LONG ISLAND SOUND STUDY

A Partnership To Restore and Protect The Sound

Spring/Summer 1999

UPDATE

In This Issue

DID YOU KNOW?

1998 LIS Shellfish Landings (bushels)

State	Hard Clams	Oysters
CT	128,544	179,562
NY	92,778	30,613

Value of 1998 LIS Shellfish Landings

State	Hard Clams	Oysters
CT	$5,105,760	$8,978,090
NY	$8,434,128	$1,319,903

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Support for the environmental movement is often boiled down to a desire for clean water and clean air. Certainly when we think of the water we drink and the air we breathe, cleanliness and purity are paramount. What we really want *are healthy* coastal waters and estuaries – for the fish and shellfish we like to catch or eat, and for the wildlife that we want to see. (I'm reminded by this mid-ninety degree day that we also want waters that are healthy for our families to cool off in during a day at the beach.) We want healthy *populations* of living resources in Long Island Sound. The Sound will never have the sparkling clarity of the Carribean, nor should it, but it should teem with life, providing abundant recreational and commercial opportunities.

What factors are involved? Consider the abundance of fish. Healthy waters *and* diverse habitats are needed to provide spawning, nursery, and feeding areas (That's why so much effort is being made to protect and restore habitat in addition to controlling pollution). *Overfishing* can still deplete populations of fish from the healthiest waters. To complicate matters further, naturally occurring diseases also can affect the health of living resources. A single-celled parasite, called MSX, has decimated the oyster harvest in Chesapeake Bay and Delaware Bays, and has affected Long Island Sound, to a lesser extent, in recent years.

So how healthy are the waters of Long Island Sound for living resources? How healthy are the populations of living resources in the Sound? This issue of the ***UPDATE*** will try to shed some light on these questions.

There are some positive signs. Striped bass, summer flounder, and weakfish are at twenty-year highs. Seals and cormorants are found in increasing numbers (These voracious predators are not welcomed by all; the juvenile summer flounder I saw a cormorant ease down its long neck like a dessert plate is one less fish for recreational fishers). The Sound supports valuable commercial fisheries for lobsters and oysters.

But there are concerns. Winter flounder, tautog, and scup are less abundant than in the 1980s. Some popular recreational fisheries have disappeared. After a die-off last fall, lobster catch rates are down in some areas of the Sound this summer. The cause of declines are not always understood. Nature is complex and natural cycles in weather and water circulation can affect population levels from year to year or decade to decade.

Ultimately, the health of Long Island Sound depends on how well we control pollution, protect habitats, and manage fisheries–and how well we relate each effort to each other. It's not enough for fishery biologists to manage fisheries, engineers to design water treatment facilities, or the assorted other practitioners to perform their craft, no matter how well, in isolation from each other. The efforts of each must be linked because the effects of each are linked.

Mark Tedesco

Rosemary Pastor Joins the LISS Staff

On August 23, 1999, Rosemary Pastor joined the Stamford LIS Office. Pastor previously worked for the Norwalk Aquarium as the Assistant Curator of Education, and was Manager of Education at the CT Regional Water Authority where she developed the Whitney Water Center. As the LISS Communications Coordinator, Pastor will develop and disseminate education and outreach materials as well as coordinate media related activities.

CAC CORNER

Already it has been an active year for the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC). Progress continues to be made in both states in implementing the nitrogen reduction strategy for this magnificent water body, while public meetings and discussions have been held on the proposed management and disposal options for the dredged harbor sediments of the Sound. The CAC has expanded its outreach activities and urged for more funds to be allocated for biological research on the Sound's critters. The more we know how the Sound ecosystem is doing, the better stewards we all can be.

One of the most exciting new policy areas of the CAC is the endorsement of a Long Island Sound Reserve concept. This proposal was originally outlined in the *Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan* (CCMP) in the Living Marine Resource section. A Long Island Sound Reserve calls for linking existing protected areas with new ones in a *system* that protects critical habitats and provides public access. These beautiful natural areas are the jewels of Long Island Sound with its shoreline serving as a necklace connecting them. While certain areas are part of the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Stuart McKinney Wildlife Refuge system or already part of a state park system, many areas remain unprotected. The establishment of a Long Island Sound Reserve system can link these critical habitats and provide funds to protect them for all future generations.

