



Town of Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts

Shellfish Department

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Charles Fisher
Shellfish Constable
Herring Warden

September 2021 Report

Marco Petricone and Mike Stenz, our part time Deputies have really stepped up to fill the void since the departure of Marissa Quell. They have done a great job helping me with our propagation programs, gear work, and regulation enforcement. They proved how well they work together during our preparations for Hurricane Henri last month and continue to be valuable assets to the Department.

Members of our Shellfish Committee and I conducted interviews of the top three candidates for the full time deputy position last week. I am writing my recommendation and will submit it to the Select Board upon completion.

Growth rates of the four species we propagate continue to be at or above average. The quahog seed we received from the Martha's Vineyard Shellfish Group got a little shaken up by Henri but their growth has been exceptional. I have started to seed some of it into Sengekontacket. We will continue to do so throughout the month. The one negative we have experienced this year has been the current results from our scallop sanctuaries. These are floating cages we fill with brood stock and hang spat bags from to catch their spawn. Results have been very few in Sengekontacket and NONE in the Lagoon. Neighboring towns that we share these ponds with have seen the same results. We have put new spat bags on all sanctuaries in hopes of catching a late spawn, which has been an increasing occurrence over the past few years. Scallop seed provided by the Shellfish Group is growing well in both ponds. I have been experimenting with them in our upweller in the harbor and am seeing positive results.

We will be taking part in the quahog relay on the 14th, 15th, and 16th of this month. If anyone would like to lend a hand, please let me know or come to the little bridge parking lot around 4:30 any of these days. The Department will join the MV Shellfish Group in an outreach event for the Library's Maritime Month. Participants will learn about the benefits of oysters as they help seed Sengekontacket with the oysters we have been growing since last year. All participants are asked to pre-register. Information can be found on the library's web page <https://oakbluffslibrary.org/maritime-month-2021/>.

I was recently notified that we did not receive funding for CZM's resiliency grant. This was quite a disappointment as we were strongly encouraged to apply by some of the people reviewing applications and deciding on awards. I have requested a call to discuss reasons and what can be done to improve our application. The short reason received so far is duplication of studies and efforts and an encouragement to use consultants familiar with the DOT permitting process. Fuss and O'Neill was originally brought on for this reason but it appears to be time to reassess firms.

Respectfully submitted,

Chuck Fisher
Oak Bluffs Shellfish Constable