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Maine Clammers Association Municipal Management Guide Fact Sheet

Maine Clammers Association

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MUNICIPAL MANAGEMENT GUIDE

Fact Sheet

Fact #1: Non-human predation is the number one source of shellfish mortality in Maine!

Fact #2: In the Gulf of Maine, ocean currents flow from east to west. Shellfish spend several weeks or more in the planktonic stage flowing with ocean currents before the seed settles. This means that clams do not repopulate the flats they are in. Instead, seed will populate flats towards the west, but not the flats in which they originated.

Fact #3: Ocean acidification is not a significant or relevant source of shellfish mortality and should be dismissed by shellfish managers when planning how to enhance juvenile shellfish populations.

Fact #4: Neoplasia is “the formation or presence of a new, abnormal growth of tissue.” Neoplasia may be considered to be a clam disease, but importantly, it is not a death sentence for clams, as all shellfish have neoplastic cells. Research has shown that clams continue to grow, spawn, and survive for years after being diagnosed with Stage 4 neoplasia. Neoplasia is not a significant source of mortality at this time and should be dismissed by shellfish managers when planning how to enhance juvenile shellfish survival.

Water Quality Actions for Municipal Shellfish Programs

Our shellfish industry depends on clean water to survive. Flats closed due to pollution are a source of frustration for Maine’s clammers. Pollution has a direct impact on our ability to work. Because clammers are directly impacted by pollution, the MCA works to assist clammers to step into their modern role as stewards of the ocean.

There are some proactive steps that Municipal Shellfish Programs can take to ensure accurate testing and improve water quality. For example, recently the town of Waldoboro addressed the problem of pet waste polluting the Medomak River by banning dogs from three town parks. Here are some actions the Maine Clammers Association recommends to improve or maintain water quality:

Water Quality Sampling by Boat

- Require town staff to work with ME DMR to ensure that all water samples are collected properly from a boat and stay on top of pollution problems.

Remember that it is the responsibility of the town to provide the personnel and transportation for water quality sampling!

Outreach to Citizens

Require town staff to develop and implement outreach programs to:

- Educate pet owners on the importance of picking up after their pet.
- Inform citizens about the improper or unnecessary use of fertilizers and pesticides.



Clammers in their natural habitat. Photo Courtesy of Sara Randall, DEI's Field Research Coordinator.