

# Sound Bytes

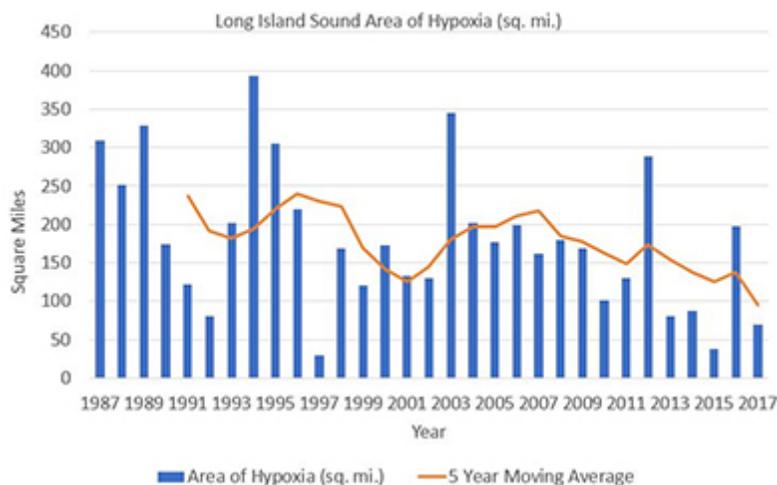


NEWS FROM THE LONG ISLAND SOUND STUDY

Fall 2017

LISS NEWS

## Sound's "Dead Zone" Third Lowest in 30 Years



### In This Issue

- [Sound's "Dead Zone" Third Lowest in 30 Years](#)
- [Webinar on Long Island Sound Nitrogen Reduction Strategy Scheduled](#)
- [#DontTrashLISound Campaign Reaches Thousands on Social Media](#)
- [Oyster Bay Gets a New Fishway](#)
- [Coastal Certificate Graduation...and Other News](#)

The area of Long Island Sound that contains an insufficient amount of oxygen for marine life, a condition called hypoxia, was the third lowest in the 30 years since the beginning of

Soundwide water quality monitoring began, according to monitoring data collected by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. The area of hypoxia, which also is sometimes referred to as a "dead zone," was 70-square miles this summer compared to 197-square miles in 2016. This year's drop is consistent with a declining trend in hypoxia since the states of Connecticut and New York with the EPA implemented in 2000 a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) plan to reduce nitrogen in the Sound. In fact, the average area of hypoxic waters during the past five summers (2013-2017) is 54% smaller than average size pre-TMDL (1987-2000).

In the summer, hypoxia affects areas of the bottom waters of Long Island Sound. If oxygen levels are low enough, fish, invertebrates and other animals can be forced to scatter or suffocate and die. The TMDL plan to reduce nitrogen, a nutrient found in sewage and fertilizers, led to advanced-nitrogen reduction upgrades of wastewater treatment plants in municipalities across the Sound. These upgrades have resulted in a reduction of more than 44 million pounds of nitrogen annually.

## Webinar on Long Island Sound Nitrogen Reduction Strategy Scheduled

EPA is holding a webinar on Wednesday, Nov. 8, to provide an update to Long Island Sound Study partners on progress supporting the Nitrogen Reduction Strategy. The goal of the Nitrogen Reduction Strategy is to continue progress on nitrogen reductions, in parallel with the States' continued implementation of the 2000 Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), and achieve water quality standards throughout Long Island Sound and its embayments and near shore coastal waters. EPA's contractor, Tetra Tech, will provide an update on work conducted over the past year in support of the Nitrogen Strategy, including assessing Long Island water quality data and developing nitrogen thresholds that, if met, would protect against water quality impairments. The webinar will discuss the timeline and next steps for completing technical tasks. There will be time for questions.



Upgrading the Hunts Point wastewater treatment plant in the Bronx has resulted in 22,000 fewer pounds of nitrogen a day entering the East River and Long Island Sound.

Everyone is welcome to participate on this public webinar using the connection information below:

Webinar Update on Long Island Sound Nitrogen Reduction Strategy\*

Date: Wednesday November 8, 2017

Time: 12:00pm-1:00pm

Webinar Link: <https://epawebconferencing.acms.com/lis/>

Conference line: 866-299-3188, Code 2039771541#

Visit the Long Island Sound Study [website](#) to learn more about the Nitrogen Reduction Strategy.

