From the Mouth of the Bay

With summer winding down and a string of hurricanes taking aim at the East Coast it seems as though everyone I talk to is busier than ever. Always behind and never able to get caught up, is the mantra of today. It is easy to get caught up in the day-to-day needs of running your business, dealing with the never ending parade of crises, and tracking the ever increasing flow of information and news calling for your attention. This is one of the reasons business professionals depend on trade organizations like the ECSGA to filter all that information and separate what is really important from what’s not.

As small business owners you have your hands full paying the bills and keeping product moving out the door. You can’t be expected to digest the river of news, policy reports, research articles and regulatory changes that could impact your business. As small business professionals you need to have someone you can count on defending your way of life and ensuring that you don’t get blindsided by some bureaucratic snafu. Chances are you don’t have the time or resources to do proper market development and sales research to ensure that the markets for tomorrow’s crops are strong enough to support today’s prices. You don’t have time to write letters in favor of critical research efforts that could make your job easier, or to craft editorials educating the public about the great environmental benefits of our industry.

This is why most over-worked business professionals become members of a trade association that can represent them and stand up for their way of life. In the aquaculture industry we are fortunate to have a number of strong allies and supporters: a great cadre of extension agents who really care about our industry, dozens of committed researchers looking for solutions to our most vexing challenges, and even many in the regulatory community who will take our side and defend us from those who would prefer that we didn’t mar their view or impede their recreation.

As I look around at the folks I work with I feel privileged to work in this industry. We have a great story to tell: natural and nutritious products, culture methods that clean the water and enhance habitat, sustainable jobs and economic development.

— Bob Rheault
Executive Director
Open-Ocean Shellfish Aquaculture

By Kevin Heasman, Cawthron

New Zealand’s mussel farms occupy 0.02 percent of its coastal area, producing between 90,000 and 100,000 metric tons (220 million pounds) of Green-shell™ mussels each year, 66 percent of which is exported to 78 countries1. The industry is highly automated. For example, vessels in excess of 100 feet with four crew members are regularly harvesting, de-clumping and size grading over 220,000 pounds of mussels a day in the inshore waters of New Zealand. They can also seed mussel ropes at a density of 60 mussels per foot, at a rate of around 3 feet per second.

There is still space available for inshore aquaculture, but there will be a time in the not-too-distant future when user conflicts will bring pressure to bear on the space available. In preparation for this, some industry members, in association with Maori, have gone through the resource consent process to gain access to open-ocean growing areas located between five and 11 miles off the coast. The process has taken a lot of time due to regulatory requirements, but there are now three farms larger than 5,500 acres (the biggest is over 8,000 acres) with full permits to grow mussels, and two small farms of between 1,000 and 2,000 acres.

Cawthron has been at the forefront of the development of open-ocean aquaculture in New Zealand. Cawthron is an independent, community owned research center, with over 180 scientific and technical staff members. Among other things, it undertakes research and development at its aquaculture facility, focusing on wealth creation through aquaculture, with a strong focus on shellfish. For more information and to view a short video of the open-ocean structure model visit www.cawthron.org.nz.

To date, open-ocean development has been undertaken in depths ranging from 100 to 220 feet. For the past eight years we have looked at a large range of parameters, including: structural development and modeling, phytoplankton, total suspended solids, biofouling, water temperatures and currents, waves, shellfish growth at different depths, benthic effects, and other species associated with the farm. We intend to continue the work, funding permitting.

Using longline systems that will probably be around 600 feet long should result in harvests of 80,000 to 90,000 pounds. On the big farms there is potential for up to 900 of these lines, realizing a possible 72 to 81 million pounds per farm. Except for some surface markers, most of the structures will be submerged.

The New Zealand shellfish farmer is acutely aware that the most pristine conditions will produce the most desirable product, just as the government and environmental bodies are. Therefore farmers have to do a baseline study of the area prior to a staged development, and perform annual monitoring to ensure the environment is looked after.

