

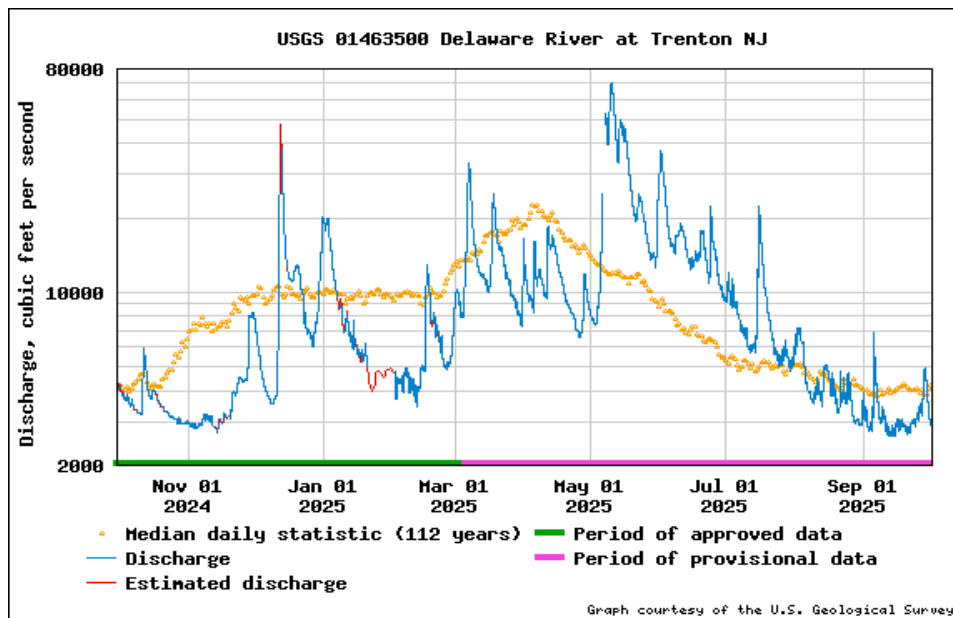
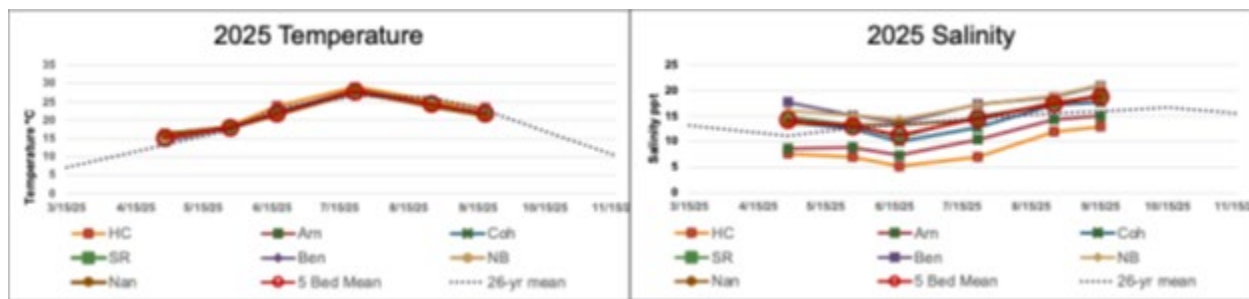
To: Delaware Bay Shellfisheries Council and NJ DEP Bureau of Shellfisheries

