



THE BATTERY PARK CITY BROADSHEET

October 28, 2008

The River Project

Studying the river



The Hudson River at Battery Park City. (Photo: Terese Loeb Kreuzer)

Since 1986, The River Project has given scientists and Hudson River lovers a venue for studying the health of the Hudson River and working to enhance and preserve it. For years, The River Project operated from Pier 26. However, when the Hudson River Park Trust dismantled that pier, The River Project moved to temporary quarters on Pier 40.

The River Project's activities include field trips for groups of students, an oyster gardening program that is attempting to renew the oyster beds for which the Hudson was once famous

and counting the kinds and numbers of fish species in the river.

"Recently, we've caught a lot of toadfish and seahorses in our traps," said Nina Zain, a research assistant. She said that seahorses would usually be present earlier in the season. Trapping and counting species will continue into November.

Over the last 30 years, the health of the river has improved dramatically because of regulations against industrial pollution.

River Project biologists report that they're seeing more species of vertebrates and invertebrates in the river, including fishes and crabs, than they had seen in a long time. Ship worms, which are a good indicator of toxicity, had left the Hudson and now are back. There are lower levels of mercury, nickel and silver than there used to be.

The River Project maintains a comprehensive and interesting Web site (www.RiverProject.org) that details the temperature, salinity, wind conditions and current on the Hudson from day to day. It also has a virtual aquarium with information about Hudson River fish, including audio files of the sounds they make. Videos show underwater views of the Hudson and its occupants that most of us will never otherwise get to see.

The River Project is on Pier 40 at Houston and West Streets; phone, 212-233-3030.

- Terese Loeb Kreuzer



The Hudson River near Tarrytown. The New Jersey Palisades are on the left. (Photo: Terese Loeb Kreuzer)