

# Southern New England – New York Bight

## *Coastal Program in Connecticut*

### Represented by Members of Congress:

Senator Christopher Dodd (D)  
Senator Joseph Lieberman (D)  
1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th districts

### Contact

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### Purpose

The Coastal Program works through partnerships to conserve the ecological integrity of the area's heavily populated coastal zone. The program supports coastal resources in the area from Cape Cod, Massachusetts to Cape May, New Jersey. This area includes two of the largest, most heavily impacted estuaries in the country: Long Island Sound and New York/New Jersey Harbor.

The work of the Coastal Program is guided by several laws and legislative authorities, including:

*Clean Water Act*  
*Endangered Species Act*  
*Oil Pollution Act*  
*Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act*  
*Coastal Barrier Improvement Act*  
*Coastal Wetland Planning, Protection and Restoration Act*

### Program Activities

To protect and restore coastal habitats, the Coastal Program uses biological expertise to assess landscape and site-specific natural resources. The staff works with government and private partners and uses computer map and database tools to identify valuable and threatened areas and species needing protection. The office also actively seeks grant funds to support implementation.



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Current partners include *Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, NOAA, EPA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Coast Guard, Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge, Connecticut Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership, Regional Plan Association, The Nature Conservancy, Connecticut Audubon Society, Connecticut College and the Branford Land Trust.*

### Highlights

- Completed an assessment of ecologically significant areas in coastal watersheds and supported management plans for including 17 important sites in the Long Island Sound Stewardship Initiative.
- Supported conservation and restoration grant awards through the Long Island Sound Futures Fund. In three years, 49 projects were funded with \$1.5M, matched nearly 3 to 1 by Connecticut partner grant applicants
- Provided biological expertise, grant writing and some funds for constructing a fish ladder at the Branford supply ponds and for headwaters land acquisition and habitat protection upstream.

### Issues

Land in the Northeast is in high demand with competing commercial and residential interests encouraging high sale prices. Land acquisition as a means of habitat protection is often seen as a short-term expense rather than a long-term investment.

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