## #DontTrashLISound Campaign Reaches Thousands on Social Media



LISS and its partners educated thousands of social media users this summer on the extent of the problem of marine debris in Long Island Sound. The [#DontTrashLISound](#) campaign posts and tweets were seen more than 80,000 times on Facebook and Twitter from mid-July to International Coastal Cleanup Day on Sept. 16. The content included a graphic on the top 10 types of litter found in the Sound, the harm abandoned gear is having on fish and other marine life, and the threat of microplastics to water quality. There were also posts on what people are doing about the problem, including a local prevention program to reduce litter in restaurants, removing "ghost gear" such as abandoned lobster traps and fish lines that can entangle marine organisms, and beach cleanups. At its quarterly meeting in September, the Long Island Sound Study Public Information and Education work group, which consists of members of citizen groups and resource

managers working through the Long Island Sound Study, agreed to consider holding another campaign next summer. The posts can be viewed at the [media center](#) of the Long Island Sound study website.

The Bronx River Alliance had a great cleanup in September at Soundview Park - 100 volunteers helped pick up 63 bags of trash totaling over 1,000 pounds of debris. Some of the strange items found were a speaker, bird cage and grill. [View the Facebook gallery](#) to see some photos.

## Oyster Bay Gets a New Fishway

Thanks to efforts from The Nature Conservancy to build a fishway in the village of Mill Neck, migratory fish are once again connected to Beaver Lake from Oyster Bay and Long Island Sound.

The fishway, a 30-foot long metal structure that resembles a ladder, was installed in August. It opens up 1.5 miles of stream corridor and 110 acres of associated wetlands for migratory fish between the brackish waters of Oyster Bay and freshwater upstream. It is designed to provide the proper angle and movement of water needed for migratory fish to move from brackish water to freshwater.

Beaver Lake was once an estuary open to Long Island Sound. As the area developed, a dam was constructed to hold back water in the estuary and create what is now Beaver Lake. The dam was enough of a barrier that during most flows, migratory fish (Blueback herring and Alewife) were unable to get over the dam to their freshwater spawning habitat. Initial efforts to restore fish passage at the Beaver Lake Dam began in 2003 but it wasn't until 2013 when The Nature Conservancy secured funding through the Long Island Sound Futures Fund that necessary engineered plans were developed and permits secured. In addition, funds for project implementation were secured through Friends of the Bay, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, The Nature Conservancy, and private donors, along with another Futures Fund grant in 2015,.



The fishway at Beaver Lake allows fish to pass underneath a bridge from Mill Neck Creek and Oyster Bay into Beaver Lake and freshwater habitat. A concrete spillway under the bridge, and the dam had blocked passage to the lake.

Cornell Cooperative Extension and Hofstra University will partner to monitor fish passage at the site during the spring 2018 migration and will continue to work with NYSDEC to stock alewife at the creek every spring to jog the spawning run.

The Long Island Sound Study Habitat Restoration & Stewardship Coordinator, Victoria O'Neill, worked with partners to transfer New York State funds to the project for implementation.

This project is the third fish passage project involving a pre-fabricated fishway on Long Island within Long Island Sound waters since 2011. The Long Island Sound Habitat

Restoration and Stewardship Work Group is hoping that it will serve as a model for similar projects around Long Island.

#### AROUND THE WEB

### Coastal Certificate Graduation...and Other News



Graduates of the Coastal Certificate program gather at the Connecticut Audubon Center at Milford Point on Oct. 1.

"Gardening is not just about pretty plants anymore." That's what gardening students of the Master Gardener Program of UConn Extension discovered after getting extension credits for taking Coastal Certificate classes. The Coastal Certificate is an education outreach effort supported by Connecticut Sea Grant and the Long Island Sound Study. Now in its fifth year, the class promotes coastal landscapes designed to be sustainable that also protect water quality in the estuary and create healthy habitats for wildlife. On October 1, the recent class of Master Gardeners receiving Coastal Certificates met at a ceremony hosted

by the Connecticut Audubon Center's Coastal Center at Milford Point.

In other news...

- Each year the Long Island Sound Study develops a Work Plan as part of the National Estuary Program that outlines the work being done with EPA funds to help achieve the goals of the Study's Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan. The 2017 Work Plan describes LISS activities planned with 2017 federal funding for Oct. 1, 2017 to Sept. 30, 2018. It also highlights projects undertaken from Oct. 1, 2016 to Sept. 30, 2017 with 2016 federal fiscal funds. From [here](#).
- The Easton Courier reports on a green infrastructure project at Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo, designed to filter stormwater before it reaches the nearby Pequonnock River, and ultimately, Long Island Sound. The Zoo

and its partner, Save the Sound, received funding support from the Long Island Sound Futures Fund. From [here](#).

- The populations of menhaden, an important forage fish, is recovering in the Sound thanks to an Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission fisheries management plan. Read or listen about the plan and the importance of menhaden as a forage species in a report by WNPR reporter Patrick Skahill. From [here](#).

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