

Access to the Hudson River Estuary

Access to the Hudson River Estuary can sometimes be difficult. Various manmade and natural obstacles can often complicate efforts to get to the river. Railroads impede access on the eastern shore of the river from Hudson to New York City and on the western shore from Haverstraw to the Town of Esopus. Crossing these railroad tracks where no signal gate or established crossing is present is **extremely** dangerous and illegal. Physical impediments such as steep shoreline slopes and shallow inlets also limit access in many areas. Private land ownership can also complicate access to the river. Accessing the river from private property without the landowner's permission is trespassing and against the law. To address these access difficulties, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) continues to aggressively pursue public access opportunities. DEC has also been active in improving existing access opportunities on the river. Currently, there are approximately 90 developed boat launches and shorefishing locations on the Hudson River that are owned by municipalities, DEC, or other state agencies and not-for-profit groups.

For more information on access to the Hudson River Estuary, contact the *NYSDEC Hudson River Estuary Program* at (845) 256-3016, or visit their access website:

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5088.html>

The *NYS Hudson River Valley Greenway Water Trail* at (518) 473-3835, or visit:

<http://www.hudsongreenway.state.ny.us/conserv/watertr.htm>

Or, the *NYSDEC* list of NYS Boat Launches:

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7832.html>

Boating and Water Safety

The Hudson is a big river subject to rough weather conditions, strong currents, and heavy commercial and recreational boat use. Barges and other large commercial vessels are common on the river. Wakes from these vessels, including secondary wakes caused by the initial wake bouncing off the shoreline, can be dangerous to small vessels. The Hudson is a tidal river, with water depths changing markedly from high (flood) to low (ebb) tide. This can significantly impact where you can navigate on the river. Boaters on the Hudson must be familiar with the rules and regulations associated with boating on a large navigable waterway such as the Hudson. Boaters should also be sure to carry the appropriate safety equipment for the boat they are operating. One of the most important safety items is a life vest (or personal flotation device (PFD)). Children under the age of 12 must wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved Type 1, 2 or 3 PFD when underway. Every pleasure boat, including kayaks, canoes and rowboats, must have on board at least one wearable U.S. Coast Guard approved PFD for every person on board. The PFD must be in good condition and readily accessible. Vessels 16 ft. in length and larger must also carry a U.S. Coast Guard approved throwable flotation device. In addition to PFDs numerous other safety items must be carried on board a boat. Required equipment varies depending upon the size of your boat. The operator or person in control of the vessel is responsible for compliance with all safety regulations.

For a complete reference of required equipment and the rules and regulations associated with safe boating in New York State, contact the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation at (518) 474-0445, or download a copy of the New York State Boaters Guide at: www.nysparks.com/boating/resource.asp

Additional information can also be found at the United States Coast Guard website: www.uscgboating.org

Anglers and boaters planning on using the Erie or Champlain Canals, which allow Hudson boaters to access Lake Champlain and the Great Lakes, should contact the New York State Canal Corporation at (518) 471-5011, or visit their website at: www.nyscanals.gov

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Fishing Regulations

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A freshwater fishing license is not required when fishing the waters of the Hudson River south of the Troy Barrier Dam. A fishing license **is** required to fish the entire length of all tributaries of the Hudson south of the Troy Dam to the Tappan Zee Bridge **even if the tributary is subject to tidal flow**. Regulations associated with the take of freshwater fish species from the Hudson River can be found in the New York State Freshwater Fishing Regulations Guide available at all DEC regional offices, license sales outlets, or by calling (518) 402-8920. Regulations can also be found on the DEC website at: www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7917.html

For marine fishing regulations call (631) 444-0435 or go to the Division of Marine Resources Saltwater Regulations webpage at: www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7894.html

Circle Hooks: Scientific research indicates that the use of circle hooks reduces mortality on fish that are caught and released. New regulations on the Hudson are proposed that, if passed, will take effect in 2007. Under these regulations, the use of circle hooks will be required if you are fishing in the Hudson using natural bait (minnows, worms, dough balls, etc.) between April 15 and June 1.

