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Chesapeake Executive Council

Implementation Plan for
Management of the
Chesapeake Bay
Oyster Fishery

Chesapeake
Bay
Program

Implementation Plan

July 1990

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR MANAGEMENT OF THE CHESAPEAKE BAY OYSTER FISHERY

Introduction

The Chesapeake Bay Program Executive Council adopted the **Chesapeake Bay Oyster Management Plan** in July, 1989, to establish a framework for coordinated management of the Chesapeake's oyster fishery. The goal of the management plan is to manage the oyster resources for long-term ecological and socioeconomic benefits. The management plan examines the current status of the Bay's oyster fishery, identifies problems affecting management of the fishery, and lists courses of action to address the problems. Each action identifies the responsible implementing jurisdiction(s) and the date by which the action will be initiated or completed.

This implementation plan is a tabular synopsis of the management plan that will be useful in keeping track of management progress. It lists problem areas and corresponding implementing actions (in abbreviated form), schedules, and jurisdictions responsible for implementation. It also includes the type of implementing action required (i.e. administrative, regulatory, or legislative), an estimate of additional funding or personnel required, and comments on the progress being made or direction being taken. The **Chesapeake Bay Oyster Management Plan** should be referred to for a more complete description of this information. Implementing actions by the Potomac River Fisheries Commission (PRFC), which were not included in the management plan, have been added here where appropriate.

Oyster management strategies contained in the management and implementation plans are intended to be flexible and adaptive. Periodic review of these plans will be undertaken to incorporate new information on the status of the resource and to assess the relative success of the management actions taken. This review will be conducted by the Fisheries Management Workgroup of the Living Resources Subcommittee.

Fishery Management Tasks for 1990-1991

Two general areas need to be addressed in order to rebuild oyster stocks and improve management of the fishery. Briefly, these are:

1. Identify new areas of fossil oyster shell that can be dredged and planted for cultch, and increase the availability of alternative sources of cultch.
2. Continue to conduct research on growth, disease resistance, and production capabilities of the eastern oyster (Crassostrea virginica), and develop an official policy and mechanism for introducing non-indigenous species of oysters into the Chesapeake Bay.

These items and others are examined more thoroughly in the 1990 annual status report for the **Chesapeake Bay Oyster Management Plan**.

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PROBLEM AREA	ACTION	IMPLEMT DATE	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY & METHOD	ADD. STAFF or \$\$	COMMENTS/NOTES
1. Harvest decline and overharvest	1.1.1 Open and close areas on a rotating basis to control fishing effort.	1990	MDNR - A VMRC - A		MD will begin project to closely monitor shell plantings, smalls, reproduction, catch, disease, etc. on key NOBs.
		Continue	PRFC - A		
	1.1.2 Establish catch limits that reflect the status of the resource.	1991	MDNR - R VMRC - A		Will continue to evaluate catch limits and seasons annually. Will establish time limits that reflect the status of the resource.
		Continue	PRFC - A		
	1.1.3 Delayed entry program to stabilize fishing effort.	Continue	MDNR - A		Will be necessary to monitor the MD program starting in 1991 when the first applicants are eligible for licenses. PRFC will evaluate MD's data as a means to stabilize fishing effort. Issue is before VA legislative committee; expect action in 1991.
		Open	PRFC - A VMRC - L		
2. Recruitment	2.1.1 Continue hatchery operations to produce eyed larvae and seed oysters.	1989	MDNR - A VMRC - A		Are continuing experimental hatchery production for disease resistance, alternative cultch, and growout methodologies. Remote field setting will be initiated in 1990.
			PRFC - A		
			MDNR - A, L VMRC - A		
	2.1.2 Support aquaculture efforts.	1990	MDNR - A, L VMRC - A		MDNR, UM, VIMS are conducting culture projects with natural and hatchery seed; have outreach programs.
	2.1.3 Continue oyster repletion program.	1989	MDNR - A PRFC - A VMRC - A		MD oyster management program is under special review; will have recommendations in 1990.
2.1.4 Reconstruct buried oyster bars on an experimental basis.	1990	MDNR - A	\$150K	MD will begin studies to reconstruct NOBs.	
2.1.5 Use research findings on adult density/recruitment relationship to regulate harvest and stocking of seed.	1992	MDNR - A PRFC - A VMRC - A		Univ. of Maryland is conducting studies; PRFC is planting seed at a rate of 10 oysters/sq.ft. - will evaluate. CPMUC is assessing need for studies.	

