

# NEW REPORT SYNTHESIZES HARD CLAM RESEARCH

New York Sea Grant recently released *The Hard Clam Research Initiative: Factors Controlling Mercenaria mercenaria Populations in South Shore Bays of Long Island, NY*, a 43-page technical report that summarizes the key results of five research projects funded through NYSG's *Hard Clam Research Initiative* which began in 1999. Funding partners included NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service, South Shore Estuary Reserve, Port Authority of NY and NJ, and NYSG. These five projects and several related studies addressed the downward trend in hard clam populations in Long Island's south shore bays, an issue of both environmental and economic interest to the region.

Says **Ms. Cornelia Schlenk**, Assistant Director of NYSG who spearheaded the Hard Clam Research Initiative, "The main goal in the preparation of this report was to achieve improved, science-based understanding of the factors controlling hard clam populations in Long Island's south shore estuaries, and thereby contribute towards better management and potential enhancement of a

once highly productive regional resource." Research topics within the report include: the hard clam's reduced reproductive success, changes in the clam's food supply and predators, the effects of brown tide, ecosystem changes in Great South Bay and other LI bays, and the effects of harvesting practices as predicted by clam population models. Continues Ms. Schlenk, "Particular emphasis is given in this synthesis report to findings that help us understand the stressors on hard clam populations and their implications relative to management and moving forward."

Compiled from publications provided by the researchers, reports submitted to NYSG, and material presented at an August 2008 workshop sponsored by NYSG at the School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences, Stony Brook University, the report was prepared by **Dr. V. Monica Bricelj** of the Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences at Rutgers University.

— **Barbara A. Branca**

# SEEKING WAYS TO STIMULATE SPORTFISHING

The decline in the number of anglers in New York's Lake Ontario region over the last decade-and-a-half has raised concerns. With the region's economy based to a large extent on sportfishing, NYSG-funded investigators **Drs. Diane M. Kuehn** and **Valerie A. Luzadis** from the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry are exploring some marketing and management strategies that could help sustain the economies of coastal communities along Lake Ontario.

"One potential strategy is to increase fishing participation by residents of the Lake Ontario region," says Kuehn. "This would provide an opportunity for businesses and tourism promoters to tap into an underutilized and large resident market group. We will be focusing on bass fishing because many residents are already involved in it."



Redirecting some promotional and business efforts to this resident angler market becomes increasingly important as further declines in nonresident anglers – the focus of past tourism promotions – are expected due to rising travel costs and a sluggish national economy.

"By studying what motivates and prevents residents from bass fishing, we're hoping to provide businesses and tourism promoters with the marketing and management information that they need to attract anglers," says Kuehn. Investigators aim to do this by surveying residents (in the fall of 2009) on the motivations, constraints, and facilitators associated with bass fishing on Lake Ontario.

— **Paul C. Focazio**