



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 23, 2016

### Statement by NY/NJ Baykeeper on Raritan Bay Fish Kills

Over the last several days, thousands of dead juvenile bunker (also known as “peanut bunker”) have been spotted in Thornes and Waackaack Creeks and along the Raritan Bayshore in Keansburg. The suspected cause of death is low dissolved oxygen in the water, which causes the fish to suffocate and die. Just like humans, fish need oxygen, but they take the oxygen from the water in which they live.

Low dissolved oxygen can occur due to warm water temperatures and nutrients or organic material in the water. Bacteria in water can consume oxygen as organic matter decays.

“The NY/NJ Baykeeper office started getting alerts from local residents last week, concerned over dead fish in local waterways, including Natco Lake, Thornes Creek, Waackaack Creek and along the Raritan Bayshore in Keansburg,” said Debbie Mans, Executive Director, NY/NJ Baykeeper. “We called the state hotline and contacted Monmouth County to report the sightings.”

“We conducted water quality testing in the impacted areas on Tuesday, August 23, and discovered the dissolved oxygen temperatures to be between 1.90 and 2.46 milligrams per Liter (mg/L),” said Meredith DeMarco, NY/NJ Baykeeper. “Once the dissolved oxygen gets below 2.0 mg/L fish will begin to suffocate and die. Ideally, dissolved oxygen should be above 5.0 mg/L.”

“This is primarily a natural phenomenon, but it is exacerbated by polluted runoff, including fertilizers from lawns, which is why preserving stream corridors and

buffers is important,” said Greg Remaud, Deputy Director, NY/NJ Baykeeper.

“Our understanding is that local government entities will now coordinate removal of the fish in certain areas,” said Mans.



Figure 1: Fish kill exhibited in Thornes Creek (credit: NY/NJ Baykeeper)



Figure 2: NY/NJ Baykeeper staff testing for dissolved oxygen (credit: NY/NJ Baykeeper)

### **About NY/NJ Baykeeper**

NY/NJ Baykeeper is the citizen advocate of the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary. Since 1989, we've worked to protect, preserve, and restore the environment of the most urban

estuary on Earth – benefiting its natural and human communities. Through our Estuary-wide programs we seek to end pollution, improve public access, conserve and restore public lands, restore aquatic habitats, encourage appropriate and discourage inappropriate development, carry out public education, and work with federal and NY/NJ state regulators and citizen groups as partners in planning for a sustainable future for the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary watershed.

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Protecting, preserving, and restoring the NY/NJ Harbor Estuary since 1989.  
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