No actions have been taken to establish a Long Island Sound Reserve system since it was first recommended in the 1994 CCMP. The CAC has requested that the Long Island Sound Study and the states put a greater emphasis on this CCMP recommendation. There are public funds currently available to preserve these natural areas including open space accounts in the states of Connecticut and New York as well as the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, which is dedicated to open space and is being re-authorized in Congress. All of these programs could fund a Long Island Sound Reserve effort if a regional game plan was put together.

The CAC will stay vigilant on this issue and plans to meet with the US EPA and the states to put in place an action plan. We need your help with letting your elected officials and state agencies know you support a Long Island Sound Reserve program. A string of protected marshlands, shorelines and public access points around the Sound would be a wonderful gift to our future generations. Let's work together to make that vision a reality.

David J. Miller is New York's co-chair of the Citizen Advisory Committee and executive director of the National Audubon Society of New York State.

June CAC Meeting

The June CAC meeting concluded with a tour of the Norwalk Wastewater Treatment Plant. Fred Treffeisen guided CAC members and agency staff, donned with hard hats, through the $40 million construction project to upgrade the facility to meet anticipated water pollution control needs into 2020. This is the first full-scale biological nutrient removal plant approved in Connecticut that will be able to treat 20 million gallons per day.

Save the Date

The next CAC meeting is September 9, 1999, in New Rochelle at the Five Islands Park Pavilion, for more information contact Joe Salata at (203) 977-1541. The winter meeting will be December 9, 1999, in Connecticut.

LIS Marine Fisheries Management in the 1990s

"Fishing stinks!"

"There's no fish around!"

"I'm going to be put out of business! I'll lose my boat and my house"

These statements and others like them became a common theme in the late 1980s and early 1990s as marine fish stocks plummeted. Of the principal species supporting the recreational and commercial fisheries of Long Island Sound, all were considered overfished. These included lobster, bluefish, striped bass, winter flounder, fluke, scup, tautog and weakfish. They comprise 95% of the species sought by anglers and commercially licensed seafood producers in Connecticut (excluding aquacultured oysters and hard clams, managed by the Department of Agriculture's Aquaculture Bureau).

At the end of the decade, it seems timely to evaluate where we are and what we've done to restore marine fishery populations to sustainable and productive levels of abundance.

All of the species listed above are now managed under the auspices of fishery management plans developed by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). The Fisheries Division of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's Bureau of Natural Resources, through its Marine Fisheries Office, is a member of the Commission and an active participant on technical committees and management boards. Involvement in these organizations is critical since, without exception, the species are migratory and exploitation in fisheries far from the Sound can have a great impact on fishing opportunities here. Consequently, coordinating plans through regional bodies is essential.

So, what is the status of our marine fisheries? In 1995, the striped bass was declared "officially recovered" and no longer considered overfished. Striped bass have become plentiful and provide a range of fishing opportunities for anglers.

Lobsters have been extremely abundant in the 1990s, providing for a productive commercial fishery for about

continued on page 7

Long Island Sound Fishery Resources

Since 1984 the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection has conducted the Long Island Sound Trawl Survey (LISTS) to monitor trends in abundance of popular recreational and commercial species. To date, the survey has documented 89 species and provides annual indices of abundance for 40 of the most common species. Using the *R/V John Dempsey*, 40 sites are sampled in April, May, June, September, and October providing a sampling intensity of one site per 20 square nautical miles per month.

Populations of finfish and invertebrates, such as lobster, vary in abundance due to a number of factors. Chief among these are recruitment (the number of young produced per year) and mortality due to fishing. In some species, recruitment has been suppressed because fishing mortality has reduced spawning biomass below some threshold level. In all cases natural variability in weather, water temperature, and currents plays an important role in determining how many eggs, larvae, and juveniles survive the critical first year of life.

Over the 15 year LISTS, the abundance of a number of species, including tautog, scup, winter flounder, summer flounder, and weakfish have declined. Two other economically important species, striped bass and lobster, were at lower abundance in the mid 1980s and have been increasing. The common thread among these seven species is that all are highly valued by sport and/or commercial fishers, and therefore have all been exposed to heavy exploitation throughout their range at some time.

