

NOAA Hazardous Waste Site Report

Port Washington Landfill (II-94)  
North Hempstead, Long Island, New York  
April 13, 1984

Location and Nature of Site:

The Port Washington Landfill is a 29-acre, active municipal landfill opened in 1974 (Figure 1). Over 200,000 tons of fill are accepted annually. High levels of methane (93,000 ppm peak) and related gaseous emissions migrate continuously from the site. Toxic wastes, consisting of vinyl chloride, benzene, trichloroethanes, and heavy metals in the parts per billion (ppb) range, have been found in leachate and soil at the site, in a nearby school, and in local residents' homes. The vinyl chloride liner restricting migration from the site is believed to have been breached. In 1981, two water supply wells were closed because of the presence of vinyl chloride in 38 and 47 ppb concentrations.

Proximity of Chemical Hazard to Marine Resources:

The site is located on the west side of Hempstead Harbor on Long Island Sound, and is within the city limits of Port Washington. It is bordered on the north by a school. At the present time, migration of toxic substances from the site is occurring in the groundwater.

Marine Resources at Risk:

This site is located on Long Island Sound, an important recreational and commercial fishing area (Table 1).

Anadromous fish migrate through this area on their spawning runs up the Hudson River during the early spring on their way to freshwater spawning grounds. This occurs in the upper reaches of the Hudson River and in some of its smaller freshwater tributaries. Juvenile fish, hatched in the spring, remain in the upper parts of the Hudson River and Bay until late summer or early fall when they also migrate into the lower parts of the Bay.

The Atlantic sturgeon is a species of special state concern, and the shortnose sturgeon is a species of special federal concern. The area around this site is heavily developed and does not provide any critical habitat for anadromous fish.

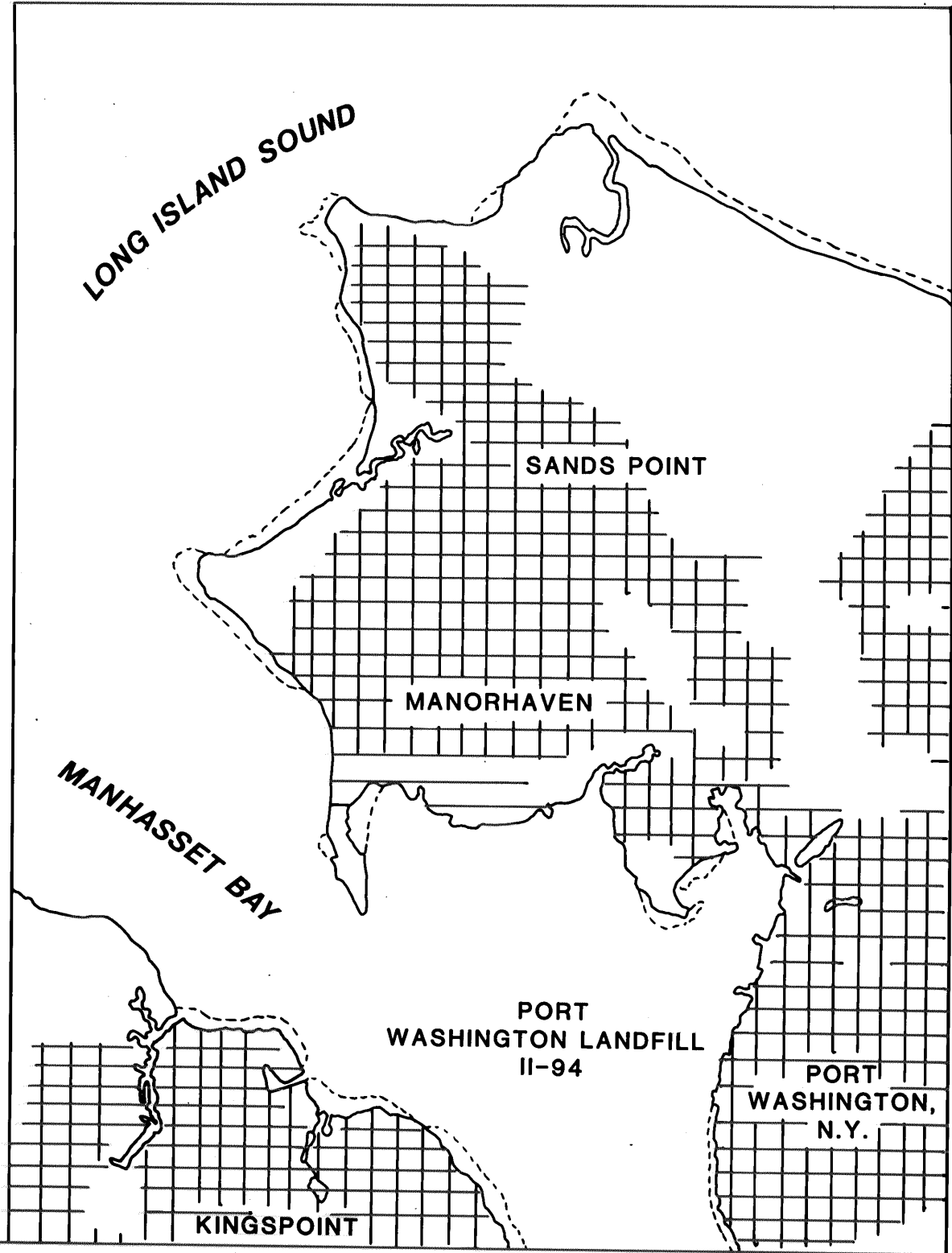


FIGURE 1. Site location.

Table 1. Fishery Resources of Southwestern Long Island Sound (1,2,4)

Finfish Species	Adult Habitat	Spawning Area	Nursery Area	Comm. Fish.	Rec. Fish.	Migr. Route
<u>Anadromous</u>						
Alewife	x			x	x	x
Blueback herring	x			x	x	x
American shad	x			x	x	x
Atlantic sturgeon	x					x
Shortnose sturgeon	x					x
Atlantic tomcod	x			x	x	x
Rainbow smelt	x			x	x	x
Striped bass	x			x	x	x
<u>Non-anadromous</u>						
Weakfish	x	x	x	x	x	x
Bluefish	x				x	
Black seabass	x			x	x	
Kingfish	x	x			x	
Bay anchovy	x	x	x			
Hake	x			x	x	
Scup	x			x	x	
Flounder	x		x	x	x	
Atlantic menhaden	x				x	
Silver perch	x	x		x		
<u>Shellfish</u>						
Blue crab	x	x	x	x	x	

Summary of Site-Related Actions:

The Port Washington Landfill has received many violation citations from the New York State Department of Environmental Quality for disregard of State landfill standards. The Town of North Hempstead and the County Health Department have hired consultants for air and groundwater testing due to area complaints. In 1982, a well documented report by the New York Public Interest Research Group called for a State and Federal investigation and cleanup action.

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References:

1. National Marine Fisheries Service, 1974. Anglers Guide to the United States 2. Atlantic Coast.
2. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1980. Atlantic Coast Ecological Inventory.
3. Breder, C.M. and D.E. Rosen, 1966. Modes of Reproduction in Fishes. TFH Publications

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4. Research Planning Institute. Environmental Sensitivity Index - New York. Unpublished.
5. Weinstein, L.H. (ed.), 1977. An Atlas of the Biological Resources of the Hudson Estuary. Boyce Thompson Inst. Plant Res.