



SEPTEMBER 2007

# WATERFOWL INVESTIGATIONS 2007-2008

## 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 are conducting a natural resource damage assessment (NRDA) to assess and restore natural resources injured by PCBs.

This fact sheet provides information about an investigation of PCB impacts to various bird species being conducted under the NRDA.

### WHY STUDY HUDSON RIVER WATERFOWL?

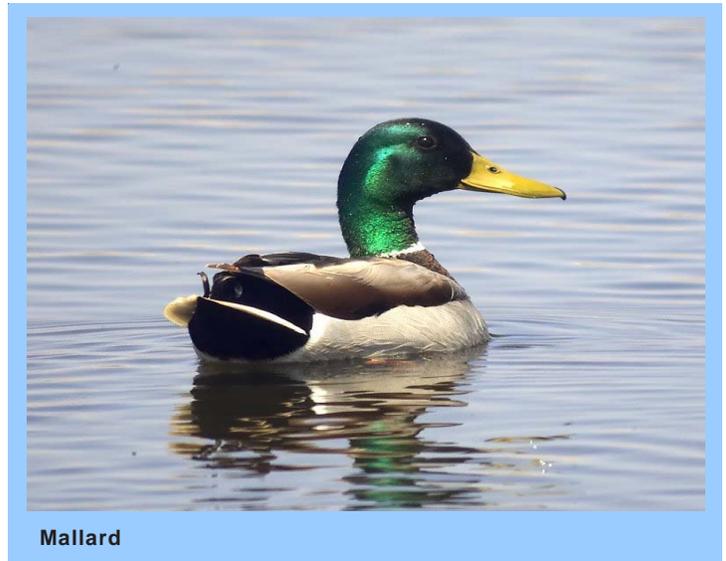
Previous studies in other waters of New York State have demonstrated that waterfowl can rapidly accumulate PCBs in their tissues. Beginning in Summer 2007, biologists from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), on behalf of the Trustees, will assess concentrations of PCBs in waterfowl, primarily mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*), from both the upper and lower Hudson River prior to the period of fall migration. Concentrations of PCBs in edible tissues of adult male and female mallards will be determined and compared to U.S. Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) tolerance levels. Concentrations of PCBs in juvenile mallards, and other hatch year resident waterfowl, as available, will also be determined to assess uptake of PCBs from the Hudson River into waterfowl. The objective of this study is to evaluate whether certain Hudson River waterfowl have suffered injury, as defined by Federal regulations, as a result of the level of PCBs that they have accumulated from the Hudson River environment. USFDA tolerance for PCBs in poultry is 3.0 parts per million in fat (lipid basis). If PCB concentrations in edible portions of Hudson River resident waterfowl exceed the USFDA tolerance levels, this would establish an injury to waterfowl pursuant to those regulations.

### WHAT WILL THE TRUSTEES LEARN?

This study will produce a current data set for PCB concentrations in edible tissues of resident waterfowl from the upper and lower Hudson River that the Trustees will use in injury determination for the Hudson River NRDA.

During July and August 2007, NYSDEC biologists conducted a reconnaissance along the river to locate resident waterfowl and test collection methods in preparation for waterfowl collections during July and August 2008. Trial collection methods included baited traps, netting by spotlight at night,

and shooting. Collecting waterfowl during late July to mid-August, before the adults achieve flight and birds initiate migration, will help to ensure that the waterfowl sampled are resident to the Hudson River and concentrations of PCBs in their tissues reflect Hudson River sources. Mallard eggs may also be collected in Spring 2008 in order to assess the contribution of PCBs to juvenile birds through PCB deposition into the egg from adult females. These data will assist the Trustees in determining whether and to what extent waterfowl resident to the Hudson River may have suffered an injury attributable to PCBs found in the riverine environment of the Hudson.



Mallard

### WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

Waterfowl will be collected in a number of locations throughout the Hudson River: upstream of Glens Falls, from Bakers Falls to Northumberland, from Schuylerville to Mechanicville, and into the estuary as far south as Newburgh. Although the Hudson River is a public resource, many of the tributaries, wetlands and backwater areas that provide crucial habitat for resident waterfowl may be located on or require access through private property. If you own property in any of the study areas, biologists from NYSDEC may ask for your permission to enter your property and sample waterfowl for this study. If you grant permission, biologists will survey the area for resident waterfowl or waterfowl nests, and potentially collect juvenile and adult waterfowl and eggs. Egg collections will be conducted in Spring 2008. Resident waterfowl sampling will be conducted from late July to mid-August 2008. The Trustees will not enter your property without your permission.



## *The Hudson River Trustees—assessing and restoring your natural resources*

**Further information** on the Hudson River NRDA can be found on the following websites:

[www.darp.noaa.gov/northeast/hudson/index.html](http://www.darp.noaa.gov/northeast/hudson/index.html)

[www.dec.ny.gov/lands/25609.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/25609.html)

<http://contaminants.fws.gov/restorationplans/HudsonRiver/HudsonRiver.cfm>

To add yourself to the **Hudson-NRDA listserv**:

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

Hudson River Natural Resource Trustees  
NYSDEC  
625 Broadway, 5th Floor  
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**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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