Because there is so much space, the ropes can be spread far apart, possibly 300 feet between each. This has advantages. If the ropes are spread out, then their impact on the environment is reduced. To date the experimental ropes in New Zealand have shown no measurable impact on the benthic fauna under them – in fact, some species appear to have increased. Although we do not think it is going to be an issue, benthic impacts may change as the number of ropes increases, which is why the developments are staged with a set number of ropes allowed every year until the impacts are identified and quantified. Confining the ropes to a small area also increases the amount of

fouling transfer between ropes, which increases labor costs and crop losses. Having said that, the fouling rate in the open ocean is much lower than it is close inshore.

Many people – particularly environmental activists – seem to forget that a shellfish farm is not the same as a finfish farm. You do not feed a shellfish farm and so the benthic build-up is not nearly as profound as with a finfish farm. Some people have also suggested that the farming structures will “destroy” the fisheries, etc. This is a myth. Our experience has shown that the structures are acting as mid-water reefs and fish-attracting devices, drawing a wide range of flora and fauna, including fishermen. In fact, the inshore farms in the Coromandel in New Zealand can attract up to 700 fishermen on a summer’s weekend.

Spacing the ropes far apart also mean that the farm can be designed to allow commercial fishermen access if so desired. For those lobster fishermen who are concerned, our preliminary results suggest that there may actually be a net benefit to the lobsters, since there will be more food about. However, this will have to be researched further.

So in all it is an exciting prospect with a lot of potential spinoff benefits. We think that with all stakeholders collaborating, the open-ocean industry will go ahead with monitored impacts and controlled responses resulting in a very productive system.

Kevin Heasman ([kevin.heasman@cawthron.org.nz](mailto:kevin.heasman@cawthron.org.nz)) is an aquaculture scientist working with the Aquaculture and Biotechnology group within Cawthron. He is the program manager for open-ocean aquaculture and has worked on open-ocean aquaculture in New Zealand since 2003. He recently spent a month visiting various projects in the United States and Canada on a fact-finding and collaborative exchange mission.
For the past 10 years, the NY/NJ Baykeeper, a non-profit advocate for the the Hudson-Raritan Estuary and Harbor, has been working on oyster restoration projects in the waters around Raritan Bay.

In 2000, the organization established a reef on Liberty Flats in front of the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor and placed spat-on-shell oysters there. That was followed by similar projects off Keyport Harbor and at the aptly named Oyster Point in the Navesink River off Red Bank, NJ. All of these waters are categorized as “Special Restricted,” and both the Keyport area and the Navesink River have hard clam stocks that are harvested either for depuration or during seasonal water openings in the winter.

The restoration process relied on either spat-on-shell oysters or on singles that were raised by shellfish gardeners associated with the Baykeeper organization. Aside from the ecological benefits that the group believed the oysters would provide, their work also underscored the need for water quality remediation and protection in those bays and estuaries.

This year, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), having recently given the group another site on which to establish a reef in the nearby Shrewsbury River, rescinded their approval for this stock restoration program and the accompanying oyster research by Rutgers scientists. NJDEP would no longer issue permits for the gardening of commercial species, even for ecological projects, in prohibited or restricted waters. In an August 9 news release, newly appointed NJDEP Commissioner Bob Martin reasoned that the action was taken to safeguard public health and to protect the health and viability of the state’s $790-million-a-year shellfish industry (his estimate, not this writer’s), which could be severely damaged by an illness outbreak related to gardened or restored shellfish raised for research or educational projects.

Debbie Mans, executive director of the local Baykeeper organization, said that the agency was “using (their) small research project to hide the larger problem – that DEP has for years been underfunding and understaffing its shellfish patrol program state-wide.”

The DEP offered to allow the Baykeeper to transport the oysters from their off-bottom bagged grow-out program to Delaware Bay, since the agency felt that Delaware Bay was the only place in the state where the shellfish patrols were adequate. Some find this statement hard to understand, since there is an extremely large concentration of hard clams in Raritan Bay, as well as several areas in the Atlantic coastal bay waters of the state with huge concen-

— Continued on page 14
The weather at the 36th Annual Milford (CT) Oyster Festival on August 20th and 21st was delightful – clear skies and not too hot – and ECSGA sold nearly 18,000 raw and roasted oysters and clams, 400 cups of clam chowder and 700 portions of fried clam strips and fried oysters. The Milford festival continues to be ECSGA’s major fundraising event each year, and the raw oysters were opened by professional shuckers who also competed in an oyster shucking contest sponsored by the association.

