May 16. Several



hundred yearling and two-year old brown trout were stocked by Rome Hatchery staff into an old pond on the hatchery grounds that is no longer used for fish production, as well as the Otselic River on Friday May 15 to provide anglers participating in the free fishing clinics a chance to catch a fish. The stocked trout weren't the only thing biting. The many bullheads and grass carp that lived in the pond also provided an exceptional angling experience for all who wet a line. Some of the smallest participants caught some of the largest fish, and a good time was had by all involved in the fishing clinics.

Much of the events activities was structured around the Hatchery and fishing, including tours of the hatchery's main production building and outside walleye pond complex, fishing clinics and fly tying displays, fly casting, aquatic insect identification, and a living stream exhibit with both coolwater and coldwater species on display. A free raffle featuring a tremendous number of fishing and non-fishing related items, donated from local area businesses, was also held for all who signed up for the fishing clinics.

Along with all the various fishing related activities, there were also taxidermy displays, live music, many delicious food items, arts, crafts, fishing and hunting licenses, jewelry, flowers, antiques, books, and more on sale from the many vendors, artisans and exhibitors at the town park as well as the Otselic Valley Grange. The event also featured various yards sales, bake sales, a quilt raffle, and a 50/50 fire department raffle. All in all, a great event that was surely a fun experience for all involved and one that is sure to grow in the years to come.

*Bureau of Fisheries*

*Phil Hulbert*

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**Fish Kill in Flanders Bay Area** - For the second year in a row, a massive school of adult menhaden (aka 'bunker') were herded by bluefish into the narrow confines of a tidal creek in the Flanders Bay area on Long Island with disastrous results for the fish. Mortalities in the hundreds of thousands resulted when the bunker was forced deep into Meetinghouse and Reeves Creeks on the north side of the Bay. Oxygen was quickly depleted by the stressed fish, resulting in death by asphyxiation for the bunker and a few of the bluefish. Southwest winds kept the dead fish inside the creeks where they contributed to continued poor water quality. Complaints from property owners were deflected to the Town of Riverhead, which marshaled a partial cleanup of the dead fish. A similar event happened at the same time last year in nearby Peconic River.

*Bureau of Marine Resources*

*Stephen W. Heins*

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

**Deer Citizen Task Force** - Citizen Task Force (CTF) meetings were completed in all three Region 5 Southern Zone Wildlife Management Units (WMUs). E. Reed worked with Cornell Cooperative Extension staff in Saratoga and Washington Counties to assemble the task force members and hold two meetings for each WMU. Members were chosen to represent various stakeholder groups, including landowners, farmers,

sportsmen, orchardists, Christmas tree growers, motorists, and forest owners. The CTF in each unit was charged with assessing public opinion on deer population levels and providing any recommended change to DEC. The CTF's recommendations are then used to set Deer Management Permit (DMP) numbers for the respective WMUs.

WMU 5R – The CTF decided that the deer population level over the past five years has been acceptable, so the Buck Take Objective (BTO) will remain at 1.3 bucks per square mile. The population is above the objective but decreasing at this point, so DMP numbers will be lower this year than in 2008.

WMU 5S – This is a newly formed unit from parts of the previous WMU's 5N, 5P, and 5K in Washington County. The buck take in 2008 was 3.1 per square mile, and the CTF decided that the population should increase from that level about 7%, so the BTO for the new unit is 3.3. Since the population was growing toward this new BTO, there will be little change in management, with DMP numbers similar to the last two years.

WMU 5T – This is another new WMU in Washington County, incorporating parts of previous WMU's 5K and 5N. The deer population is lower than in 5S, with last year's buck take at 2.2 bucks per square mile. The CTF decided on a 25% increase in the deer population, so the new BTO is 2.8. The population has been increasing recently, so DMP numbers will remain low to allow the population to continue to grow toward the new objective.

*Bureau of Wildlife*                      *Ed Reed*                      *(518) 897-1294*

**Endangered Species Recovery Plans** - *Draft* recovery plans have been prepared for two high-priority herp species, the eastern hellbender and the eastern massasauga rattlesnake. Technicians Brandon Wheeler and Rebecca Macblane have been hard at work assembling the background information through literature searches and consultation with species experts. The plans will be reviewed by the recovery team, consisting of species experts, then go on to review by the Division management team. After the plan is adopted, it will be used by DEC staff and partners to guide work on and protection of these species in New York State in the future.

