

The M.A.A. Newsletter

Massachusetts Aquaculture Association

"Massachusetts' Aquaculture Trade Association"

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MAY 2004

2004 Industry Summit Big Success

The Industry Summit that was held April 10th at the Orleans Inn was a big success. Although the day was cold and dreary, we had a great turnout. Thanks very much to all who attended and a special thanks to the vendors who braved the cold out on the deck! Make it a point to visit the Orleans Inn on Rt. 6A Orleans, the food, view and hospitality are wonderful!

Shellfish can thrive on ice.. Winter a hidden blessing for Cape stocks

*(By DOUG FRASER, STAFF WRITER
Cape Cod Times March 29, 2004)*

When you gazed at the Arctic ice pack that was Cape Cod Bay this winter, could you smell fresh mussels steamed in white wine?

When you saw the smaller bays and river mouths frozen like northern lakes, were you transported by visions of bay scallops, lightly floured and pan-fried in butter?

These may seem non sequiturs, but Cape shellfishermen know that the second unusually cold winter in a row killed off the foreign species and diseases that plague our native shellfish.

Nauset Marsh in Eastham and Orleans, for example, has a huge green crab population that has been feasting on more than its rightful share of steamers, mussels and bay scallops during the past decade's temperate winters.

But prolonged cold is apparently its Achilles' heel. A survey of the stomach contents of striped bass, which eat green crabs, turned up little evidence of the crabs last year.

"I get green crabs for bait and after last winter the population was cut down to almost zero," said Barnstable fisherman John Nawoichik. "Now we have soft-shelled clams all over the place and the crabs aren't there to eat them, so we'll have a good catch there."

Green crabs were one of the first alien species to arrive in North America. A European import from the late 1800s, they clung to the vegetative growth on the hulls of ships sailing from the Baltic Sea.

Small, prolific and extremely aggressive, the green crab out-competes the native crab for food and is blamed for the collapse of the Maine soft-shelled clam industry. The U.S. government estimates that the green crab causes \$44 million in damage to shellfish production annually.

"In the last few years, they've been annihilated and last summer we saw enormous sets of blue mussels like we haven't seen in 10 years," said Henry Lind, Eastham's shellfish constable and harbor master, of the green crab in Nauset Marsh.

Everyone with a boat capable of towing a small scallop drag is hoping Lind is right when he says the diminished green crab population may also lead to improved bay scallop stocks.

Not only predators but shellfish diseases, most of which originated in warmer southern waters, also took a hit this winter. Another benefit of the deep freeze is the scouring effect on the sandy bottom of the ice being dragged by the tide.

Like a tiller, the ice exposes sharp-sided sand grains to which shellfish larvae attach.

"A hard winter means a good set of soft-shelled clams," said Lind.

Ice damage

But not everyone benefited from the iced-up waters. "Hey, you're working with nature. You got to grin and bear it," said aquaculturalist Mike Parlante.

Aquaculturalists plant thousands, sometimes millions of "seed" clams and/or oysters in cages on the tidal flats, protected from predators by netting. This winter Parlante watched helplessly as several large icebergs diverted water from the Herring River in Harwich onto his cages, burying oysters under a foot of sand, washing away nets and clams, and mixing up shellfish that had already been sorted for harvest. He estimates that an acre and a half of his four-acre grant was affected.

"I don't usually get hit that much. This is probably the worst year," he said.

It's not the pressure of the ice settling on cages and shellfish at low tide that causes problems, but the action of the tide and wind dragging ice chunks across the tidal flats when the ice pack has broken up. Aquaculturalists considered themselves lucky that the ice stayed frozen in place for most of the winter.