This year, the ECSGA and the Oyster Festival committee (AMOF) pledged financial support for the Gulf Coast oyster industry hurt by the oil spill. In addition to the direct contribution by ECSGA and AMOF to Friends of the Fishermen, a charity in Louisiana assisting needy individuals and families who depend on the oyster for their livelihood, the AMOF set up jars to accept public donations for this cause. Two of the oyster shuckers traveled from the Gulf Coast to help out in the food booth.

In all, 12 shuckers competed in the shucking contest, with Luis Iglesia of Manhattan’s Grand Central Oyster Bar taking home top honors. Iglesia was followed closely by Bob Hastings of Hanover, PA; Anton Christen of Boston’s Union Oyster House; and “Stormin” Norman Conerly of Acme Oyster House, New Orleans.

Coming up over the Columbus Day weekend, October 8-11, 2010, the ECSGA will again be providing happy festival goers with raw and fried shellfish at the Long Island Fall Festival at Heckscher Park in Huntington, NY (www.lifallfestival.com). We are actively seeking volunteers to help in the booth. As this is your organization we hope you will consider lending a hand. We intend to work hard and have a lot of fun. It's a great way to interact with others who believe in the mission of the ECSGA.
ECSGA Publishes Shellfish Culture BMP Manual


The manual includes three major sections:
- A Code of Conduct;
- A BMP section with a discussion of issues and suggested BMP statements for specific farm operations; and
- A shellfish farm template with suggestions for farm-level BMP elements and a sample farm management plan.

Each section also discusses an issue important for shellfish farmers to address, while offering suggested BMP statements that an individual farm can adopt as is or modify for incorporation into the farm’s BMP.

The new East Coast manual is the result of extensive communication with experts and others involved with shellfish aquaculture, including growers, regulators, academics, non-government agencies (NGOs) and other stakeholders. The ECSGA held 20 workshops in 11 states with a total participation of 370 people from industry, the regulatory community and various other stakeholder groups. The discussions were broken down into four main topic areas: gear/operation and maintenance, user conflicts, permitting/siting, and environmental concerns.

The manual was produced with funding from the NOAA Aquaculture Program, USDA-NIFA, and the Northeastern Regional Aquaculture Center (NRAC) in cooperation with Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Toms River, NJ; Coastal Resource Specialists of Orleans, MA; and Aquatecnics of Milford, CT. The East Coast manual echoes a similar document that was developed for the West Coast shellfish industry.

For more information and to create your own farm-specific BMP document using our template, a Microsoft Excel file in macro format (.xlsm), visit the What's New section of our home page at www.ECSGA.org and click on *Best Management Practices Manual and BMP Template*.

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Update on the Outbreak of Oyster Herpesvirus in Europe

By Ryan Carnegie
Associate Research Scientist
VIMS Shellfish Pathology Laboratory

Oysters have been in the papers recently, though not much of the news has been good. Besides the widespread impacts of the Gulf oil spill, the negative economic effects of which are significantly impacting our region, there is news of oysters dying again in Europe. For the third year in a row, culture of the Pacific oyster (*Crassostrea gigas*) has been devastated by an outbreak of oyster herpesvirus. I took the opportunity during recent travel to France to talk with colleagues in the shellfish pathology community about the situation there, and gained more perspective after my return by consulting a Dutch colleague.

Here I’ll share what I have learned. First, what has been happening in Europe? “Summer mortality” of Pacific oysters has long imposed modest losses on the Pacific oyster industry in Europe, and an oyster herpesvirus (a shellfish pathogen that poses no human health risk) has been recognized as one possible contributor. However, in the summer of 2008 elevated mortality of 40 percent to 100 percent, primarily affecting spat and juveniles (12-18 months old), swept all major Pacific oyster growing areas in France. (The flat oyster, *Ostrea edulis*, was not affected, nor were clams, cockles, or mussels.)

