

Project POWER

Protecting Our Wetlands
Through Education and Regulation



Sponsored by a grant from:



**NEW YORK
AQUARIUM**

Wetland Loss and Degradation

- 48 states lost 50% of their original wetlands during the past 300 years
 - 87% loss as a function of disease control, crop production
 - 11 million acres = rapid urban development (1950s-1970s)



Wetland Loss and Degradation

- Efforts to minimize loss via programs started in the 1970s (Clean Water Act, Tidal Wetlands Act, Coastal Zone Management Act)
- Opportunities for states to purchase wetlands, create national preserves, and protect coastlines.



Wetland Loss and Degradation

- Since 1989 the federal gov't has adopted a policy of “no net loss of wetlands”



- Despite federal attempts, 2/3s of the U.S. states lack a regulatory policy to preserve wetlands.

The Inception of Project Power

- Application of Wetlands Laws have resulted in increased violations
- Since 1994 Tidal wetlands classes have been conducted to over 500 “violators” and invited community members
- Project POWER sponsored by EPA in 2002



1994 Surveys (N=200)

- Prior to the class, 69% never heard of the Wetlands Act, and those who did claimed not to understand it.
- Regulatory agencies' effectiveness in informing the general public:
 - 37% not effective - 39% somewhat effective - 24% effective
 - 89% -wetland issues should be taught in HS curriculum
 - 73% -willing to attend free classes on environmental issues
 - 79% -tidal wetland class would help others avoid violations

Project POWER Goes National with Federal EPA Support

■ Benefits

- Helps to abate wetland violations
- Helps to prevent repeat offenders
- Assists with the permit application process
- Promotes positive interactions between government and citizens
- Builds educational capacity with institutions (aquaria, museums, zoos) to effectively respond to the communities' need to know
- Promotes community-based environmental literacy across the nation



*“What this guy needs is an education,
not a violation”*

James J. Gilmore
Region 2 Natural Resources Supervisor
NYS DEC



A photograph of a wetland landscape. In the foreground, there is a body of water reflecting the sky. The middle ground is filled with tall, dry reeds and grasses. In the background, there is a dense line of green trees. The sky is a clear, bright blue. The text "Why Should We Care About Wetlands?" is overlaid in large, bold, yellow letters across the center of the image.

Why Should We Care About Wetlands ?

Wetlands
Have Value!



- They perform functions that are valuable to all of us.
- These values are considered in the permitting process.

Wildlife Habitat

💧 Wetlands provide habitat for many species of fish and wildlife, including some endangered and threatened.



Nesting



Foraging

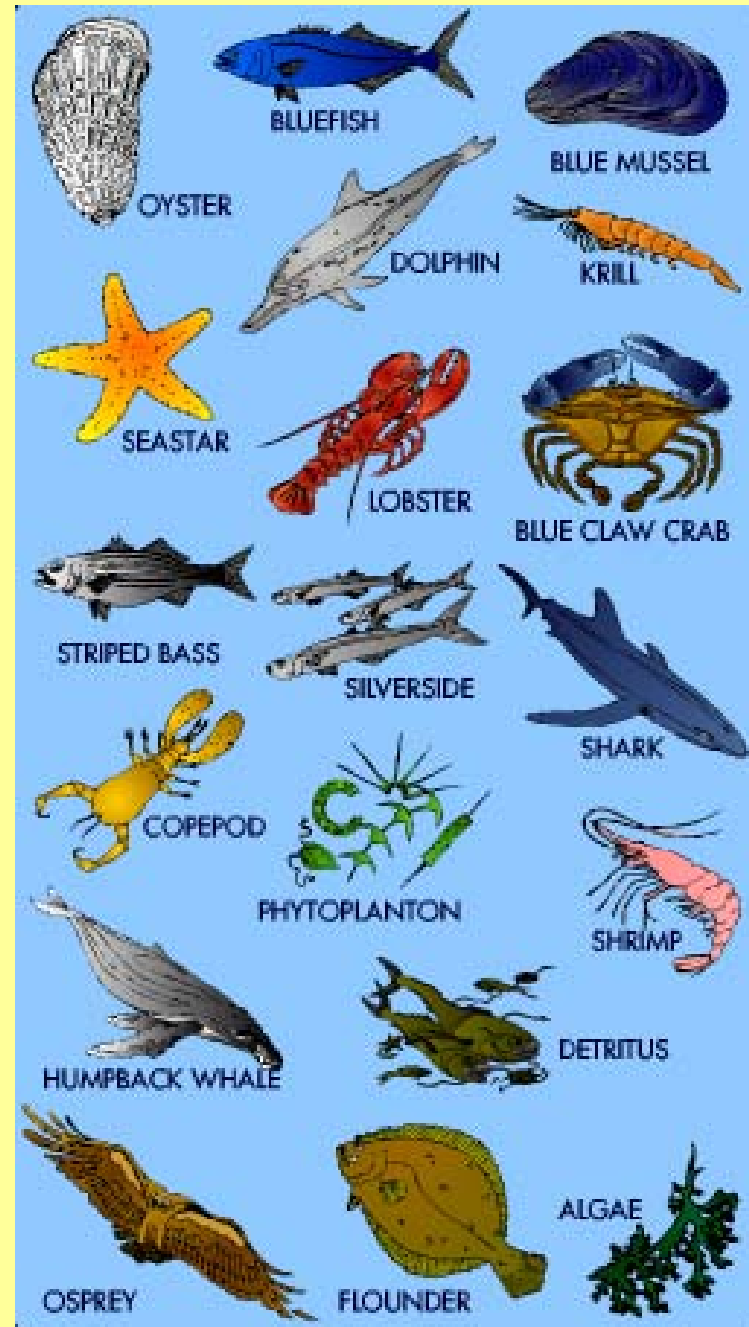


Breeding



Food Production

- Wetlands are one of Earth's most productive ecosystems.



Water Quality Maintenance



- Wetlands purify water through biological, chemical, and physical processes.

Flood Protection



💧 Wetlands act like a sponge – they store storm water that would otherwise flood developed areas.

Aesthetics and Recreation



💧 Wetlands
provide open
space for human
enjoyment.



Education and Research



With so much biodiversity, wetlands provide numerous opportunities for both education and scientific research.

2 Types of Wetlands

Freshwater and Tidal



Take Home Message...

- Wetlands are important.
- We're here to protect them for everyone's benefit.
- You have a role in this, too.
- Follow your permit, and do your part to protect our valuable wetlands.