From: Iris Burt

Date: September 30, 2025

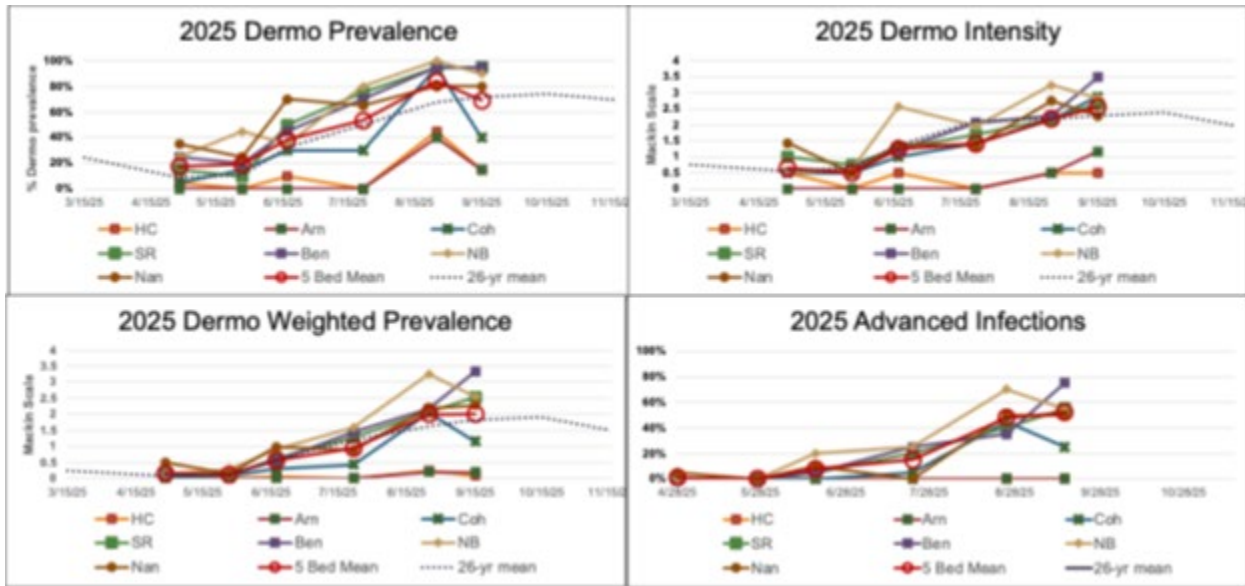
Re: Delaware Bay Seed Bed Monitoring

Oyster samples were collected on September 15, 2025, for our regular monthly monitoring program. Bottom water temperatures averaged 21.8°C (72.8°F), just below the long-term seasonal temperatures. Salinity averaged 18.8 ppt; an increase from last month and above the 26-year mean of 15.9. Salinity ranged from 12.9 ppt at Hope Creek to 21.0 ppt at New Beds. Delaware River discharge has declined steadily since July (see USGS graph).