High mortalities recurred in 2009 and again this year, beginning in the Mediterranean Sea and spreading north along the Atlantic coast to the English Channel. Local appearance of disease and mortality corresponded with water temperatures reaching 15°C, and an oyster herpesvirus identified years earlier was detected in most moribund oysters. Three *Vibrio* species (*V. splendidus*, *V. aestuarianus*, and *V. harveyi*) were also detected, but the role of these bacteria in the outbreaks is not well resolved. The role of the virus itself as a primary agent of disease and mortality is not sufficiently resolved in everyone’s minds, though the pathology community in Europe views the oyster herpesvirus as the major problem.

The current disease outbreak was initially limited to France. However, in 2009 Pacific oysters began dying in Ireland. Mortality occurred in 15 growing areas, and the oyster herpesvirus was detected in 14 of these areas. All affected areas had received oyster seed from France, while areas receiving seed from England or the Channel Islands were not affected. This summer, heavy Pacific oyster mortality has occurred in southeastern England, again associated with the oyster herpesvirus and again (I am told) in an area that received seed from France. The recent expansion to England was unfortunate in that it could have been avoided, but interests in France, the presumed source of the virus, have fiercely opposed any attempts to restrict importation of their oyster seed, which they view as illegal restriction on commerce. Regulations will soon be in place (if they are not already) that may prevent the transplantation of affected oyster stocks to virus-free areas, but given the openness of coastal systems, the spread of the oyster herpesvirus to all major Pacific oyster growing areas in Europe, including those in the British Isles, may now be inevitable. My Dutch colleague wrote, “I see this as the most serious problem for shellfish culture in Europe since the problems with Marteilia and Bonamia in the past.”

As noted earlier, the oyster herpesvirus has been known to infect Pacific oysters in Europe (as well as Asia and the West Coast of North America) for years. Why has it become such a problem recently?

While changes in the environment are one possibility, the worsening disease impact of the last three years appears to relate to the appearance of a unique viral genotype to which Pacific oysters may be acutely susceptible. This new variant, “OsHV-μVar,” was unknown prior to 2008, but was present in 43 percent of samples from mortality events that year. Now, it is the only oyster herpesvirus genotype detected in virus-affected areas in France, Ireland, and England. The sudden emergence of this OsHV-μVar viral genotype, in association with sharply higher oyster mortality rates, has led the European community to treat this not as a simple intensification of “summer mortality,” but as the emergence of what basically is a new pathogen. What caused it to emerge is unknown.

How the Pacific oyster industry in Europe will move forward is also unclear. The French oyster industry has begun to push for another introduction of *C. gigas* broodstock from Asia, but biosecurity considerations — Continued on page 13
With the hottest days of summer behind us, growers in the Northeast can stop worrying about Vibrio bacteria contamination, but growers in the South still need to remain vigilant for a few more weeks; as long as growing waters stay above 20˚C (68˚F), the risk of contamination remains. Keeping shellfish shaded and cool until it is in the walk-in cooler is the best defense we have against bacterial growth.

At the September Interstate Shellfish Seminar I saw a presentation by Dr. John Jacobs, a NOAA modeler who has been developing a predictive tool to estimate Vibrio levels in the Chesapeake by measuring Vibrio levels and correlating them with a handful of environmental parameters. Temperature and salinity seem to predict most of the variation in Vibrio parahaemolyticus levels, with his data showing that Chesapeake growers need to remain cautious well into October.

Several states have had problems with Vibrio illnesses this summer. The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene issued a news release in mid-August after a spate of wound infections in bathers and a handful of Vibrio illnesses that were probably related to out-of-state product. Unfortunately, the release triggered an avalanche of news articles that seemed to implicate Maryland shellfish.

Just about every state is seeing more Vibrio cases, because doctors are testing more samples, and hospitals and state authorities are doing a better job of reporting the illnesses to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). So even if actual illness rates per meal are declining, CDC is likely to report an increase in illnesses tied to shellfish consumption.

The ECSGA has been proactive in trying to educate growers and dealers about Vibrio risks. With grants from WHOI Sea Grant, RI Sea Grant, SC Sea Grant, the ISSC, NOAA and Rutgers Cooperative Extension we have been conducting workshops and distributing brochures. Many growers are installing shade tarps, swamp coolers and big ice chests on their harvest boats. One grower proudly reported that he measured a 10 to 12 degree drop in the temperature of clams being held on deck after he installed new cooling equipment this summer. As you can see from the above illustration, 10 degrees can make a huge difference.