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Hudson River Fish Consumption Advisories

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The Hudson River Estuary has a very large watershed that includes many urban areas, factory towns, and other sources of pollution. Unfortunately, this has resulted in the addition of chemicals, pathogens and heavy metals to the river that have found their way into the bodies of some Hudson fish species. As a result, fish consumption advisories have been established by the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) for many Hudson River fish species. Fish consumption advisories are updated annually and can be found in the New York State Fishing Regulations Guide or by visiting the NYSDOH website at: www.health.state.ny.us/environmental/outdoors/fish/fish.htm

For more information on health effects associated with exposure to chemical contaminants call NYSDOH at 1-800-458-1158 x 27815.

Popular Gamefish More info:

www.dec.ny.gov/animals/269.html



Striped Bass, or Stripers, easily distinguished by the seven to nine dark horizontal lines found along their sides, vary considerably in size, ranging from 18 to 55 inches in length and three to 70 pounds in weight. On the Hudson River, striped bass fishing is best during the spring spawning run from March to June.



American Shad, the largest of the herring in the Hudson, average 20 to 23 inches in length and five to six pounds in weight. During spawning, April to June, shad arrive in large schools, running up the rivers where they slowly adjust to the change from salt to fresh water.



Smallmouth Bass, members of the sunfish family, are famous for their fighting ability when hooked and have the reputation for being, inch-for-inch, the best sporting fish around. Adult smallmouth bass are usually found near the protection of rocks or near submerged logs. Early morning and evening are their most active feeding times.



Largemouth Bass, also of the sunfish family, have been known to reach weights in excess of ten pounds. They are rather solitary fish, preferring to stay among dense aquatic vegetation or close to submerged cover, such as stumps, logs, or dock pilings.



White Perch, NY's smallest true bass, seldom reach more than 12 inches in length. Like striped bass, white perch can live in both fresh and saltwater. They often occur in large schools in turbid shallow areas. White perch are especially easy to catch in the spring during spawning. Although small in size, they can put up a good fight when hooked.



Yellow Perch, ranging in length from six to 12 inches, prefer shallow, weedy protected sections. Yellow perch spawn in April or May and are most active in the morning and evening. They eat a variety of organisms, including aquatic insects, crayfish, and fish.



Channel Catfish, the largest of New York State's catfish, can reach trophy size of 20-plus pounds. Channel catfish are most active just before sunrise and sunset. Catfish have a very diverse diet, generally eating any object they can get their mouths around.



White Catfish are found throughout the Hudson River. Adults are almost always medium-sized, averaging eight to 14 inches in length. Catfish are nocturnal - feeding most actively at night.



Blue Crab, one of the largest crustaceans, has five pairs of legs. The first pair are claws, and the last pair are adapted into swimming paddles. Adults will eat mollusks and bivalves, using their claws to manipulate them. Other food items include dead or live fish, blue crabs, shrimp, organic debris, and aquatic plants.



Carp, first introduced into New York State waters in 1831, can grow quite large, more than 40 pounds! They eat a variety of plant and animal material and are often spotted by the cloud of mud they stir up as they feed. It is not uncommon to see and hear carp sucking in floating insects at the water's surface.

Species of Note



Atlantic Sturgeon, occasionally reaching over 200 pounds in weight and six to eight feet in length, return to the Hudson each spring to spawn. While much is known about their habits in freshwater, little is known about this sturgeon while at sea. *Possession is prohibited.*



Shortnose Sturgeon, rarely exceeding 3.5 feet in length and 14 pounds in weight, have a short, blunt, conical snout with four barbels in front of its large underslung mouth. It is officially listed as *endangered* in all states where it occurs. *It is unlawful to kill or possess this fish.*

Fishing the Hudson River Estuary

The estuary usually has two high and two low tides in a twenty-four hour period. With this rising and falling come changes in the direction of flow. Generally speaking, a rising tide is accompanied by a *flood* current flowing north towards Troy, a falling tide by an *ebb* current flowing south towards the sea.

