

Protecting  
our estuary,



Don Riepe

where our rivers  
meet the sea...

so that we all may live,  
work,  
swim, travel,  
fish, canoe,  
bird-watch, learn,  
enjoy, and preserve  
this wonderful  
treasure  
for generations to come.



## How can you get involved?

We can all benefit from a healthy harbor estuary. Reducing pollution and its resultant problems usually requires a combination of large-scale efforts such as addressing waste water treatment plants, combined sewer overflows, and simpler actions each of us can take, like cleaning after your pet, keeping streets litter-free, or avoiding use of unnecessary fertilizers and chemicals. For more information about specific issues, events, or to check out our newsletter and other publications, visit us at



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**www.harborestuary.org**. If you want to be directly involved in hands-on volunteer activities, search for stewardship organizations and opportunities near you at **www.oasisnyc.net**. And, voice your support for restoration and other efforts to improve habitat, water quality, and public access throughout the harbor. Our plan for restoration and improvement of habitat quality in the estuary is very ambitious and everyone's support is needed!

Cover photos : Don Riepe and USEPA



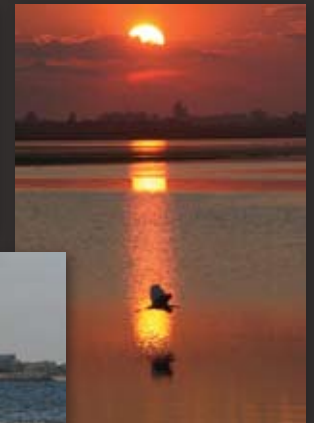
US Army Corps of Engineers



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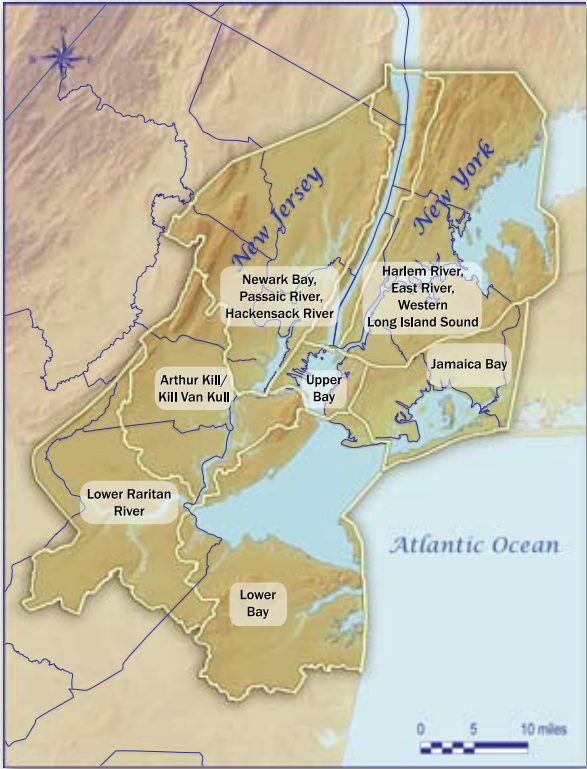


New York-New Jersey  
Harbor Estuary Program



# What is the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary?

Estuaries, where ocean water meets fresh river water, are rich, productive and diverse ecosystems where many types of plants and animals live. People are drawn to them because of their beauty, resources, and because they are ideal locations for ports. It's no coincidence that Native Americans and early colonists chose estuaries for their settlements, and that these places became some of our oldest and most populated cities. The NY-NJ Harbor Estuary is home to one of the most vibrant and economically important metropolitan areas in the country and the world. We enjoy many benefits from the estuary that bolster our quality of life and economy, such as fishing, boating, swimming, transportation.



Geographic scope of the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary Program

Increasing populations and the Industrial Age have severely affected the estuary. Significant legislative actions such as the Clean Water Act have done much to bring the harbor back from the brink, but many ongoing problems and legacies have yet to be addressed. The New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program (HEP) was established in 1988 under the Clean Water Act, to restore the resources we all share and depend on within the estuary. HEP is a partnership program including many government, non-government, and non-profit partners. Our mission is to implement our management plan for the estuary.



# Working for a healthy estuary

**Protecting clean water:** HEP is working to make our waterways clean and safe, so families can enjoy swimming and fishing, wildlife and plants can have a healthy habitat, and vessels can safely travel our waters. Reducing pollution from point and non-point sources will be a major challenge.

**Stewardship and education:** the estuary offers countless opportunities for learning and enjoying outdoor activities. HEP supports efforts that encourage residents young and old to experience the waterfront.



Urban Assembly NY Harbor School

**Managing sediment:** sediment is an essential and dynamic part of the estuary, directly affecting ecosystem health and the regional economy. Contaminated sediments mean increased dredging costs and the restriction of fisheries. HEP has prepared a Regional Sediment Management Plan to ensure that sediments support a healthy ecosystem and regional economy.

**Public access:** HEP supports opportunities for residents to visit and interact with the water and wildlife, through projects such as the construction of small boat access, development of a water trail map, and events such as the NY-NJ Baykeeper Ecocruises.

**Habitat protection & restoration:** In a partnership led by the NY-NJ Port Authority and the US Army Corps of Engineers, HEP plans to improve habitat in the entire estuary, benefitting all of its human, plant, and animal residents. Some of this work has already begun, through projects such as the installation of experimental oyster reefs and restoring wetlands.



# What does a healthy ecosystem mean to you?

**A working harbor:** shipping, marine transportation and maritime businesses provide hundreds of thousands of jobs for New York and New Jersey communities. Our goal is to maintain a working harbor that is both ecologically and economically healthy.

**Vibrant public spaces & education:** Restored and protected areas can be used as much needed public spaces for family activities, social interaction, playing sports, connecting with nature, and learning about our estuary. These places help build healthier, stronger and more vibrant communities benefitting our families and businesses for generations to come.



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**Clean & safe waterways, healthy & productive habitats:** Improving water quality in the harbor not only benefits the health of ecosystems but also creates more opportunities for outdoor recreation activities such as kayaking and boating, bird watching, swimming, and fishing.



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