



Town of Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts

**Shellfish Department**

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October 2019 Report

A major focus this month has been the Farm Pond restoration project. I have spent a considerable amount of time reviewing reports, files, and emails to get up to date with the project. There have been a couple of meetings with the Town's Coastal Infrastructure group and phone calls with many of the involved agencies and individuals. The Division of Environmental Restoration, the co-sponsor of the project, was about to decommission the project. I have expressed the importance of the ponds restoration and I believe the Division will continue to classify it as a priority. There are a few hurdles to get over involving studies, regulations, and funding. With renewed interest, I think it may be possible to bring the project to completion. According to the MEP report, increasing the inlet size is likely to reduce total nitrogen levels and indicates that pond restoration is likely by increasing size. Increasing the inlet is also an important part of the Town's CWMP as studies show the reduction of total nitrogen is likely to result in no need to take other actions to reduce nitrogen loading, ie no need for sewerage in the neighborhood.

It has been a good season of growth for all of the species we propagate. The tidal upweller has been emptied and the oysters have been placed in bottom cages for overwintering. The tidal upweller will be hauled out for the winter in the next couple of weeks.

Quahogs have been seeded out in both Sengekontacket and Lagoon Pond. The nursery rafts have been stored for the season.

The scallop seed we have been growing is coming along nicely. I have cleared one of the lines from the Lagoon. Average size is currently about one inch with the larger ones being just over 1 ½ inches. Over the next month we will be emptying the rest of the bags and clearing the lines for the winter. The scallop nursery cages that were placed in the Lagoon were very productive. All cages have been removed and stored.

Scallop season has had a slow start in Sengekontacket Pond. I have seen a good amount of seed in the Lagoon and there have been reports of a couple areas of adult sets, but I am not expecting much to be taken from either pond this season.

The Tisbury Harbormaster reported no boats were pumped out in the Lagoon last month. This is not surprising as there were very few boats anchored for overnight stays.

The Hale family gave a presentation on their proposed marina expansion at this month's Lagoon Pond Association meeting. While they brought up good points about their business, I don't see the association supporting their expansion plans as it may be in conflict with LPA's mission. The project has moved to the MV Commission for review.

Respectfully submitted,