

OYSTERS

Healthy populations buffer coastlines, boost economies, and benefit marine life



Oysters overview

Oysters have been part of the human diet for millennia. In the Delaware Bay region, they were known as a valuable source of protein for Indigenous Peoples and European settlers alike.

Today, oyster populations are a fraction of what they once were due to pollution, disease, overharvest and destruction of habitat. This means communities are losing out, not only on fresh wild seafood, but also the many other benefits of oysters, which filter coastal water, provide habitat for marine life, buffer coastlines against storms, and support jobs and recreational activities.

Oysters are remarkably resilient, and under the right conditions, they can rebuild reefs quickly, often in one to three years. In Delaware, organizations are working to restore oyster reefs, and today's commercial harvests are considered sustainable thanks to the collaboration between fishers, scientists and managers.

OYSTER FACTS:

- A healthy adult oyster can filter the amount of water it takes to fill a small bathtub every day.
- Oysters live in brackish and saltwater bays, estuaries, tidal creeks, shallow ocean areas, and intertidal zones - regions submerged at high tide and exposed at low tide.
- Oyster shells are recyclable, and can be collected to build new reefs. Learn more about two shell recycling efforts in Delaware by visiting:
 - <https://delawareestuary.org/science-and-research/oysters/buy-cook-recycle-oysters/>
 - <https://www.inlandbays.org/projects-and-issues/all/dont-chuck-your-shucks/>



The Waterways Infrastructure and Investment Network (WIIN) is a coalition of partners and stakeholders that was awarded grant funding by the National Coastal Resilience Fund (through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) to create a natural resource evaluation and management plan for the Mispillion and Cedar Creek watersheds.

To learn more, visit us at: derascl.org/wiin.

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Sources: NOAA, PDE, CIB, Pew