

Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources

Monthly Highlights

November, 2008

Issue Priorities:

[Connect New Yorkers to Nature](#)

Junior Hunting License Sales up Significantly - The youth hunting bill signed into law by Governor Paterson this summer had a very positive impact on junior hunting license sales. For the current license year, which began October 1, sales of the junior hunting license through November 30 are up 29% over the comparable period a year ago. Overall sporting license sales for the period are up about 3.4% from the previous year, a favorable reversal of the long-term decline largely attributable to demographics of an aging population. Anecdotally, we have received many letters and e-mails from families appreciative of the opportunity for young sportsmen in New York to participate in big game hunting traditions.

Bureau of Wildlife

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

Oswegatchie River Trials and Tribulations - a Simple Hydroelectric Maintenance Activity Gone Awry - In September, Hydro Development Group, Inc. (HDG), a subsidiary of Enel North America, commenced installation of a cofferdam to facilitate diverting water away from its intake and powerhouse while conducting concrete and other repairs at the Fowler #7 Hydroelectric Project on the Oswegatchie River near Gouverneur, St. Lawrence County. The repair work had been approved by the Department via a letter prescribing terms and conditions to protect water quality standards of the Oswegatchie River - a class A waterway in the vicinity of the Project.

On day one of construction, a series of unfortunate events commenced. The contractor started constructing the cofferdam on a rainy Friday afternoon, using talc castings from a nearby quarry. The larger talc stone was not clean and had a lot of fine material mixed in with it causing high turbidity. A sink hole developed upstream of the intake which leaked the turbid water to an area downstream of the Project's tailrace. Despite DEC requirements to stop work, install containment, and reconsider the cofferdam design, the operator chose not to change the cofferdam design and made poor decisions regarding erosion and sediment controls, resulting in two more days of water quality contravention. Notices of violation have been issued to both HDG and their contractor for compromising water quality standards in the Oswegatchie River for a duration of three days. Region 6 Legal, Law Enforcement, Division of Water, and Bureau of Habitat staff have been working collaboratively on this case and expect to meet with HDG and the contractor in early December.

Bureau of Habitat

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Commissioner’s “Flood Summit” Highlights Importance of Appropriate Floodplain Management and Protecting Aquatic Habitat - On October 16, 2008, government and non-government representatives converged in Kingston, New York to discuss approaches for reducing flood risks and damages, improving restoration techniques, and floodplain management. DEC Commissioner Grannis convened the summit and provided introductory remarks along with several elected officials. The remainder of the summit was organized by DEC’s Division of Water and included technical and policy presentations. Drawing from his 30-year career spanning many flooding events, Bureau of Habitat Manager Jack Isaacs provided an insightful commentary on appropriate floodplain management and highlighted impacts to aquatic resources resulting from improper management.

Bureau of Habitat

Jack Isaacs

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NY Natural Heritage project screening at a record pace in FY 0809 - The New York Natural Heritage Program screens the sites of proposed projects and actions for potential impacts on rare animals, rare plants, and significant natural communities (habitat types). During the first seven months of FY 08-09 (from April 1 through October 31), Tara Seoane and Jean Pietrusiak have reviewed 1,110 project sites. At this rate, Natural Heritage will screen 1,900 sites in FY 08-09. Most screening requests are turned around in less than two weeks. The reports and maps we provide enhance the ability of municipalities, state agencies, regulators, planners, developers, and landowners to make decisions that benefit or minimize deleterious impacts on New York’s imperiled plants and animals and significant ecosystems.

In FY 08-09 to date, Tara Salerno has prepared 27 GIS datasets of Natural Heritage locations for distribution to other New York State agencies, such as NYS DOT and NYS OPRHP, and to municipalities, non-profit conservation organizations, academic researchers, and land managers. This data sharing is done under the auspices of an agreement that allows use of the data while making sure that sensitive information on precise locations of rare plants and animals remains confidential.

Bureau of Habitat

Tara Salerno and Nick Conrad

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New York State Dragonfly and Damselfly Survey Documents a New Species for New York - Annette Oliveira, a New York Dragonfly and Damselfly Survey volunteer, documented a new dragonfly species for New York State, the Four-spotted Pennant, on July 26, 2008 and August 1 in Greenport on Long Island. This is a coastal species known from New Mexico to New Jersey, but not previously seen in New York State.



