**To:** Delaware Bay Shellfisheries Council and NJ DEP Bureau of Shellfisheries
From: Iris Burt
Date: June 13, 2025
**Re:** Delaware Bay Seed Bed Monitoring

Oyster samples were collected on May 27, 2025, for our regular monthly monitoring program. Bottom water temperatures averaged 17.9° C, (63.3°F) equivalent to the long-term seasonal temperatures. Salinity averaged 13ppt - a decrease from last month and now equal to the 26-year mean. Salinity ranged from 7.0ppt at Hope Creek to 15ppt at Bennies. Delaware River discharge has been low throughout the winter season but has seen an increase during May. (see graph below)
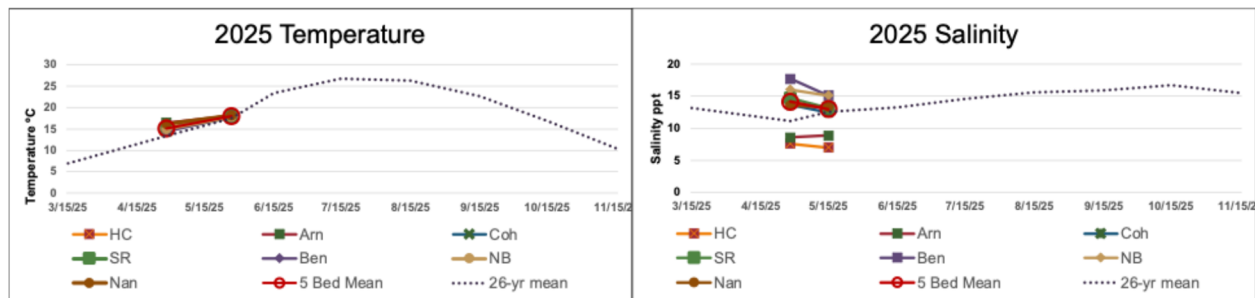
Light dermo levels were detected on most beds, excluding Arnolds and Hope Creek. Both Dermo prevalence and intensity were above the long-term means for the May sampling.
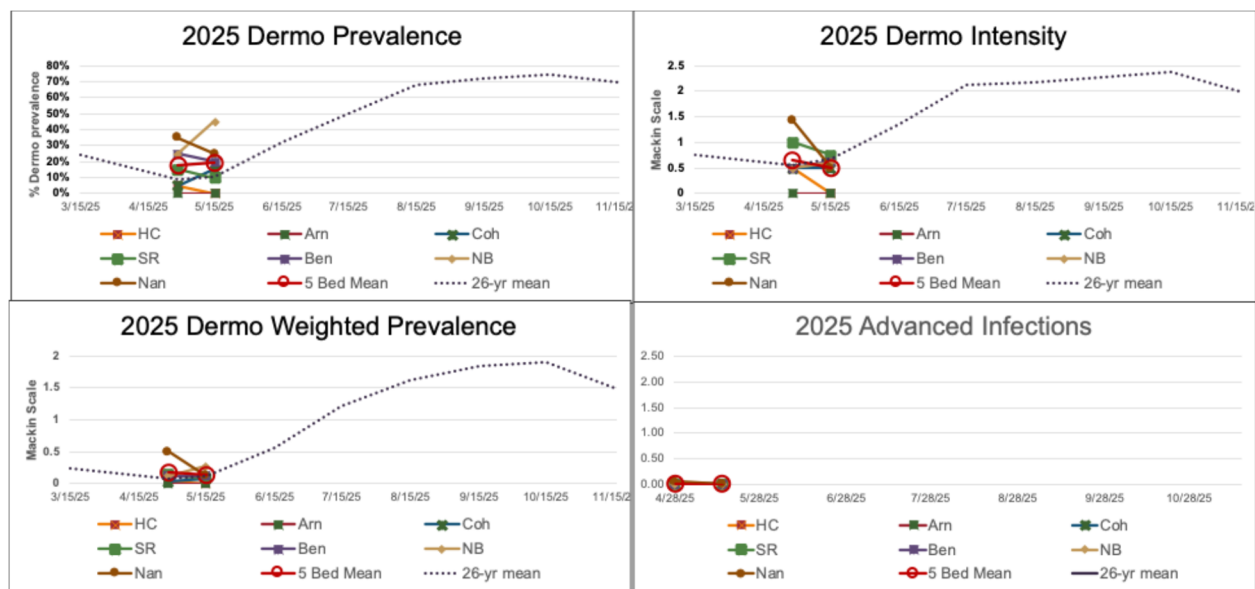
Total box counts and recent box counts are both are light and just below the long-term means. There was a slight uptick in recent box counts on New Beds.
