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Staten Island Students and Cub Scouts Take Part in Annual Eel Count at Richmond Creek Bluebelt



Continuing Expansion of Staten Island's Sewer System and the Inter-Connected Network of Bluebelts Have Improved Water Quality and Created Habitats for Eels and other Species

Photos of the Event are Available on DEP's Flickr Page

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) on Wednesday hosted students from the Saint Clare School and Cub Scouts from Pack 25 for the annual count of juvenile glass eels at Staten Island's Richmond Creek Bluebelt. The American eel is born at sea, floats to the coast on prevailing currents and migrates to clean, healthy waterways along the east coast where they can live for up to 20 years. Eel populations are an important indicator of water quality and experts have seen a resurgence in the eel population in New York City following the investment of more than \$10 billion over the last decade to improve harbor water quality. Thus far in 2016, more than 6,000 glass eels have been counted in Richmond Creek.

"Fostering in our children an appreciation for the waterways that flow throughout the city is a wonderful way for them to both learn about the complex ecosystem that sustains many different species and to instill a lasting sense of environmental stewardship," said **DEP Acting Commissioner Steven Lawitts**. "Our waterways our healthier than ever thanks to investments made in wastewater infrastructure, and this eel count serves as a wonderful opportunity for students to see firsthand how wildlife is thriving in New York City."

Each spring eels arrive in estuaries like the Hudson River as translucent, two-inch long "glass eels." As part of ongoing research, volunteers and students use a ten-foot cone-shaped net specifically designed to catch the eels and then count and release them back into the water. The 2016 eel monitoring program began in March and will continue until the end of the eels' migratory period. Staten Island is one of ten sites, ranging from New York City to Albany, where counts are taken as part of DEC's Hudson River Eel Project.

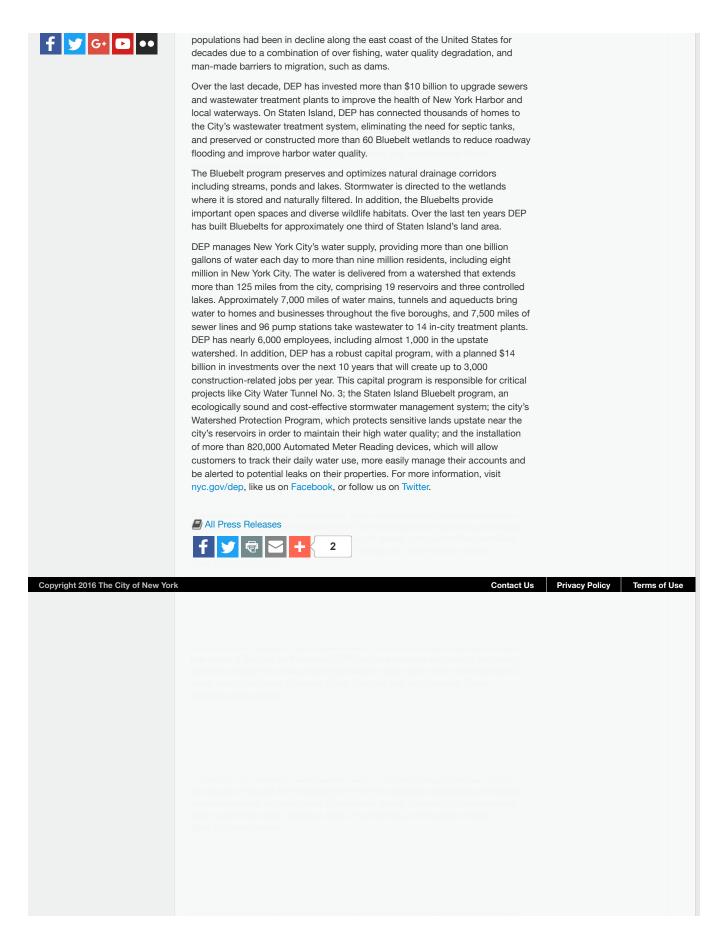
In 2015, about 4,800 glass eels were observed in Richmond Creek and nearly 50,000 were counted at the ten Hudson River Estuary monitoring sites. Eel

More Information

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