

# Manasquan River Fishery Management

Water quality degraded by fecal contamination, sedimentation, and chemical inputs has negatively affected the abundance of fish species and the health of the shellfishery. Loss of habitat, combined with degraded water quality, has exacerbated problems by reducing food and shelter for juvenile fish and shellfish that rely on the Manasquan for survival.

## SHELLFISH

The Manasquan River Estuary contains approximately 1,500 acres of shellfish beds. In 1992, it was estimated that hard clams in the Manasquan River had a potential dockside value of \$1.2 million, but the Estuary had been closed to shellfishing since 1961 because of fecal contamination to the shellfish. In the early 1980's municipal and industrial point source discharges were eliminated from the River and significant improvements to water quality resulted. These water quality improvements led to the reopening of the beds in 1987 as long as the shellfish were removed from the estuary and "flushed" extensively through depuration or relay programs (30 days). Even though water quality improvements were apparent from point source reductions, fecal contamination



*John Tiedemann*

problems persisted from stormwater outfalls, malfunctioning septic systems, and high densities of resident waterfowl. These persistent sources led to the closing of all shellfish beds west of the Route 70 bridge in 1990.

## BOATING

Manasquan Inlet



*Freehold Soil Conservation District*

The Manasquan inlet is one of the busiest inlets on the eastern seaboard. It is the northern terminus of the 116-mile long New Jersey intracoastal waterway and follows the course of the river for 1.5 miles before turning south into the Point Pleasant Canal. A recent survey documented more than 1,500 vessels passing through the inlet during a 10 hour period. Adding to intracoastal boat traffic are the 2,500 vessels harbored within



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the Manasquan River estuary. Many of the boaters who enjoy the River's scenic beauty also enjoy fishing for species dependant upon the Manasquan for survival.

## MARINE FISHES

More than 75 species of marine and estuarine fish species can be found in the Manasquan River at some point of their life stage. Important marine and estuarine fish species in the estuary include winter flounder, summer flounder, spot, weakfish, bluefish, striped bass, mummichog, stickleback, bay anchovy, Atlantic silverside, Atlantic menhaden, and American eel. The Manasquan River Estuary, along with the Shark River to the north, consistently yield some of the highest numbers of winter flounder among all of New Jersey's estuaries.



*John Tiedemann*

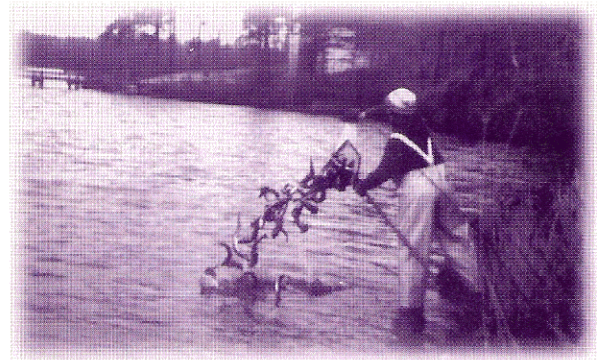
## FRESHWATER FISHES

The Manasquan River supports a diverse assemblage of freshwater fish species. Species such as white sucker, yellow perch, brook trout, brown bullhead, brown trout, rainbow trout, golden shiner and largemouth bass depend on the freshwater portions of the Manasquan River.

Reports indicate that some limited trout production had occurred in the river, but most of the trout are from stocking programs

conducted by the NJ Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife. In 1997, a sea-run brown trout stocking program was initiated in the Manasquan River. Since that time more than 50,000 brown trout have been stocked in the

### Fish Stocking Program



*Shaun O'Rourke*

river in an effort to create a population of sea-run fish. Annual fish stocking in the Manasquan River includes the following:

- Manasquan River
  - Rainbow and brook trout
  - Sea run brown trout
- Mingamahone Brook
  - Brook trout
- Macs Pond
  - Brook trout

The fish stocking program was expanded when the Manasquan Reservoir came on-line. The Reservoir was initially stocked with largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, bluegill sunfish, fathead minnows, alewife herring, and black crappie. Since then, annual stocking consists of rainbow trout, brook trout, hybrid striped bass, tiger muskellunge, and channel catfish (every 2 years).

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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