

# The Tidal Exchange

~E-news~

Of the



New York-New Jersey  
Harbor & Estuary Program

News and upcoming events in the harbor!

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## HEP HAS EXPANDED

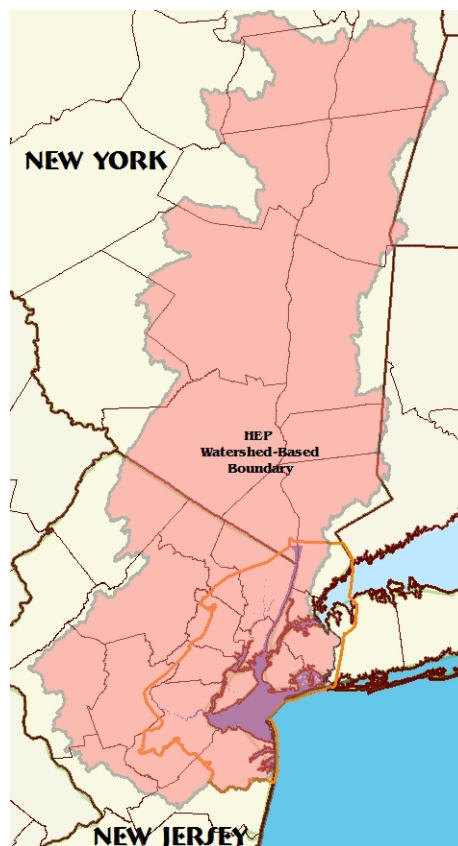
### A Watershed-Based Approach

At their December meeting, HEP's Policy Committee extended the boundaries of the program to include the Hudson River watershed up to the Troy Dam, as well as the watersheds of the Raritan, Passaic, and Hackensack rivers in New Jersey. This watershed approach is much more in keeping with the way other major estuaries are managed. When HEP was initiated over 20 years ago, watershed concept was not as widely accepted as it is today and the focus was on the "core waters" of the estuary.

It is well known that activities occurring anywhere in a watershed can impact other areas and certainly the estuary - where the rivers meet the sea. Good examples of these are sediments moving downstream and fish moving upstream.

This watershed-wide focus will result in enhanced coordination and cooperation with already-established organizations that have been working in some of these areas, such as the [Hudson River Estuary Program](#) and the [Sustainable Raritan River Initiative](#).

To reflect this new scope, our program's name has been slightly modified to *New York-New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program*, while our acronym will continue to be HEP.



The new HEP geographic area is shaded in pink. In orange is the Hudson-Raritan Comprehensive Restoration Plan boundary, which guides habitat restoration efforts. Note that HEP focuses on NY and NJ, although the Hudson watershed includes small areas in two other states.

Please stay tuned for upcoming updates on this topic.

## CITIZEN SCIENTISTS KEEP TAB OF SEALS

### Join the Effort to Count Harbor Seals in New York Harbor!

By Paul Sieswerda

Our Founding Fathers considered a census so important to govern the original colonies that they mandated it within the Constitution itself. This is no easy task, as the U.S. Census 2010 showed, requiring many thousands of workers to collect and organize the data.



No such mandate exists for the enumeration of seals in and around NY harbor, but ongoing efforts by co-operating institutions and volunteers are beginning to build a picture of the increasing seal population that has returned to New York waters. This effort has grown primarily through "citizen science", where the general public provides the eyes and the support to gather data regarding where, when, and how many seals inhabit the areas around New York. In the past few years this information has shown that seals are indeed returning to New York in greater and greater numbers.

The model for such a project was taken from the National Audubon Society and its Christmas Bird Count. For over a hundred years, around Christmas time, the Audubon Society collects information from countless volunteers about the birds that these "citizen scientists" observe during that period. This provides a snapshot of the bird population, nationwide and supplies wildlife managers with critical data that would otherwise be impossible to gather.