The best time to fish is during the slow current period, just before the change in direction of tidal flow near high and low slack tide. Normally the action builds for about an hour as the current slows. Best fishing often comes during the $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ hour of dead slack and tapers off as the current builds again. Slack tides around dawn and dusk are especially hot. Tide current tables will help you plan the best fishing times each day.

Tidal current tables and nautical charts are available from local bait shops, marinas and boating supply dealers. Chart 12347 covers Wappingers Creek to the City of Hudson, and Chart 12348 covers the upper river from the City of Hudson to Troy.

For more information about tides, and current conditions, please refer to the following NOAA website: <http://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/tides06/>

For more information about Hudson River Estuary fishing, visit

- The *NYSDEC Fishing* website: www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/fishing.html
- The *NYS DEC Hudson River Fisheries Unit* website: www.dec.ny.gov/animals/9962.html
- In Albany, Rensselaer, Greene, and Columbia Counties, contact the *NYS DEC Bureau of Fisheries Region 4 Office* at (607) 652-7366
- In Ulster, Dutchess, Orange, Rockland, and Westchester Counties, contact the *Region 3 Office* at (845) 256-3161.

Day-to-day observations of the Hudson's fish, wildlife, birds, sunsets, storms, migrations, and more sent in by anglers, researchers, sailors, bird watchers, schoolchildren, picnickers, and others who delight in the river can be found in the *Hudson River Almanac* at:

www.dec.ny.gov/lands/25608.html

Responsible Angling and Boating

Nesting Birds: Many species of birds select nest sites on or close to water. These include ducks, geese, swans, loons, herons, ospreys and eagles. Close approach by boaters and anglers and activities associated with boating and fishing may cause these birds to leave their nests. This makes the eggs or young vulnerable to predators, chilling, overheating and possible abandonment and starvation. Please pay attention and keep a good distance from nesting birds or birds with chicks. Also, be sure to move away from birds that appear to be frightened or defending nesting areas.

Submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV): SAV plays a vital role in the estuarine ecosystem by maintaining water quality and supporting both fish and macroinvertebrate communities. Protecting this sensitive habitat from human disturbance or damage from boat propellers is important to the continued health of the river.

Catch And Release: A fresh fish dinner represents the ideal conclusion to a fishing trip for many people. Fish populations are, however, a limited resource, and anglers can have an impact on the quality of these populations. This is particularly the case for larger gamefish that are relatively rare in a population, and often take an extended period of time to reach these sizes. With the availability of fiberglass mounts that can be painted to exactly duplicate a trophy catch, even the angler who wants a remembrance of the catch of his or her life now has an alternative to killing the fish.

Responsible Angling and Boating

Whether the release of a fish is dictated by fishing regulations or conservation, follow these simple guidelines to ensure that your released fish has the best chance of survival:

- Quickly play and land fish;
- Have necessary tools on hand to remove the hook;
- Unhook fish in the water if possible;
- Handle fish carefully to avoid injury—avoid contact with gills. Do not squeeze fish or remove protective slime. Do not grasp fish by the eye sockets;
- Cut leaders on deeply-hooked fish;
- Consider using barbless or circle hooks;
- Don't "cull" by killing fish considered undesirable, and
- Request the pamphlet "Fish for the Future" from DEC regional offices to learn how to release fish caught from waters greater than 30 feet deep. Such fish often develop distended air bladders due to sudden pressure reduction and require special handling.

Used Fishing Line: Lost or discarded fishing line can last a long time in the environment. Too often birds and other wildlife become entangled leading to severe injury or a slow and painful death. Be sure to properly discard all fishing line by collecting it for proper disposal in trash cans or tackle shop recycling programs. Any additional line that you are able to collect and remove from the areas that you fish will also have a beneficial effect on the environment.

