

# Chronology of Inland Bays Applied Research and Demonstration Activities

- Year
- 1998-2000 - Characterize seasonal oyster and hard clam growth
  - 2000 - Eel grass (*Zostera*) bed at the James Farm (with hard clams)
  - 2001 - Inland Bays shellfish pathogen monitoring (preliminary study)
  - 2001-present - Establish and monitor a pilot scale oyster reef site at the James Farm
  - 2002-03 - Assessment of native bivalve shellfish stocks in the Little Assawoman Bay; oyster and hard clam pathogen monitoring throughout the Inland Bays
  - 2003-present - Citizens volunteer oyster gardening program



Off bottom aquaculture gear.



An aerial view of the James Farm.

## The Native Versus Asian Oyster Debate

*Some of you may be familiar with the current and sometimes contentious debate going on in the Chesapeake Bay about introducing the Asian oyster (*Crassostrea ariakensis*).*

The conflict between the anticipated commercial benefits and largely unknown or poorly understood ecological implications makes this a very difficult issue that is virtually impossible to resolve in the desired short time frame.

The idea of a taking a similar approach for oyster restoration in the Inland Bays has been suggested.

***Based on our experience working with the native American oyster (*Crassostrea virginica*), there is no indication that there would be any advantage to doing this and the list of unknowns and associated risks would be lengthy.***

For additional information on the Asian oyster debate, visit the website [mdsg.umd.edu/oysters/exotic/ariakensis.html](http://mdsg.umd.edu/oysters/exotic/ariakensis.html) or [vims.edu/abc/CA.html](http://vims.edu/abc/CA.html).

# What Lies Ahead for the Shellfish Program?

With the capable assistance of this year's CIB summer interns Sarah Beteljewski and Mike Yost, it has been a very busy summer. Fieldwork (unfortunately minus the summer interns) will continue into the fall season for as long as the weather allows.

Some ongoing and some new activities are planned for next season. We anticipate recruiting additional oyster gardeners especially in the Torquay Canal area of Re-

hoboth Bay and in Little Assawoman Bay and will continue stocking juvenile oysters on the James Farm reef.

Patrick Erbland, a graduate student from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) sponsored Living Marine Resources Cooperative Science Center program at Delaware State University, will continue a field study initiated this summer to evaluate the nursery habitat value of shellfish aquaculture gear for ju-

venile finfish and small invertebrates.

Also, we will plant additional hard clam seed and will begin working on developing a series of small fringing oyster reefs in Little Assawoman Bay this fall (and next summer) to develop adult populations that will hopefully serve as spawning sanctuaries.

Longer-term goals include the perpetual job of securing additional outside funding

support for a long overdue inventory of Inland Bay shellfish resources and updating the shellfish management plan for the Inland Bays.

To stay informed on what we are doing, please visit the Center for the Inland Bays website [inlandbays.org](http://inlandbays.org) or the Delaware Aquaculture Resource Center's section on shellfish stock enhancement and oyster gardening at [darc.cms.udel.edu/#oyster](http://darc.cms.udel.edu/#oyster).