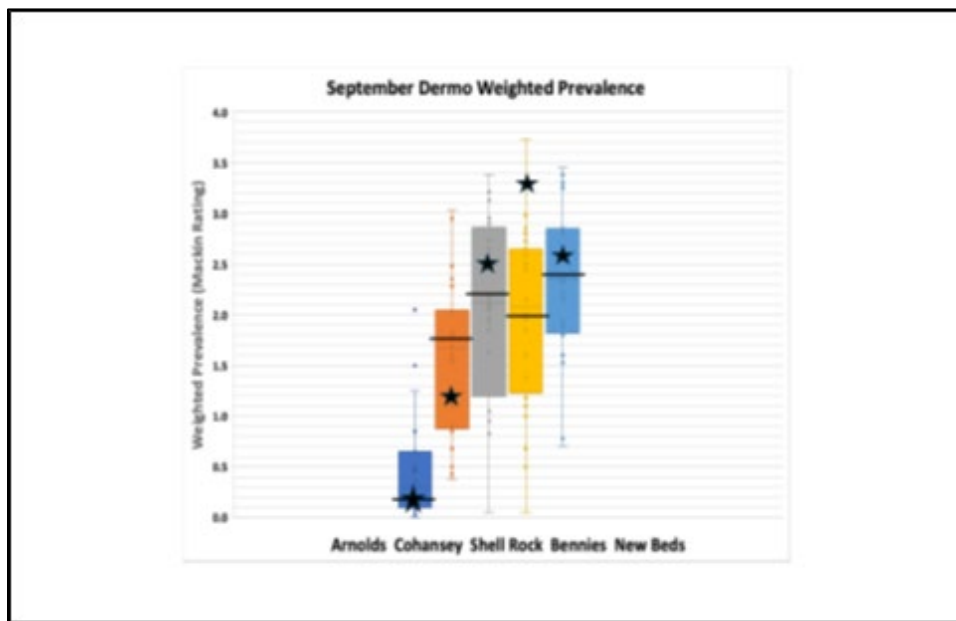


Delaware River discharge measured at Trenton, NJ USGS monitoring station 01463500. Blue line represents daily discharge for the past year relative to the median values shown as a dotted yellow line. Data source:
https://nwis.waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/uv/?ts_id=195092&format=img_stats&site_no=01463500&begin_date=20241001&end_date=20251001

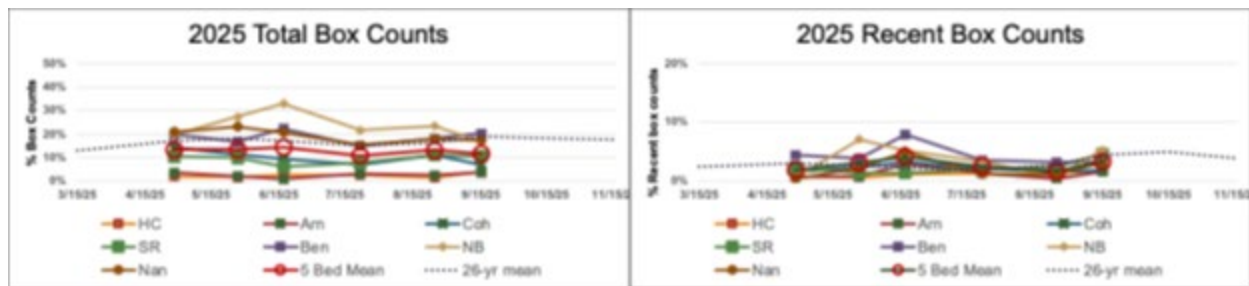
Dermo prevalence decreased slightly for September but both weighted prevalence and intensity increased and were above the long-term means for this sampling. Dermo was detected on ALL beds in September. Advanced infections (3.0 or above Mackin Rating) increased to 52% from New Beds up to Cohansey. No advanced infections were found on Arnolds or Hope Creek.



Below is a new graph that was requested to show the current rating, indicated by a star, relative to the long-term ratings for each bed for the current month. Dark black lines are the long-term averages. The upper beds (Arnolds and Cohansey) fall below average, whereas the lower beds (Shell Rock, Bennies, and New Beds) have above average infection levels.



Total box counts remained steady and below the long-term means for September. A few new boxes were counted but remained below the mean of 4%.



Shellplanting and intermediate transplant sites were sampled on September 22. The new 2025 Bennies Sand, Shell Rock and Ship John sites were all sampled for the first time since the shell was planted. Oyster spat on planted shell was easily found on both the Bennies Sand and Ship John sites with very minimal drill damage. Spat on the Shell Rock site was more difficult to find. Spat measured on all 3 sites were very small and averaged 8.7 mm.

The 2024 Shell Rock shellplant site is now 36.7 mm (1.5 inches) with no new mortality observed. The 2024 Bennies shellplant had heavy drill damage last fall and continues to be difficult to find live oyster on planted shell. The 2023 shellplants now average 49.6 mm (2 inches) and continues to have light mortality. Dermo samples were taken on the 2023 shellplants in September and light to moderate levels were found in all 3 sites.

The 2024 and 2025 intermediate transplant sites continue to do well with below average bed box count rates. Very few new boxes were observed from this sampling.

September update of Dermo from the Cape Shore 2023 NEH cultured stocks and wild Delaware Bay native stocks.