NEXT MAA MEETING AND NEWSLETTER

***Meeting announcement will be sent
to all growers and posted on the web site.***

New Report on Sustainable Aquaculture

(From: "SeaWeb Aquaculture Clearinghouse")

Dear Friend of the Coast:

We would like to bring to your attention the latest SeaWeb Aquaculture Clearinghouse report, At a Crossroads: Will Aquaculture Fulfill the Promise of the Blue Revolution? The 17-page report is downloadable on the Sustainable Aquaculture section of our website: www.seaweb.org/resources/sac/sustainable.html

This report recommends a new paradigm for aquaculture that is based on sustainable development with consideration given to environmental, social, and economic aspects of development. It identifies a number of alternative ways forward in the development of aquaculture, including ecological aquaculture, organic aquaculture, polyculture, mollusc farming, and closed and low discharge aquaculture. These alternative practices have been successfully implemented in different areas of the world; however, they must be examined for their application on a wider scale.

Clearly, aquaculture has an important role to play, as long as it's conducted in an environmentally and socially responsible way. SeaWeb encourages those who finance, practice and regulate aquaculture to ensure the health and productivity of coastal waters and watersheds, and local communities. The Clearinghouse looks forward to working with you to make this happen and we welcome your feedback on this report.

Sincerely,

Bill Mott, Director and Brendan O'Neill, Outreach Coordinator

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ATTENTION Finfish and Shellfish Farmers:

Your products made it onto the "Best Choices" list in the National Pocket Guide to Sustainable Seafood created by the Monterey Bay Aquarium. Congratulations to clam, mussel, and oyster farmers and tilapia farmers! Make good use of your product's designation in your advertisements

Eating to Conserve Fish Is Easy with New Pocket Guide

MONTEREY, California; February 12, 2004 (Environment News Service)— A national pocket guide to sustainable seafood created by the

Monterey Bay Aquarium is now available to consumers across the country. The tool can help people protect ocean wildlife every time they order seafood at restaurants and seafood markets.

The national guide features 60 of the most popular seafood species found on menus and in markets across the United States, ranked in “Best Choices,” “Caution” and “Avoid” categories by the aquarium’s Seafood Watch research team.

Topping the “Best Choices” list are items including farmed clams, mussels, and oysters, farmed catfish, farmed striped bass, farmed caviar, stone crab, wild-caught Alaska salmon, farmed tilapia, and Pacific halibut.

Added from website: The “Caution” list includes wild-caught clams, blue crabs, imitation crab, flounder, mahi-mahi, wild-caught oysters, scallops, trawl-caught shrimp, and canned tuna, and fresh tuna from long-lining sources.

The “Avoid” list includes Atlantic and Icelandic cod, Chilean sea bass, orange roughy, swordfish, imported shrimp, red snapper, farmed Atlantic salmon, shark and swordfish and bluefin tuna.

The guide, modeled on the aquarium’s West Coast pocket guide first issued in 1999, will reach two million people by Earth Day 2004, including 770,000 cards distributed in the January issue of Sierra magazine, and another 600,000 in the March/April issue of National Wildlife magazine.

“Fish are the only wildlife on Earth still actively hunted as a major food source,” said Jennifer Dianto, who heads the aquarium’s Seafood Watch program.

Increased consumer demand for seafood and the growth of destructive fishing practices have had a profound effect on the health of the oceans. Today, 11 of the world’s 15 most important fishing areas – and nearly 70 percent of the world’s fisheries – are either fully fished or overfished.

Each year an estimated 30 million tons of fish, sharks, and seabirds are caught accidentally and discarded, dead or dying.

Fish farming, or aquaculture, has its own set of problems, including pollution, spread of disease to wild populations, and the destructive conversion of coastal wetlands into commercial fish farms.

“Fisheries conservation is among today’s most important marine conservation issues,” said aquarium Executive Director Julie Packard. “It’s an environmental problem whose solution is in people’s hands every time they buy seafood. Through Seafood Watch, we want people to have the information they need to make wise choices when they shop.” The cards are also available on the aquarium’s website at:

<http://www.montereybayaquarium.org>.

More than 8,000 national pocket guides were downloaded in December – the first month they were available. That month, the Seafood Watch pocket guide was singled out by the New York Times Magazine in its “Year in Ideas” issue as one of the notable innovations of 2003. With support from aquarium donors and the aid of a grant from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, regional guides for Hawaii, the Southeast/Gulf Coast, the Northeast/Mid-Atlantic, and Great Lakes will be released in 2004.

