

OYSTER RECOVERY
PARTNERSHIP | ORP

2016 IMPACT REPORT





Dear Friends of the Chesapeake Bay,

Thank you for sharing our interest in the return of one of the Bay's most valuable native species – the Eastern Oyster. A national leader in oyster restoration, the Oyster Recovery Partnership (ORP) is taking action in the areas of science, preservation and economic growth. Our mission is simple: plan, promote and implement science-based sustainable fisheries and shellfish management activities to enhance our environment, support our economy and preserve our cultural heritage.

Most of ORP's activities are focused on the large-scale construction of oyster reefs. Oysters improve Bay health by filtering excess nutrients from the water, and their reefs create habitat for a multitude of marine life. Over the last two decades, our organization has increased its efficiency and effectiveness in handling the logistics necessary to plant hundreds of millions of oysters each season. ORP also strives to provide watermen and oyster farmers with harvest and economic stability, while supporting the rapidly increasing demand for sustainable seafood.

In 2016, with the help of our partners and generous donors, ORP planted 835 million oysters on sanctuary and public fishing reefs in Maryland. The Shell Recycling Alliance celebrated a major milestone in collecting 100,000 bushels since the program's inception in 2010 and collecting 30,000 bushels in 2016 while expanding the network by 38 restaurants to nearly 300 member establishments.

We orchestrated the planting of 270,000 bushels of shell on public oyster reefs to rehabilitate fishing areas, coordinated the oyster best management practice expert panel and delivered 8,000 cages of spat on shell to homeowners through the Marylanders Grow Oysters program.

ORP continues to be recognized as a top-rated nonprofit receiving the Maryland Nonprofit's Standards for Excellence award, the Guidestar Exchange Seal and 1% for the Planet accreditation. Ninety-five percent of all donations go directly into recovery programs.

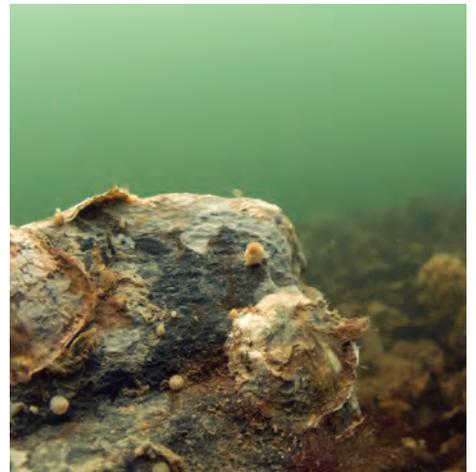
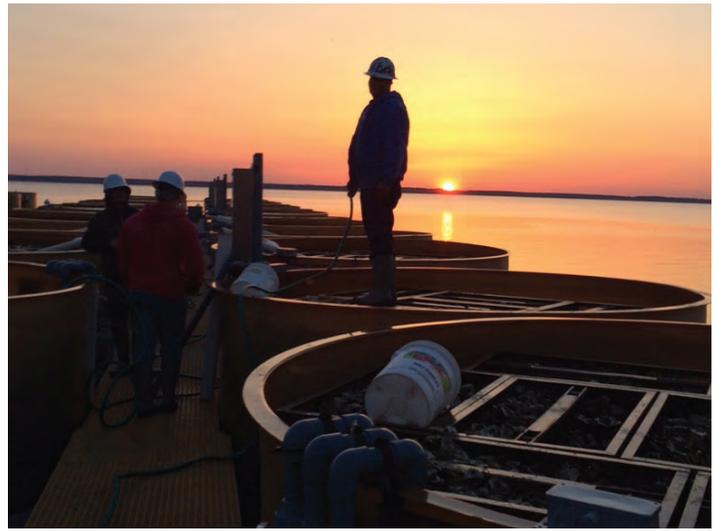
Thank you for joining us in our efforts,




Jim Perdue Chairman of the Board




Stephan Abel Executive Director



Photos, from top left: Volunteer Perdue Farms associates in Salisbury, MD assembled 684 shell bags for oyster aquaculture. | Sunrise over oyster setting tanks at Horn Point Oyster Hatchery in Cambridge, MD | ORP's oyster planting vessel, the Robert Lee, deploys oysters in the Tred Avon River | One-year-old oysters | Used oyster shell is recycled in Annapolis, MD by Shell Recycling Alliance crew members, Wayne Witzke and Alex Rozner. | A three year old oyster reef in Harris Creek, MD