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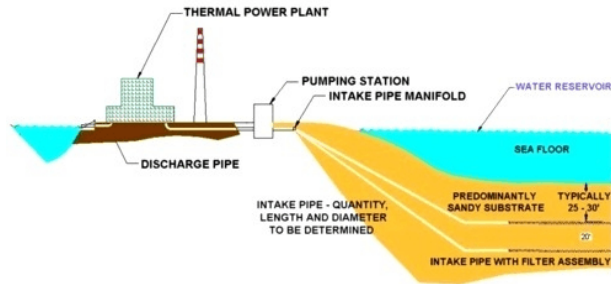
This new find underscores the importance of these coordinated survey efforts in understanding and documenting New York’s biodiversity.

Bureau of Habitat

Erin White

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Potential Fish Protective Technology Under Development - A new technology designed to provide cooling water to power plants, yet at the same time protect aquatic organisms from impingement and entrainment, is under development at the Shoreham Nuclear Power Plant in East Shoreham, Long Island. The technology, called the Substratum Intake System (SIS), is a series of wells drilled horizontally into a groundwater source to provide the facility with cooling



water. Facilities with traditional “once-through cooling” typically use surface water for cooling purposes, which causes mortality to fish when they become trapped against the cooling water intake screens (impingement), or are withdrawn into the plant (entrainment) and subjected to physical, chemical and thermal stress. If proven effective and feasible, SIS could be used by some steam-electric facilities to minimize or even eliminate this mortality to

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fish and shellfish as required by the Clean Water Act § 316(b), and New York State regulations 6 NYCRR Part 704.5.

Bureau of Habitat

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Data Processing for Birds - Data processing for birds banded under DEC’s endangered species and nongame banding permit continues. In 2008, at least 813 birds were banded by DEC staff and cooperators, including 376 double-crested cormorants, 95 bald eagles, 58 peregrine falcons, 50 Caspian terns, 24 eastern bluebirds, 20 ospreys, 20 barn owls, 8 eastern screech-owls, 5 short-eared owls, one each of golden eagle, northern harrier and red-tailed hawk, plus 154 songbirds of 24 species. Each year, banding records must be compiled and sent to the national Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL) to meet reporting requirements and enable the BBL to update its databases. Subsequent reporting of banded birds by banders, bird watchers and the general public provides valuable information on bird movement, survival and behavior. To report a color-marked or banded wild bird, visit the BBL’s website at <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBL/> or call the band reporting hotline, 1-800-327-BAND.

Bureau of Wildlife

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Tuberculosis in Captive Deer - In October, the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets reported the finding of tuberculosis (TB) in a fallow deer of a captive red and fallow deer herd in Columbia County. This finding was the result of routine disease testing conducted by their Department. Laboratory testing at the USDA National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Ames, Iowa confirmed the State's diagnosis.

TB is a slow-moving bacterial disease that is fatal to deer. The presence of TB in this captive deer herd could threaten the health of the wild deer population, as well as the health of nearby domestic animal populations. It has not been found in the wild deer herd of New York.

Region 4 and central office wildlife staff, together with the assistance of the Delmar Wildlife Pathology Unit and USDA APHIS, have set up a surveillance and sampling plan to collect tissues from 200 wild white-tailed deer from seven key towns that surround the captive farm where the disease was found. An outreach effort to collect deer heads in these towns for tissue sampling is under way. Road kill deer have been collected with State and local DOT cooperation, and hunter-harvested deer heads have been collected with local meat cutters and Sportman's clubs cooperation. Posters, facts sheets, and wallet cards with a call-in phone number have been prepared and distributed throughout the surveillance area. Through the end of November, approximately 150 samples have been collected. Examination and collection of samples to be sure the infection has not spread to New York's wild deer population continues through the hunting season.

New York State has worked for more than 70 years to earn and maintain a TB-free status for livestock. Sporadic outbreaks of TB have occurred since it was eradicated, with the last case in cattle detected in 1992 and the last case in captive deer detected in 1995.

Bureau of Wildlife

Chuck Dente

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IPN in the Connetquot River Hatchery - DEC Regional Director Peter Scully and Regional Fisheries Manager Chart Guthrie, with support from Central Office Bureau of Fisheries, have been working closely with Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) staff to assist in resolving issues associated with the closing of the Connetquot River State Park Fish Hatchery due to the presence of Infectious Pancreatic Necrosis (IPN) in fish raised in the Connetquot Hatchery. DEC Regulations 188.2 prohibit the stocking of diseased fish in the waters of the State of New York after December 31, 2008.

OPRHP and DEC have agreed upon a suite of actions to address this issue and to maintain a healthy fishery in the river.

Chart Guthrie attended the November meeting of the Long Island Chapter of Trout Unlimited with OPRHP staff to answer questions about the issue of IPN in the Connetquot River. While some concern was expressed over a possible decline in fishing quality in the Connetquot, the overwhelming sentiment expressed was in favor of the State's need to address the IPN issue.