Responsible Angling and Boating

Aquatic Invasive Species: The Hudson River Estuary (HRE) like most other public water bodies in New York State has been affected to some degree by the introduction of aquatic invasive species. Historically the aquatic community was isolated by natural geography until relatively recently when global transportation of goods and services has now provided easy transport of non-native, or exotic, species to new ecosystems. Exotics in the HRE initially may increase community biodiversity with their presence. Without natural enemies, however, they are free to proceed into a boom and bust growth pattern in which high numbers of exotics often out-compete, displace and sometimes extirpate native species. Many nuisance species are now established and have become common household names for boaters and anglers in the lower river basin. Long-term exotics include common carp and the aquatic plants, Eurasian watermilfoil and water chestnut, followed more recently by zebra mussel and European rudd. Other invaders making their way inland from the Great Lakes basin, such as round goby and VHS—viral hemorrhagic septicemia, a deadly fish virus—may pose a future threat to the Hudson.

Anglers and boaters can also spread fish diseases and parasites from waterbody to waterbody. Diseases like whirling disease, VHS and largemouth bass virus can be spread through contaminated live-wells, bait-wells and bilge water, and/or by moving fish from one body of water to another. Anglers and boaters should be certain to drain their live-wells, bait-wells and bilges before leaving a body of water. Anglers should be aware that it is illegal to place fish into a body of water in New York State without a stocking permit. This includes baitfish.

Responsible Angling and Boating

Specific guidelines to prevent the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species are:

- Call your local DEC fisheries office and ask for literature and brochures on exotic species;
- Follow recommended guidelines and NYS regulations while fishing and boating;
- Remove all sediment and aquatic plants from all recreational gear including boots, waders, nets, boats, motors and trailers before departing an access site;
- Drain all water from your boat before leaving the launch or access site, including bilges, live-wells, and bait tanks;
- Dry all fishing gear such as nets and boots before traveling to another water body;
- Do **not** transport fish from one water body to another;
- Do **not** release unused live bait into any water body;
- Do **not** dispose of fish carcasses or by-products in any water body;
- Rinse sediment and debris from waders and other wading gear before reuse;
- Consider disinfecting waders and live wells by using a 10% chlorine/water solution to kill organisms, particularly after entering known infected waters. Rinse gear well after treatment to remove all residual chlorine before next reuse;
- Use responsible live-well and tournament procedures to avoid stressing fish, and
- Stage tournaments during cool weather periods and practice catch and live release.

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Responsible Angling and Boating

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More information pertaining to Aquatic Invasive Species:

NYSDEC – Freshwater Fishing Regulations Guide, including VHS alert
www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7917.html

LMBV, fishing tournaments, and live well procedures
<http://sports.espn.go.com/outdoors/bassmaster/conservation/>



Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers
www.ProtectYourWaters.net

NYSDEC - Aquatic Invasive Species Eradication Grant Program: including a list of aquatic species in NYS
www.dec.ny.gov/animals/32861.html

Zebra Mussel
(approx. 1/2")



Round Goby



Responsible Angling and Boating

Non-Toxic Sinkers: The loss of sinkers and lures is a routine part of fishing. Unfortunately, lost sinkers, especially split-shot, may be mistaken for food or grit and eaten by water birds such as ducks, geese, swans, gulls or loons. Toxic effects of even a single lead sinker can cause birds to sicken and increase the risk of death through predation, exposure or lead poisoning.

Effective May 7, 2004, the sale of certain lead sinkers (including "split shot") weighing one-half ounce or less is prohibited in New York State. This includes sale from out-of-state vendors, including catalog and internet sales. This prohibition does not include artificial lures, weighted line, weighted flies or jig heads.

