

## ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAMS



Barnegat Bay Estuary Program • 732.286.7877 • [www.bbep.org](http://www.bbep.org) • March 2001

### BARNEGAT BAY ESTUARY

*The Barnegat Bay and Little Egg Harbor estuarine system extends along 40 miles of New Jersey's shoreline and encompasses most of Ocean County, New Jersey. The population of the bay's watershed has swelled by more than twenty percent in the 1990s yet, for the most part, Barnegat Bay continues to be a vital and healthy environment for both the citizens and the natural resources of the watershed.*

#### FACTS ABOUT THE ESTUARY

- Boat traffic in and around the bay, including personal watercraft use has grown significantly, raising concerns about user conflicts and cumulative impacts.
- Increased development is removing native vegetation and pervious surfaces, resulting in a loss of natural habitat for wildlife and decreased infiltration of rainwater into drinking water aquifers.
- The 660 square mile watershed has a year round population of 500,000 people but a summer population of well over 1 million.
- The bay is a recreational playground for tens of thousands of boaters and anglers and brings in an estimated \$1.65 million in tourism dollars each year.
- The bay area supports a \$2.7 million commercial fishery.

## HEALTH OF THE ESTUARY

- Most freshwater inputs into the estuary are groundwater based, either as direct groundwater seepage into the bay, or as baseflow in bay tributaries.
- The mix of fresh water and saltwater produces special conditions important for survival of crabs, fish, birds and other wildlife. Prominent species that thrive in the bay include winter flounder, white perch, inland silverside, northern pipefish, bluefish, weakfish, striped bass, blue crab and hard shell clams.
- Extensive salt marshes, freshwater marshes and forested wetlands provide natural buffers that minimize the impacts of coastal storms, protect inland habitats, and reduce erosion.
- Submerged aquatic vegetation such as eelgrass and seagrass provide important food sources and habitat for fish, ducks and other marine animals in the bay.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE ESTUARY PROGRAM

- Recently upgraded 5,000 acres of restricted shellfish waters for the first time in 25 years.
- The bay will have a “No Discharge Zone” designation by the 2001 boating season.
- Initiated a \$500,000 project to control nonpoint source pollution.
- Conducted Educators Roundtables on environmental issues to include in school curricula.
- Established two sewage pumpout boats to serve the northern and southern portions of the bay. In addition, 66 pumpout facilities have been installed in Ocean County as part of the Clean Vessel Act Program.
- Working with the Ocean County Natural Lands Trust and the Trust for Public Land to increase open space and sensitive lands acquisitions.
- Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan, approved in 2001, contains 70 actions to protect water quality and supplies, habitat and natural resources, and competing uses.

### *Hot Striper Dip*

Striper is the local name for Striped Bass

3 packages softened cream cheese  
1 lb striper  
(poached and hand-shredded)  
1 clove crushed garlic  
1/2 cup mayonnaise  
2 tsp dry mustard  
1/2 cup white wine  
Old Bay seasoning to taste  
1-2 minced raw scallions

Blend ingredients and either heat in a saucepan and serve in a chafing dish or bake in a casserole dish at 375 degrees until bubbly.

Serve with crackers or sliced French bread.