

2018 Hudson River Education Success Stories

All of our program successes are due to cooperation between The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Hudson River Estuary Program, Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve, NYS Water Resource Institute at Cornell University, the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission, as well as dozens of local and regional partners.

Ladder of stewardship: Our education programs depend on the hard work of young professionals hired through the Student Conservation Association and Americorps. This year, three of our SCA educators all participated in our programs as high school students! Ashawna Abbott and Martice Smith worked with the eel project as Poughkeepsie High School students, and Aidan Mabey volunteered during her time at Kingston High School as well as SUNY New Paltz. Now they are the mentors and teachers in the same classrooms and streams they grew up in.



Ashawna, Aidan, and Martice take a time-out from setting up submerged aquatic vegetation plots. Photo by Chris Bowser

Eels by the numbers: The Hudson River Eel Project had a superlative year. Over 700 volunteers donated 3,000 hours to catch count and release 146,000 juvenile eels past upstream barriers to migration. With plenty of support from local partners, we piloted a new collection site at the Poestenkill in downtown Troy, which means that eel sites span the entire 150 mile length of the estuary.



Arlington High School senior Kezia Lovell is no stranger to the eel project. She first discovered the eels in her creek with us back in 2009! Photos by Chris Bowser

Closing the lid on marine debris: There is growing awareness that plastic trash is a major ocean and estuary problem, and that solutions begin upstream. Through a NOAA Marine Debris Program grant, we worked with partners to develop curriculum, activities, and interpretive signs to help people use and discard less plastic. This included a huge larger-than life statue of “StanneLee” the striped bass, made entirely of plastic debris found along our nation’s coasts. StanneLee is a beautiful scavenger hunt of trash, from drinking straws and plastic bags to flip flops and even shotgun shells. It’s a reminder to all we want *real* fish in the Hudson, not plastic ones!



Students check out the many types of discarded plastics that make up StanneLee the Striped Bass. Photo by Chris Bowser