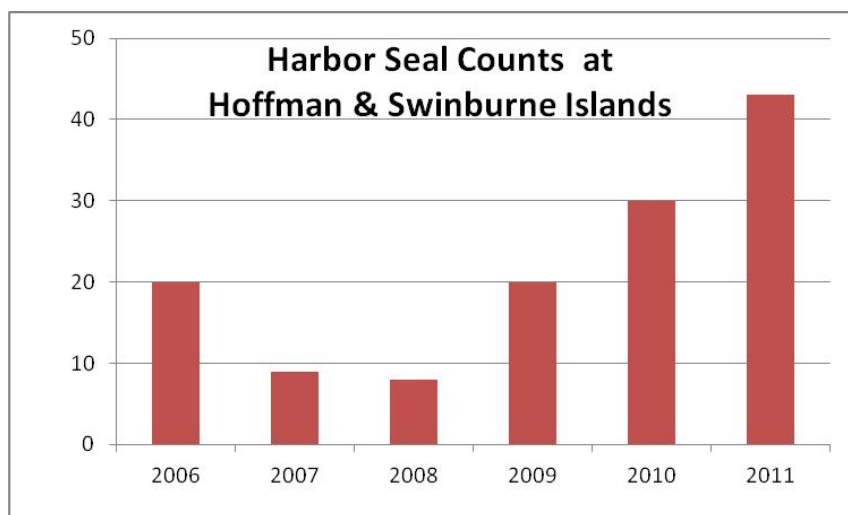
Over the past few years, volunteers have been doing similar work counting seals off of Staten Island. Intermittent reports of seals in the area were sent to the New York Aquarium and when I was Curator there, I worked with Kingsborough College to establish an annual seal count off of Staten Island. A

rookery on Swinburne Island, just south of the Verrazano Bridge was shown to have seals hauled out, year after year. Sincethen, this work has expanded to regular trips during the winter months aboard the American Princess where more frequent observations are building a database regarding species, numbers, feeding activity, and even identifying individuals. This information is shared with other groups to help fill the overall view of seal populations along the Atlantic Coast.

At last count, at least 43 harbor seals make their winter home around Swinburne Island. The American Princess will make excursions on weekends beginning in February, to count, photograph, and note the activity of this rookery. The seals can be seen hauled out on the rocks, sunning themselves in the typical "banana" pose, bobbing in the water in the "bottling" posture, or actively "porpoising" in swift leaps when chasing herring. Clear evidence of what the seals feed on was provided when a "citizen scientist" was able to photograph a seal with a herring in its mouth.



Image by Barry Masterson



The harbor seal population is expanding in the Western Atlantic. Seals that were the rare oddity in Massachusetts are now commonplace and Long Island rookeries have consistent populations each winter. It is likely to have more species appear, such as grey seals and harp seals, in New York harbor. Documenting the population will be valuable as growing numbers are bound to impact human activities as well as humans impacting the seals. The 2010 human census counts over 8 million inhabitants in New York. To have a slice of the wild, like harbor seals so close to that many people is a fascinating occurrence in itself. To have the population of seals thriving is a testament to the improved conditions that make it possible. And to better understand the populations of either species will hopefully allow the compatible existence of both. If "citizen scientists" would like to observe the seals first hand, contact [Americanprincesscruises.com](http://Americanprincesscruises.com) for scheduled seal counts.

## E-CYCLE NEW JERSEY

### How to Recycle your Electronics for Free in the Garden State



Did you know that beginning January 1st 2012 it is illegal in New Jersey to dispose of electronic devices in the garbage?

E-waste makes 2% of the municipal solid waste stream but is growing two to three times faster than any other component of the solid waste stream. These wastes contain toxic substances of potential concern such as lead, mercury, cadmium, and brominated flame retardants. But you can keep these toxics out of the environment by recycling your unwanted electronics.

Consumers and some small business in New Jersey can recycle their old TVs, computers, and other electronics for free at approved manufacturers collection sites.

In New York State, a [similar law was passed in 2010](#), requiring manufacturers of these items to make it easy and convenient for consumers to recycle e-waste.

To locate a collection site near you and find out what you can recycle in New Jersey, visit <http://www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/ewaste/index.html> or call In New York State, visit <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/66872.html> or call **518-402-8706**.

## EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT RECYCLING

### Hackensack Riverkeeper Recycling Article

What happens if I don't rinse that peanut butter jar?

Can I recycle ALL plastics?

Do things REALLY get recycled?

Find the answers to these and other questions in [Lisa Ryan's thorough investigation for the Hackensack Tidelines](#). For more stories and to subscribe, visit [www.hackensackriverkeeper.org](http://www.hackensackriverkeeper.org).



Waste Management employees sorting single-stream recyclables. photo courtesy of Waste Management.

