



C L E A R W A T E R

Navigator

S P R I N G 2 0 0 5

REVIVAL!
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H U D S O N R I V E R R E P O R T C A R D

REPORT CARD UPDATES

By ANDY MELE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

[Editors' note: A full article on submerged aquatic vegetation will appear in the next issue.]

SMELT DISAPPEARING FROM THE HUDSON

Ichthyologist Bob Schmidt reports, simply, that the once-common smelt (*Osmerus mordax*) is gone from the Hudson River: Period. For centuries the smelt were the Hudson's first spawners of spring, and were met by legions of scapnetters in tributaries large and small, afloat and on foot. Scientists don't have enough data on this species' virtual disappearance yet, but a principal suspected cause is global warming. The Hudson River has always been the southern extreme of the smelts' range, and the two- or three-degree rise in average Hudson River water temperature observed during recent years may have been just enough to make the river unsuitable smelt habitat.



Chris Bowser

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RESPONSE TO ACTION ALERTS LEADS TO VICTORY

Many thanks to Clearwater members who responded to a moment's notice to recent Environmental Action alerts. With your emails, letters and attendance at key meetings, we won two important victories:

- On February 10, the Ulster County Legislature passed a resolution 20-6 urging the Nuclear Regulatory Agency to REJECT the relicensing applications for Indian Point 2 and 3, which expire in 2013 and 2015 respectively.
- On February 15, the NY State Assembly Codes Committee passed the Bigger Better Bottle Bill out of committee. Now in the Ways and Means Committee, if passed, the BBBB will update New York's highly successful bottle law by expanding the 5-cent deposit to cover non-carbonated beverages, such as bottled water and iced tea. This would keep up to 2.6 billion bottles and cans each year from polluting our streams, parks and roadsides. The BBBB will also require that unclaimed bottle deposits go to the State Environmental Protection Fund, generating more than \$179 million a year to support recycling and other programs that protect New York's land and water. **Great work, folks!**

TO RECEIVE CLEARWATER ACTION ALERTS, please send your email to mannajo@clearwater.org or sign up at www.clearwater.org/join.html.

COASTAL SHAD FISHERY CLOSES

This season marks the first year of the closure of the intercept shad fishery along most of the East Coast. As we described in the *Navigator* May-June 2004 issue, the intercept fishery is believed to be a major component of the shad's unsustainable 70% mortality rate. Watch the river this spring, and keep your fingers crossed! We'll report any anecdotal findings from shad fishermen and researchers on our web site at www.clearwater.org/shad.html.

EAGLES ON THE TRACKS

One or more endangered bald eagles are killed each year by collisions with trains. Clearwater is in the early stages of a legal intervention intended to pressure NYSDEC to, in turn, pressure Amtrak, CSX, and Metro-North to remove track-kill carcasses periodically. The carcasses attract eagles to the tracks.

STOPPING NOBOB INVADERS

Clearwater is researching strategies for controlling ballast water discharges from visiting ships. Ballast water brought us the zebra mussel, which has irrevocably changed the river ecosystem, as well as the round goby and spiny water flea, both invasive species that are on their way through New York's canal system to the Hudson. Part of the problem involves getting the Coast Guard to enforce existing laws on ships arriving with cargo, claiming "no ballast on board" (hence NOBOB) status.