*Bureau of Wildlife*                      *Tom Bell*                      *607-753-3095*

**Braddock Bay Encroachment Resolved and Habitat Restored** – Over the years, Region 8's Bureau of Wildlife has futilely sent letters to homeowners who have expanded their lawns into the Braddock Bay WMA in Monroe County. Last year, an initiative by staff in the General Counsel's Office for DEC resulted in the homeowners removing their personal property from State lands and agreeing to stop mowing those lands. Only a few minor issues remain to be wrapped up with this encroachment, including removal of two sheds that none of the current landowners have claimed.



A prominent issue for both DEC and the homeowners was what to do with the abandoned lawn areas within the encroachment area. It was decided to replant the area with trees rather than wait for natural succession to reforest the habitat.

In early May, regional staff obtained 415 potted spruce trees from DEC’s Saratoga Nursery and, with the assistance of Town of Greece employees and volunteers from the Avalon School of St. Joseph’s Villa, three rows of trees were planted to restore the habitat and assist in permanently demarcating the boundary of the State land. Additional trees will be planted next year to complete the habitat restoration at this site.

*Bureau of Wildlife                      Mike Wasilco                      585-226-5460*

**Hudson River Dredging for PCB’s Begins** – General Electric began dredging the upper



**Figure 1** Results of shoreline tree trimming for dredging access. DEC’s review highlighted the importance of overhanging trees and improved understanding of the need to limit tree trimming.

Hudson River to remove PCB contaminated sediments on May 15, 2009. This project is expected to reduce the availability of PCBs in the river and lead to lower concentrations in fish and wildlife with corresponding benefits to their populations and to human use of these natural resources. Bureau of Habitat staff, in the Environmental Monitoring Section, have played a key role in planning, design and monitoring leading up to initiation of dredging and will continue to engage in this work while

dredging takes place and during post-dredging habitat reconstruction. Activities include collection of fish for PCB analysis, oversight of GE’s fish monitoring program, oversight of habitat assessment, review of design and work plans, and review and development of plans for habitat reconstruction. These efforts have led to reductions in the habitat damage associated with dredging and to improvements in the habitats to be constructed after dredging.

*Bureau of Habitat    Wayne Richter, Larry Skinner, Michael Kane    (518) 402-8974*

**Remedial Plantings Reviewed at Marathon Battery / Foundry Cove** – Wayne Richter, along with Wayne Mizerak of the Division of Environmental Remediation, participated in a multi-agency site visit and review of experimental restoration plantings at the Marathon Battery / Foundry Cove site. This site, adjacent to the Hudson River in Philipstown, was dredged to remove cadmium contaminated sediments in the 1990s. Restoration planting of the marsh was not fully successful, leading to the present conditions of excessive amounts of open



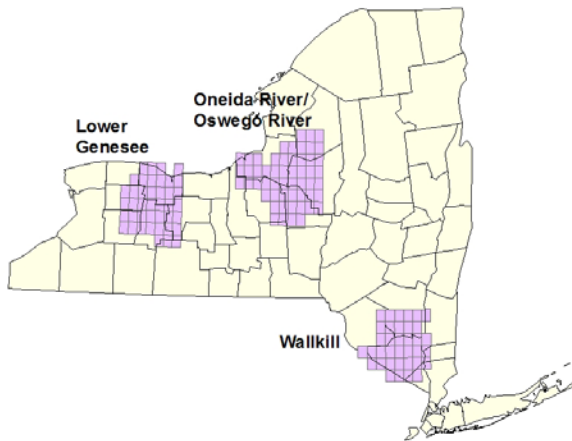
water, unvegetated mud flats, and invasive species. Current efforts include restoration plantings of different species at different surface elevations and control of phragmites. Future concerns include the eroding berm between the marsh and open water.