Frustrated by low abundance and poor harvest rates for many of these species, managers and fishers initiated stock rebuilding programs that have led to a resurgence in recent years in the abundance of many of these species in the Sound and elsewhere along the coast. Striped bass were the first species to be targeted for rebuilding, beginning in 1984. Restrictive harvest limits and larger minimum size restrictions over the next 15 years allowed the stock to grow to unprecedented levels. LISTS indices of abundance began to rise in 1990 and have continued to rise every year since. Angler catches mirror this recovery and in 1996 Connecticut anglers alone caught more than 1 million stripers in the Sound, releasing more than 90% in response to both regulations governing the size and number of fish that may be kept, and to a changing angler ethic that placed a higher value on catch and release fishing.

The successful striped bass recovery effort inspired more vigorous management efforts to rebuild other fish stocks. Those efforts have begun to pay off, most notably for summer flounder and weakfish. LISTS indices of abundance are at or near record highs since 1996 for both species in response to management measures implemented just a few years before. Biomass indices have increased even faster because the average fish size has increased in response to lower fishing rates. Recreational catches of these two species since 1996 are among the highest in nearly two decades. Together these three species, striped bass, summer flounder and weakfish, have provided recreational fishers in the Sound with the best fishing in years.

American lobster, the mainstay of commercial fishing in the Sound has also increased dramatically in abundance. Over the past decade, juvenile abundance in the LISTS has gradually tripled. As mentioned above, improved recruitment is related to higher survival rates, especially during the first year of life, but the mechanism behind increased survival is unknown. From whatever cause, increased abundance of small lobsters has translated into record harvests by the Sound's commercial lobstermen. Landings have climbed steadily during the 1980s and 1990s topping 3 million pounds in 1997 and 1998 by Connecticut residents alone, compared to just over 1 million pounds 15 years ago. Tempering the good news of increased landings however, are reports of greatly reduced catch rates in some areas of the Sound during the first half of 1999. These reports follow an unusual die-off of unknown magnitude that occurred in the fall of 1998. It is also unknown at this time whether the two events are related, or if poor catch rates in limited areas of the Sound reported recently will affect annual landings.

The combination of environmental conditions leading to improved recruitment for some species and fishery management measures to limit exploitation and rebuild stock biomass in others have helped "turn the corner" in terms of Long Island Sound fishery productivity. There still remains a great deal of work to be done. Winter flounder stocks have shown modest improvement in the last three years, but stocks remain far below the long term average. Tautog have yet to respond substantially to more stringent management measures implemented in 1997. And scup, which produced annual catches in Connecticut alone as high as 7 million fish in the mid-1980s, yielded a catch of just 200,000 fish in 1997. However, with the same commitment to the restoration of these stocks that was shown in the management of striped bass, summer flounder and weakfish, it will not be long before currently depressed stocks have turned their own corner on the road to recovery.

David Simpson is Supervising Fishery Biologist for the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection.

Lobster Diseases

There are two principal diseases, Gaffkemia and shell disease, that affect lobsters in Long Island Sound. Gaffkemia is caused by a bacterium and shell disease has multiple causes. While, these diseases have affected lobsters in LIS for a number of years, it is not known what impact they have on the population levels.

Gaffkemia, generally called "red tail,"is usually seen during the summer and fall months. It is caused by a microorganism that replaces blood cells and causes the lobster to "waste away" by preventing it from receiving nutrition. For a lobster to become infected with Gaffkemia, it is necessary for there to be a break in the lobster's "skin". Lobsters kept in crowded holding facilities are more likely to suffer breaks in skin, making them more susceptible to the disease than those in the wild.

Shell disease is an erosion of a lobster's (or shrimp or crabs) external skeleton. Bacteria or fungi are usually blamed for this condition. It is rarely fatal, but can look ugly. When these animals shed their shell to grow, they also shed the shell disease symptoms. While both diseases may affect the health of lobster populations, there are no known human health concerns.

Rick D'Amico is the LISS Coordinator for New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Fish Kills

Periodically, in summer months, menhaden (bunker) kills occur in western Long Island Sound, particularly in bays and harbors. Observations of these fish kills indicate that the lack of oxygen was the immediate cause of death.

Menhaden kills are often triggered by bluefish predation. Bluefish herd menhaden into shallow water to feed on them. The menhaden panic, which causes them to consume large quantities of dissolved oxygen. The problem is made worse when the initial dissolved oxygen in the waterways is low, which frequently happens during the summer months. When dissolved oxygen levels are initially low, fish kills will occur in less time and more frequently than they would under normal conditions.

