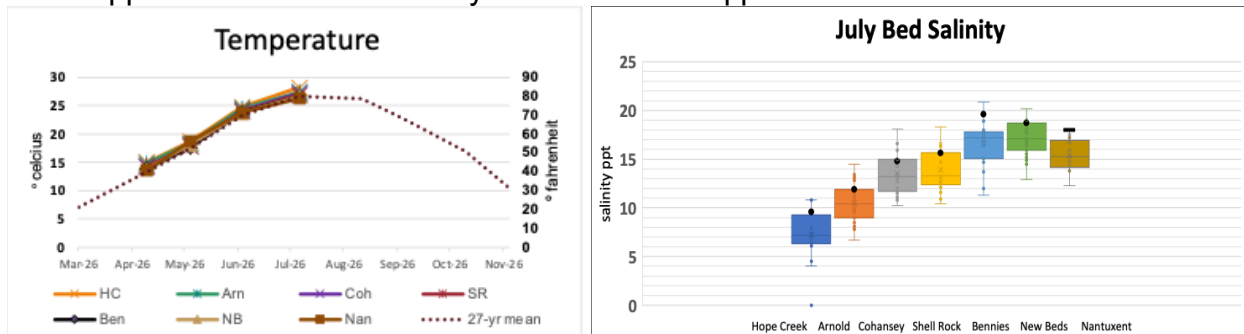
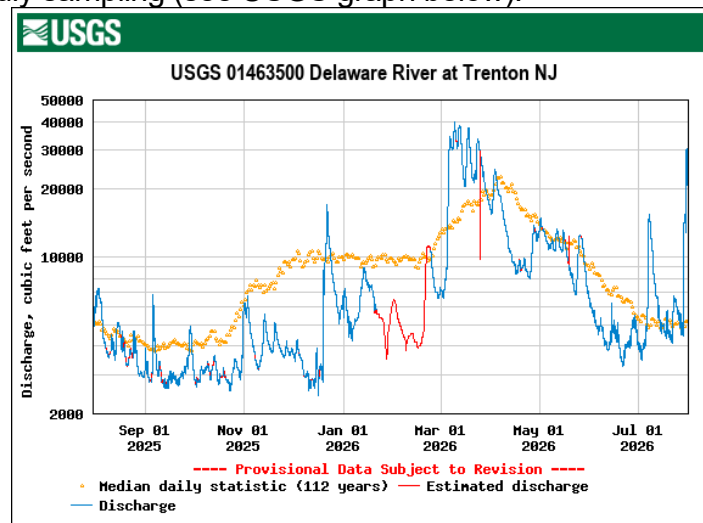


To: Delaware Bay Shellfisheries Council and NJ DEP Bureau of Shellfisheries
From: Iris Burt
Date: August 10, 2026
Re: Delaware Bay Seed Bed Monitoring

Oyster samples were collected on July 20, 2026 for our regular monthly monitoring program. Bottom water temperatures averaged 80.1°F (27°C), slightly above the long-term seasonal average. Salinity ranged from 9.6 ppt at Hope Creek to 19.6 ppt at Bennies with an average of 16.2 ppt that was above the 27-year mean of 14.6 ppt.