Restoration in Maryland

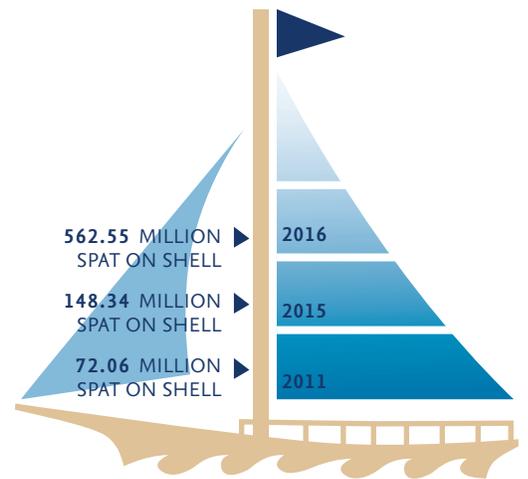
The Chesapeake Bay was once world famous for its vast oyster reefs, but now the population is a fraction of its historical peaks. ORP works with federal, state and county governments, foundations, corporations, watermen and conservation organizations to restore reefs and maintain a viable future for this keystone species.

The seven-state Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement and Executive Order 13508 — Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration — calls for restoration of native oyster habitat and populations in 10 tributaries by 2025. The three tributaries selected so far in Maryland are part of the Choptank River Complex on Maryland’s eastern shore: Harris Creek, Little Choptank River and Tred Avon River.

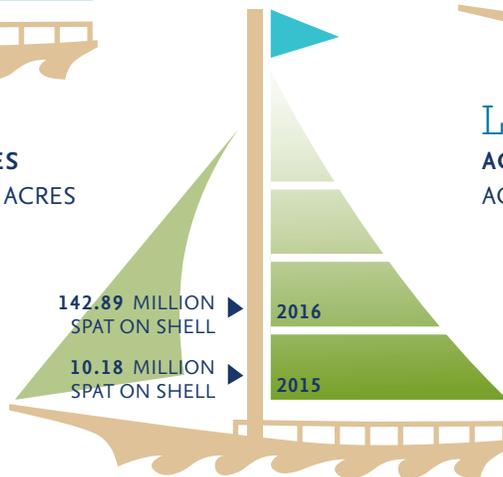
In 2016, ORP conducted oyster deployments five days a week and planted 835 million spat on shell in Maryland, with the Little Choptank River sanctuary being the tributary of focus. We also worked with commercial watermen to place 270,000 bushels of shell on public oyster reefs.



Harris Creek
ACREAGE GOAL: 350 ACRES
ACREAGE COMPLETED: 350 ACRES



Little Choptank River
ACREAGE GOAL: 400 ACRES
ACREAGE COMPLETED: 165 ACRES



Tred Avon River
ACREAGE GOAL: 147 ACRES
ACREAGE COMPLETED: 35 ACRES

Where We Work

The Oyster Recovery Partnership is not just about putting billions of oysters in the Chesapeake Bay. We're also running the largest network of Shell Recycling Alliance members in the nation, co-managing the state's Marylanders Grow Oysters program, replenishing public oyster bars and providing aquaculture support and training.



