

Martha's Vineyard Shellfish Group 2005 Annual Report

To the Honorable Boards of Selectmen:

With funding from the six member towns, private donations, and grant moneys from the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, the Northeastern Regional Aquaculture Center, NOAA Sea Grant, the Great Pond Foundation, Martha's Vineyard Permanent Endowment Fund and USEPA through the Wampanoag Tribe, the Martha's Vineyard Shellfish Group, Inc. continued its program to promote the well being of the Island's shellfish and the clean water they require. Highlights of our 2005 program follow:

Solar Shellfish Hatchery – We produced and distributed to the towns over 6 million seed quahogs and almost 9 million seed scallops. Using broodstock oysters from Edgartown Great Pond that may be resistant to Dermo disease, we seeded Tisbury Great Pond with over 3 million remote-set oyster larvae and 257,000 single seed oysters.

Oyster Disease Investigations – Both cultured and wild Island oyster populations continue to suffer losses from Juvenile Oyster Disease (JOD) and Dermo. We continue to monitor the status of Dermo, an oyster disease infecting the local oysters in both Edgartown and Tisbury Great Ponds. When tested, the oysters in both ponds continue to show Dermo infection rates at or near 100%. Interestingly, a good percentage of the population of oysters in Edgartown Great Pond appears to be surviving in spite of the Dermo infection and we have been investigating the possibility that these surviving oysters may have developed a natural resistance to the disease. In collaboration with Rutgers University and the Woods Hole Marine Biological Lab, we have begun a series of experiments to test the field performance of several putative disease resistant oyster strains. Two Rutgers strains and the offspring of our hatchery's cross of oysters surviving Dermo disease in Edgartown Great Pond are being tested in deployments in Edgartown Great Pond and Katama Bay. We have begun to use surviving oysters from Edgartown Great Pond as broodstock for our seeding program in Tisbury Great Pond in hopes of speeding up the recovery of the decimated populations there. Please note that both JOD and Dermo are diseases of oysters and pose no threat to humans consuming the oysters.

The Island Blue Pages - As more of the Island is subdivided and developed, the actions of individual homeowners are having a greater impact on our water quality. Over the past several winters, we have directed a project involving a number of volunteers from pond associations, environmental groups, town departments and the Wampanoag Tribe to produce and distribute an informational booklet for Island homeowners. This summer with funding from the US Environmental Protection Agency secured by the Wampanoag Tribe and the assistance of local newspapers, we printed and distributed nearly 27,000 copies of "The Island Blue Pages." The 54-page, reader-friendly booklet seeks to inform residents of the environmental impacts of their daily activities on the Island's water resources- encouraging helpful behaviors and discouraging damaging ones.

Promotion of Shellfish Aquaculture – Over the past year we continued to encourage, support and promote shellfish aquaculture as an ideal "green" industry for Martha's Vineyard. With funding from the MV Permanent Endowment Fund we provided technical support to the local shellfish farmers.

Think Locally and Act Globally – The Shellfish Group continues to post its work on the worldwide web at <www.mvshellfishgroup.org>. I continue to serve as Co-Chair of the Southeastern Massachusetts Aquaculture Center. I serve on the Industry Subcommittee and the Executive Committee of the National Shellfisheries Association, and on the governing boards of the East Coast Shellfish Growers Association, the Lagoon Pond Association and newly formed Slow Food MV. I also serve on the advisory boards of the Friends of Sengekontacket and the Squibnocket District Advisory Committee and am an active member of the MV Water Alliance.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard C. Karney
Shellfish Biologist/Director

SEED SHELLFISH DISTRIBUTED IN 2005

	<u>TOWN</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Quahog Seed	Aquinnah	923,000
	Chilmark	1,300,000
	Edgartown	1,300,000
	Oak Bluffs	1,300,000
	Tisbury	<u>1,300,000</u>
	Total Quahogs	6,123,000

Scallop Seed

On Burlap (estimated)

Aquinnah	1,700,000
Chilmark	1,700,000
Edgartown	1,700,000
Oak Bluffs	1,700,000
Tisbury	1,700,000
Wampanoag Tribe*	<u>200,000</u>
Total Scallops	8,700,000

Oyster Larvae	Chilmark & West Tisbury (Released in Tisbury Great Pond)	
	22 Day old larvae	2,070,000
	West Tisbury (Remote Setting System)	
	Eyed setting larvae	<u>3,270,000</u>
Total Oyster Larvae		5,340,000

Single Oyster Seed	West Tisbury	223,000
	Chilmark	<u>34,000</u>
	Total Single Oysters	257,000

*Supplied under contract