*Bureau of Habitat*

*Wayne Richter*

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**Wetland Basemaps Completed for Three Watersheds** - The creation of 130 new basemaps on which to show regulated NYS DEC freshwater wetlands have been



completed. The basemap work was done by dedicated SUNY-Albany interns- Jamie-Rose Kearney, Dennis Davidson, Eryle Bixler and David Mark, under the diligent guidance of Peter Gradoni, Bureau of Wildlife, Habitat Inventory Unit.

A change from the existing wetland maps, the new ones will include improved road and hydrology networks along with valuable natural resource features, and elevation data in the form of contours. The geographic

extent of the new basemaps remains the same as for the original wetland maps, the standard USGS 7 ½ minute quadrangle maps.

The next step is to use these maps along with GIS analysis of orthoimagery (natural color and color infrared) along with other data sources that are good indicators of the presence of DEC wetland, such as hydric soils, hydrology, National Wetland Inventory and Multi-Resolution Land Characteristics (MRLC) classified wetland. Using these data sets, preferably while viewing in high resolution 3D (through the use of StereoMirror Technology and device), will ease the work effort in identifying currently unmapped wetland and producing updated NYS Article 24 Freshwater Wetland Maps.

*Bureau of Habitat*

*Peter Gradoni, Judy Marth Stevens*

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**Line Drawn in the Sand for Protecting Long Island Wetland** - On April 22, 2009, Commissioner Grannis upheld the denial of a freshwater wetlands permit for a project in Suffolk County. DEC staff said “enough is enough” and denied a permit application for the construction of a single family dwelling on the last undeveloped lot adjacent to Deer Lake, Town of Islip. The proposed project was contained entirely in the adjacent area of a DEC regulated wetland “BW-2,” with activities proposed only a few feet from the wetland. The subject parcel was the last of eight lots on Deer Lake owned by the applicant and was left undeveloped as part of negotiations associated with developing the other lots. DEC was represented well by Gail Rowan, (Assistant Regional Attorney) with testimony provided by Heather Amster (Real Property Supervisor) and Rob Marsh

(Regional Manager, Bureau of Habitat). The full decision is available at the DEC's website ([http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/legal\\_protection\\_pdf/pecararod.pdf](http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/legal_protection_pdf/pecararod.pdf)).

*Bureau of Habitat*

*Rob Marsh*

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**MTA Impacts Large Wetland Complex-**

While clearing a culvert and blockage caused by beavers along a railroad line in the Town of Pawling, Dutchess County, an MTA crew opened a path through the RR embankment to lower impounded water in the 15-acre upstream wetland. The volume of water soon overwhelmed the area, washing out the embankment. The washout resulted in the near draining of the wetland, a substantial fishkill, and hundreds of yards of railroad ballast being deposited in the wetland below the work area. Wetland PQ -10 was impacted both above and below the RR work area. Biologist Jim Pinheiro is actively working with MTA staff to develop a restoration plan for the area. Restoration will include an improved crossing at the RR embankment that will provide a more efficient opening and better habitat connectivity through the wetland complex, maintenance of upstream water levels, and hopefully reduction of beaver problems. In addition, embankment spoil will be removed from the wetland areas downstream.



*Bureau of Habitat*

*Jack Isaacs*

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**New York Natural Heritage completes project on “Climate Change and the Adirondack Alpine Zone: establishing baselines”** - Tim Howard, Program Scientist, with funding by the New York Biodiversity Research Institute, collected detailed vegetation information in a systematic manner to inform classification of the alpine communities in the Adirondack Mountains, and to allow repeated measures over time to improve quantitative monitoring of vegetation change. The completion of this project involved drafting two manuscripts which were prepared for eventual submission to scientific journals for publication. The project also involved the identification of hundreds of alpine lichens and mosses; two of the mosses turned out to be rare species and will eventually be incorporated into Natural Heritage's rare species database.

Perhaps the most important take-home messages are:

1. At least three distinct plant community types were found in the 173 acres of the alpine zone, greatly expanding our understanding of species associations for this area. These communities are similar to those found in the alpine zones in other parts of the northeast, but not exactly the same.
2. Having such detailed plant population data will greatly inform our knowledge of rare plant populations on these summits. It will help prioritize potential future inventories for these rare species.

