



in partnership with



Cornell University

Hudson River Estuary Program

Tools for Protecting Nature in Your Community

The NYSDEC Hudson River Estuary Program is partnering with communities to encourage biodiversity conservation at the local level to sustain the health and resiliency of the entire estuary watershed. By providing technical assistance, information, and training, the Estuary Program offers strategies for "smart planning" that support economic growth and quality of life, while keeping nature in mind. www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5094.html

Habitat conservation priorities of the Hudson River Estuary Program

- estuary shoreline
- stream corridors
- wetlands
- grasslands and shrublands
- unbroken forests
- caves and cliffs

Steps for conserving biodiversity

- identify resources (*What do you have?*)
- prioritize resources (*What's most important?*)
- plan, protect, manage (*How are you going to preserve it?*)

Local approach to conserving biodiversity

- use town or regional conservation plans to guide land-use decisions
- consider habitat conservation *early* in the planning process
- think "big picture" to prevent habitat fragmentation and maintain ecosystem services

Overview of Resources Offered by the Estuary Program and Partners

1) *Maps, Data, and Conservation Guidance*

Hudson River Estuary Wildlife and Habitat Conservation Framework

The Framework provides an overview of biodiversity resources in the Hudson River estuary corridor, describes key plant and animal habitats, includes a map and descriptions of Significant Biodiversity Areas in the region, and proposes various strategies for their conservation. Available at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5096.html> and on CD-ROM from the Hudson River Estuary Program.

Mapping Nature in Your Community: Important Areas Maps

Developed by the NY Natural Heritage Program in partnership with the Estuary Program, these maps include areas important to known populations of rare plants and animals, and to known significant ecosystems. The Important Areas GIS data are currently being distributed to county agencies and municipalities by the Estuary Program for use in open space planning, development of natural resource inventories and master plans, and other regional land use planning efforts.

Habitat Summaries

The Hudson River Estuary Program can provide your municipality with a map and summary of documented significant ecological communities, rare plants and animals, and other available data on biological resources in your town. Communities in Albany, Rensselaer, Columbia, and Greene counties can contact Karen Strong at klstrong@gw.dec.state.ny.us and in Ulster, Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, and Westchester, contact Laura Heady at lthead@gw.dec.state.ny.us.

Continued...Resources Offered by the Estuary Program and Partners

Conservation Guides

The NY Natural Heritage Program maintains online animal, plant, and community guides that include description, habitat, distribution, places to see, conservation issues, and other information on the rare species and natural communities they track in their database. See <http://guides.nynhp.org/>

Guidance for Management of Priority Birds

This Audubon New York web tool offers guidance on priority bird species of the Hudson Valley and species-specific management guidelines; habitat recommendations on grasslands, shrublands, and forests; a management decision-tree; and Important Bird Area (IBA) information. http://ny.audubon.org/BirdSci_HudsonRiverValleyConservation.html

Additional On-Line Data

NYS Breeding Bird Atlas: www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7312.html

NYS Amphibian & Reptile Atlas: www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7140.html

NYSDEC Environmental Resource Mapper: www.dec.ny.gov/animals/38801.html

New York Nature Explorer: A Gateway to Biodiversity Information: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/57844.html>

2) Training and Education

Planning for Nature in Your Community

The Hudson River Estuary Program offers a workshop for planning officials and community leaders on tools and procedures that support conservation of natural resources during the local planning process. www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5094.html

Biodiversity Assessment

Through a partnership with the Estuary Program, Hudsonia offers training on biodiversity assessment to land-use decisionmakers and planners. Participants learn how to use maps, air photos, and field investigation to identify and map important habitats and discuss strategies for conservation. See www.hudsonia.org for more information and additional resources.

The **Hudson River Estuary Program** also partners with **Cornell University** to provide GIS training and workshops on priority habitats to landowners and planners. Contact the Estuary Program for more details. www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5094.html

3) Publications

Conserving Natural Areas and Wildlife in Your Community

This handbook from the Hudson River Estuary Program offers conservation guidance and smart growth strategies to local governments in the Hudson River Valley. A limited number of paper copies are available, as well as digital copies on CD-ROM and on the NYSDEC website at www.dec.ny.gov/lands/50083.html.

See also **Hudson River Estuary Wildlife and Habitat Conservation Framework**, above.

Biodiversity Assessment Manual for the Hudson River Estuary Corridor

The Manual was written by Hudsonia and published by the NYSDEC in 2001, to fill the gap in biological information available to land-use planners. It offers guidance in identification, assessment, and protection of habitats, plants, and animals of conservation importance. See www.hudsonia.org.

Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS)

The CWCS was completed by the NYSDEC in September 2005 to address the wildlife species of greatest conservation need in NY. The plan includes information on species and habitats, biodiversity trends and threats, and recommendations.

www.dec.ny.gov/animals/30483.html

Metropolitan Conservation Alliance (MCA)

The MCA has published a number of biodiversity plans for different parts of the Hudson Valley, as well as technical guidance on a variety of planning and conservation topics. For more information, see http://www.ecostudies.org/mca_technical_papers.html.

4) Funding

Hudson River Estuary Grants

The Hudson River Estuary Grants are offered annually to municipalities and not-for-profit organizations, and include a category for community-based habitat conservation and stewardship. See details at www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5091.html.