



Town of Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts
Shellfish Department
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August 2014 Report

The quahogs in the nursery rafts are growing well. We have been seeding the soft-shell clams out as they reach about ½ inch in the upweller. The wild scallop spat collectors did not indicate a good spawning event in Lagoon Pond. The scallops from the hatchery are growing well. We have started taking them down and seeding them out. Hopefully the seed we have from the Martha's Vineyard Shellfish Group will be enough to keep the numbers up.

This summer we had an algal bloom of the *Cochlodinium* again. The highest concentration seems to have been in the West Arm of the Lagoon but it was seen in patches throughout the pond. This is a dinoflagellate species that has been associated with bay scallop mortality so it is a big concern. This is the third consecutive summer we have seen it. Last year it stayed around for weeks and we also saw it in both Farm and Sengekontacket Ponds.

We are trying to assure the crab traps are tended at least weekly; sometimes it is us and sometimes it is Jeff Clements.

Dr Mary Carman has been over on a monthly basis collecting eelgrass/sea squirt samples in Farm, Lagoon and Sengekontacket Ponds. We are not seeing as many sea squirts this year; perhaps due to the wet July, Rain fall data will be reviewed over this coming winter.

Dr. Carman has received funding for 2 other projects and she wants to use Oak Bluffs sites. One is related to the invasive jelly fish known as the "clinging jellyfish". It is aptly named as it tends to stick to your skin and keeps stinging until it is removed. The second involves a particularly aggressive invasive colonial sea squirt. This particular species has been found to be acidic. This species has been found growing on shellfish. Acids dissolve shell. I am particularly concerned with their effects on our thin shelled scallops.

I made a brief power point presentation on what this department does at the annual summer taxpayer forum.

The Town met with representatives from FEMA but so far we have not been awarded the funds to re-open the little bridge channel. The longer we wait the more sand fills in and the bigger the project becomes.

Last month we had Sengekontacket closed for 22 days due to rainfall closure status. July threshold is only 0.2 inches of rain. For August and September the threshold jumps to a full one inch.

The pilot project allowing Dick's Bait and Tackle to sell non-resident shellfish licenses seems to be working.. This project will be reviewed this coming fall and a decision will be made whether to continue the project or not.

Respectfully submitted,