Both projects provide excellent baseline data for tracking population and community-level trends in the alpine zone, the ecosystem in the Adirondacks likely to be the most sensitive to climate change.

*Bureau of Habitat*

*Tim Howard*

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**Central Park Electrofishing Surveys** - On May 5 and 6, Region 2 staff completed electrofishing surveys of the Harlem Meer and Central Park Lake, both located in Central Park, Manhattan. Last spring's capture of a northern snakehead from the Meer prompted additional surveying to determine the extent of these invasive fish in the lake. Fortunately, none was captured. A significant finding of the survey was the reduction in the number of largemouth bass greater than 300 mm in length from the effort last year. This reduction in larger fish from this catch-and-release only lake may suggest that illegal harvest of largemouth bass has occurred over the past year. In contrast to the Meer, the Central Park Lake survey revealed a relatively large proportion of bass over 300 mm. Staff from the Central Park Conservancy participated in the surveys and helped the evening's work go smoothly.

*Bureau of Fisheries*

*Melissa K. Cohen*

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**The Frog Farm Dam on the Great Chazy River as a Lamprey Barrier** - The United States Fish and Wildlife Service, using funds from a special appropriation obtained by Vermont's Senator Leahy, has installed a new metal lip on the crest of the Frog Farm Dam. Hopefully, the lip will block spawning phase sea lamprey from migrating upstream of the dam. Doing so would eliminate the need to apply lampricides to about 13 miles of river from the dam up to Mooers; about 7.5 miles of river downstream of the dam would continue to be treated on the standard four-year rotation.

*Bureau of Fisheries*

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**Black River Lake Sturgeon Monitoring, Jefferson County** - The lower Black River (Dexter, Jefferson Co.) was sampled from April 23-May 13, 2009 to monitor lake sturgeon use during the spawning period. Spawning was previously documented in 2005. Historically, this river had a well known fishery for sturgeon which is documented by photos of large fish from the 1940's in several collections. Pollution and overfishing depleted sturgeon numbers to where only remnant stocks remained in Lake Ontario. Sightings of sturgeon by anglers in the Dexter area since 1995 prompted the initial exploratory survey in 2005. Subsequent surveys have attempted to document continued use by this species and to tag fish for future studies.



Monofilament gill nets (10 inch stretch) were fished at two locations and five lake sturgeons were collected during this survey. River flows were marginally high during this survey, which lowered capture efficiency. All fish collected were males, three of which were in spawning condition. One male was a recapture from the 2006 netting

effort. The largest sturgeon weighed approximately 44 pounds. PIT tags were applied to all fish to so they can be identified in the future by other agencies tracking this species. Other species collected include channel catfish and common carp.

*Bureau of Fisheries*

*Roger Klindt*

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**Shellfish Transplant Program in Raritan Bay Commences for 2009** – The Shellfish Transplant Program, which is administered by the Shellfish Management Unit in the uncertified waters of Raritan Bay and Great Kills Harbor off Staten Island, commenced on May 18. Shellfish Management staff provide on-site supervision over the hand harvesting of hard clams conducted by shellfish diggers from designated areas of Raritan Bay and the transplanting of those shellfish to certified waters in Little Peconic Bay for bacterial cleansing and subsequent marketing as a safe food product. This year, more than 6,200 acres, or approximately 60 percent of Raritan Bay, are approved for transplant harvest. Presently, there are approximately 24 harvesters (diggers and their helpers) and one shellfish transplant cleansing operation participating in this program. Staff have been working in collaboration with the Marine Animal Disease Laboratory at Stony Brook University since the discovery of the hard clam parasitic disease Quahog Parasite Unknown, or QPX, in 2002. Staff conducted QPX sampling from designated sampling sites in Raritan Bay on April 13 and May 28 as part of the Bureau's annual QPX monitoring program. Additional QPX sampling will take place every six weeks throughout the transplant season, which ends on October 10, in order to verify that the hard clams are acceptable for transplant purposes. The Shellfish Transplant Program provides an important economic opportunity for commercial shellfishermen and also protects the public health by making these areas less attractive to illegal harvest.

