RIBBED MUSSEL BULKHEAD SURVEY AT THE SALT LOT

Organized by Gowanus Dredgers, October 31st, 2020

ATLANTIC RIBBED MUSSEL GEUKENSIA DEMISSA

METHODOLOGY
On October 31st, 2020 The Gowanus Dredgers and Gowanus Canal Conservancy conducted a primary observation survey of Atlantic Ribbed Mussel in the Gowanus Canal to understand mussel populations and habitat along the canal bulkhead. Observations were made via canoe from the canal during afternoon low tide. Counts were made in vertical sections measured by distance from the mean high waterline. Mussels within shoreline wooden bulkhead and substrate material were counted. A total of 3 canoes, each consisting of two counters, tallied each visible mussel within a particular bulkhead section. Totals from each section were summed for a total estimated count. Each visible mussel was counted as one. Within clusters a best attempt was made to count each mussel within the cluster.

LOCATION
Observations we made along a contiguous stretch of bulkheads and edges spanning from the end of Second Avenue, around the Salt Lot, and along the north edge of the 6th st turning basin.

Bulkhead materials observed include steel bulkheads, timber, rip rap, rocks, mud flats.
The existing wooden bulkheads along the Gowanus Canal within the survey area are providing critical habitat to Atlantic Ribbed Mussels. Significantly more mussels were observed in the wooden bulkhead and timber than in the rip rap or mud flat. For example, the maximum number of mussels observed in a single section of steel bulkhead was 16, whereas up to 887 mussels were observed in a wooden bulkhead of similar size.

We analyzed the mussel counts by bulkhead material and found that on average wooden bulkheads provide significant habitat for mussels at a rate of 311 mussels per 100 linear feet. Wood supports 103 times more mussels than steel. Steel bulkheads provide minimal to no mussel habitat, at an average rate of 3 mussels per 100 linear feet.

**SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS**

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