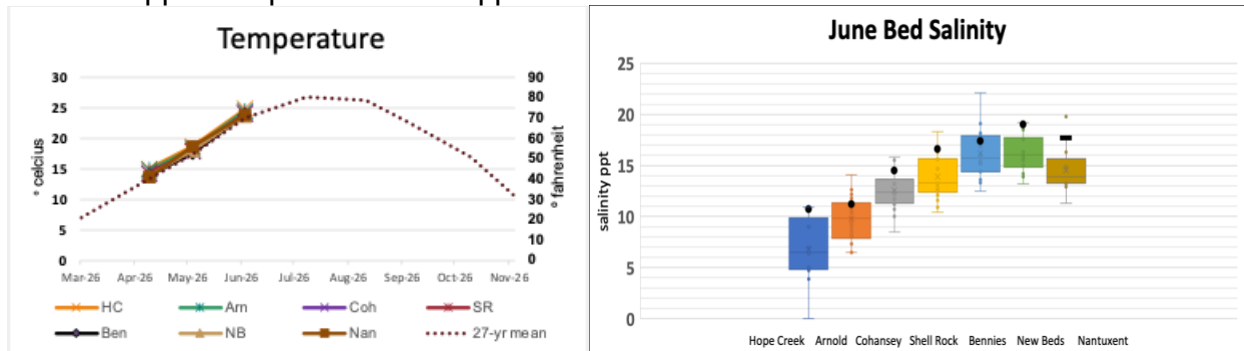
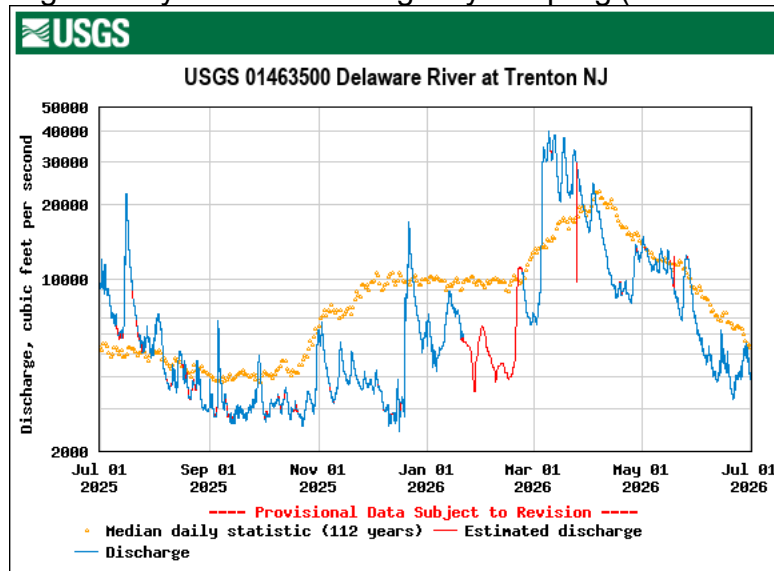


To: Delaware Bay Shellfisheries Council and NJ DEP Bureau of Shellfisheries
From: Iris Burt
Date: July 12, 2026
Re: Delaware Bay Seed Bed Monitoring

Oyster samples were collected on June 24, 2026 for our regular monthly monitoring program. Bottom water temperatures averaged 74°F (24°C), above the long-term seasonal temperatures. Salinity averaged 15.9 ppt; above the 27-year mean of 13.3. Salinity ranged from 10.7 ppt at Hope Creek to 19 ppt at Bennies.

