Atlantic Ribbed Mussel Survey
Gowanus Canal - 7th Street Turning Basin
Survey Date: November 4, 2023

Introduction

On November 4th, 2023, The Gowanus Dredgers Canoe Club organized a volunteer survey of the bulkhead along the 7th Street turning basin, located in the Gowanus Canal. The primary goal of the survey was to estimate how many Atlantic Ribbed Mussels (*Geukensia demissa*) are living in the estimated 1,209 feet of mixed material bulkhead.

Survey Site Details

Observations were made via canoe by a group of 7 volunteers, along a contiguous stretch of bulkheads and edges spanning from the full length of the 7th street turning basin to the steel bulkhead towards the 6th Street turning basin. Bulkhead materials observed include timber bulkheads, concrete, rip rap, rocks, mud flats. Mussels were counted by looking in all crevasses and along the water line. Tally was kept with a clicker. To the best of the volunteer(s) ability, each individual mussel was counted as one. Spat smaller than 10mm were not counted.

Total Number of Mussels Counted = 2,528
Observations

Based on previous surveys, we anticipated the highest concentration of mussels to be along the older wooden bulkhead. This previous finding proved consistent with our observations. We were surprised to find a good number of mussels wild-set in cracks in the concrete bulkhead on the south side of the turning basin. We observed a few large (dead) wild set oysters along the same concrete bulkhead. Additionally noted were several active suspension feeding organisms within the turning basin on the wooden materials. Speculatively identified as sea anemones, they potentially warrant further interest as to accurately document the biodiversity utilizing wooden and textured substrates.

Despite a heavy layer of coal tar along much of the bulkhead, we observed mussels thriving and even saw evidence of spawning. The largest mussels were located in areas that appeared to be places of more water exchange, like by outflow pipes.