



Shellfish Department
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July 2019 Report

The Board of Selectmen has appointed Marissa Quell as the full time year round Deputy Constable. I am excited to have her start at the end of this month and am looking forward to what she may bring to the department. Gedeon Pil continues to be an ace at phytoplankton identification and has really stepped up in his role as part time summer Deputy. Will McBrian, our LPA intern, has proven his abilities with boat handling. Gedeon and Will have been a great team and have been working hard to fill in the personnel gaps of the department. They have been focusing on; predator control, maintaining the steamer upweller, and water sampling.

The Martha's Vineyard shellfish group has had another good year for quahogs. We have 2.7 million growing in our nursery rafts and tidal upweller. They are growing at equal rates. Those in the upweller will be moved to rafts as the oysters grow and need the room in the upweller.

We have 500,000 oysters in the tidal upweller. They are almost doubling in size weekly with the largest about 1/2" in size. I have started seeding out overwintered oysters in the area around Pecoy Point. There has been a very high survival rate and good growth in the first few cages. I expect the rest to show the same.

We have received 350,000 steamer clams so far. The second half of the order is expected in a couple of weeks. Their delay has been due to colder water temperatures and a water quality issue reported from Salem State.

The first round of bay scallop seed is expected this week. I intend to talk with the MV Shellfish Group about spawning time. They try to match the natural spawn. If it is possible to receive the seed earlier in the season we will be able to grow them longer and probably larger before we seed them into the ponds. This may help lower mortality rates. I will be growing some of the scallops in Sengekontacket as well as the Lagoon to compare growth rates, mortality, and general health.

We have been conducting weekly water sampling in the Lagoon which has shown many types of phytoplankton. Concentrations of harmful varieties are either nonexistent or extremely low and not considered harmful to humans or shellfish. We have also seen high concentrations of shellfish larvae. There is currently a small bloom of protoperidinium in the Lagoon. It is harmless but can cause discolorations of the water.

This month started with a rainfall closure of Sengekontacket. The pond is currently under a second closure that is scheduled to lift Thursday, July 18th.

The new motor has made it in and the boat is at the mechanic for installation. I am looking forward to seeing progress with it over the next month as staff scheduling provides time.

Respectfully submitted,