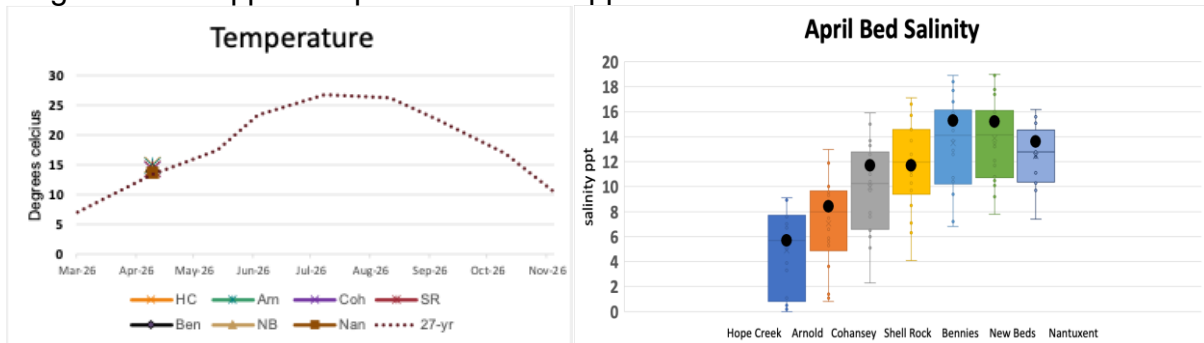
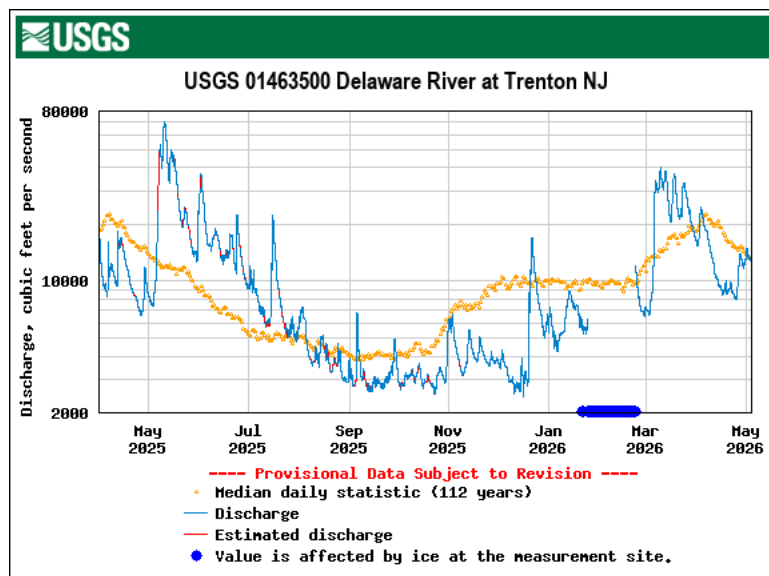


To: Delaware Bay Shellfisheries Council and NJ DEP Bureau of Shellfisheries
From: Iris Burt
Date: May 5, 2026
Re: Delaware Bay Seed Bed Monitoring

Oyster samples were collected on April 23, 2026 for our regular monthly monitoring program. Bottom water temperatures averaged 56°F (14.2°C), above the long-term seasonal temperatures. Salinity averaged 12.5 ppt; above the 27-year mean of 11.2. Salinity ranged from 5.7 ppt at Hope Creek to 15.3 ppt at Bennies.

