



Town of Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts

Shellfish Department

P.O. Box 1327

Oak Bluffs, MA 02557-1327

Telephone: (508) 693-0072

Fax: (508) 696-6472

Charles Fisher
Shellfish Constable
Herring Warden

November 2019 Report

Last week we finished seeding out the last of our scallops of the season. While there was still a large range in size, the average was about 1 ½” with the largest around 2” across. I held some of the medium-large stock for over wintering. We lined a couple of scallop nursery cages with mesh to deter predators, put a few dozen seed in each cage, and secured them to the bottom near the hatchery. In Sengekontacket, I used a bottom cage we generally use for oysters. It is located just off of Gravel Island.

I have been compiling information on progress that has been made in the past few years with the Farm Pond restoration project. A new grant from NOAA for coastal and marine restoration has been announced. It is intended for new projects and not those for water quality improvement measures that rely primarily upon hard infrastructure, but there are a few loopholes that the Farm Pond restoration project might fit through. Maintenance dredging has been completed today.

Dredging of the little bridge channel is scheduled for late December/early January. I am working on moving the date up as the channel continues to fill in.

Dredge work is underway in Sengekontacket. I took some water samples with the Commission before the work started and will take more upon completion. I intend to compare the samples to quantify the benefits.

Farm Pond and the Harbor were tested by DMF on 10/29 and 11/6. Results for both sites and tests came back with relatively high levels of coliform bacteria. Both test dates followed significant rainfalls and high tides. The end of October was a period of “King Tides”. Due to these results, I have not been able to open either bodies of water to shellfishing. DMF will be back on Thursday, 11/21 to re-test. With average tides, no rain or heavy wind in the forecast, I am hopeful that results will be favorable for opening. If the tests are clean, I would like to recommend asking the Select board at their meeting on 12/3 for their approval to open the Harbor on Saturday, 12/7.

The tidal upweller has been hauled out for the season. Minor repairs will be completed this month.

I am planning to attend the annual Milford Aquaculture Seminar in mid-January. This is a forum for technology transfer among staff; aquaculture, scientific and academic communities; regulators; and the public. This seminar consists of a welcome session and two days of technical sessions predominantly focused on shellfish aquaculture.

Respectfully submitted,