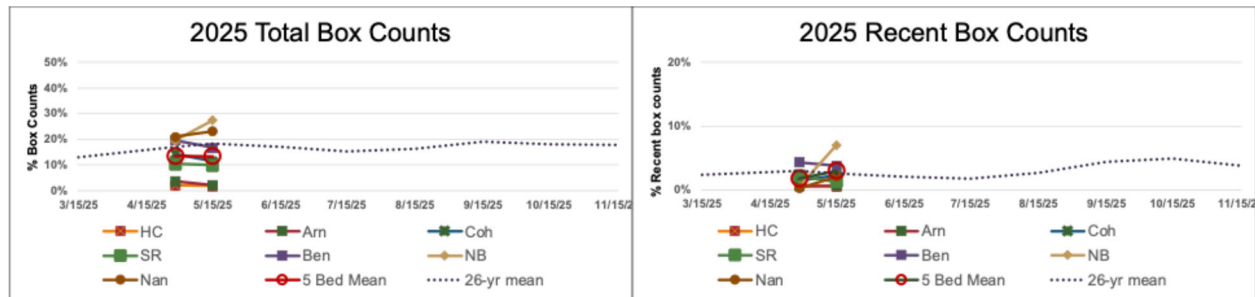
Shellplanting and the 2024 intermediate transplant sites were sampled initially on May 1 and again on May 29 for the regular monthly monitoring. The 2023 shellplants now average 45.8 mm (1.8 inches). The 2024 Shell Rock shellplant is now 18.7 mm (0.72 inches) with very light mortality. The Bennies shellplant had heavy drill damage in the fall and is difficult to find live spat on shell.

The 2024 intermediate transplant sites are doing well with very light dermo detected and low mortality. The 2025 intermediate transplants were sampled post transplanting on May 29. There were very few new boxes recorded, and dermo levels were light on all sites.
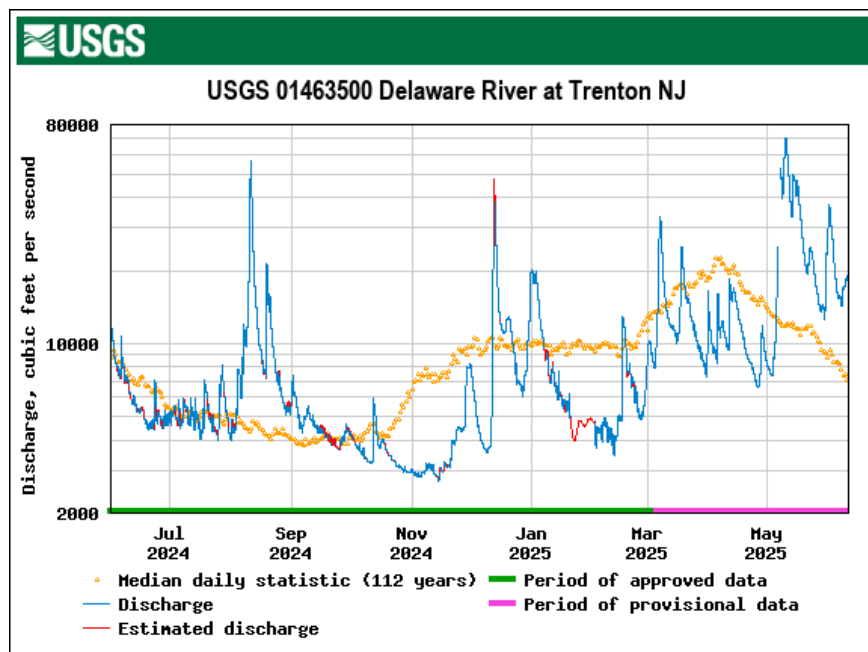
Delaware River discharge measured at Trenton, NJ USGS monitoring station 01463500. Blue line represents daily discharge for the past year relative to the 1913-2024 median values shown as a dotted yellow line. Data source: https://waterdata.usgs.gov/monitoring-location/01463500/#period=P365D&compare=true&dataTypeId=continuous-00060-0&showMedian=true