Casco Bay Regional Shellfish Working Group
Project Updates
October 13, 2021

Conservation Activity Summary

After gathering information from shellfish wardens, harvesters, and area biologists, the conservation activity summary is complete! It includes sections on stock enhancement, predator mitigation, pollution source identification, data collection, and community outreach. Use it to plan for your community's next conservation project. Print copies are available, or access the report on our Current Initiatives webpage: https://www.cascobayregionalshellfishworkinggroup.org/initiatives.

Community Intertidal Data Portal

The Working Group (WG) is developing an online resource of intertidal data to help inform shellfish conservation and management decisions, as well as to aid in climate change adaptation and resiliency initiatives. Based on input from surveys of the shellfish community and of municipal planners and others involved in coastal planning, a few example map viewers are under development. These will be available for testing by WG members in the winter or early spring. Check out the survey results or our data portal plan on our Current Initiatives webpage!

Ecological Intertidal Survey

Manomet has been working on developing an ecological survey based on input from shellfish harvesters and municipal shellfish committees. We partnered with students and researchers at the University of Maine and Bates College to test different methods this summer, and piloted the survey in Georgetown, Arrowsic, and Damariscotta. This fall we will also be working with partners in eastern Maine to test survey methods in a different area of the state. We are looking for interested volunteers in the Casco Bay region to test out this new survey method as well!

E-DNA

Manomet has spent the summer and fall collecting water samples for an environmental DNA (eDNA) monitoring project that aims to identify the timing of quahog spawning events in Georgetown. This work is supported by the Maine eDNA Project and our partner Dr. Pete Countway at Bigelow Labs. We hope to determine if eDNA can track intertidal shellfish spawning events and also help us understand if larvae from spawning quahogs are locally retained. This work could ultimately help to inform shellfish management and conservation, particularly stock enhancement efforts.

Green Crab Surveys & Fishery Development

Intertidal green crab surveys continue this fall at Manomet's long-term monitoring sites in Georgetown, West Bath, Phippsburg, and Yarmouth. We saw record high green crab abundance this spring and early summer, followed by a slight dip in abundance in the late summer and early fall. We are planning to continue monitoring through November and will be sharing 2021 results at the end of the season through Manomet's website and the CBRSWG newsletter.

Green crab fishery development efforts continue throughout New England. Manomet hosted several soft-shell green crab fishery workshops over the summer aimed at providing tools and training to anyone interested in participating in the fishery. We are also partnering with the University of Maine to develop value-added culinary products that would create a high volume market. Finally, the bait and pet food markets continue to expand in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, with fishers receiving $0.40-$0.75/lb.

Maine Shellfish Restoration and Resilience Fund

The Maine Shellfish Restoration and Resilience Fund (MSRRF) will be available again this year to fund municipal shellfish projects. Please refer to the Request for Proposals on the MSRRF website, and share this grant opportunity with your towns and networks. **Proposals are due January 19, 2022**. The Maine Shellfish Learning Network is offering technical support for grant writing, so please reach out to a member of their team (https://themudflat.org/contact-us-2/).

FMI: https://umaine.edu/shellfish-restoration/