*Bureau of Marine Resources*

*Debra Barnes*

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**Volunteer River Herring Program** – The 2009 river herring monitoring season ended on May 31. This Hudson River Estuary Program (HREP) and Hudson River Fisheries Unit (HRFU) backed program was developed in 2008 to collect information on river herring use of local tributaries during their annual spawning runs into the Hudson River Estuary. This season, volunteers were asked to visit a targeted tributary twice a week from April through May, where they recorded the presence or absence of herring along with several environmental factors that may affect the presence of herring. Though not all of the datasheets have been submitted from 2009, data are expected from over 100 volunteers who monitored at least one of the 12 targeted streams. Based on the 2008 season, this high volume of data will allow us to describe several patterns of river herring immigration and also compare the current runs to historical records. Last season, data showed both water temperature and tidal stage to be important determinants of herring presence in the selected tributaries. The HRFU staff hopes to summarize the 2009 data

and put out a final report to the volunteers by the fall. For more information on the program, please visit our website: [www.dec.ny.gov/animals/41545.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/41545.html).



*Bureau of Marine Resources*

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## Foster Green and Healthy Communities

**Toxicity of New Variety of Transgenic Corn Evaluated** - The soil bacteria, *Bacillus thuringiensis*, has long been known to produce crystalline (CRY) proteins during their spore stage that are toxic to a select group of target insect pests. Numerous pesticide products have been produced using the spores harvested from the bacteria as the active ingredient. In the past 10 years, the genes for the production of the CRY proteins have been spliced into the DNA for crops such as corn, cotton, and soybeans, producing a class of products known as Plant Incorporated Protectants (PIPs). The Ecotoxicology and Standards Unit (ESU) has reviewed several corn PIP products consisting of genetically incorporated CRY proteins that are toxic to various lepidopteran and coleopteran pests. This month, ESU reviewed a new PIP that has not been reviewed previously, the Vip3Aa20 insecticidal protein. VIP is an acronym for Vegetative Insecticidal Protein. Like CRY proteins, VIPs are also produced by *Bacillus thuringiensis*, however, they are produced during the vegetative stage of the bacterium's life cycle, not during the spore stage. They are also released as soluble proteins and not as crystals. Despite these differences, the VIP protein causes toxicity to target insects by a very similar mode of action as the CRY proteins, and they are similarly selective to just a few groups of target insects. The inclusion of a second, different PIP is important for resistance management. If a target insect survives exposure to a CRY protein because of genetic resistance to the toxin, that trait can be passed down to future generations, and strains of resistant insects might develop. However, if a plant incorporates two dissimilar PIPs, there is a much smaller likelihood that a target insect would be resistant to both PIPs. That is, if it can survive exposure to the CRY protein, it still might succumb to the VIP protein (and vice versa). Thus, the likelihood of the development of genetic resistance to either protein is diminished. The use of PIPs has resulted in a vast reduction, on the order of millions of pounds nationally, in the use of chemical pesticides that are much more dangerous to a larger group of non-target insects. Conventional, chemical pesticides are most often ineffective against insects that bore into the stalk of the corn plant. By the time a farmer discovers the infestation, the insects are protected against those pesticides that are applied to the outside of the corn. The PIPs are able to protect corn from that type of insect attack.

*Bureau of Habitat*

*Tim Sinnott*

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**PCB Track-down Study** - During 2008, BoH Biologist Michael Kane found that small brook trout and minnows from a steep gradient stream (known as Tributary 11a), below the Dewey Loeffel Landfill located in Nassau, NY, again showed elevated levels of PCB. This remediated landfill is where PCBs from General Electric were disposed. To locate the source or point of entry for the PCB, Kane and fellow Biologist Tim Preddice deployed duplicate passive in-situ chemical extraction samplers (PISCES) in May at six sites below the landfill extending downstream nearly to the Valatie Kill. Deployment of PISCES in this very small and shallow tributary presented a challenge. To solve the problem, two small, disposable bag-style PISCES developed at the Hale Creek Field Station (HCFS) were attached to a brick and held in place with a steel rod hammered into the stream bottom at each of the six sites. The system seemed to work quite well during the 13-day exposure. The solvent-based samples will soon be analyzed by the Analytical Services Unit at HCFS. Data from these samples may lead to other exposures in order to narrow the affected zone until the source/ point of entry is located.



