Delaware Bay Oyster Revitalization Program
2005-2008
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RECRUITMENT: Plantings in 2005 on both New Jersey and Delaware beds resulted in mean recruitment rates nearly 4 times the bay-wide mean. Shell plants from 2005 continued to competitively perform as compared to native shell in substrate to enhance recruitment while disease levels remain high. New Jersey oyster beds have been recruiting at rates much higher than Delaware beds. In 2005, New Jersey beds were losing shell on the order of 250,000 to 500,000 bushels annually since 1999 (the first year a shell budget estimate could be calculated). Delaware beds have been losing shell on the order of 100,000 to 300,000 bushels annually since 2003. From 2005-2009, New Jersey beds have gained shell on the order of 100,000 to 300,000 bushels annually while Delaware beds have lost shell on the order of 100,000 to 300,000 bushels annually. It is hypothesized that the difference in shell gain and loss is due to disease, with the New Jersey beds showing a larger increase in disease and loss in shell. New Jersey beds are losing shell due to disease and overharvesting by watermen, while Delaware beds are losing shell primarily due to disease. Seed oyster shortage in New Jersey beds has reduced spat settlement rates and limits the potential for shell gain in New Jersey beds.

FISHERY: Since 2005, the Delaware Bay oyster fishery has experienced a significant increase in abundance. The reasons for the increase are a combination of factors including increased recruitment, improved habitat sustainability, and limited exploitation. As a result of increased abundance, shellfishing has been allowed in the bay. Shellfishing is managed through the Delaware Bay(shellfish) Management Plan, which was developed with input from the Bay Management Council, the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

ECONOMIC: The Delaware Bay Oyster Revitalization Program has been a significant economic driver for local and regional economies. The program has generated millions of dollars in economic benefits through increased oyster abundance, improved habitat sustainability, and increased harvest levels. The program has also created new jobs and supported local businesses, including restaurants, seafood processors, and shellfish harvesters.

BANG FOR BUCK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investment</th>
<th>Bushels Planted</th>
<th>Bushels Harvested</th>
<th>Yield</th>
<th>Dockside Value</th>
<th>Economic Return</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$300,000</td>
<td>1,800,000</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>$2,566,461</td>
<td>$4,022,190</td>
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</tbody>
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