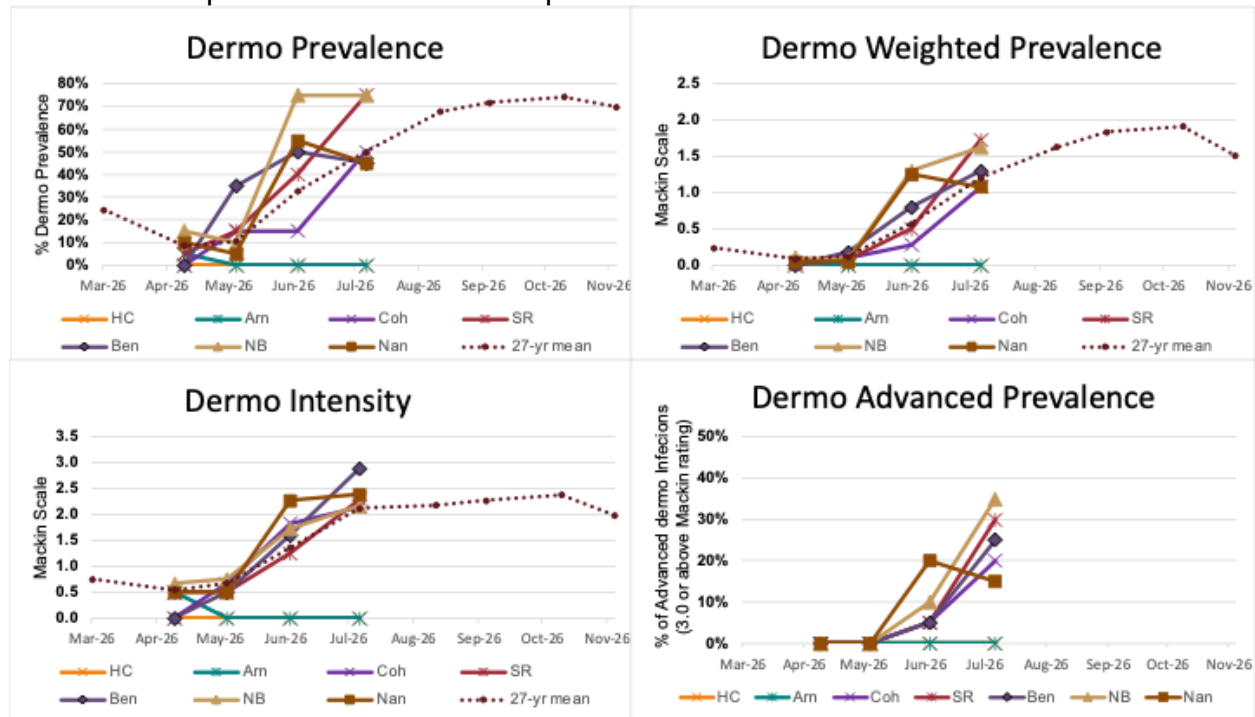


Delaware River discharge measured at Trenton, NJ (USGS monitoring station 01463500) has been lower than usual for the past year. While water entering the Bay has increased, it has not offset the impact of the drought, resulting in the higher overall average salinity measured during July sampling (see USGS graph below).

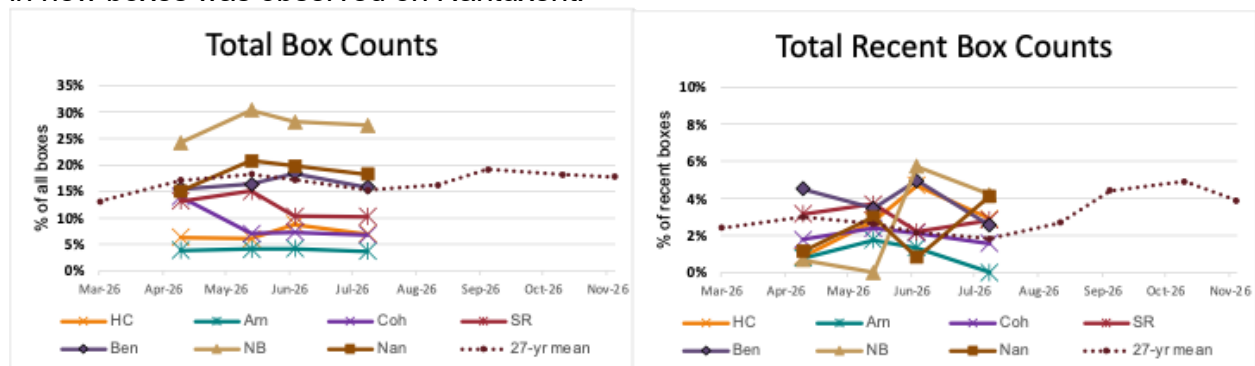


In the graph above, the blue line represents daily discharge for the past year relative to the long-term median values shown as a dotted yellow line. Data source:
https://nwis.waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/uv/?ts_id=195092&format=img_stats&site_no=01463500&begin_date=20250731&end_date=20260731

Dermo prevalence, weighted prevalence and intensity all rose to the long-term mean average or above 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 July. A slight increase in new boxes was observed on Nantuxent.



The 2025 and 26 intermediate transplant sites were sampled on July 23. Bed total mortality levels ranged between 12% to 14% on the 2025 transplants and 6% to 13% on the 2026 transplants both with light new box counts across all sites.

Shellplant sites from 2024 and 25 were also sampled on July 23. The 2024 site on Shell Rock averaged 48 mm (1.9 inches) in size and had no new mortality counted. We discontinued sampling the 2024 Bennies site at the beginning of the season. The 2025 shellplant sites on Bennies Sand, Shell Rock and Ship John now average 31.2 mm (1.2



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inches). New drill mortality was noted on the Ship John site that was not present in the June sampling. No new boxes were counted on the other sites.