All ECSGA members will be receiving packets of flyers that were specially designed with different audiences in mind. The one meant for harvesters shows the importance of keeping shellfish cool. Our rack card for truckers explains steps they need to take to protect our product. The third brochure is meant to be displayed at retail counters, and asks customers to keep shellfish cool on the ride home and to cook it if they are immune compromised. We are also appealing to health professionals in each state to assist us in placing these brochures at seafood counters when they do their inspections.

— Continued on page 10
Dear Fellow Members,

The Fall is upon us, and with what is sure to be a good selling season, will also be the November elections. Interestingly, we all have a take on what the election outcome will be, as well as who are our favorite candidates. Have you ever considered what it would take to get someone elected who was pro-shellfish? Someone who was pro-aquaculture? If this sounds silly or preposterous to you then you probably haven't ever worked for a candidate.

Many candidates, both federal and local, need your help to win. Should you choose to spend some of your time helping a candidate, you would be surprised at the results. The blinders will come off for one, and you will see how much your input and opinion matter and count in these elections.

November is only seven weeks away. Your participation in the elections in your state and community will have a positive result and benefit to you and all of us. What do you have to lose? Get involved locally! You can make a big difference in the outcome of these elections and also can be a positive force for change.

— Tom Kehoe

President-East Coast Shellfish Growers Association
K & B Seafood, Inc.

Join Our LISTSERV

If you haven't joined the ECSGA e-mail LISTSERV yet you're missing out on lots of timely news and information. It's free and easy to get started. Click the Join button on www.ECSGA.org, then click on the “Join the ECSGA email listserve” link at the bottom of the page.

The volume of posts is not overwhelming and the list is our primary conduit for delivering important news, grant information and action alerts to our members.

Upcoming Events 2010 and 2011

Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association annual meeting and conference, Sept. 20-23, Tacoma, WA. www.pcsga.org/events
Wellfleet Oyster Fest, Oct. 16-17, Wellfleet, MA. www.wellfleetoysterfest.org
Vibrios in the Environment 2010, Nov. 7-12, Biloxi, MS. www.joss.ucar.edu/vibrios_2010
International Conference on Shellfish Restoration, Nov. 17-20, Charleston, SC. www.scseagrant.org/content/?cid=297
Aquaculture America 2011, Feb. 28 – Mar. 3, New Orleans, LA. www.was.org
National Shellfisheries 103rd annual meeting, March 27-31, Baltimore, MD. shellfish.org/annual-meeting

Links and more information are available on the Events page of the ECSGA website: www.ECSGA.org
You can see all three brochures and even view the material that is covered in the workshops online from our website. If you are not worried about Vibrios then it is important for you to look at these materials carefully. We cannot afford to be careless with our shellfish. We have made substantial investments in our businesses and the impacts of a few Vibrio illnesses could be severe and potentially crippling. In addition to the hassle of a recall, damage to markets, and lost sales, you can expect stringent harvest limits and a list of new regulatory mandates that will include closures and potentially forced post-harvest processing.

So it really pays to invest in a little ice and a shade tarp, and to have a little talk with that guy you know who seems content to leave his harvest out in the sun. We have two choices: we can do a better job, or we can just complain when the FDA shuts us down.

**Vibrio Issues**  
— Continued from page 8

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The newly published, *Oyster: A World History* claims to be the first book tracing the world history of the delectable mollusc. Its publication coincides with the UK’s Month of the Oyster. London-based author Drew Smith is a food writer, former editor of *The Good Food Guide*, and restaurant writer for *The Guardian*.

Present in all of human history, right back to the Neolithic, oysters have inspired great writers, painters, and cooks, while sustaining whole communities and becoming the stuff of legend and history. A hundred years ago oysters were the most valuable harvest in the world. Today the oyster has become an emblem of environmental concern, a barometer of global warming, and possibly a means of feeding the planet in the future.

