



Life above and below the Hudson: A kayaker glides atop the tranquil river while below the surface, native water celery provides life-giving oxygen and habitat to fish and waterfowl.



## Boating on the Hudson

Whether you're rowing, kayaking, sailing or motoring, the Hudson River has it all. Part of **Nordica Holochuck's** mission is to increase awareness about what boaters can do to protect the Hudson's unique ecology. What is the best way to deliver stewardship educational materials to boaters along the river? Over the last two boating seasons, Holochuck has been working extensively with regional commercial and recreational boating groups to find out.

Ten locations—marinas, marine stores and municipal docks—throughout the tidal estuary portion of the Hudson River Valley were selected to host pilot information stations on topics of interest to the

recreational boating public such as boating best management practices, safety, and ecotourism. At the end of each boating season, host stations were surveyed regarding public response. A similar survey was sent to commodores of all Hudson boat and yacht club associations. With nearly 40 percent responding, these survey results are helping NYSG develop outreach materials specific to the Hudson Estuary.

Holochuck, NYSG's Hudson Estuary Specialist, has long been delivering a message to boaters about submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV). Based on research by Cornell University, the Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve and the Institute for Ecosystem Studies, Holochuck's brochure *What Boaters Should Know About Hudson River Underwater Plant Beds* has been distributed to thousands of Hudson River boaters over the last two boating seasons. In 2003, thanks to the same two-year grant funded by the NYSDEC Hudson River Estuary Program, Boating Community Stewardship of Hudson River Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Restoration, Holochuck developed a colorful SAV poster to further increase awareness about submerged aquatic vegetation. The poster (shown left) is now displayed in Hudson River boat and yacht clubs, marine stores and shops.

**Help Protect Hudson River Plant Beds!**

While boating on the Hudson River during the summer months, you'll see dense beds of underwater plants in the shallows. Called submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV), these beds are located throughout the river, most abundantly between Kingston and Catskill. SAV provides life-giving oxygen to the water and important habitat and feeding areas for fish and waterfowl.

**Common Hudson River SAV**

- Water Celery
- Cat-tailed Bedstraw
- Craying Lizard Bedstraw
- Eastern Water Milfoil

**You Can Help!**

- Boats and personal watercraft can easily damage underwater habitat. Damage may last many years.
- Slow and stop. Avoid stirring through or anchoring in the plant beds.
- Test fellow boaters where these SAV beds are and how valuable they are to fish and wildlife.

For more information contact:  
New York Sea Grant,  
10 Westbrook Lane  
Kingston, NY 12401  
(845) 340-3983



# Watch

Says **Dottie Knott**, a founding member and former officer of the Hudson Valley Marine Trades Association currently affiliated with *Boating World* magazine, “Nordica Holochuck brings key information to the recreational boaters of the Hudson Valley—and they are happy to get it. When she takes her ‘sojourns’ along the river, she gives boaters brochures and posters about submerged aquatic vegetation—‘the underwater weeds’ as we call them. People are becoming educated about these underwater plants and in the long run, this is helping to protect the SAV.”

What is next for Hudson River SAV project team now that public awareness and interest about SAV is on the rise? Over the summer of 2003, **Dr. Stuart Findlay** of the Institute for Ecosystem Studies ran a trial to test the feasibility of using volunteers to monitor the river’s SAV beds. Holochuck says, “It is exciting to be a part of a team of people willing to try innovative techniques that include welcoming the participation of an enthusiastic group of kayakers, local stewards who will play a key role, formally or informally, in maintaining the health of the river’s SAV. Sea Grant extension will continue to support citizen monitoring of SAV as the project team deems necessary.”

NYSG’s efforts are part of the much larger Hudson River Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Project, under the auspices of the Cornell Institute for Resource Information Systems. The Hudson River Submerged Aquatic Education Project was recently awarded the 2002 Team Effort/Innovative Program Award presented by the New York State Association of Natural Resource Extension Professionals. The award “recognizes interdisciplinary, interagency and/or other teams that have exhibited leadership and excellence in producing unique, cutting edge, risk-taking Extension environmental or natural resources education programs.”

Another educational campaign for Hudson River boaters is to encourage environmentally-safe



**With help from NYSG’s Nordica Holochuck and Jay Tanski, “Don’t Fool With Fuel” signs will soon give Hudson boaters fueling tips.**

fueling. “Don’t Fool with Fuel” signs were developed with NYSG coastal processes and marine facilities specialist **Jay Tanski**. Knott accompanies Holochuck to many of the Hudson’s marinas where the new signs are being placed at fueling stations to alert boaters to some simple methods. “The design of the new signs is working well,” says Knott. “The signs are unobtrusive, yet very readable. This campaign is being met with much enthusiasm, at both public marinas and private yacht clubs.” With large marinas such as the one in Haverstraw with a thousand boat capacity, the signs have the potential of being read by hundreds of people daily. Some of those same marinas also show an informative slide show Tanski developed from his *Best Management Practices for Marinas Guide* for controlling stormwater runoff.

The signs represent just part of fuel spill prevention education kits provided to all Hudson River marinas with fuel docks. In the spring of 2004, participating docks will distribute educational flyers to boaters and samples of bilge socks and nozzle pads. The 18-inch bilge socks are made of absorbent material that can soak up oil, bilge and other discharge before it can get in the river. With Holochuck’s help and enthusiasm, these outreach campaigns to educate boaters are helping to restore and maintain the Hudson River’s unique habitat and heritage.

— **Barbara A. Branca**

All photos courtesy of Nordica Holochuck

## DON'T FOOL WITH FUEL HELP KEEP THE HUDSON RIVER CLEAN

Gas, diesel and oil are extremely toxic to aquatic plants and animals! Fish and shellfish are sensitive to very low concentrations of petroleum products in our waters. Concentrations equivalent to 1 drop of gas in 17 gallons of water can harm aquatic life. Little spills and drips add up fast.

Remember, the person fueling the boat is responsible for all spills and associated penalties. Please obey safety rules and follow these tips:

- ✓ Fuel with care. Hold the gas nozzle handle and stay with your boat during the entire refueling operations!
- ✓ Use an absorbent “doughnut” or collar on the nozzle to prevent “splash-back” and catch drips.
- ✓ Use absorbent pads to catch drips when transferring nozzle to and from boat. Be prepared to catch any overflow from vents with absorbent pads or “no-spill” containers that fit over the vent opening.
- ✓ Fuel expands as it warms up. Do not fill tanks to more than 90% of tank capacity.
- ✓ Install an air/fuel separator or vent whistle in your tank vent line to prevent spills.
- ✓ Fill portable tanks on land and use a drip pan and absorbent material to catch drips and splashes.

### If a spill occurs:

- ✓ Stop the source immediately.
- ✓ Report the spill to marina personnel. By law spills must be reported to New York State (1 (800) 457-7362) and the Coast Guard (1 (800) OILS-911).
- ✓ Use absorbent pads and materials to clean up small spills.  
Do not use detergents, soaps or dispersing agents.

Thank you for helping to keep our waters clean.

