

# 2 studies set for LI Sound

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Two research projects on Long Island Sound's environment will look to the water's history in order to predict its future.

The federal Sea Grant programs of Connecticut and New York have awarded \$708,308 to a pair of two-year projects.

One project uses a computer model to analyze the effects of past environmental conditions in an effort to predict what the Sound will look like in the future.

"It's like forecasting backwards, and taking the history and leaping forward," said Barbara Branca, a communications manager for Sea Grant.

Researchers at the Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, N.J., have developed a model that performs "hindcasting," or modeling conditions in a previous time period.

"Their model is very good at predicting events that have to do with climate change over the last several decades. Now they want to use that same model to launch forward to see what conditions will be in Long Island Sound

over the next few decades," Branca said. "We'll be able to predict with some accuracy what the effects of climate change will be on Long Island Sound's physical environment and the living marine resources," she added.

The other project, helmed by researchers from the University of Connecticut and the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County, will examine the environmental conditions of embayments in the Sound to determine potential effects on local fish and shellfish stock.

"We're used to having a food web — certain kinds of invertebrates eaten by little fish and those fish eaten by big fish," Branca said. "Those food webs, you can predict changes and adjust accordingly and you'll have a real sense of what's going on." The applications for commercial fishing are profound, she said.

"These research projects are both really important. They take very different views. They also synthesize information from different technical fields," she said. "So there's a lot of collaboration among the scientists in both the physical environment and the living marine resources."

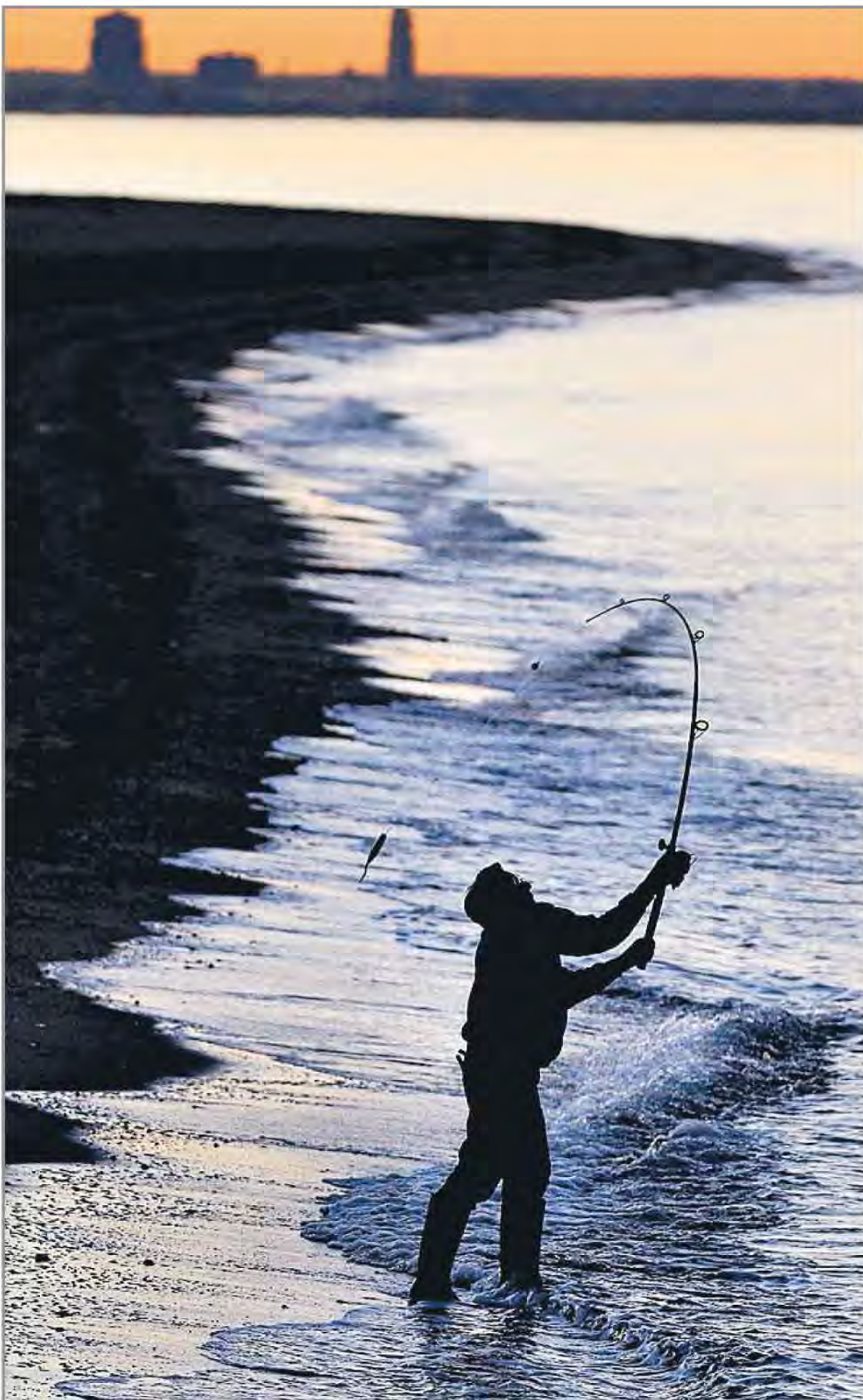


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One of the research projects will examine how local fish and shellfish stock are affected by the Sound's environmental conditions.