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# Volunteer for the Sound

WORKING TOGETHER TO RESTORE AND PROTECT THE SOUND



October 28, 2015

## DO YOUR PART - VOLUNTEER FOR THE SOUND!



There are many organizations in Connecticut and New York that need your help restoring and protecting Long Island Sound!

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### End of the Season

Congratulations on a great volunteer season! I hope you learned something new while gaining a greater appreciation of Long Island Sound. Do you still want to explore some more and give back to your community? Then see below for some dates to mark on your calendar for 2016.



Volunteers at the Great Gull Island Stewardship Day, May 2015.

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## New Plan for Long Island Sound

Last Thursday, the Long Island Sound Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) was [released](#). What does this mean for volunteerism around Long Island Sound? It means we keep on going and do even more! Whether it be through volunteering your time as a citizen scientist, restoring a salt marsh, installing a green infrastructure practice, or cleaning up marine debris, there is always a need for volunteers. The new CCMP also provides us with ecosystem targets to be achieved by 2035. Some of these include:

- Reducing beach closures due to sewage by 50%.
- Reducing areas of water with unhealthy oxygen levels by about 28%.
- Improving water clarity to support eelgrass.
- Increasing the area of natural vegetation within 300 feet of all streams and lakes in New York and Connecticut to 75%.
- Restoring 3,000 acres of coastal habitat by 2035.
- Conserving an additional 4,000 acres of open space in Connecticut and 3,000 acres in New York.
- Reducing the five-year average of marine debris collected from the sound by more than 300 pounds per mile surveyed.

To learn more about this plan for Long Island Sound, check out the [CCMP website](#), [interactive guide](#), and [public summary brochure](#).

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## Save the Date: Upcoming Volunteer Events

Mark your calendars for these 2016 events:

- Great Backyard Bird Count: February 12-15, 2016
- Alewife Monitoring: March-May 2016
- Horseshoe Crab Monitoring: May-July 2016

- National Trails Day Weekend: June 4-5, 2016
  - NY Invasive Species Awareness Week: July 2016
  - International Coastal Clean Up: September 2016
  - National Estuaries Week: September 2016
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## Volunteer Spotlight

**Article by Victoria O'Neill, the Long Island Sound Study Habitat Restoration Coordinator, as featured in the fall 2014 issue of Sound Update:**



Credit: Steve Heins

Alewives (*Alosa pseudoharengus*), also known as river herring, are anadromous fish, meaning they spend the majority of their lives out at sea and only enter freshwater systems along the northeastern United States in the spring to spawn. During their travels, Alewives are an important food source for a variety of mammals, fish, and birds. From mid-March through May, these fish can be seen making their way up the many rivers and streams found throughout the Long Island Sound coastline and beyond. Unfortunately, over the last hundred years, alewife populations have decreased throughout their range. Spawning runs in Long Island Sound tributaries have been lost or severely diminished due to overfishing, habitat degradation, poor water quality, and, most importantly, the installation of impassable structures, such as dams, weirs, and culverts, that prevent fish from reaching their spawning grounds.

On Long Island, an effort has been made by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), Seatuck Environmental Association, Peconic River Fish Restoration Commission, the Peconic Estuary Program, the South Shore Estuary Reserve, the Long Island Sound Study, and many other partners to bring back the alewives. One of the biggest supporters and contributors to this effort over the years has been retired NYSDEC Section Chief of Finfish and Crustaceans, **Byron Young**. Prior to being Section Chief, Byron served as the Unit Leader for the Anadromous Fisheries Unit at NYSDEC for 23 years, rising up through the ranks from Field Biologist. While at NYSDEC, Byron was an original member of the Long Island Diadromous Fish Work Group, established in 2004, and he assisted with numerous Long Island Sound and Peconic River habitat restoration projects.

Since his retirement in 2006, Byron has volunteered his free time and extensive fisheries knowledge to

continue to support the alewife population growth on Long Island. He works with the partners every spring to conduct the Long Island Volunteer Alewife Survey, a program for citizen scientists to identify and collect information on remnant alewife spawning runs. Byron assists with presentations at the volunteer training workshops for the Survey, runs educational programs for the public at established fish passage locations, and takes the time to meet with other volunteer surveyors during the season to answer their questions. In addition, Byron assists partners with fish passage project planning, surveys Long Island for potential remnant alewife spawning run locations, and collects biological data on thousands of alewives each year at known alewife spawning runs on the Island. The five years of alewife data he has collected for the Peconic River is the largest data set for alewives on Long Island. Byron's work has significantly contributed to the success of fish passage projects and alewife spawning success throughout Long Island. His enthusiasm and dedication to the cause continues to energize volunteers, politicians, and partners alike.

***If you would like to share your story of how someone is making a difference around the Sound, please contact Amy Mandelbaum, Long Island Sound Study Outreach Coordinator, at 631-632-9216 or [acb328@cornell.edu](mailto:acb328@cornell.edu).***

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If your organization would like its volunteer event advertised in this volunteer e-newsletter, our [Volunteer Opportunities web page](#), or our [Facebook page](#), please send Amy Mandelbaum, Long Island Sound Study Outreach Coordinator, an [email](#).

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

- [Long Island Sound Volunteer Opportunities](#)
- [What You Can Do To Protect Long Island Sound](#)
- [Long Island Sound Study Website](#)

#### **Amy Mandelbaum**

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