

# FACT SHEET: May 2014

## MINK INJURY INVESTIGATIONS

### HUDSON RIVER NRDA



Past and continuing discharges of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) have contaminated Hudson River natural resources. While the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is continuing with cleanup plans, federal and state trustee agencies - the U.S. Department of Commerce, the U.S. Department of the Interior, and New York State - are conducting a natural resource damage assessment (NRDA). These agencies are responsible for evaluating the injuries associated with hazardous substance contamination to natural resources and determining appropriate actions to restore those resources. Natural resource damage payments provide a means for the Trustees to restore injured public resources to the condition they would have been in but for the release of hazardous substances to the environment, and to compensate the public for lost services provided by those resources.

This fact sheet provides information on a field investigation of Hudson River mink being conducted as part of the Hudson River NRDA.

#### **Why study Hudson River mink?**

Many species of mammals, including mink, rely on the Hudson River and its floodplain for food and shelter. Previous studies have shown that PCBs can injure mink, reducing kit survival and causing jaw lesions, among other effects. Hudson River mink are exposed to elevated levels of PCBs. Mink collected by trappers in the vicinity of the river contain relatively high concentrations of PCBs in their bodies.

#### **Mink Field Study**

The Trustees plan to compare the abundance and density of mink associated with the Upper Hudson River to the abundance and density of mink associated with a reference river (the Mohawk River). In 2014, mink scat (droppings) will be collected from the field using highly trained dogs that specialize in locating such material. This technique does not involve killing mink or trapping mink, nor will it adversely affect mink. All collected scat and samples will be genetically analyzed. Genetic analysis permits the identification of individual mink, which provides data the Trustees will use to estimate mink abundance and density in the Hudson and Mohawk study areas.

Pursuant to the Hudson River NRDA Plan, peer and public review of a draft study plan was conducted, resulting in a final study plan released to the public in July 2012. A Responsiveness Summary responding to public comments was also released to the public. Subsequent modifications to the final study plan were issued in August 2013 and May 2014.



## More Information

The following Trustee websites contain a variety of additional reports and documents relating to the overall Hudson River NRDA:

[www.fws.gov/contaminants/restorationplans/HudsonRiver/index/html](http://www.fws.gov/contaminants/restorationplans/HudsonRiver/index/html)

[www.dec.ny.gov/lands/25609.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/25609.html)

[www.darrp.noaa.gov/northeast/hudson](http://www.darrp.noaa.gov/northeast/hudson)

## For the Hudson NRDA listserv:

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You will receive a confirmation email about unsubscribing.

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