Sea Grant Law Center: Powerful Legal Resource

(Commercial Fisheries News May 2004)

OXFORD, MS - Fishermen and fishing organizations with questions about how various laws could affect their livelihoods have a powerful resource available to them.

The National Sea Grant Law Center housed at the University of Mississippi, was established in February 2002 to disseminate legal information to scientists, government agencies, coastal communities, industry groups, and individuals around the country, according to law center Director Stephanie Showalter.

“Anyone with legal questions - industry groups, individual fishermen, shellfish farmers, aquaculturists - may contact the law center,” she said. “If we don’t have the expertise, we will find someone who does.”

Showalter emphasized that the law center cannot address questions that involve specific litigation or the actual practice of law, but can provide, usually at no charge, the following kinds of information:

- ◆ How federal or state agencies interpret and enforce various provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and others;
- ◆ Background and in-depth analysis on new federal or state regulations; and
- ◆ How the permit process works and how agencies are responsible. We can also prepare fact sheets white papers on existing laws and regulations to help commercial fishermen understand laws and how they are lied," Showalter added.

Publications

One example is a book published by the center called "Understanding Fisheries Management," which discusses essential habitat issues in nonlegal terms. The law center also puts out two regular publications.

The first is *The Sandbar*, a quarterly newsletter that offers analysis of statutes and regulations, judicial decisions, government policies, and changes in law that affect coastal areas.

The second is The Sea Grant Law Policy Digest, an on-line biannual publication that indexes the law review and other articles in the fields of ocean coastal law and policy published in the previous six months. Both reports can be easily accessed on the law center's web site.

On the radar

These days, law center attorneys are focusing their research on marine protected areas, coastal water quality, maritime salvage, and conservation easements.

Showalter said she welcomes inquiries from individual fishermen in part because they frequently make her aware of new issues that merit the law center's attention.

"I am always willing to talk to individual fishermen and industry groups about legal issues because many of the law center's larger research projects are often driven by our conversations with industry groups," she said. "It is people in the field who know what the real legal conflicts are."

The National Sea Grant Law Center operates in conjunction with the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Legal Program, which has been involved in research, education, and outreach.

To reach the center, call (662) 915-7775 or send an email to sealaw@olemiss.edu.

More information is available on the law center's web site at www.olemiss.edu/orgs/SGLC.

Members Classified

(A service provided free of charge to paid members)

For Sale

Quahog Culling Machine - 8 ft. x 2 ft. x 5 ft. high. Works off 5hp 6:1 motor. Mount it on a float right on your grant. Adjustable PVC rollers cull into four chutes. Original cost \$1,000. Asking \$500 or b.o. Call 508-240-0571 or E-mail seafarms@capecod.net.

For Sale

1 – 3/12 H.P. Briggs and Stratton Engine with reduction gear. Never used, still in box. \$250.00 or b.o. Call: (508) 349-7556

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Baked Stuffed Oysters

Makes 4 appetizer servings

1 pound fresh pork sausage, removed from casing and crumbled
 1 pint oysters, drained (reserve the liquor) and chopped
 3 tablespoons minced parsley
 ¼ cup minced green onions
 8 slices toasted bread, finely crumbled
 ¼ cup butter, melted
 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
 Salt and cayenne pepper
 12 oyster shells (cleaned) or ramekins

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Brown the sausage in a heavy saucepan until all pink has disappeared. Add the oysters, parsley and green onions, and cook, stirring, for about five minutes. Remove from the heat. Add the breadcrumbs, butter, and lemon juice and mix well. If the mixture is dry, add a little of the oyster liquor. Season with salt and pepper. (If the sausage is highly seasoned, you may not have to add salt and pepper.) Put equal amounts of the mixture in the oyster shells or ramekins (or in a small casserole dish) and place on a baking sheet. Bake until heated through, about 15 minutes. Serve immediately.