Shell Recycling Alliance

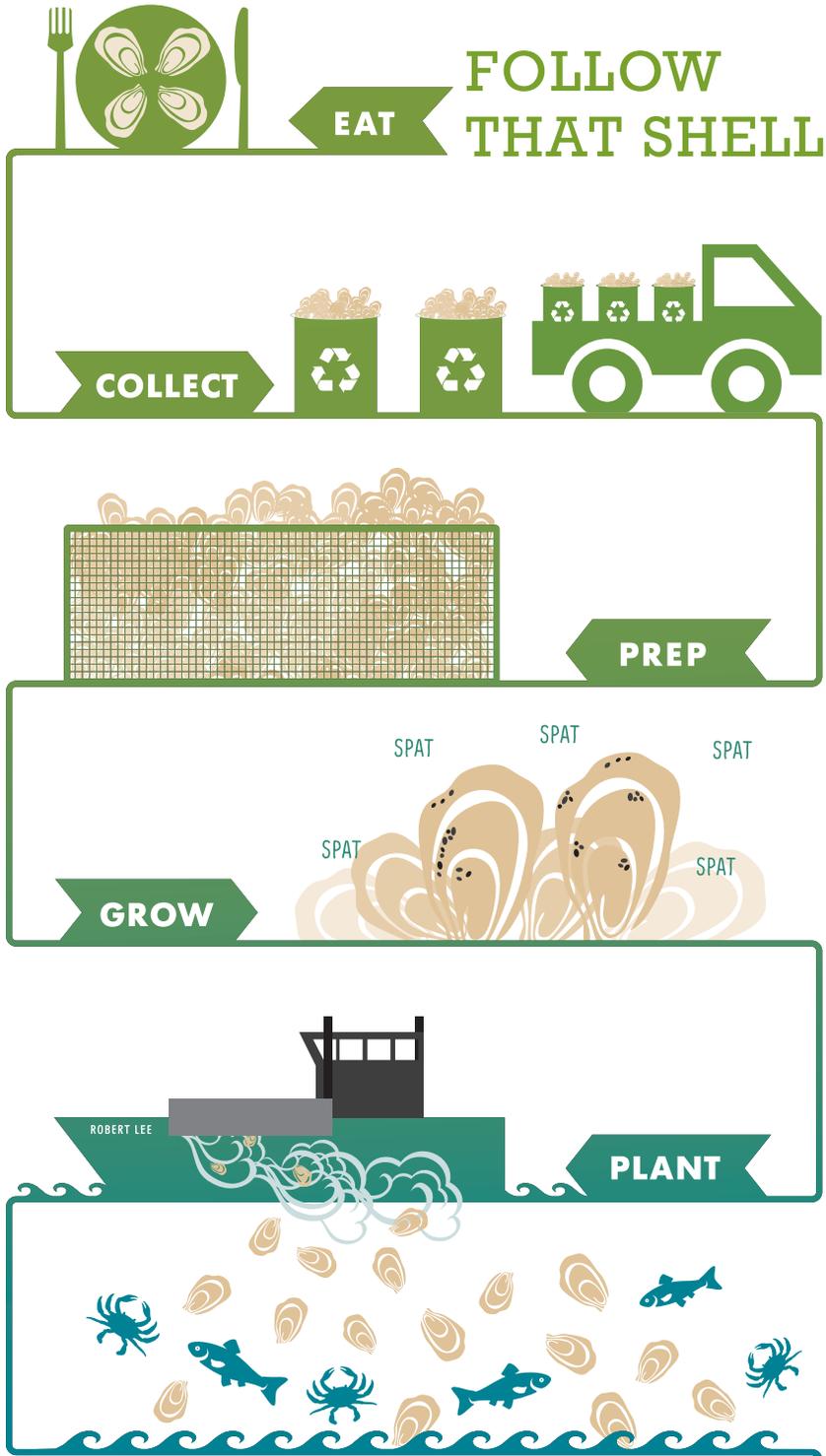
Natural oyster shell is the best material on which to raise new oysters and restore reefs. In 2010, ORP developed the the Shell Recycling Alliance to enable the public, restaurants and caterers to save this limited natural resource from going into landfills. It has become the largest network of restaurants recycling shell in the country.



In 2016, more than 30,000 bushels of oyster shell were collected from nearly 300 member establishments in Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, Washington, D.C. and Pennsylvania. The recycled shell will be used as substrate and enable ORP to plant more than 150 million filter-feeding oysters into the Chesapeake Bay. Since its launch, the Alliance has recycled 100,000 bushels of shell.

TOP 10 PRODUCERS IN 2016

- Boatyard Bar and Grille** (Annapolis, MD) — 2,264 bushels (reclaimed from distribution sites)
- Captain White's Seafood City** (Washington DC) — 1,567 bushels
- Congressional Seafood** (Jessup, MD) — 1,204 bushels
- Faidley's Seafood** (Baltimore, MD) — 1,204 bushels
- Jesse Taylor Seafood** (Washington DC) — 1,050 bushels
- The Local Oyster** (Baltimore, MD) — 965 bushels
- Mike's Crab House** (Annapolis, MD) — 917 bushels
- Old Ebbitt Grill** (Washington DC) — 784 bushels
- Rappahannock River Oyster Bar** (Washington DC) — 732 bushels
- Ryleigh's Oyster** (Hunt Valley, MD) — 672 bushels



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www.oysterrecovery.org

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In August, Troop 855 from Severna Park, MD helped bag shell in support of Seamus Seerey's Eagle Scout project.

