

ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAMS



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NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY HARBOR

The New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary was designated an “Estuary of National Significance” in 1988 by the US Environmental Protection Agency. The Estuary Program was convened as a partnership of federal, state, and local governments; scientists; civic and environmental advocates; the fishing community; business and labor leaders; and educators. The estuary includes the waters of New York Harbor and the tidally influenced portions of all rivers and streams that empty into the harbor. Almost 240 miles of sandy shoreline, extending from Cape May, New Jersey, to Montauk Point, Long Island, form its landward border.

FACTS ABOUT THE ESTUARY

- The harbor includes the largest port on North America’s east coast, the 3rd largest container port in the US, a major passenger port, the largest petroleum product port in the US, and a major vehicle port.
- The port supports \$6.6 billion in salaries and wages and generates \$19.6 billion in sales.
- Waterfront access for recreational use is a high priority in the urban core area.
- Certain areas of the harbor support extensive commercial hardclam shellfisheries.
- The estuary supports extensive recreational fisheries.
- Twenty-five percent of nesting herons between Cape May, NJ and Rhode Island make their home in the harbor.
- Over 100 species of fish are present in the harbor estuary area.

HEALTH OF THE ESTUARY

- Eighty-five percent of the historic wetlands in the New York-New Jersey Harbor have been lost.
- Sediments in much of the harbor are contaminated with PCBs, dioxin, mercury, heavy metals, pesticides, and PAHs.
- Advisories against consumption of some species of fish and shellfish, including striped bass, eel and blue crab remain in place.
- Over half (by area) of the harbor's benthos is considered degraded.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE ESTUARY PROGRAM

- Facilitated an agreement among the Army Corps of Engineers, NYC Dept. of City Planning, and New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation to make the wetlands permitting process more efficient and consistent.
- Identified priority acquisition and restoration areas throughout the estuary and secured state bond acts to fund the work.
- Established public-private partnerships to fund and implement habitat protection projects.
- Implementing the Contaminant Assessment and Reduction Project (CARP), a \$30 million program to determine the main sources of contaminants of concern to the estuary.
- Documented barriers to anadromous fish spawning in coordination with the New York-New Jersey BayKeeper.
- Opened the New Jersey section of the Hudson River Water Trail in 2000, greatly increasing canoe and kayak access to the harbor.

Shad & Roe with Black Butter

3 pairs shad roe
8 tbl butter
12 tbl capers
12 lemons, halved
and seeded
Coarse salt
1/4 bunch parsley, trimmed
and chopped

Bring a medium pot of water to a boil over high heat. Carefully arrange roe in the bottom of a large, wide bowl. Pour the boiling water down the inside edge of the bowl, avoiding roes as you pour. The roe will turn gray, pairs may separate, and the eggs will bloom where there are tears in the sac. After 15 seconds, transfer roe with a slotted spatula to paper towels and pat dry. Carefully separate pairs still attached to each other and discard the connective membrane.

Melt butter in a large heavy-bottomed skillet set over medium-high heat and then add the roe. Fry roe, turning once (reduce heat to medium if roe begins to burn), until roe is browned on the outside and still pink in the center, about 3 minutes per side. Roe will split as it cooks. Add capers and squeeze lemons to taste over roe while gently shaking skillet over heat, then remove skillet from heat. Generously season roe with salt and garnish with chopped parsley. Serve with some of the blackened butter sauce from the skillet spooned over the top.