**Copy- About NY&NJ Harbor**

Located where the Hudson River meets the Long Island Sound and the New York Bight (the Atlantic Ocean), the New York- New Jersey Harbor estuary and its surrounding watershed are a prominent facet of the economic and environmental landscape of the Northeast region. [[1]](#footnote-1) The New York- New Jersey Harbor is home to both a variety of wildlife and the third largest port in the United States. Although this area is not often thought of as a water recreation destination, there are many opportunities to fish, camp and kayak. Human activities, such as the creation of piers and other commercial developments, have adversely impacted the ecosystem of this harbor. In order for this watershed to reach its potential as a recreation destination for the fishing community, there are three main obstacles to be overcome:

* Increased public accessibility to this watershed
* Clean-up of toxic waste sites
* Removing the hindrances to the free flow of the harbor

Investing in the New York-New Jersey Harbor will preserve and rehabilitate the natural habitat of this watershed while simultaneously increasing economic development in this region due to tourism and recreational activities.

*(Economic Importance of the New York-New Jersey Harbor)*

The New York-New Jersey Harbor is vital to the region as it is the largest port on the East Coast, providing 260,000 jobs and $12 billion to the local economy.[[2]](#footnote-2) There are additional financial benefits of this watershed for the local economy, including tax incentives, increased home value, recreation activities, increased tourism, and ecosystem services. Increased investments in this watershed would provide additional jobs, tourism opportunities, and general economic development throughout this region. Once some of the environmental issues within the New York-New Jersey estuary (such as water pollution) are addressed, the clam, oyster, and mussel farming (for human consumption) can begin to be reintroduced- an industry that once brought millions of dollars to the regional economy.

(*Environmental Diversity within the New York- New Jersey Harbor)*

The New York-New Jersey Harbor estuary provides a diverse ecosystem for hundreds of species of flora and fauna. This estuary provides a variety of aqueous habitats for over 100 species of fish in saltwater, freshwater, mudflats, and wetlands.[[3]](#footnote-3) In addition to providing a crucial habitat for several varieties of fish, invertebrates, birds, and plants, this estuary offers several ecosystem services, such as erosion protection, flood protection, and water filtration.[[4]](#footnote-4) Financial (and otherwise) support for this harbor would increase the environmental benefits that can accrue from this habitat, subsequently heightening biodiversity and ecosystem health throughout this region.

(*Potential for Recreation)*

The New York-New Jersey Harbor could become a haven for kayaking, canoeing, sailing, windsurfing, fishing, and waterskiing with increased investment in clean-ups and other initiatives to make the harbor healthier and safer for human activities. There is already a strong interest from New Yorkers and New Jerseyans to participate in recreational activities on the harbor, as demonstrated by the popularity of places like Canarsie Pier in Brooklyn and Fire Island among fishermen. At Fire Island, recreational and sport fishing are popular, as surfcasting and deep-sea fishing can yield a variety of species from tuna and marlin to bluefish and bass.[[5]](#footnote-5) There are two artificial reefs in the Great South Bay and several directly off of Fire Island where lobsters and other forms of crustaceans, fish, and mollusks can be caught. [[6]](#footnote-6)

1. New York/ New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program. (n.d.). Overview. Retrieved at: <http://www.harborestuary.org/aboutestuary.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. NPCA. (2011, April 5). The New York/ New Jersey Harbor Joins America’s Great Waters Coalition to Advocate for Restoration Needs. Retrieved at: <http://www.npca.org/news/media-center/press-releases/regions/nynjharbor_great_waters_040511.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. New York-New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program. (2012). State of the estuary 2012. Retrieved at: <http://www.harborestuary.org/pdf/StateOfTheEstuary2012/SOE_Rprt.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. (n.d.). Why are estuaries important? Ecosystem services. Retrieved at: <http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/education/kits/estuaries/estuaries03_ecosystem.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Fire Island. (n.d.). Things to do. Retrieved at: <http://www.fireisland.com/about-fire-island/fire-island-activities/things-to-do/> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. National Park Service. (n.d.). Fire Island Fishing. Retrieved at: <http://www.nps.gov/fiis/planyourvisit/fishing.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)