Aquaculture Support and Training

Aquaculture is helping revitalize the oyster industry and bringing the Bay's ecology back into balance. Thanks to the support of the Ratcliffe Foundation, ORP and the University of Maryland offer training and services to assist watermen in producing, managing and promoting their oysters and farms.

OVER THE LAST 6 YEARS:

71 growers (42% of all Maryland leaseholders) participated in the training program

1 billion oyster spat on shell have been produced and planted

In 2016, over 3,500 shell bags were produced with the help of dozens of dedicated volunteers for this season's oyster aquaculture program.



Shell bags are loaded in setting tanks and then set with oyster larvae.



Oyster reefs are monitored for both structural and functional components of a habitat. One step in the monitoring process includes recording what types of marine life are on the oyster bars.

Monitoring

ORP's oyster monitoring program consists of three core elements: identifying optimal planting habitat; assessing spat survivorship; and evaluating the long-term performance of planted reefs.

In 2016, ORP and partners identified optimal bottom habitats for restoration in the Little Choptank and Tred Avon Rivers, and monitored spat survivorship on more than 150 acres of restored oyster reefs. Monitoring strategies were developed to assess the long-term performance of oysters, and the results of the first assessment showed the densities of oysters on three-year-old reefs are at levels last seen a half a century ago.



Commercial waterman, David Kirwan, electronically reporting his daily harvest of Blue Crab.

Electronic Reporting

Working collaboratively with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, in 2016 ORP continued to coordinate the electronic commercial harvest reporting system team in the expansion of Maryland's comprehensive electronic fisheries management system, FACTS™.



Oysters filter the Bay's waters and in the process remove excess nitrogen and phosphorus

Oyster Best Management Practices

Excess nutrients and sediment runoff negatively affect Chesapeake Bay water quality and research has shown that oysters play an important role to improve water quality through filter-feeding. ORP coordinated a 13-member expert panel evaluating the nutrient and suspended sediment reduction potential of oysters to help meet the water quality goals established by the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load, a Bay-wide cleanup plan.

The Panel's activities spanned more than 16 months and included reviews of available scientific information and data, and addressing the public and other stakeholders during public meetings and through three public review periods. The panel completed its first set of recommendations and in December 2016 the U.S. EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership approved the Panel's recommendations for nutrient reduction credits for oysters harvested by private oyster aquaculture practices. **This is the first in-water filter feeding organism to be approved as a Best Management Practice!**



ORP's shell recycling crew delivers 250 bags of oyster spat to the St. Mary's River to support the Marylanders Grow Oysters program.

Marylanders Grow Oysters

ORP co-manages the Marylanders Grow Oysters program in which thousands of citizens grow millions of baby oysters in cages hanging from piers. Homeowners from 33 tributaries and creeks around Maryland learned about the importance of oysters to the Bay's ecosystem as they safeguarded more than 8,000 cages of spat during their vulnerable first year of life. Oysters and cages are distributed every August and September, and collected in May and June the following year. The year-old oysters are placed on local sanctuary preserves where they continue to grow and flourish.



ORP's oyster mascot, Shelly, attends dozens of local events each year.



Students from Severn School visit an oyster sanctuary in the Choptank River.

Education and Outreach

ORP is dedicated to educating the public about the importance of oysters and the role we play in the Bay's overall recovery. Each year we participate in dozens of community events and festivals, collecting and recycling oyster shell for future restoration projects, staffing information tables and having our mascot Shelly interact with event attendees. ORP also collaborates with schools, camps, scout troops and clubs to deliver a wide range of educational services. In 2016, ORP interacted with 52 organizations, 33 public and private schools and reached over 8,800 people.

Seafood Marketing

For the second year in a row, ORP offered fresh, local seafood at the Anne Arundel County Farmers Market – live and shucked oysters, crabmeat and fresh fish.

Over the course of 2016, ORP registered 94 shareholders with Old Line Fish Company, the Chesapeake Bay region's first Community Supported Fishery.



ORP staff members Bryan Gomes, left, and Paul Schurick sell fresh oysters harvested by local watermen at the Anne Arundel County Farmers' Market.

Thank You to Our Restoration Partners

The Oyster Recovery Partnership relies on its many partners to assist in fulfilling their mission.



Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Maryland Watermen's Association
University of Maryland Paynter Lab

MAJOR PARTNERS:

Charm City Run
Chesapeake Bay Roasting Company
ClearShark H2o

Flying Dog Brewery
Maryland Grain Producers
MOM's Organic Market

The Ratcliffe Foundation
Whole Foods

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