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Shellfish and Mariculture Advisory Panel

August 1, 2019 – 5:00 PM

Coastal Resources Division, Brunswick

- 5:00 Assemble to serve dinner
- 5:15 Welcome
- 5:20 Staff and Panel Member Introductions
- 5:35 Orientation and Guidelines for SMAP
- 6:00 Overview of Shellfish Program and Regulatory Partners
- 6:15 Review of Current and New Shellfish Code
- 6:45 Discuss Panel Charge
- 7:00 Questions
- 7:15 Adjourn



Georgia Shellfish Fishery Overview

Dominic Guadagnoli, Shellfish and Water Quality Program Manager

Shellfish Program Partners

- Coastal Resources Division is responsible for classification, sampling and laboratory analysis of shellfish growing area waters. Other responsibilities include lease management/permitting, harvester education and permitting, and recreational area management.
- The Department of Agriculture, Food Safety Division, regulates handling and storage requirements, shucking, packing, shipping and/or sale of shellfish products within O.C.G.A. 40-7-12. Other responsibilities include HACCP and dealer training, dealer certification and dealer inspections.
- The Georgia Law Enforcement Division enforces Georgia shellfish laws O.C.G.A. 27-4-187 thru 204. LED works with CRD and DOA to enforce all shellfish rules and regulations both on the water and in landing facilities.

National Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP)

Guide for the Control of Molluscan Shellfish

- The National Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP) is the federal/state cooperative program recognized by the U. S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference (ISSC) for the sanitary control of shellfish produced and sold for human consumption.
- The purpose of the NSSP is to promote and improve the sanitation of shellfish (oysters, clams, mussels and scallops) moving in interstate commerce through federal/state cooperation and **uniformity** of State shellfish programs.
- Participants in the NSSP include agencies from shellfish producing and non-producing States, FDA, EPA, NOAA, and the **shellfish industry**. Under international agreements with FDA, foreign governments also participate in the NSSP.
- Other components of the NSSP include program guidelines for state growing area classification including laboratory, dealer certification programs, patrol and law enforcement programs and FDA evaluation of all other state shellfish program elements.
- Through their participation in the National Shellfish Sanitation Program and membership in the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference, States have agreed to enforce the Model Ordinance as the requirements which are minimally necessary for the sanitary control of molluscan shellfish.

Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference (ISSC)

- The purpose of the ISSC is to provide a formal structure for State regulatory authorities to participate in establishing updated regulatory guidelines and procedures for uniform state application of the Program.
- The ISSC has adopted formal procedures for state representatives to review shellfish sanitation issues and develop regulatory guidelines.
- Following FDA concurrence, these guidelines are published in revisions of the NSSP Model Ordinance. The ISSC convenes every other year and rotates throughout all regions of the U.S.
- Both GADNR and GADOA have adopted the NSSP model ordinance by reference in their code.

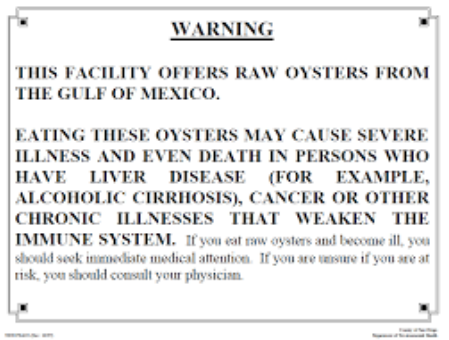
Water Quality Monitoring

- Georgia uses 2 classifications of shellfish waters - Approved and Prohibited.
- Shellfish sanitation guidelines are documented in the NSSP model ordinance. CRD audited annually by the FDA to review sanitary survey reports, vibrio management plans and patrol policies with LED for each growing area. DOA audited annually to review industry compliance with dealer HACCP plans, inspection frequencies and dealer certification.



Why is this one of the most regulated fisheries?

- In many cases, oysters and clams in the U.S. are still traditionally consumed raw or undercooked.
- As a result, the consumption of raw or undercooked shellfish has been and is still linked to severe illnesses and deaths that occur annually in the U.S.
- Georgia is a member of the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference (ISSC). The conference participants include state regulatory authorities, industry, FDA, EPA and NOAA. This conference convenes every other year where proposals are submitted and formally amended and voted on by state delegates to change language in the NSSP model ordinance.



Traditional (Wild) Shellfish Harvest

- **Oysters** naturally grow in clusters in intertidal zones. Must be “chipped” apart to separate legal-sized individuals
- Harvest at low tide when oyster and clam beds are exposed
- **Clams** are generally found in small remote creeks that are difficult to access and harvest.
- Heavy predation makes resource management difficult.
- Obtaining skilled and trained labor for commercial operations is a major limiting factor.
- Wild oyster and clam harvest is subject to cultch replenishment requirements



Clam Mariculture

- DNR inspects hatcheries/nurseries prior to certification to permit shipment of seed into the state.
- DNR monitors the purchase of clam seed (usually 4-5 mm) by growers. All clam seed is purchased from out-of-state hatcheries and tested by a certified pathologist.
- Staff inspects shipments to ensure seed is not comingled with other shellfish species or pests.
- Clam seed is transported to the field nursery and placed in fine mesh bags and under mesh cover netting to protect product from predation.
- Georgia farmed clams reach market size in 16 – 20 months and are marketed throughout the U.S. and Canada.



Oyster Mariculture

- Oyster farming has been growing throughout many regions of the U.S. including the Pacific, Northeast and Mid-Atlantic coasts. The Southeast and Gulf coasts are also beginning to experience growth in this industry.
- Due to many factors, the growth of this fishery has presented many challenges to both the entrepreneur as well as those who are responsible for regulating this industry.
- **Some of the major challenges include:**
 - Shared allocation for public domain
 - Restrictive siting requirements
 - Unique permitting challenges for each site
 - Shared burdens for regulatory authorization
 - Safe and reliable seed availability
 - Additional regulatory burdens in the NSSP(i.e. operational plans)
 - Potential navigational issues
 - Conflicts with other wildlife and birds
 - Compliance and enforcement
 - Storm Mitigation Plans

