

SHELLFISH RESTORATION: AQUACULTURE, STEWARDSHIP, AND EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Ocean County has had a very long association with the coast and the natural resources of its estuary. The Barnegat Bay Shellfish Restoration Program, currently in its third year, has won local support, press, and awards for its efforts to "ReClam the Bay". Rutgers Cooperative Extension runs the program in cooperation with the NJDEP Division of Fish and Wildlife Bureau of Shellfisheries, and through funding provided by the County of Ocean and the USEPA's Barnegat Bay National Estuary Program. Thus far, the program has trained two groups of 80 volunteers to grow and monitor 1.8 million clam seed and 100,000 oyster seed. Volunteers have formed a non-profit organization (ReClam the Bay!) to help secure funds for the continuation of the program into the future. Public outreach is an important aspect of the program, and emphasizes the connection between shellfish restoration, citizen stewardship, and the overall health of the water, habitat and resources of Barnegat Bay. In particular, the Clam Trail scavenger hunt has helped increase interest in the program and provide non-traditional learning opportunities for citizens.

KEYWORDS

Shellfish, restoration, ReClam, Barnegat Bay, outreach, stewardship, Clam Trail, Barnegat Bay Shellfish Restoration Program, Rutgers Cooperative Extension,