## BALD EAGLE VIEWING

Bald eagles almost disappeared from our region as a result of

toxic pesticides like DDT and competition for habitat. But thanks to the ban on DDT, protection of habitats, and the efforts to reintroduce eagles into their habitats, they are making a comeback. Populations have been increasing both in [New Jersey](#) (where [recovery reached a milestone](#) with 100 nests throughout the state) and in [New York](#). Many nests can be found along the Hudson River and some around our harbor, especially in northern New Jersey.



Image by Herb Houghton

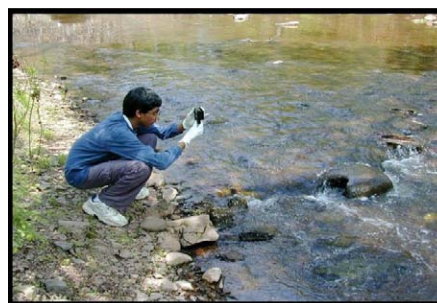
While it is possible to see eagles year-round, especially near nesting sites, the best viewing opportunities are during the winter months, when eagles come in large numbers from the north and east. Here are a few viewing opportunities nearby (click links for details):

- **8th Annual [Hudson River EagleFest](#)<sup>SM</sup>** at Westchester County's Croton Point Park on **February 4**.
- **Hudson River Foundation's [Bald Eagle Viewing Programs](#)** led by Christopher Letts, the Foundation's educator. **January 28 & 29** at Croton Point Park and **February 5 & 12** at Georges Island Park.

## WATER QUALITY MONITORING RESOURCES

### NJDEP Holds 8th Water Monitoring Summit

On the first two days of December, 2011, the NJ Dept of Environmental Conservation held its 8th Water Monitoring Summit.



The Summit covered a variety of topics, including monitoring of all water body types, and it showcased projects, tools and programs that have been developed to complement local and state planning and restoration efforts. Summit participants included volunteers, private and public partners, watershed association staff, watershed educators, academics, federal, state and local government representatives, and other members of the water monitoring and assessment community.

Many of the full presentations, along with the agenda and other resources are available at [www.state.nj.us/dep/wms/2011\\_summit.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/wms/2011_summit.htm)

## TWO STEPS CLOSER TO CLEANER WATERS

## Innovative Technology to contain CSOs in Brooklyn

NYC Dept of Environmental Protection installed two underground inflatable dams within existing sewer lines in the Newtown Creek and Red Hook neighborhoods. Automatic sensors cause the dams to inflate during rain events, temporarily collecting a mixture of stormwater and raw sewage and preventing it from being discharged into our waterways via combined sewer overflows (CSOs).



Red Hook inflatable dam on January 2010. Picture by NYCDEP.

When the rain stops, the dams deflate and the liquid reaches the wastewater treatment plant for treatment. Each dam will help avoid up to 100 million gallons of combined sewer overflows into the harbor every year.

For more details read the [press release](#).

## NYC Adopts New On-Site Stormwater Controls for New Construction Projects

NYC Dept of Environmental Protection's new rule requires new construction and major alterations to deal with a substantial amount of [stormwater runoff](#) on site, leaving more capacity in the city's combined sewers and reducing pollutant loads into our waterways. The rule is expected to contribute to cleaner waters in our Estuary and to help the city move closer to achieving the goals of its [Green Infrastructure Plan](#).

For more details, read the [press release](#).

## EPA PUTS US ON A REDUCED-MERCURY DIET

### New Standards Aim to Cut Pollution

In December, 2011, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards, the first national standards to protect American families from power plant emissions of mercury and toxic air pollution like arsenic, acid gas, nickel, selenium, and cyanide.

These reductions are good news for [environmental effects](#) associated with



Mercury can affect the survival and reproduction of animals such as this egret

these chemicals. Some of the expected benefits of reduced emissions are: *(photo: Kate Boicourt, taken in Jamaica Bay)*

- Prevent up to 46,000 premature deaths and 540,000 asthma attacks among children.
- Up to \$380 billion in return to American families in the form of longer, healthier lives and reduced health care costs.
- Employment for thousands, potentially including 46,000 short-term construction jobs and 8,000 long-term utility jobs.
- As much as \$90 billion of total health and economic benefits annually.

