Oysters in Maryland
Past, Present and Future

A presentation for the Citizens Advisory Committee
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Can use harvest over time as a proxy to examine the Maryland oyster population.
Historic and Current Oyster Population

Can use harvest over time as a proxy to examine the Maryland oyster population.
Basics of Harvesting and Sanctuaries

Oyster Management Zones

As of 2010
Basics of Harvesting and Sanctuaries

• Season: Oct 1 to Mar 31
• Minimum size: 3 inches
• Between 12 to 15 bushels per day (Monday-Friday) for most gear types (150 per day for sail dredge)
• Approximately 1,100 harvesters in 2014-2015
• Harvest allowed in PSFA and non-restricted MDE areas

Oyster Management Zones

Diving for oysters
Patent tongs
Hand tongs
Sail dredge and power dredge

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- 29 sanctuaries prior to 2010
  • Smaller and isolated
  • 9% of oyster bottom
- 30 new sanctuaries established in 2010
  • Protected 50% of the “best bars” – most productive areas
  • Multiple oyster bars in each sanctuary and non-oyster bottom areas in between
  • Encompasses multiple salinity zones in the Bay
- 24% of oyster bottom currently in a sanctuary
- No commercial harvest of oysters in sanctuaries (with exception of aquaculture leases)
- Currently, three sanctuaries with active restoration activities occurring; two more sanctuaries in the future

Oyster Management Zones
Oyster Restoration Approaches

First three sanctuaries receiving restoration activities in Maryland

Harris Creek: Completed restoration of 372 acres of oyster bottom. Currently monitoring to determine if meets criteria to be defined as a restored area.

Little Choptank: Goal of restoring 442 acres. To date, have applied restoration activities to 143 acres.

Tred Avon: Goal of restoring 147 acres. To date, have applied restoration activities to 16 acres.

Restoration activities include emplacing substrate and planting hatchery spat-on-shell:

- Oyster shell
- Mixed shell: clam, whelk, etc.
- Fossil oyster shell
- Rock
- Spat-on-shell
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A combination of all restoration activities can create 3-D oyster reefs having multiple ecological benefits.

Harris Creek October 2015

[Image of underwater scene with oyster shells and restoration activities]

- Oyster shell
- Mixed shell: clam, whelk, etc.
- Fossil oyster shell
- Rock
- Spat-on-shell
Understanding the Basics of Aquaculture

- Currently, 237 of the 334 leaseholders have a commercial fishing license
- In 2013, 498 individuals were permitted to work on leases
- The average wholesale price per bushel for farm-raised oysters in 2014 was $56
- The average wholesale price per oyster sold by count in 2014 was $0.41 and $0.60 for retail
- Estimated dockside value in 2014 was $3 million

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Leases</th>
<th>Acres</th>
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<td>334</td>
<td>4,182</td>
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*Started reporting harvest from leases in 2012*