

Major Milestone Achieved in Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Biological Control

by Lyn Chimera

DEC, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and Cornell University's New York State Hemlock Initiative announced that *Laricobius nigrinus*, a predator beetle being released to control the invasive hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA), is confirmed to be reproducing successfully in the lower Hudson Valley. Teams from New York, New Hampshire, and Vermont collected 12,676 of the sesame seed-sized beetles from Harriman State Park, where they had been released years earlier as part of a regional HWA biocontrol effort. The number collected exceeded expectations and marks significant progress towards establishing HWA population controls.

Highlights from the ongoing efforts to establish HWA predator controls:

- The effort to establish *Laricobius nigrinus* populations in Harriman State Park began with an initial release of about 2,000 beetles between 2018 and 2020.
- Beetle population growth must occur in the wild in order to successfully expand across landscapes without ongoing human assistance.
- This year's record beetle collection has allowed for the redistribution of beetles to new sites across New York and neighboring states as part of a cooperative effort to establish new populations of predators of HWA across the northeast.
- Partners from New Hampshire and Vermont collected 4,392 and 1,437 beetles, respectively, to release in their states. New York benefitted from a similar effort in North Carolina in 2013.

A total of 6,487 beetles were released at three New York sites: Long Point State Park, Thacher State Park, and the DEC's Five Rivers Environmental Education Center.

More about HWA:

- HWA is an invasive insect that can attack healthy hemlock trees, often killing them in under a decade.
- It was discovered in the lower Hudson Valley and on Long Island in the 1980s and has since spread north to the Adirondacks and west to the Finger Lakes Region.
- Efforts to control HWA have largely involved early detection and chemical control, but these are not long-term solutions.

Establishing specialist predators, like *Laricobius nigrinus*, will help keep HWA populations in check naturally, allowing hemlocks to survive.

Public involvement remains essential to protecting hemlocks and anyone can help by learning to identify and report HWA using resources from the New York State Hemlock Initiative or DEC. For questions or resources on hemlock conservation, visit nyhemlockinitiative.info or email nyhemlockinitiative@cornell.edu.

Find the original article from NYS DEC at: <https://dec.ny.gov/news/press-releases/2026/3/dec-oprhp-and-new-york-state-hemlock-initiative-announce-major-milestone-in-hemlock-woolly-adelgid-biological-control>



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