Beginning in late August 1998, a persistent series of fish kills occurred throughout the western portion of Long Island Sound. Bluefish predation and low dissolved oxygen are generally the cause of menhaden kills.

While affects on human health from dead fish are unlikely, as a precaution it is recommended that you do not touch or swim in waters with dead fish. Instead report observed fish kills, to the NY State Department of Environmental Conservation at (516) 444-0435 and/or the CT Department of Environmental Protection Marine Fisheries Headquarters at (860) 434- 6043. When reporting a fish kill, information such as date, time, location, species, approximate numbers of fish, and observations in behavior (if the fish are alive, but dying) is very useful.

Rick D'Amico is the LISS Coordinator for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

A Recreational Fisherman's Viewpoint on Fisheries

I like fish and have kept myself involved in the environmental issues of fish, fishing, and fisheries in the northeast for more than 35 years. I am an active sports fisherman and have written scores of articles for major outdoor magazines about the once thriving sport fishing in western Long Island Sound, which sadly now is only a shadow of its once beautiful glory. Sure we have striped bass, which were regulated back from depletion, but bluefish stocks are declining. Fluke are here only because commercial fisheries have been curbed, particularly in southern states; they once took their entire yearly quota in just ten days. But the puzzle to me is where are the once prevalent minor species, menhaden, tomcod, smelt, alewives, blowfish, winter flounder, bergals, and mackerel?

The LISS came into being in the late 80s, driven by the rising interest of troubled estuaries and massive menhaden die-offs. The LISS concentrated on nitrogen reduction as its primary goal. Perhaps in concentrating on water chemistry, not enough attention was given to the broader questions on the health of living marine resources. Fisheries science is almost an art. Trying to count numbers of fish underwater, which are constantly moving, changing, and eating and being eaten is based on long sampling regimes and statistical analysis. While CT DEP samples most of LIS very little monitoring is done in the far western Sound or the Narrows. This part of the Sound itself is a unique ecosystem that really doesn't flush - tidal cycles slop themselves back and forth about six miles and a counter clockwise gyre further contains this water mass.

Since critter bioindicators are being ignored, perhaps a more valid picture of a declining fishery is economic indicators. National resource managers often tout the multiple effect that thriving natural resources have on the surrounding economy in the form of jobs, tourism, and facilities. The reverse is also true, in that the Sound's declining fishery gets reflected in shore-based businesses related to fishing. A recent study by the American Sports Fishing Association shows that in Connecticut, as fresh water fishing continues to increase, the salt water economy has decreased. Once thriving fishing boat rental companies are almost nonexistent.

Federal and state fisheries agencies don't seem to show much interest. The Feds, busy with the offshore fisheries debacle, hardly glance inshore. Connecticut and New York fishery groups, concentrate their efforts on inland fisheries that are funded by fishing license fees.

The sad truth is that not enough living marine resource science has been done in the western Sound. So I am using basic bio-indicators to try and puzzle out the declining fisheries question. Blue mussels, once ubiquitous on the shore and every piling now are spotty and scarce. Caging mussels in areas where they are and aren't, then inspecting the plankton they feed on will give us a first undercut on planktonic species and abundance. The lack of the once common bergals is another teaser, no one over fishes bergals, so where are they? My network of fishers say they are ending up in the stomachs of many predator fish because normal baitfish populations have declined so dramatically. Mackerel, which used to invade the Sound every May, stopped coming 15 years ago, yet the offshore biomass is as high as it's ever been.

Under the threat of lawsuits by large environmental organizations, many fishing managers are rethinking their recovery strategies. Perhaps we too should be remembering the basic requirements of carbon, nitrogen, and phosphorous that create the cornerstone of most *ecosystem* approaches. Aquatic ecosystem survival and fisheries management are only successful when scientists, managers, and regulators talk to each other and trust each other. We have a long way to go on western Long Island Sound.

Art Glowka is Chairman Emeritus, of Save The Sound and founding director of the Hudson River Fisherman's Association and the Hudson River Foundation. He sits on the Responsible Fishing Committee of the New England Fisheries Management Council and is Chairman of Stamford's Shellfish Commission.