[Read more...](#)

## WHO'S POLLUTING YOUR LOCAL WATERS?

### New Tool to Track Water Pollution Across the U.S.

The U.S. EPA has developed the [Discharge Monitoring Report \(DMR\) Pollutant Loading Tool](#), which

allows for easy searching and mapping of water pollution by local area, watershed, company, industry

sector, and pollutant. When discharges are above permitted levels, users can view the violations and link to details about enforcement actions that EPA and states have taken to address these violations.



In addition, EPA has also released several new features on its [Enforcement and Compliance History Online \(ECHO\) website](#), which provides information about inspections, facility compliance, and state and federal enforcement actions. New features include a search for criminal enforcement cases and web developer tools that make it easy to tap into ECHO reports and maps.

[Read the press release...](#)

## WEEHAWKEN RESERVOIR ACQUIRED FOR PRESERVATION

### Partnership secures 14.4-acre reservoir

At the end of December, 2011, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, the Township of Weehawken, Union City, the New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Trust, and the Trust for Public Land, secured the preservation of a unique 14.4-acre parcel containing a reservoir and surrounding land near the Lincoln Tunnel. The preserved area will also include a recreational trail to a region (Weehawken and Union City) that is otherwise densely populated and has limited opportunity for open space. For more information, see the announcements of

the [Trust for Public Land](#) and [New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection](#).

## A NEW TOOL FOR OCEAN PLANNERS

### National Ocean Policy Draft Implementation Plan

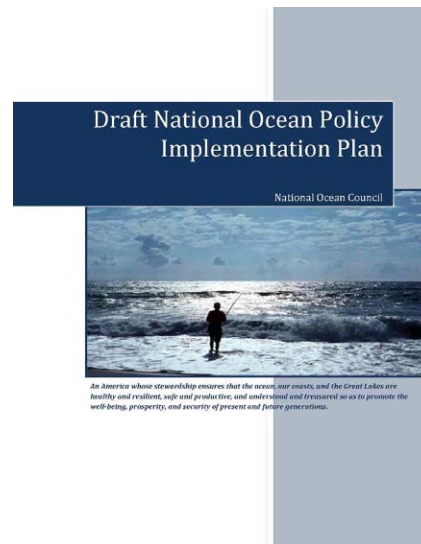
We rely on the ocean and our coastal waters for food, jobs, recreation, commerce and more. But we need to manage them thoughtfully if we want to ensure these precious resources will continue to be healthy and productive for future generations.

The National Ocean Council prepared a [draft Implementation Plan](#) that lays out the first steps to achieve this vision and to address the most pressing challenges facing the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes.

This draft Implementation Plan is guided by four themes:

1. Adopt ecosystem-based management.
2. Obtain, use, and share the best science and data.
3. Promote efficiency and collaboration.
4. Strengthen regional efforts.

To read the draft Implementation Plan, see the full range of proposed actions, and submit comments, please visit [www.whitehouse.gov/oceans](http://www.whitehouse.gov/oceans). The draft Implementation Plan will be **available for public comments through February 27, 2012**.



## UPCOMING EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

For more events, check out our [calendar](#). To post your Estuary-related event in our calendar, [please send us the details](#)!

### SAVE THE DATES:

**January 28: A Kayaker's Journey Along the Hudson: stories and book signing with Susan Fox Rogers.**

**January 28:** [Lower East Side Ecology Center E-Waste/Recycling events](#).

**January 28 & 29** (Croton Point Park) **and February 4 & 12** (Georges Island Park, NY): [Bald Eagle Viewing Programs](#): Hudson River Foundation's Christopher Letts.

**February 7: A forum to discuss green infrastructure:** (Environmental Protection Agency, held at the NY Water Environment Association's 84th Annual Meeting [Click here for more details and to RSVP](#)).

**February 9 & 10: iMapInvasives Training (NYC): Invasive species tracking for volunteers and professionals** - support efforts to protect NY State from invasive species [click here for full details](#)

**March 10: Annual NJ Land Conservation Rally.** [More details...](#)

**March 12-15: Ecosystem Modeling Workshop**- Barnegat Bay Partnership and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (Ocean Co. College, Toms River, New Jersey). [For more details...](#)

**May 18-19: MWA 2012 Waterfront Conference - Our Harbor: An Environmental Engine and Economic Resource** ([Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance](#), NYC) [More details...](#)

**June 14: Fourth Annual Raritan River Conference: Raritan River Restoration: Our Communities, Our Land, Our Water, Our Future** (Duke Farms, Hillsborough, NJ). For more information or to inquire about giving a presentation, contact [Judy Shaw](#).