As responsible anglers, we should all seek to reduce any unintended effects on the natural environment and leave no trace of our presence. A trip to your favorite tackle shop will reveal a variety of alternatives to lead split shot, sinkers and jig heads. By switching to non-toxic sinkers with your next purchase, you can assure that your fishing tackle choices are helping to reduce the risk of lead poisoning to birds.

Pumpout Stations: While not a major source of pollution, illegal sewage discharge from recreational boats contributes to pollution problems, especially in enclosed shallow bays where boats tend to congregate. Please keep the Hudson clean. *Use Pumpouts!* To follow is a listing of pumpout facilities along the Hudson River Estuary:

Hudson River Pumpouts

The entire Hudson River Estuary from the Battery in Manhattan to the Troy Dam is a No Discharge Zone!

Call for availability and hours of service.

Facility Name	Municipality	Phone
Albany County		
Offshore Marine (Van Schaick Island Marina)	Cohoes C.	518-237-2681
Ravena-Coeymans Yacht Club Inc.	Coeymans T.	518-756-9932
Dutch Apple Cruises, Inc.	Albany C.	518-463-0220
Coeymans Landing Marina (Stationary & Boat)	Coeymans T.	518-756-6111
Rensselaer County		
Castleton Boat Club Inc.	Schodack T.	518-732-7077
Troy Motor Boat and Canoe Club	Troy C.	518-235-9697
Albany Yacht Club	Rensselaer	518-445-9587
City of Troy - Broadway Landing	Troy C.	518-270-4644
Greene County		
Shady Harbor Marina Inc.	New Baltimore T.	518-756-8001
Coxsackie Yacht Club	Coxsackie V.	518-731-9819
Catskill Marina Corp.	Catskill T.	518-943-4170
Catskill Yacht Club	Catskill V.	518-943-6459
Hop-O-Nose Marina*	Catskill V.	518-943-4640
Columbia County		
Hudson Powerboat Association	Hudson C.	518-821-0151
Ulster County		
City of Kingston - West Strand Park Public Dock	Kingston C.	845-331-6940
Hideaway Marina, Inc.	Kingston	845-331-4565
Marlboro Yacht Club	Marlboro	845-236-3932
Certified Marine Service, Inc.	Esopus T.	845-339-3060
Jeff's Yacht Haven	Esopus T.	845-331-9248
Rondout Yacht Basin	Esopus T.	845-331-7061
Hidden Harbor Yacht Club	Port Ewen T.	845-338-0923
Kingston Powerboat Association	Kingston C.	845-338-3946
Dutchess County		
Rogers Point Boating Association	Hyde Park T.	845-229-2236
White's Hudson R. Marina Inc. (Stationary & Boat)	Wappinger T.	845-297-8520
Orange County		
Cornwall Yacht Club	Cornwall-On-Hudson	845-534-8835
Front Street Marina (Stationary & Boat)	Newburgh C.	845-661-4914
Rockland County		
Julius Petersen, Inc.	Clarkstown	845-358-2100
Panco Oil Co. -Pancor Marine Inc.	Stony Point T.	845-429-9120
Tappan Zee Marina	Orangetown T.	845-359-5522
Pennybridge Marina	Stony Point T.	845-786-5100
Seaweed Yacht Club	Stony Point T.	845-786-8731
Haverstraw Marina	Haverstraw T.	845-429-2001
Stony Point Bay Marina	Stony Point T.	845-786-3700

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Westchester County

Peekskill Yacht Club	Peekskill C.	914-737-9515
Half Moon Bay Marina	Croton-On-Hudson	914-271-5400
Cortlandt Yacht Club	Cortlandt T.	914-739-3011
Viking Boat Yard*	Cortlandt T.	914-739-5090
Westerly Marina, Inc.	Ossining T.	914-941-2203
Hudson Valley Marine	Cortlandt T.	914-736-2932
Tarrytown Marina Inc. (Stationary & Boat)	Greenburg T.	914-631-1300

New York

NYCDEP - *Dyckman Marine Group, Inc.	Inwood	212-496-2105
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*Expected Completion 2007

While underway, use an approved Marine Sanitation Device (MSD), and maintain it according to manufacturer recommendations.

