

2017 aquaculture report shows growth, diversification in industry

V. 4 Iss. 3
April 2018

The aquaculture industry in Rhode Island experienced growth in 2017 in production and value, thanks to aquaculturists raising new and diversified crops, according to the RI CRMC's annual status report, "Aquaculture in Rhode Island."

In 2017, the farm gate value (the value for the product paid to the farmer) of the state's aquaculture products increased from \$5.3 million to more than \$5.7 million.

The number of farms increased from 70 to 73, and acres farmed grew by 21.4 acres, a modest 7.8 percent increase, to a total of 295.93 acres farmed. Oysters remain the aquaculture product of choice in the state, with more than 8 million sold for consumption.

Farmers this past year have focused on diversify-

ing their products – they have added sugar kelp (from nine new farms permitted in 2016), soft

shell clams, surf clams, and bay scallops to their production. There was also a shellfish harvest closure in February and March 2017 because of *Pseudo nitzschia* which is not harmful to shellfish but is harmful to people. The closure did not affect the aquaculture crop but did affect the shellfish harvest.

Oyster seed sales from Rhode Island aquaculturists were valued at \$260,175, up from last year's value of \$183,000. The number of aquaculture farm workers also grew from 177 to 194, a 9.6 percent increase in the industry's workforce.

The full report is available at the CRMC's web site, www.crmc.ri.gov.



East Beach Farm in Quonochontaug Pond (Photo: Ayla Fox)

[Learn more](#)

CRMC announces coastal wetland preservation strategy

The CRMC now has a series of "to-do list" actions for managing threatened coastal wetland habitats across the state.

The *Rhode Island Coastal Wetland Restoration Strategy*, developed by the CRMC and the Rhode Island Natural History Survey, provides a strategy for conservation and management efforts, and lays out a series of necessary actions for coastal wetland resource managers in Rhode Island. Coastal wetlands are important habitats that have been under threat from human activity since colonial times. They provide many important benefits to wildlife and humans, such as buffering shorelines from waves and slowing down coastal erosion, absorbing pollutants that would otherwise hurt coastal waters, and providing feeding, spawning and nesting areas for fish and wildlife. For these reasons, coastal wetlands are protected at the state and federal level, and there are many programs dedicated to restoring the damage done by development.

[Learn more](#)

CRMC rewards RI students for science fair projects

The CRMC has awarded gift cards to six Rhode Island junior, middle and high school students for their winning projects in the 2018 Rhode Island Science and Engineering Fair.

This year's science and engineering fair took place in March at the Community College of Rhode Island's Knight Campus in Warwick, and showcased engineering, science and environmental projects from 30 schools and 300 students from grades 6 through 12. This year students showed a total of 350 projects, and the CRMC awarded VISA gift cards for projects on floating

houses, hydro power and solar panels, as well as a study of the natural world, with projects about effects of ocean acidification on oyster shells, jellyfish, and the positive impacts of being in nature.

The six students were winners of the individual science fairs at their schools; teachers are allowed to send as many as 15 winners per school. The CRMC awarded prizes in the special awards category, which allows organizations and groups to set their own criteria and choose their own winners.

[Learn more](#)

To remove your name from our mailing list, please [click here](#). Questions or comments can be sent to ldwyer@crm.ri.gov.

Want to receive our improved Coastal Features printed newsletter? Email ldwyer@crm.ri.gov.