Bureau of Fisheries

Chart Guthrie

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Region 4 Brook Trout Surveys - The Region 4 Fisheries Office completed the second year of a multi-year effort to survey many of the smaller streams throughout the region for brook trout. This effort is part of the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture Project (EBTJV) of which New York is one of 17 participating states. The goal of this effort is to halt the decline of brook trout and restore fishable populations. To accomplish this goal, an updated inventory of brook trout waters is needed because many of the smaller streams have never been surveyed or the survey information is old and outdated. In 2008, a federally funded survey team sampled 873 streams between June 2 and November 12. Trout were found in 285 streams; brook trout were found in 205 streams, brown trout in 185 streams, and rainbow trout in 19 streams. A total of 180 streams are eligible for upgrading of their water classification including 112 unprotected streams to C(t) or C(ts).

Bureau of Fisheries

Norman McBride

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Heritage Brook Trout and Round Whitefish Restoration Efforts - Mountain Pond's Windfall Strain Brook Trout: Region 5 Fisheries staff took eggs from Windfall strain heritage brook trout in Mountain Pond near Paul Smiths, New York. Mountain Pond is a reclaimed pond managed under catch and release fishing regulations. This year's egg-take effort on Mountain Pond was limited to just one day due to other staff commitments for sea lamprey control on Lake Champlain. About 10,500 eyed eggs were stripped from 26 female trout. The egg take effort fulfills about 75% of our stocking needs. Windfall strain brook trout are stocked in seven other Adirondack waters. They are reared to spring fingerling size at NYSDEC's South Otselic Hatchery. Unfortunately, the trout in Mountain Pond appear to be declining in average size, probably due to a burgeoning population of brown bullhead (500+ were netted along with the brook trout). Black Pond, on VIC property near Paul Smiths, will likely have to be used as a broodstock water for the Windfall strain in the next few years and a disease history is now being developed for that water.

Bureau of Fisheries

Bill Schoch

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Honeoye Lake Standard Gang Gill Netting - Honeoye Lake currently supports a popular ice and open lake fishery. Region 8 Fisheries staff conducted four nights (12 total nets) of gill netting on Honeoye Lake during September, primarily to assess the walleye and panfish populations. Samples were also collected for VHS testing and the Toxic Substance Monitoring Program.

Results of the effort were fairly similar to past nettings on Honeoye Lake with the most commonly collected species being pumpkinseeds, bluegills, walleye, yellow perch, and black crappie respectively.

Almost one-half of the walleye netted were sub-legal (< 15 inches) fish. This is a significant change from our last gill netting in 2003, when only six percent of walleye were sub-legal. Approximately 90% of these sub-legal walleye were over 12 inches, therefore, it appears that good numbers of sub-legal walleye will reach legal size and enter the fishery within the next two years.

Honeoye Lake also continues to provide an excellent panfish fishery. Eighty-eight percent of the pumpkinseed sample and 35% of the bluegill sample exceeded preferred length (eight inches). We also collected three bluegills and pumpkinseeds over 12 inches.

Bureau of Fisheries

Pete Austerman

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Lake Erie Autumn Trawl Survey - The annual trawling program to assess the status of forage fish populations and juvenile yellow perch was completed on schedule during October. Continuing a recent trend, this program found high juvenile and forage fish abundance and diversity during 2008. In the 1990's, rainbow smelt were the most prominent species encountered during this annual sampling effort. However, monitoring in recent years has found round gobies, trout-perch, emerald shiners, juvenile yellow perch, gizzard shad and alewife as increasingly

abundant components of Lake Erie's forage fish community. Both young-of-the-year and yearling yellow perch were especially abundant in this year's collections. Abundance of young perch forecasts that recent excellent perch fishing quality in Lake Erie should continue for a few more years.

Bureau of Fisheries

Don Einhouse

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Organizational Priorities:

Partnerships and the Public

Wildlife Management Areas: After months of collaboration between the Region 5 Wildlife Unit, NYSEG, and the High Peaks Audubon Society, a new osprey nesting structure was installed at Wickham Marsh Wildlife Management Area. NYSEG erected the structure on top of a 35-foot utility pole provided by the High Peaks Audubon Society along the edge of the marsh in a field directly across from the universally accessible Wildlife Viewing Platform. Visitors can look across the marsh from the viewing platform and peer directly into the osprey nest. While NYSDEC paid for the nesting structure itself, NYSEG provided their services for free and the High Peaks Audubon Society was able to get the utility pole donated by Lake Placid Municipal Lighting.

Bureau of Wildlife

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