



TOWN OF GREENWICH SHELLFISH COMMISSION

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PRESS RELEASE

Town of Greenwich Shellfish Commission partners with NOAA to quantify the value of the ecosystem services provided by Shellfish in Greenwich waters

Shellfish are an important local resource that easily can be overlooked as they live and grow hidden underwater. But shellfish provide many valuable services to shoreline towns and their residents! In the Connecticut town of Greenwich, shellfish farmers cultivate clams and oysters in town waters, providing a local, sustainable source of healthy seafood. In addition, town residents can harvest their own shellfish dinners from the recreational shellfish beds. Furthermore, naturally-occurring shellfish populations along the Greenwich shoreline and on the seafloor filter the water as they feed, which helps keep town waters cleaner and clearer, qualities appreciated by swimmers, boaters, and anglers. The habitat created by natural shellfish populations provides important shoreline protection against erosion, as well as a safe haven for young stages of fish to feed and hide from predators.

Like other assets, the town's shellfish beds and their associated "ecosystem services" generate economic benefits. A new project by the Greenwich Shellfish Commission, researchers from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and an economist from Stony Brook University, will begin to quantify the ecosystem services provided by shellfish to Greenwich. By combining local expertise with shellfish research and resource economics, the project team is collecting information to calculate the economic values associated with commercial harvest, recreational harvest, and water quality services that are realized by the town. NOAA researchers have been sampling local waters since December onboard the Greenwich Shellfish Commission boat and will be conducting more detailed studies this summer, when the shellfish are most active. The team is hoping to have initial results by the end of 2015.

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