Long Island Sound Shellfishery

Long Island Sound produces some of the finest shellfish in the country. Connecticut has become a national leader in the oyster farming industry, with annual harvests valued at more than $50,000,000. Over 60,000 acres of shellfish grounds are cultivated in our state's coastal waters by the aquaculture industry. Although oysters are the dominant commercial shellfish resource in Connecticut, commercial and recreational shellfishers also harvest hard clams (or quahogs), soft-shell clams (or steamers), bay scallops, blue mussels and razor clams. While the 1890s might be considered the heyday for the oyster industry when more than 2000 Connecticut residents were employed by 600 shellfishing companies, there has been a steady resurgence of the industry since the 1970s. Today, approximately 400 people are employed in oyster harvesting in Connecticut using a fleet of 71 vessels.

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Aquaculture (BA) works on developing the aquaculture industry through technology transfer, by overseeing legislation and regulating aquaculture, and by promoting and marketing increased use of aquacultured products. The BA is also responsible for licensing all shellfish industry operations, the testing of shellfish and water quality, providing diagnostic services to determine shellfish health and leasing of shellfish grounds for commercial aquaculture. These efforts, combined with improved water quality since the 1970s, have dramatically enhanced shellfisheries as a resource in the last 20 years. In recent months, the BA has been working with the University of Connecticut and public officials to acquire the former UCONN marine research laboratory located on the shoreline in the historic Noank village district of Groton. The BA, in cooperation with UCONN, the Town of Groton, and local shellfish culturists will focus on the production of oyster seed that are disease resistant. Also, the Connecticut Seafood Council, established in 1997, has embarked on a broad-based marketing campaign, "Connecticut Seafood - As Fresh as it Gets." These government and local partnerships are all essential to growth of the shellfish industry and health of the resource.

Despite the success of the aquaculture industry over the past two decades, there are still threats from man and nature alike. During the last two years, massive oyster mortalities have occurred along Connecticut's shoreline. These mortalities were caused by a single-celled parasite called MSX, (*Haplosporidium nelsoni)*. In other MSX infected areas, such as the Delaware and Chesapeake Bays, disease outbreaks have permanently decimated oyster production. According to Dr. Inke Sunila, shellfish pathologist at the BA, "Even if oyster mortalities in Connecticut waters appear drastic at the present time, it will be a benefit in the long run. Because most of the susceptible oysters were exposed to the disease and died, they will not be able to spawn susceptible seed and keep on feeding the disease." When high MSX mortalities occur, many of the surviving oysters are disease resistant. MSX reportedly visited the Sound in 1985, with drastic declines in oyster production, but by 1992 production had risen to a record high. Dr. Sunila reports that presently, disease prevalence is generally low and seems to be ending.

Recreational shellfishers should exercise common sense and caution before setting out to collect some of these bivalves for their next meal. Be aware that shellfishing is allowed only in certain waters designated as "approved" or "conditionally approved" for taking shellfish for direct consumption. Some shellfish areas are located in waters classified as "prohibited" or "restricted" due to the proximity of the areas to sewage treatment facilities or potential sources of pathogens. These designations can change at any time due to changes in local water conditions. Check with your local health department or town shellfish commission to make sure the waters you want to shellfish in are approved for harvest. Remember that a local license or permit is usually required to take shellfish for personal consumption. Be safe, be legal - call before you harvest!

John Volk is the Bureau Director of Aquaculture in the CT Dept. of Agriculture.

Seals in the Sound

Since the late 1980s, a growing number of seals have been "wintering" on the Connecticut shores of the Western Sound. These seasonal guests migrate down each fall from Maine and Canada, then head back north for the pupping season in late March.

Most of the seals are harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina*). Smaller numbers of gray seals (*Halichoerus grypus*), harp seals (*Phoca groenlandica*) and even hooded seals (*Cystophora cristata*) are present.

Harbor seals range throughout the northern Atlantic and Pacific oceans. There are no definite answers as to why more and more seals are appearing in the Sound each winter, but suggestions include:

- Health of the Sound has improved to the point that it sustains larger fish stocks. Seals wouldn't stay if there was no food.
- Growth of the seal population since the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 made approaching, harming and harassing seals a federal offense. The population has grown to the point that some seals are settling in less-crowded areas.
- Decline of fish stocks off northern New England and Canada has forced seals to come south where food supplies are better.

