

Dye release to track pollutants in ocean

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TRENTON — Researchers led by scientists from Rutgers University are to release non-toxic red dye into the mouth of the Hudson River today to see how pollutants and other material discharged from the river interact with the Atlantic Ocean.

The five-year, \$4.2 million proj-

ect, now in its second year, has already brought some surprises.

While following dye about 20 miles from Sandy Hook to Manasquan in May, the scientists expected to see concentrations of heavy metals such as zinc and mercury dissipate in the phytoplankton near the bottom of the food chain. But the concentrations stayed the

same, suggesting that pollution from the Hudson was entering the food chain miles out.

Robert Chant, professor of marine science at Rutgers' Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences, said the researchers plan to release twice as much dye this time — two 100-pound releases versus the two 50-pound releases last year. They are

also heading out earlier in the year in the hope of catching the Hudson River's discharge when the current is stronger. Last year's releases were in May.

Results from the study might help answer questions such as whether New York should dispose of treated sewage farther out in the ocean, Chant said.