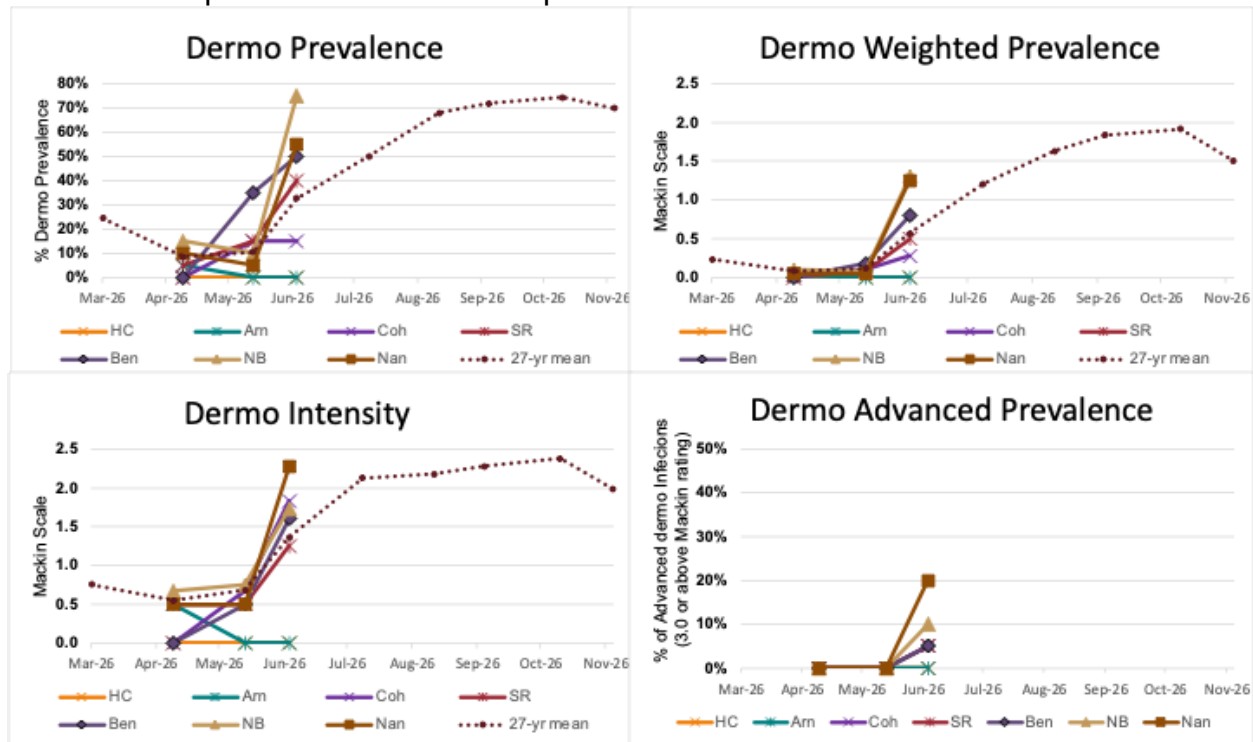


Delaware River discharge measured at Trenton, NJ (USGS monitoring station 01463500) has been lower than usual since last August – we have been in a drought. While water entering the Bay has increased, it has not offset the impact of the drought, resulting in the higher overall average salinity measured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

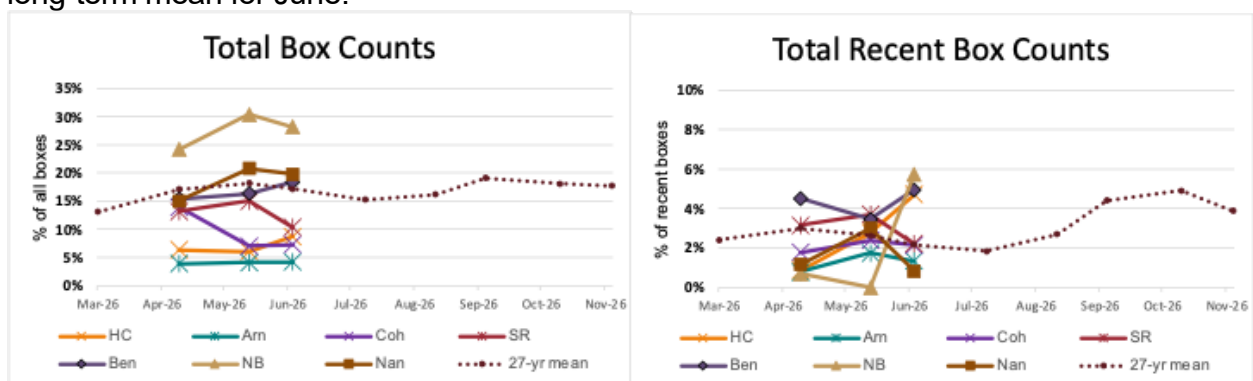


In the graph above, the blue line represents daily discharge for the past year relative to the long-term median values shown as a dotted yellow line. Data source:
https://nwis.waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/uv/?ts_id=195092&format=img_stats&site_no=01463500&begin_date=20250701&end_date=20260701

Dermo prevalence, weighted prevalence and intensity all rose to just above the long-term mean average in the areas from New Beds to Cohansey/Shell Rock. No dermo was detected in Hope Creek or Arnolds samples.



Total box counts remained steady and below the long-term means for June. An increase in new boxes was observed on Hope Creek, Bennies and New Beds putting it just above the long-term mean for June.



The 2025 and 26 intermediate transplant sites were sampled on June 25. Bed total mortality levels ranged between 9% to 18% on the 2025 transplants and 9% to 13% on the 2026 transplants both with light new box counts.



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Shellplant sites from 2024 and 25 were also sampled on June 25. The 2024 site on Shell Rock averaged 48 mm in size and had no new mortality counted. We have discontinued sampling the 2024 Bennies site. The 2025 shellplant sites on Bennies Sand, Shell Rock and Ship John now average 24.3 mm. Some old drill mortality was noted on all 3 sites. Very few new boxes were counted.