Several organizations launched an experimental restoration project on Tuesday.

Together, they are moving “seed oysters,” or shells with baby oysters attached, from the Cape May County area of Delaware Bay to storm-damaged oyster beds off Salem County.

“This project is a partnership between the New Jersey Chapter of The Nature Conservancy and several members of the Delaware Bay Oyster Restoration Task Force,” said Jennifer Adkins, executive director of the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary.

“It’s a new element of our oyster-restoration strategy, and it’s aimed at promoting growth on the oyster beds in the upper part of the bay that were so damaged last year.”

“Restoring oyster reefs is a conservation priority for The Nature Conservancy,” said Moses Katkowski, marine conservation coordinator for TNC’s New Jersey chapter.

“The Hope Creek shell replanting project will benefit people and nature today and into the future.”

“The Council has voluntarily agreed not to harvest these beds for at least five years, while restoration efforts take effect,” added Barney Hollinger, co-chairman of the Delaware Bay Section of the New Jersey Shellfisheries Council.

“Shell planting is the single most important action we can take to rebuild and revitalize the oyster beds of Delaware Bay,” said Dr. David Bushek, director of Rutgers University’s Haskin Shellfish Research Laboratory.

“Shell planting enhances oyster habitat, giving them a leg up on survival so we can continue to reap both the ecological and economical benefits they provide.”