In an effort to help answer questions about these newest visitors to the Sound, the Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk began a Harbor Seal Census for seal populations in the western Sound. Using data collected from aerial surveys and the research vessel, *Oceanic*, scientists at the Aquarium and Southampton College hope to better understand the migration habits of seals in this area. Students and teachers can participate in the study, learning basic research techniques, such as population sampling, surveying, navigation, photo identification, and data analysis. For more information, contact the Maritime Aquarium at (203) 852-0700 ext. 245.

Kim Raccio is the Educational Resource Manager at the Maritime Aquarium in Norwalk.

Contacts

Clip -n- Save

Long Island Sound

LISS Offices

EPA LIS Office
Stamford Government Center
888 Washington Blvd
Stamford, CT 06904-2152
(203) 977-1541

EPA LIS Office
Marine Science Research Center
SUNY
Stony Brook, NY 11794-5000
(516) 632-9216

LISS Public Outreach

New York Sea Grant
146 Suffolk Hall
SUNY
Stony Brook, NY 11794-5002
(516) 632-9216

CT Dept of Environmental Protection Water Management Planning & Standards Division
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106-5127
(860) 424-3020

National Estuary Program

US EPA
Office of Water
401 M Street (4504S)
Washington, DC 20460
(202) 260-6502

US Fish & Wildlife Service

Southern New England NY Bight Coastal Ecosystems
Shoreline Plaza Route 1A
PO Box 307
Charlestown, RI 02813
(401) 364-9124

Long Island Field Office
PO Box 608
500 St. Marks Lane
Islip, NY 11751-0608
(516) 581-2941

National Marine Fisheries Service

212 Rogers Ave
Milford, CT 06460
(203) 579-7000

Connecticut

Dept of Environmental Protection (DEP)
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106-5127
(860) 424-3000
LIS Programs
(860) 424-3034

Coast Guard:
Customer Info
(800) 368-5647
New Haven
(203) 468-4400
New London
(860) 442-4471

Dept Agriculture Shellfish
(203) 874-0696

Department of Health:
Septic Systems
(860) 509-7296
Shellfish Quality
(860) 509-7750

CT Rivers Alliance
(860) 693-1602

Cooperative Extension:
Fairfield
(203) 797-4176
Hartford
(860) 570-9010
Litchfield
(860) 626-6240
Middlesex
(860) 345-4511
New Haven
(203) 789-7865
New London
(860) 887-1608
Tolland
(860) 875-3331
Windham
(860) 774-9600

Clean Sound, Inc.
(203) 929-6195

Fund for the Environment
(203) 787-0646

Hazardous Spills/Oil & Chemical (24 hour)
(860) 424-3338

Hazardous Waste/ Enforcement/Complaints
(860) 424-3023

Hazardous Waste Collection/Schedules
(860) 424-3242

LIS Keeper
(203) 854-5330

LIS Resource Center
(860) 445-3473

LIS Watershed Alliance
(203) 327-9786

Mystic Aquarium
(860) 572-5955

National Audubon Society
(860) 526-4686

National Response Center (dumping/spills)
(800) 424-8802

Norwalk Aquarium
(203) 852-0700

Project Oceanology
(860) 445-9007

Save the Sound, Inc.
(203) 327-9786

Sea Grant
(860) 405-9128

Solid Waste Recycling
(860) 424-3365

Sound Waters, Inc.
(203) 323-1978

Turn in Poachers/ Report Violations
(860) 842-HELP

New York

Dept of Environmental Conservation (DEC):
DEC Region I
Building 40
SUNY
Stony Brook, NY 11794
(516) 444-0373

DEC Region II
Hunter's Point Plaza
47-40 21st Street
LI City, NY 11101-5407
(718) 482-4900

DEC Region III
21 S Putt Corners Road
New Paltz, NY 12561
(914) 256-3000

DEC Debris Line
(718) 482-4955

DEC Marine Resources
(516) 444-0430

DEC Marine Fishing Laws and Regulations
800)REGSDEC

DEC Spill Hotline
(800) 457-7362
out of State
(518) 457-7362

DEC Law Enforcement
(800) TIPPDEC

Department of Health
(800) 458-1158

Dept of State Coastal Management Program
41 State Street
Albany, NY 12231
(518) 474-6000

