



To the editor,

Last fall I wrote that the Connecticut River might freeze this winter because of the closure of the nuclear reactor at Vernon and the loss of its thermal pollution of the river.

This photo was taken in early Feb, 2015. The river is largely frozen at the Coolidge Bridge, with some open water on the east side, where the current is strongest. Coyote prints are clear along the river. I have also seen coyotes walking along the river and three deer cross the river from Hadley to Elwell Island. There has been no human activity on the river such as ice fishing. I have been looking for someone to walk across the river in front of me to test the ice, but I have found no takers.

In past years the Connecticut River has been largely unfrozen at the Coolidge Bridge. In 2013 I found that the river was largely unfrozen downstream from Vernon. I looked as far south as Windsor Locks, and there was no ice across the river.

This year, in comparison, the river is frozen at the Northfield Boat launch, at the dam at Turner's falls, along the area at the Hadley dike, and as far south as Springfield, Hartford, and even Rocky Hill, Ct. This is a dramatic increase in the ice coverage of this winter.

I had wondered whether the effects of global warming would trump the cooling effects of the closing of the reactor, and there might be little ice. After all, December 2014 was the warmest December on record. However, one of the lesser effects of global warming is that other areas might be colder than normal. This seems to have happened. According to the historical data on the weatherunderground, the average mean temperature in Northampton, Mass. for February is about 27 degrees. So far, the average mean temperature this year for Feb up to Feb 17, is about 13, the coldest by far. In fact, there have only been two times since 1942, when the record began, that the average mean temperature has been below 20 during this time period of Feb 1-17.

The river has frozen at the Coolidge Bridge, but the effect cannot be attributed to the closing of the reactor at Vernon but, ironically, the effects of global warming. Wait until next year. It might be warmer. Meanwhile, it may well be a dramatic spring melt.