Drew Smith reveals the full scandal of what has happened to the oyster industry in the UK. He also describes how in the United States the oyster is being replanted to clear the waters and create flood defences against hurricanes; in Japan and Korea it is at the forefront of the modern science of aquaculture; in France it has been looked after so well that the oyster industry is now the fourth largest economy in the world. Included in the publication are beautiful color plates of Dutch Masters’ depictions of oysters.

The book promises to deliver a whole array of incredible facts about oysters you never knew before – from pleasure, pearls, politics, piracy and piety to poverty:

- Before the pyramids were built, Indians in Mississippi were roasting oysters.
- Oysters are one of the healthiest foods we can eat, providing essential salts and minerals. Science has shown they are also an aphrodisiac.
- Many of our greatest cities were built because it was where oysters were available: Glasgow, London, New York, Naples, Hiroshima.

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**This is Your Newsletter**

We’re always looking for new content for the newsletter, so if there’s a topic that you’d like to learn more about, let us know and we’ll try to find someone who knows about it or do some investigative reporting ourselves.

If you have experience in an area that other growers might find interesting, please feel free to submit a short piece.

Either way, we’re looking for your input, so please do your part! Thanks!

— Kathy Rhodes

krhodes23@optonline.net
Enhanced Japanese Scallop Fisheries Enter MSC Assessment

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) announced that the Japanese scallop fishery, with the largest scallop harvest in the world, is entering into full MSC assessment. The fishery will be assessed against the MSC standard for well managed and sustainable fisheries, and if successful, their products will be eligible to bear the MSC ecolabel. This is of interest because the MSC has so far only certified wild harvest fisheries.

Harvests of the the scallop dredge fishery plus the two enhanced scallop fisheries – hanging and seabed-ranching – reached 433,000 metric tons (un-shucked) in 2008; the largest scallop landing of its kind in the world. The catch has been exported mainly to Europe and Southeast Asia.

Executive Officer Hirokazu Sakide of Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association said, “For the Japanese scallop fisheries, operating sustainably with limited impacts on marine eco-systems has always been a priority. Consumers are now increasingly demanding seafood sourced from sustainable and well managed [fisheries]. This is why all scallop fishermen in Hokkaido decided to seek MSC certification collectively. We hope that the assessment will be successful, and look forward to being able to promote our scallops with the MSC ecolabel globally and in Japan.”

The MSC’s Deputy Chief Executive, Chris Ninnes, welcomed the announcement, saying, “I am delighted to see the Hokkaido Gyoren's Japanese scallop fisheries moving forward into full assessment. If successful, MSC certification will allow scallops from this fishery to bear the internationally recognised MSC ecolabel that enables consumers to recognise and reward sustainable fisheries management. We wish the scallop fishery well during the assessment.”

Oyster Herpesvirus Outbreak — Continued from page 7

How is this situation relevant to shellfish culture interests in our region? First, we might ask whether oyster herpesviruses pose any threat to us. No oyster herpesvirus is known from our waters, and an introduction via shellfish from potentially infected populations in Europe and the Pacific Ocean is unlikely, particularly as plans to introduce a non-native oyster like Crassostrea ariakensis have been abandoned. It may be the case that local shellfish species are not even susceptible to these pathogens. The potential for an introduction and outbreak of any oyster herpesvirus, including the emergent OsHV-μVar genotype, for now seems remote.

The European situation is perhaps best viewed as a cautionary tale about the scale and structure of a shellfish aquaculture industry. Pacific oyster culture in Europe is industrial in scale, with very large numbers of non-endemic Pacific oysters produced at densities that may approach the carrying capacity of some coastal systems. Seed are still collected naturally in some locations, but much cultured seed (70 percent of production in France) is produced by a small number of large hatcheries and then distributed very broadly. The very intensive nature of the culture systems produces stressful conditions that can be conducive to outbreaks of disease. The broad dissemination of seed from a limited number of sources is a recipe for rapidly distributing an emerging pathogen and is probably central to the oyster herpesvirus story. It is probably the means by which the virus spread.