Action for the Preservation of the North Shore
(212) 206-1106

Coast Guard
(516) 261-6959

Cooperative Extension:
Westchester
(914) 285-4620
Nassau
(516) 454-0900
Suffolk
(516) 727-7850

Federated Conservationists of Westchester
(914) 592-0262

National Response Center (dumping/spills)
(800) 424-8802

National Audubon Society
(518) 869-9731

Save the Sound, Inc.
(516) 759-2165

Sea Grant
(516) 632-6905

Sound Watch
(212) 885-2566

continued from page 2

500 Connecticut lobstermen and an enjoyable experience for "personal use" license holders.

Summer flounder ("fluke") and winter flounder are another story. Both were severely overfished in the 1980s. Regionally, both have been recovering due to restrictive management measures implemented by the states and the two regional fishery councils for federal water fisheries, but the results have not yet been felt in the Sound for different reasons.

Scup and tautog are both managed by ASMFC fishery management plans. The scup plan is a joint effort of the Commission and the Mid-Atlantic Council, both management systems have only been in place a few years. Neither has produced signs of recovery at this time.

The bluefish fishery is the last of the eight species comprising Connecticut's principal fisheries in the Sound. Bluefish have been managed by a Commission and Mid-Atlantic Council plan since the 1980s. At various times it has been considered overfished, fully exploited, or recovering. Bluefish tend to be one of the more highly migratory of Connecticut's principal fishery resources. Availability of prey in the Sound, exploitation elsewhere, and oceanography all probably have a substantial effect on the abundance and distribution of bluefish and their availability in Long Island Sound. They are managed by a coastwide commercial quota and recreational creel limit. In short and within these rules, when they are here in the Sound, it's "good fishing!"

So, there's where we are. Where should we be?

We hope to restore all depressed fish stocks to levels that produce enjoyable and productive recreational fishing opportunities and productive and rewarding commercial fishing opportunities. Anglers who fish for their own table or for the recreational experience and seafood producers who land fishery resources for the non-fishing consumer both have their place in the properly-managed sustainable fisheries of the future. We've come a long way since 1990, but there is *still* more work to be done!

Eric Smith is Assistant Director of Marine Fisheries for the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection.

Web Sites of Interest

CT Anglers Guide -
www.dep.state.ct.us/burnatr/fishing/angler.htm

CT Department of Agriculture -
www.state.ct.us/doag/business/aquac/recshell.htm
www.state.ct.us/doag/permits/agpermits.htm

National Marine Fisheries -
www.mi.nmfs.gov/index.html

New York State -
www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dfwmr/marine/index.htm

Dredging Update: EIS Gets Underway

The Winter 1999 issue of ***UPDATE*** focused on dredging in LIS and this summer major efforts got underway to address the issue. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is being developed and produced by the EPA Region I and II, and the US Army Corps of Engineers (ACE)New England and New York Districts, to assess the potential environmental impact of the designation of one or more disposal sites in the Sound for dredged material. This 3-year project will have milestones along the way where the EPA and the ACE will solicit public input. The first step was a series of Public Scoping meetings, held in Stony Brook, NY, Groton, CT and Stamford, CT during June. Summaries of the meetings will be completed in September.

The next step is developing the Draft Work plan that should be available for public review in September 1999. The Draft Work plan will include the framework for the EIS, specific issues, such as the alternatives to be considered in site designation, a description of the site screening process, and the site screening criteria to be used in site selection. It is expected that there will be two workshops in early October 1999 on these issues.

The LISS's CAC Sediment Focus Group is involved in this process. If you would like to be kept informed of the EIS progress, milestones or if you would like to review information and provide comments please contact: Ann Rodney, US EPA - New England Region, One Congress Street, Suite 1100, CWQ, Boston, MA 02114-2023, (617)918-1538, fax (617)918-1505, E-mail: rodney.ann@epa.gov

Director
Mark Tedesco

Program Specialist
Joe Salata

Connecticut Outreach Coordinator
Mark Parker

New York Outreach Coordinator
Kimberly Zimmer

Editors:
Karen Chytalo, NYS DEC
Mel Cote, EPA Region I
Rick D'Amico, NYS DEC
Mark Parker, CT DEP
Joe Salata, EPA LIS Office
Paul Stacey, CT DEP
Mark Tedesco, EPA LIS Office
Editor/Layout:
Kimberly Zimmer
ksz1@cornell.edu

The Long Island Sound Study ***UPDATE*** is published quarterly by the public outreach program to inform the public about issues pertaining to the study.

