

CLEAR WATER REVIVAL



Journal photo by Suzanne Plunkett

Capt. Joe Shastay of Jersey City navigates his charter fishing boat through choppy Hudson waters.

A healthier Hudson River is home again to thriving fish

First of two parts

By Brian Donohue
Journal staff writer

Charles Stamm remembers when he would cast his bait into the Hudson River and watch it disappear.

"I judge how clean the water is by how far down you can see your bait," said Stamm, president of the New Jersey chapter of the Hudson River Fishermen's Association. "Used to be, you couldn't see it more than a few feet. Now you can see it down much further."

HEALTHY HUDSON

The river bounces back
TODAY-Part 1

Where is the walkway?
MONDAY-Part 2

Stamm's bait is still disappearing quickly, though — into a fish's mouth. He's in on a growing secret: The river that gives Hudson County its name is coming back to life.

Even by standards more scientific than Stamm's bait-test, the river is getting cleaner.

"There's an upswing in the condition, the reception and the use of the river," said John Waldman, a research associate with the Hudson River Foundation, a nonprofit organization that conducts and funds research on the river estuary. "It's a rising tide."

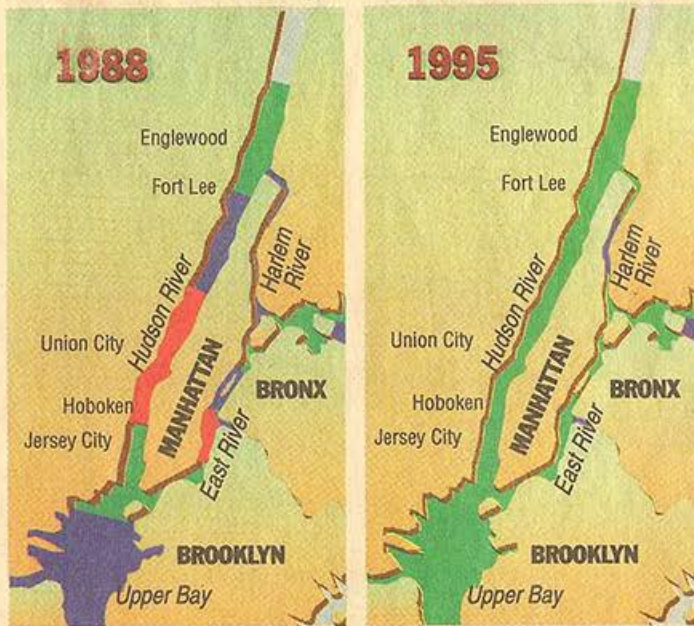
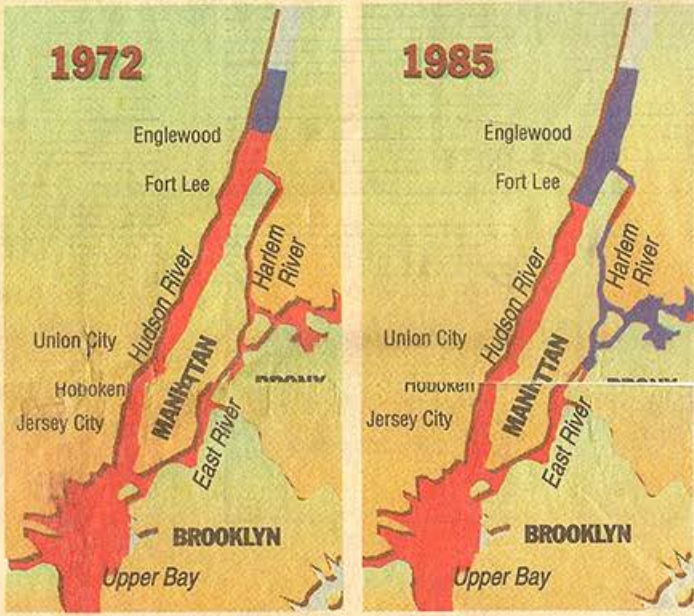
Raw sewage no longer regularly flows into the

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BACTERIA IN SURFACE WATER

Fecal coliform levels in the Hudson River have been declining since 1968, the result of improved water treatment and construction of new water control plants. Waters off Hudson County are classified as safe for "secondary contact" such as fishing, while the Hudson north of the George Washington Bridge is approved for "primary contact" such as bathing.

- Unacceptable bacteria levels
- Meets standard for fishing
- Meets standards for bathing
- Not measured



Journal graphic by JEFFERY COHEN

Source: New York City Department of Environmental Protection

While the water now meets scientific standards for bathing, the New York Department of Environmental Conservation hasn't officially approved swimming in river waters off Hudson County or Manhattan.