

THE UPPER DELAWARE RIVER WATERSHED:

New York's Hidden Gem

Situated in the Catskills and Southern Tier regions of New York State, the Upper Delaware River is the headwaters of what is often referred to as "America's First River."

The Upper Delaware River is one of the most important natural-resource based tourist destinations in our state, and is home to one of the finest coldwater wild trout fisheries in the country. The economic, recreational, and ecological value of this region must be recognized and protected, especially the headwaters of the river located south of the NYC reservoirs, which has received minimal funding from both the state and city. Over the last two years, this region has received less than 5% of watershed-related funding available through New York State's Environmental Protection Fund. While the Upper Delaware River is relatively healthy, there are increasing threats due to accelerated erosion and sedimentation, invasive species, and a changing climate. Long-term investments are crucial for the health of the river and the communities that rely on it. Get involved in our efforts to protect this hidden gem by signing up for our updates at www.nylcv.org.



CC BY FUDR

12,800 SQUARE MILES

The Delaware River Watershed (12,800 square miles) covers parts of New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. About one-fifth of the upper watershed lies within New York State (2,390 square miles of land area)¹.

MORE THAN HALF

Located near the headwaters of the Delaware River Watershed in New York are three NYC-operated reservoirs, Cannonsville, Pepacton, and Neversink that provide New York City with more than half of its drinking water².

125,000 PEOPLE

The 125,000 people³ residing within the Upper Delaware River Watershed rely on the basin's groundwater for their drinking water needs⁴.

73 MILES OF SCENIC AND RECREATIONAL PARKS

A 73 mile portion of the river in this region is credited as a Scenic and Recreational National Park unit by New York State under the federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act⁵. This area alone attracted more than a quarter million visitors in 2017⁶.

1 DEC. (n.d.) Delaware River Watershed. Retrieved from <https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/48372.html>
 2 Delaware River Basin Commission. (2020, March 6). Reservoirs. DRBC. Retrieved from <https://www.state.nj.us/drbc/hydrological/reservoirs/>
 3 Kauffman, G. J. (2016). Economic Value of Nature and Ecosystems in the Delaware River Basin. Universities Council on Water Resources Journal of Contemporary Water Research & Education, 158, 1-22. Retrieved from <http://www.wrc.udel.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/EconomicValueofNatureandEcosystemsintheDelawareRiverBasin2016.pdf>
 4 DEC. (n.d.) Facts about the NYC Watershed. Retrieved from <https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/25599.html>
 5 National Parks Conservation Association. (2018, October). Making Connections: Roots of Prosperity in New York and Pennsylvania's Upper Delaware River Region. NPCA. Retrieved from <https://www.npca.org/resources/3245-making-connections-roots-of-prosperity-in-new-york-and-pennsylvania-s-upper>
 6 American Rivers. (2019). Delaware River. American Rivers. Retrieved from <https://www.americanrivers.org/river/delaware-river/>
 7 DEC. (2005, September). A Strategy for Conserving New York's Fish and Wildlife Resources. Retrieved from https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/wildlife_pdf/cwcs2005.pdf
 8 IUCN. (n.d.). Red List of Threatened Species. Retrieved from <https://www.iucnredlist.org/>

PRODUCED BY THE ALLIANCE FOR THE UPPER DELAWARE RIVER WATERSHED

\$3.5 BILLION

The natural goods and services that derive from ecosystems of the Delaware River Basin generate \$3.5 billion in NYS⁷.

- Industries that rely on the watershed include fishing, tourism, recreation, ports, water construction and utilities.
- Wild trout fishing alone contributes over \$29 million in economic activity and almost 350 jobs with \$3.6 million in wages.

OVER 5.5 MILLION VISITORS

The recreational activities in the Delaware River Watershed attract millions of visitors every year. In 2010, more than 5.5 million people traveled to the region to hike, fish, camp, birdwatch, and paddle⁸. In Sullivan County, the year-round population more than triples on typical summer weekends, as travelers seek out beautiful places to play⁶.

81 SPECIES OF GREATEST CONSERVATION NEED

The Delaware Basin is home to 81 of the 537 Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) or about 15% of the SGCN statewide⁷.

SPECIES THAT RELY ON THE HEALTH OF THE UPPER DELAWARE RIVER



Trout

CC BY FUDR

Dwarf Wedge Mussel

CC BY USFWS

Sea Lamprey

CC BY USFWS

Gizzard Shad

CC BY NatureServe

Striped Bass

CC BY PlanespotterA320

Spawning American Shad

American Eel (endangered)⁸

CC BY VSP

Atlantic Sturgeon (critically endangered)⁸

©Allen Barlow

Delaware River Clubtail

CC BY USFWS

Bog Turtle

CC BY Peter Trimming

Barn Owl

CC BY Williamsplex

American Bullfrog

CC BY Williamsplex