If you would like to be placed on the mailing list or make changes to your address please contact the NY LIS Office.

Printing of the Long Island Sound Study ***UPDATE*** is supported by EPA cooperative agreement #CE992680-01-1

The content of this document does not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Environmental Protection Agency, nor does mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation for use.

CONNECTICUT
EPA LIS OFFICE
STAMFORD GOVERNMENT CENTER
888 WASHINGTON BLVD
STAMFORD, CT 06904-2152
(203) 977-1541
FAX: (203) 977-1546

NEW YORK
EPA LIS OFFICE
MARINE SCIENCE RESEARCH CENTER
SUNY AT STONY BROOK
STONY BROOK NY 11794-5000
(516) 632-9216
FAX: (516) 632-8216

www.epa.gov/region01/eco/lis

Long Island Sound Study Supporting Agencies:
U.S. EPA CT DEP NYS DEC
www.epa.gov www.dec.state.ny.us
www.dep.state.ct.us.

News

New Web Site

The LISS World Wide Web site has a new look and new links to real-time data on LIS water quality, as well as regional data and information. The site at: www.epa.gov/region01/eco/lis has been redesigned in a user-friendly format, providing access to different pages in the site while retaining the major site indices at the top and left side of the page. The LISS has partnered with the New York/New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program (HEP) to develop a Regional Index and Data Depot of reports, studies, data sets, and information on both LIS and HEP. The Regional Index provides a search engine to find information by subject (toxics, sediments, etc). The Data Depot contains sets of data that may be of common interest to LIS and HEP.

The LISS site contains a new link to real-time water quality data through the University of Connecticut Department of Marine Sciences Web site at: www.mysound.uconn.edu The MySound site is funded by the EPA's EMPACT program (Environmental Monitoring for Public Access and Community Tracking). EMPACT funds have enabled UConn to place monitoring buoys off of Bridgeport and New London. The buoys provide real-time and time-series data on dissolved oxygen concentration and saturation, water temperature, salinity, and fluorescence and turbidity, depending on the site configuration.

The LISS will continue to add new features and improve the site based on feedback from users. Your comments and feedback are valued and encouraged and can be done "on-site". In addition the site has a new calendar feature for events and meetings of interest to the LIS community. To submit calendar items contact Joe Salata at (203)977-1541 or E-mail: salata.joseph@epa.gov

Corrections to the Winter Newsletter

On page 7 the definition for dredged material was incorrct, the correct definition is: **Dredged Material**-Material consisting of sediment, rock, or other industrialized materials that are excavated or dredged from coastal and ocean waters and displaced or removed to a disposal location. Dredged material refers to material which has been dredged from a water body, while the term sediment refers to material in a water body prior to the dredging process.

On page 8 under the dredged Sediment Web Sites the Army Corps of Engineers DAMOS site should be www.nae.usace.army.mil/environm/damos1.htm

Calendar of Events

September 9 LISS CAC Meeting see page two for more information.

September 14 System Wide Nutrient work group meeting in NYC call (203)977-1541 for more information.

September 18 International Beach Clean Up contact CT Sea Grant (860)405-9141 or American Littoral Society (718) 471-2166.

September 25 Nature Festival at The Nature Conservancy's Upland Farm Sanctuary in Cold Spring Harbor 12-5pm, call (516)367-3225 for more information.

October 2 National Estuaries Day. For more information check out the web site www.epa.gov/OWOW/estuaries/estday.htm

October 5 LISS Nonpoint Nitrogen Trends meeting in Stamford, CT call (203)977-1541 for more information.

October 21 LISS Management Committee Meeting Stamford, CT call (203)977-1541 for more information.

November 15 LISS Small Grant proposal deadline call (516)632-9216 for more information.

Program

LONG ISLAND SOUND STUDY

UPDATE

Long Island Sound Study
NY Sea Grant Extension Program
146 Suffolk Hall
SUNY
Stony Brook, NY 11794-5002

NONPROFIT
US POSTAGE PAID
UNIVERSITY AT
STONY BROOK