

District goes to the birds

There is evidence that navigation and fowl are co-existing in New York Harbor. During a recent harbor inspection, the crew of the Corps vessel *Hocking* spotted hundreds of common terns nesting in a 300-foot garbage barge. The harbor has rebounded in the past decade, and small fish that many birds eat have returned. The barge is floating in the middle of the harbor and is the temporary home for about 100 common terns who have taken up residency.

The tern is a threatened bird species. The Corps will have to wait until the birds migrate in the autumn before the scow can be used or necessary repairs made, according to Joe Seebode, chief of harbor programs. "The fisheries have come back moored, and the birds that feed on them have come back," said Seebode.

In addition to the terns, herons, cormorants and ospreys, have been seen in increased numbers over the past few years.

The barge is one of two used by New York District to collect debris in the harbor.

Cormorants were sighted nesting on a buoy, and ospreys were spotted nesting on pier pillars -- all now a common site in the port. New York District recognizes the interdependence of life and the physical environment -- one of the seven environmental operating principles of the Corps.



Nesting time -- During a recent harbor inspection, cormorants were spotted nesting on a buoy, an osprey nesting on an old pier piling and terns nesting in a garbage scow.



Photos: Peter Shugert

Corps Environmental Operating Principles

- 1 Strive to achieve environmental sustainability. An environment maintained in a healthy, diverse, and sustainable condition is necessary to support life.
- 2 Recognize the interdependence of life and the physical environment. Proactively consider environmental consequences of Corps programs and act accordingly in all appropriate circumstances.
- 3 Seek balance and synergy among human development activities and natural systems by designing economic and environmental solutions that support and reinforce one another.
- 4 Continue to accept corporate responsibility and accountability under the law for activities and decisions under our control that impact human health and welfare and the continued viability of natural systems.
- 5 Seek ways and means to assess and mitigate cumulative impacts to the environment; bring systems approaches to the full life cycle of our processes and work.
- 6 Build and share an integrated scientific, economic and social knowledge base that supports a greater understanding of the environment and impacts of our work.
- 7 Respect the views of individuals and groups interested in Corps activities; listen to them actively, and learn from their perspective in the search to find innovative win-win solutions to the Nation's problems that also protect and enhance the environment.