Here in the eastern United States, the smaller shellfish aquaculture industry retains an artisanal flavor. This is not necessarily a bad thing. We produce local endemic shellfish species, working with diverse broodstocks that are well suited to local environments, if not derived directly from them. Seed are produced by myriad hatcheries and nurseries of often small size dispersed widely along the coast. The geographic scale of transplantation is generally modest. Where shellfish are cultured, carrying capacities are probably not often approached. The industry along the East Coast will grow. Retaining some of these characteristics, however, will favor the health of cultured animals and increase the possibility that, unlike today in Europe, new diseases may be managed locally when they do emerge.
trations of hard clams in aquaculture plots, and one might wonder why these heavily concentrated areas lack adequate patrol. The department also had an issue with the shellfish gardeners, since it was the DEP Marine Enforcement Unit’s position that they had to inspect each of the sites where the Baykeeper’s gardeners kept their bags of oyster seed in order to comply with FDA Shellfish Patrol requirements. These oysters would eventually be placed on a reef, but these gardeners will no longer be growing oysters for restoration.

50,000 oysters that were removed by DEP decree were thrown away in a dumpster

The DEP offered that they make about 60 arrests of illegal harvesters or poachers in restricted waters each year, primarily in the NY/NJ Harbor and Raritan Bay, but a Baykeeper representative noted that none of those alleged violations were from poaching the oysters from their research. Some wonder why any poachers would focus on oysters when the Raritan and Sandy Hook bays produce about 35 million hard clams annually, indicating large easily poached concentrations, and anyone poaching oysters might have a hard time explaining to local seafood markets where those oysters came from, since the closest open oyster waters are in the Mullica River about 70 miles away.

The 50,000 oysters that were removed by DEP decree were thrown away in a dumpster, and the permit for the new reef in the Shrewsbury was revoked. It looks as if a couple of Baykeeper employees involved with the restoration program will likely be let go, the research will stop (unfortunate since they were documenting excellent marine life habitat benefits from the structures) and the group is now looking for other ways to bring the polluted water issues into the public view. The Baykeeper even offered to cover expenses for additional security and to install video cameras for surveillance. The organization is presently in negotiations with the Naval Weapons Station Earle, which has a 3-mile pier on Raritan Bay where munitions are loaded for shipment worldwide, to establish a reef in their very well watched security zone. The Navy at this point seems to be more accommodating of this possibility than the state of New Jersey.

The shellfish industry seems to be split on the restoration effort: some oyster producers from the Delaware Bay area were opposed to the restoration project in less-than-approved waters, while some clam growers didn’t see the risk as being that great.

What do you think?
Mail Membership form and dues to:
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Annual Dues Schedule

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Dealers/Suppliers $250
Associations $15/member
Non-voting $35

Member Benefits:
Listing on our website for growers, dealers and hatcheries
Listing on our website for growers, dealers and hatcheries
Advertising for suppliers in our newsletters
Representation to Federal agencies on matters of coast-wide impact
Immediate response to press inquiries and shellfish illness reports

Name ________________________________

Company / affiliation ____________________________

Address _______________________________________

City ___________________ State __________ Zip code __________

Phone ___________________ Fax ___________________

I am joining as a ___ Grower ___ Dealer ___ Equipment Supplier ___ Associate __________________________ Other

I would like to receive the newsletter in ___ written ___ e-mail ___ Both written and electronic format ___ Please add me to the ECSGA e-mail discussion list

e-mail address ________________________________

Dues Payment: __________________

For advertising rate information contact Bob Rheault (401) 783-3360
Visit our web site: www.ECSGA.org.
In This Issue

From the Mouth of the Bay ................................................................. page 1
New Zealand’s Open-Ocean Shellfish Culture ....................... pages 2, 3
New Jersey Halts Restoration Program ............................... pages 4, 14
ECSGA Festival Roundup ............................................................... page 5
European Oyster Herpesvirus Outbreaks ............................. pages 7, 13
Vibrio Issues .................................................................................. pages 8, 10
From the President ................................................................. page 9
Upcoming Events ................................................................. page 9
Chesapeake Bay Foundation Report ............................... page 10
Oyster: A World History Published ................................ page 12
Japanese Scallops Considered for MSC EcoLabel .......... page 13
Membership Form ................................................................. page 15