

## NYSG NEMO: Promoting Healthy Fisheries

Pathogens are disease-causing viruses, algae, bacteria, and other organisms that can affect humans as well as wildlife. Animal waste carried by stormwater runoff is a source of pathogen contamination. Pathogen discharges to Long Island surface waters pose a threat to public health when contaminated seafood is consumed, or upon contact with contaminated waters. Economic losses have resulted from the closure of shellfish beds and bathing beaches. The New York Sea Grant Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials program (NYSG NEMO) has responded to these issues by working with municipalities throughout Long Island to reduce stormwater contaminants.

### NYSG Responds

NYSG NEMO has encouraged strategies for implementing multi-pronged programs with an integrated focus on pathogens. Specific practices promoted have included:

- reassessing the water quality classifications of impaired waterbodies
- geese management
- pet waste control
- local laws
- municipal pollution prevention practices, and
- public education and involvement programs.

Strengthened municipal attention to water resource protection may have contributed to recent New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) surveys showing reduced levels of fecal coliform bacteria during cooler months of the year.

In September 2014 NYSDEC Commissioner Joe Martens announced regulations that will reopen shellfish harvesting areas in three Long Island Townships. Shellfish harvesting will be permitted during particular months of the year in approximately 303 acres of bays and creeks in Babylon, Southold and East Hampton. These areas include portions of Great South Bay, Northwest Creek, Mattituck Creek and Wickham Creek.



*Long Island municipal stormwater practices help reopen shellfish beds.  
Photo: NYSG*

*“Improving water quality is important to the sustainable use of Long Island’s coastal resources and economic vitality.”*

— Alison Branco,  
Peconic Estuary Program Director

### Partner:

- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

### ***The Sea Grant Focus Area for this project is Sustainable NY Fisheries & NY Seafood Businesses***

New York Sea Grant is a joint program of Cornell University, the State University of New York, and NOAA.

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