*Bureau of Habitat*

*Tim Preddice*

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**Monofilament Recycling Bin** - The Lake Erie Unit set up a prototype monofilament recycling bin over the winter with excellent results. The bin, constructed of PVC pipe, was placed last fall at the Dunkirk fishing platform near the NRG power plant, a popular fishing destination during the winter and spring months. The labeled bin was a receptacle for anglers to properly discard used fishing line instead of leaving it on the platform or in the harbor. The recycling bin was checked in early spring and found to be full of fishing line along with a few other small trash items. Several more of the bins are planned to be built in May and placed at popular fishing spots along the Lake Erie shoreline.



*Bureau of Fisheries*

*Don Einhouse or Jim Markham*

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**Monitoring Shellfish for Marine Biotoxins** - Since mid-April, the Bureau of Marine Resources' Shellfisheries Section has been conducting monitoring for potentially hazardous marine biotoxins in shellfish at 10 locations around Long Island. Mesh bags of blue mussels were deployed at six monitoring sites at municipal marinas on the north and south shores in eastern, central and western Suffolk County. Four offshore stations have been established in the Huntington/Northport complex of bays and harbors where we have previously detected biotoxins and implemented closures in 2006 and 2008. On May 26, biotoxin was detected in mussels at three DEC monitoring sites in the Northport/Huntington complex. One of the locations is in a certified (open) area in

which shellfish are harvested commercially and recreationally for human consumption. Effective at sunrise on May 27, Bureau of Marine Resources designated approximately 2200 acres of shellfishing areas in Northport Bay, Centerport Harbor, and Duck Island Harbor as temporarily uncertified for the harvest of shellfish. The temporary closure will remain in effect until three consecutive samples, collected over a period of two weeks, are determined to be negative for the presence of biotoxin or the biotoxin level is sufficiently below the action level of 80 micrograms/100 grams of shellfish tissue, that it does not present a threat to shellfish consumers.

Testing of shellfish at all other DEC monitoring locations continues. Collection and testing of samples has been expanded to include shellfish harvested commercially in other areas not covered by the regular monitoring program.

*Bureau of Marine Resources*

*Bill Hastback*

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### **Organizational Priorities:**

#### **Partnerships and the Public**

**Environmental Field Day at Hale Creek Field Station-** On May 21, Hale Creek Field Station, in cooperation with Cornell Cooperative Extension, once again hosted over 100 fifth grade students from surrounding schools to participate in Environmental Field Day. Over the course of a few hours, the students worked their way through five different learning stations led by DEC staff. Biologist Dave Mayack and Chemist Brian Buanno taught the students about the relationship between water quality and trout. Biologist Mary Jo Crance had the children in the creek catching and identifying stream invertebrates. Biologist Sean Madden organized a “food chain game” to demonstrate how contaminants can move their way up the food web. Biologist Tim Preddice introduced students to the concept of invasive species and helped them to identify some common invaders in NY. Biologist Colleen Kimble led the students on a nature walk along Hale Creek’s trails to turn over rocks and logs and uncover some of the woods’ hidden biological treasures. When the day was done, the sun was shining, the kids were smiling, and the instructors were exhausted. The students left with more than just an understanding of DEC and its mission, but also with a hands-on experience that will help lay the foundation for the next generation of natural resource stewards.

*Bureau of Wildlife*

*Tim Preddice*

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**GHI Workforce Team Challenge: Team DEC-** Staff of the Bureau of Habitat, including Colleen Kimble, Corbin Gosier, Mary Jo Crance, Mike Calaban and Sean Madden, joined over 70 others from DEC to help the agency take third place in participation for a State agency at this year’s GHI Workforce Team Challenge on May 21. Corbin and Sean also helped land two of DEC’s men’s teams in the top ten.

Whether staff ran, walked, or watched, it was great to see so many people from all different divisions gathered as one DEC team.

*Bureau of Wildlife*

*Sean Madden*

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