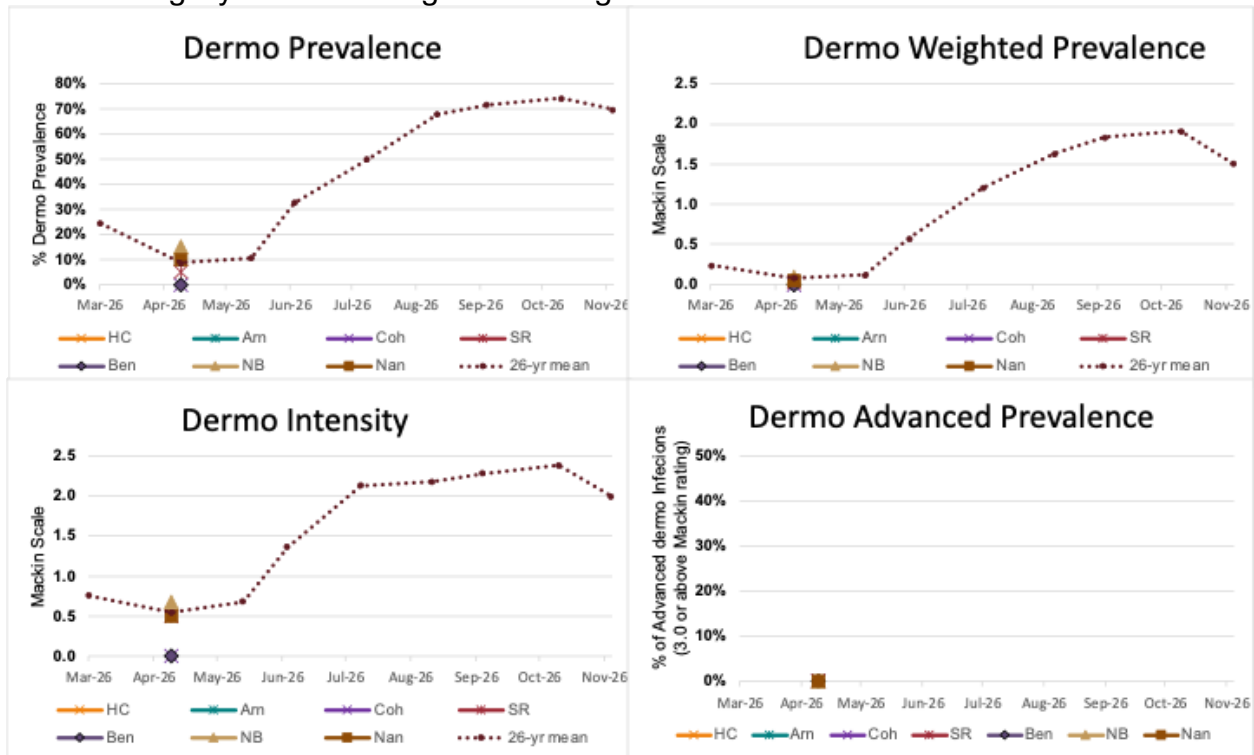


Delaware River discharge measured at Trenton, NJ (USGS monitoring station 01463500) has been lower than usual since last August – we have been in a drought. While water entering the Bay has increased, it has not offset the impact of the drought, resulting in the higher overall average salinity measured during April sampling (see USGS graph below).

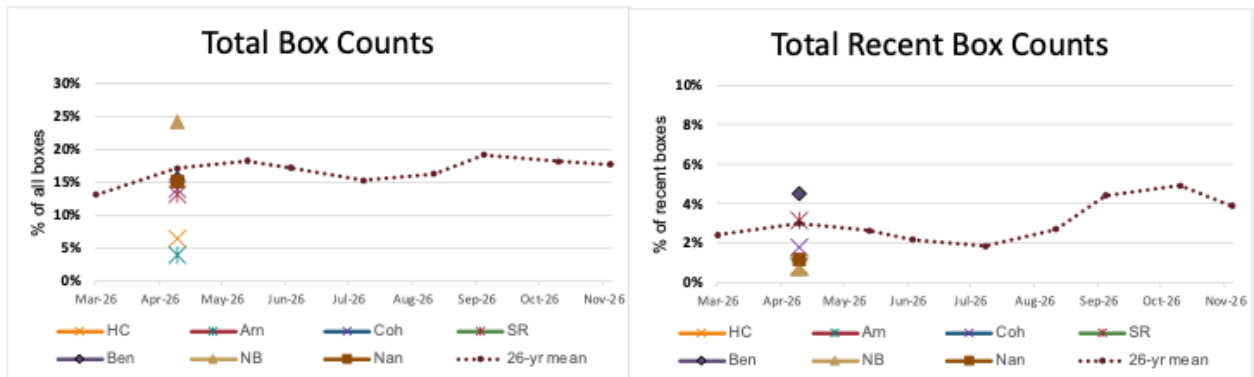


In the graph above, the blue line represents daily discharge for the past year relative to the long-term median values shown as a dotted yellow line. Data source:
https://nwis.waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/uv/?ts_id=195092&format=img_stats&site_no=01463500&begin_date=20250401&end_date=20260504

Dermo prevalence, weighted prevalence and intensity were low or not detected during April and were slightly below the long-term average.



Total box counts were also low and below the long-term means for April. Some new boxes were observed but remained below the mean of 2%. Bennies had the highest new box counts at 5%.



Shellplanting, 2025 intermediate transplant sites and oysters from the Cape Shore were sampled on April 29th. Data analysis is not yet complete on these sites and will be reported next month.