

## 2006 Shellfish Report

Landings from 01/01/06 thru 12/31/06

	Commercial	Recreational
Bay scallops:	550 bushel	20 bushel
Quahougs:	120 bushel	40 bushel
Oysters:	50 bushel	10 bushel

A bay scallop season two years in a row did not seem possible anymore. But it has happened. And although the scallop catch is not like years past where many could share in the bounty, the crop appears to be healthy and hopeful for next year also.

While exercising my power of reasoning why this phenomenon has happened, I have come across several long term scientific and environmental studies, naming pollutants like carbon dioxide, nitric oxide, sulfate dioxide and carbon monoxide. These are a fraction of the pollutants that make up the greenhouse gases, smog and acid rain that saturate the air we breath. Much of it ends up in the ocean. New England has some of the highest concentrations in the country.

The algae of the oceans at one time could convert some of this back into oxygen. But not anymore. Actually, these pollutants are killing the alga, the bottom of the food chain. And alga is a food source for shellfish.

Mercury deposition, pharmicuticals and hundreds of other pollutants are also killing the bottom of the food chain. It is commonplace to read of dead zones in the oceans upon the earth. Areas void of life. Some doomsday scientist are predicting mass extinctions all over the earth. Whole eco-systems being wiped out. Million year old bio-masses destroyed in our lifetime. Similar to what has happened to the fishstocks off the coast of New England.

It is not an easy task to juggle the issues surrounding our waterways. Many are familiar with the Island Blue Pages by The Martha's Vineyard Shellfish Group. Very infomative and very important. A must read publication.

The newly drafted Chilmark Shellfish Restoration Committee is committed to help battle against the causes that have depleted the local shellfish stocks. A major issue is access to the shellfish beds, so recreational citizens can harvest and enjoy our shared resources. Managing and protecting our ponds and waterways is vital. They are enjoyable and interesting. A creation impossible to replace.

Sincerely submitted,  
Stanley L. Larsen  
Chilmark Shellfish Constable