For more information contact:

New York Sea Grant: dgw9@cornell.edu 607.255.2832

www.nysgextension.org/pumpouts/pumpouts-search.html

Responsible Angling and Boating

More information about responsible angling and boating:

NYSDEC - Bureau of Fisheries (518) 402-8920
www.dec.ny.gov/about/32834.html

In Albany, Rensselaer, Greene, and Columbia Counties,
NYSDEC - Bureau of Fisheries Region 4 Office (607) 652-7366

In Ulster, Dutchess, Orange, Rockland, and Westchester Counties,
NYSDEC - Bureau of Fisheries Region 3 Office (845) 256-3161

US Coast Guard Boating Safety
www.uscgboating.org

NYSDEC – Hudson River Estuary Program
www.dec.ny.gov/lands/4920.html

NYSDEC - Hudson River Fisheries Unit
www.dec.ny.gov/animals/9962.html

New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program
www.seagrant.sunysb.edu/HEP/library.htm

Boater's Guide To The Hudson River Estuary by Dennis Mildner and Betsy Blair
<http://library.marist.edu/diglib/EnvSci/archives/pubaccs/mildner/mildner%20-%20blair%20-%20boater's%20guide.html>

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***New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
(NYSDEC)***

www.dec.ny.gov

NYSDEC Hudson River Estuary Program (845) 256-3016

www.dec.ny.gov/lands/4920.html

Access Program: www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5088.html

Hudson River Almanac: www.dec.ny.gov/lands/25608.html

NYSDEC Bureau of Fisheries (518) 402-8920

Freshwater Fishing: www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7752.html

Fish Descriptions: www.dec.ny.gov/animals/269.html

List of NYS Boat Launch Sites: www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7832.html

Region 3 Office (Ulster, Dutchess, Orange, Rockland, Westchester): (845) 256-3161

Region 4 Office (Albany, Rensselaer, Greene, Columbia): (607) 652-7366

NYSDEC Hudson River Fisheries Unit

www.dec.ny.gov/animals/9962.html

NYSDEC Aquatic Invasive Species Eradication Grant Program

www.dec.ny.gov/animals/32861.html

NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP)

Bureau of Marine and Recreational Vehicles (518) 474-0445

www.nysparks.com

Boating Regulations: www.nysparks.com/boating/edu_boat.asp

NYS Hudson River Valley Greenway Water Trail (518) 473-3835

www.hudsongreenway.state.ny.us/conserv/watertr.htm

NYS Canal Corporation (518) 471-5011

www.nyscanals.gov

NYS Department of Health

Health Advisories for Fish Consumption (800) 458-1158 ext.27815

www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/environ/fish.htm

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NY Sea Grant (607) 255-2832

www.nysgextension.org

Pumpouts: www.nysgextension.org/pumpouts/pumpouts-search.html

New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program

www.seagrant.sunysb.edu/HEP/library.htm

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Center for Operational Oceanographic Products and Services (CO-OPS) (301)

713-2813 ext. 123

Tidal Ranges and Predictions: <http://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/tides06/>

United States Geological Survey (USGS): Salt front, Tides, and Water Temperature

<http://ny.water.usgs.gov/projects/dialer-plots/saltfront.html>

US Coast Guard (USCG): Boating Safety

www.uscgboating.org

B.A.S.S. Conservation: LMBV, fishing tournament, and live well procedures

<http://sports.espn.go.com/outdoors/bassmaster/conservation/>

Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers

www.ProtectYourWaters.net

Boater's Guide To The Hudson River Estuary by Dennis Mildner and Betsy Blair

<http://library.marist.edu/diglib/EnvSci/archives/pubacces/mildner/mildner%20-%20blair%20-%20boater's%20guide.html>