#### **FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:**

**NYC Green Infrastructure Grant Program:** up to \$4 million for green infrastructure projects on private property and in sidewalks in combined sewered areas of NYC. *Deadline: February 15, 2012.* [For more information...](#)

**Five Star Restoration Grant Program:** community-based wetland, riparian, and coastal habitat restoration projects that build diverse partnerships and foster local natural resource stewardship. *Deadline: February 15.* [For more details...](#)

**2012 Catalyst Grant - Soundview Park:** for organizing activities for the Soundview Park Festival (Saturday, July 14th 2012; rain date: Saturday, July 21st 2012). Awards: \$250-1,000. *Deadline: February 24.* Grant Orientation Meeting: **February 9**, Soundview Park. [View full details.](#)

The **N. G. Kaul Memorial Scholarship Fund** - \$2500 in scholarships available to students pursuing graduate or doctoral degrees. *Deadline: February 28.* [For more information...](#)

**NAWCA U.S. Standard Grants:** \$40 million in awards ranging from \$75,001-1 million is available [for restoration or enhancement](#) benefiting wetlands-associated migratory birds. **Two deadlines: March 2 and July 27.** See [Grants.gov](#) funding announcement.

**2012 Tibor T. Polgar Fellowships.** The Hudson River Foundation - eight \$3,800-grants (and up to \$1,000 research budget) is available for summer fellowships. *Deadline: February 20.* [For more information...](#)

**2012 Graduate Fellowships.** The Hudson River Foundation - up to three full-time research fellowships are available for graduate students conducting research on the Hudson River

system (11-\$15,000/yr and a research budget not to exceed \$1,000). **Deadline: March 21.** [For more information...](#)

#### **EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES:**

**New York-New Jersey Trail Conference [Programs Coordinator](#).**

**NOAA [Liaison to the Long Island Sound Study](#).**

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITIES:**

**Westchester Creek Waterbody/Watershed Facility Plan Report (NYCDEP):** outlines finished work and future plans for improving water quality in Westchester Creek, including construction of weir modifications at relief structures CSO-29A and CSO-29 and a parallel sewer for Pugsley Creek. **Public Comment Period: January 19 - February 17.** [More details...](#)

**Flushing Creek Waterbody/Watershed Facility Plan Report (NYCDEP):** outlines completed work and future plans for improving water quality in Flushing Bay and Flushing Creek, including construction of a 43 million gallon CSO storage facility, installation of bending weirs at six locations in the Bowery Bay high-level interceptor, diversion of flow from the Bowery Bay high-level interceptor to the low-level interceptor, construction of a parallel Whitestone interceptor, and rehabilitation of the Flushing interceptor. **Public Comment Period: January 19 - February 17.** [Learn more...](#)

**2012 Draft CWA Section 303(d) List and NY's CALM:** The Draft New York State 2012 Section 303(d) List of Impaired/TMDL Waters is now available for public comment. **Deadline: close of business on March 2, 2012.** For more information, visit the [DEC 303\(d\) List webpage](#).

**New York City Wetlands Strategy Draft for Public Comment:** a framework for improving wetlands and natural areas in New York City. **Deadline for comments: February 18** at [planyc@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:planyc@cityhall.nyc.gov). [For more information...](#)

**2012 draft document Recreational Water Quality Criteria.** The document contains EPA's draft recommendations for protecting human health in ambient waters that are designated for primary contact recreation. **Deadline for comments: February 21.** For more information visit [www.epa.gov/ost/criteria/recreation](http://www.epa.gov/ost/criteria/recreation).

**Draft National Ocean Policy Implementation Plan.** As part of President Obama's National Policy for the Stewardship of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes, the National Ocean Council has released a draft National Ocean Policy Implementation Plan to address some of the most pressing challenges facing the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes. To read the draft, visit [www.whitehouse.gov/oceans](http://www.whitehouse.gov/oceans). **Deadline for public comments: February 27.**

#### **AWARDS:**

**Environmental Quality Awards:** Each April, EPA honors individuals and organizations who have contributed significantly to improving the environment during the prior year in New

Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.  
**Nominations for this award may be submitted by  
February 21, 2012. [For more information...](#)**

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