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3. Disease mortality	3.1.1 Continue the annual disease survey to determine the best plan for planting seed and shell.	1989	MDNR - A PRFC - A VMRC - A		Are maximizing seed and shell plantings in areas free from disease pressure.
	3.1.2 Implement a program to monitor seed for disease before transplanting them.	1990 Continue	MDNR - A PRFC - A		Continue current efforts with an emphasis on disease strategies. PRFC will not transplant seed from infected areas to disease-free areas.
	3.1.3 Continue research on disease transmission and the development of a disease-free strain of <i>C. virginica</i> .	1989	MDNR - A VMRC - A	\$250K	Currently being implemented but in need of additional funding. National Sea Grant is interested in establishing coordinated research funding mechanism.
	3.1.4 Continue research on the development of a disease-resistant hybrid oyster.	1989	MDNR - A PRFC - A VMRC - A		Need to develop clear policy on introduction of exotic species/hybrids; would need new regulations and permitting system to cover introduction.
4. Leased ground production	4.1.1 Establish a seed bed for sale of seed to private leaseholders.	1989	MDNR - A		Two beds established: 10 ac in Calvert Co. and 15 ac in St. Mary's Co.; planted 300,000 bu shell for seed production.
	4.1.2 Continue active extension program for leaseholders.	1989	MDNR - A VMRC - A		Extension/outreach programs are underway; additional coordination is needed.
	4.1.3 Implement "proof of use" measures to promote private production and cultivation.	1990	MDNR - A,R,L VMRC - A		MD law passed in 1988, new statute under consideration; reporting forms developed and in use; draft regs proposed.
	4.1.4 Promote the development of new culture methods by removing impediments in the existing permitting process.	1990	VMRC - A		VMRC is working within legal requirements to minimize problems encountered by applicants; first such permit issued in Feb. 1990.
	4.1.5 Research the feasibility of and methodology for new culture techniques.	1990	VMRC - A		VIMS outreach program and internal research are shifting emphasis to new techniques.

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5. Habitat issues	5.1a-c Promote the objectives of the Chesapeake Bay Agreement to improve water quality.	Variable	MDNR - A VMRC - A		Will coordinate closely with other agencies and jurisdictions.
6. Shellfish sanitation	6.1.1 Promote the improvement of water quality (see 5.1).	Variable	MDNR - A PRFC - A VMRC - A		Will coordinate closely with other agencies and jurisdictions.
	6.1.2 Participate in the Interagency Shellfish Enhancement Task Force.	Continue	VMRC - A		
	6.1.3 a) Investigate the potential of depuration techniques. b) Implement regulations for constainerized relaying of condemned oysters.	Variable 1989	MDNR, MOE - A VMRC - A VMRC - R	\$250K	If depuration or wet storage techniques are developed, appropriate legislation and regulations would be needed. VMRC is assessing situation; expect to propose regulations in March 1990.
	6.1.4 Promote more effective treatment of sewage and water conservation (see 5.1).	1995	MDNR - A		Will coordinate closely with other agencies and jurisdictions.
	6.1.5 (new) PRFC will continue participation in the ISSC.	Continue	PRFC - A		
7. Market Production	7.1.1 Implement the strategies of the management plan to restore oyster stocks.	1989	MDNR - A PRFC - A VMRC - A		Underway; special commission is reviewing MD oyster industry, recommendations are due in 1990.
	7.1.2 a) Promote public awareness that oysters with MSX and Dermo are safe to consume.	1990	MDNR - A MDAGR - A		Had press releases & media interviews, developed consumer guide & fact sheet.
	b) Use industry and state promotion of oyster quality to stem market losses.	1990	VMRC - A VMFB - A		VA Marine Products Board continues active promotion of oysters.

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8. Repletion program	8.1.1 Review the existing statutory authority which dictates the distribution of seed and shell.	1991 Continue	MDNR - A PRFC - A		The MD oyster mgmt program is being reviewed by a special commission. PRFC will suspend shell planting on "set and grow" areas.
	8.1.2 Consider increasing the tax on exported oysters.	1991	MDNR - L		Is being reviewed by special commission.
	8.1.3 Evaluate repletion programs for production and cost efficiencies.	1991	MDNR - A PRFC - A VMRC - A		Md program under special review.
	8.1.4 Utilize alternative sources of cultch.	1989	MDNR - A VMRC - A		Are using surf clam shell; investigating other means, such as fly ash/gypsum.
		1990	PRFC - A		
	8.1.5 Continue to protect and expand areas for seed and research purposes.	1991	MDNR - A		MD currently has 10 sanctuaries; are evaluating potential new ones. PRFC will maintain oyster sanctuary on Jones Shore.
		Continue	PRFC - A		
	8.1.6 Enhance the seed program in the Great Wicomico, Piankatank, and James Rivers.	Continue	VMRC - A		Continuing.
8.1.7 Establish a special repletion program for the seaside of the eastern shore	1989	VMRC - A			
8.1.8 (new) Continue to utilize the input of the Oyster Repletion Committee	Continue	PRFC - A		Will develop an Annual Oyster Repletion Program for the Potomac.	

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LEGEND: MDE = Maryland Department of the Environment
MDAGR = Maryland Department of Agriculture
MDNR = Maryland Department of Natural Resources
PRFC = Potomac River Fisheries Commission
VMRC = Virginia Marine Resources Commission
VMPD = Virginia Marine Products Board
A = Administrative action
L = Legislation
R = Regulation
K = \$1,000