

FACT SHEET

HUDSON RIVER

Catbird Egg Investigation



GRAY CATBIRD EGG EXPOSURE INVESTIGATION

Past and continuing discharges of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) have contaminated the natural resources of the Hudson River. The Hudson River Natural Resource Trustees – New York State, the U.S. Department of Commerce, and the U.S. Department of the Interior – are conducting a natural resource damage assessment (NRDA) to assess and restore those natural resources injured by PCBs.

The Hudson River, for greater than 200 miles below Hudson Falls, New York, is extensively contaminated with PCBs. Surface waters, sediments, floodplain soils, fish, birds, wildlife, and other biota are all contaminated with PCBs. The Hudson River and surrounding area support more than 150 species of birds, including waterfowl, wading birds, shorebirds, songbirds, and raptors. Birds are an integral part of the ecosystem and provide a number of important ecosystem services such as seed distribution, plant pollination, and insect control. Birds are also an important source of prey to other species.

The Trustees are investigating injury to birds in the Hudson River system, and have determined that further investigations focused on a particular avian species, the gray catbird, are appropriate to injury assessment for the Hudson River NRDA. Accordingly, in 2015, work to document the exposure of gray catbirds to PCBs will be performed. This work will guide the Trustees in the determination of potential restoration requirements for avian resources subject to identification and quantification of injury to avian resources.

Specifically, the work will entail collection of gray catbird eggs from the Hudson River valley in accordance with Trustee approved procedures. This investigation will



Photo by Dr. Thomas G. Barnes,
FWS Images Library



focus on the Hudson River valley between Bakers Falls in Hudson Falls, New York and Schodack Island, New York. Eggs will be processed in accordance with Trustee approved procedures and analyzed for PCBs and other contaminants. Chemical analyses will be conducted pursuant to the Trustees' 2002 Analytical Quality Assurance Plan. Any necessary collecting permits required will be obtained.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

Gray catbird eggs will be collected in a number of locations throughout the Hudson River valley. Many of the areas that provide habitat for gray catbird may be located on or require access through private property. If you own property in any of the study areas, biologists from NYSDEC may ask for your permission to enter your property for this investigation. If you grant permission, biologists will survey the area for gray catbird nests, and potentially collect eggs. Egg collections will be conducted in Spring 2015. The Trustees will not enter your property without your permission.

NEXT STEPS

Depending on the results of this preliminary investigation, the Trustees may conduct additional field investigations and/or laboratory studies to further evaluate the effects of PCBs on Hudson River birds.

Learn More about the Hudson River

NOAA: <http://www.darrp.noaa.gov/northeast/ HUDSON/index.html>

NYSDEC: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/25609.html>

FWS: <http://www.fws.gov/contaminants/restorationplans/HudsonRiver/index.html>

To add yourself to the Hudson River Natural Resource Damage Assessment electronic mailing list:

Send a blank e-mail to: Hudson-nrda-join@list.woc.noaa.gov



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