



Don't Chuck Your Shucks

Project Status:
Ongoing

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The "Don't Chuck Your Shucks" (DCYS) shell recycling program collects shells from local restaurants to use in projects that directly benefit the Inland Bays.

Project Summary

Background

Natural oyster shell is the best material for settlement and growth of young oysters. Given the shortage of shells for use in restoring the Inland Bays' oyster population, the Center has formed partnerships with local businesses to divert oyster shells from landfills for use in shellfish enhancement projects.

Project Description

When you visit a participating restaurant and enjoy an oyster meal, the spent shells (shucks) from your plate will be separated from the waste stream and put into special bins. A Center employee picks up shells from the restaurants and transports them to a facility located near the Fresh Pond Tract of Delaware Seashore State Park. They are cured in the sun for six months to remove soft tissue and bacteria. The recycled shells are then used in local habitat restoration projects such as living shorelines, oyster reefs, and oyster gardening.

Objective

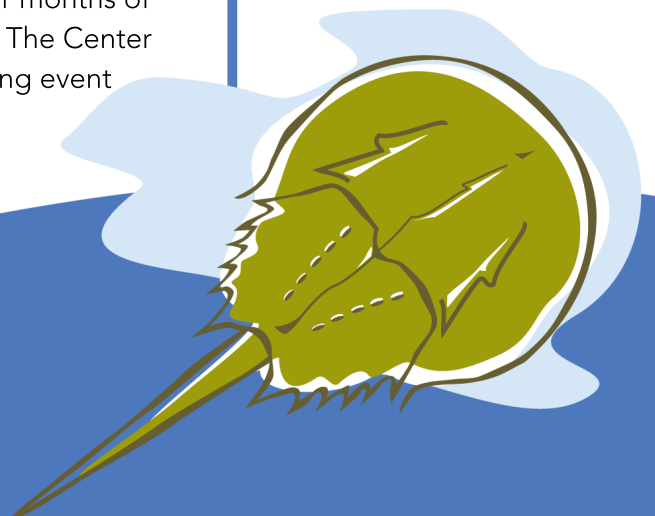
The DCYS Program teaches restaurant staff and patrons about the benefits of healthy oyster populations, as well as the Center's mission to improve the Bays. Restaurant staff have opportunities to volunteer in "bagging" events and preparing shells for use in restoration projects.

Project Timeline

The shells are collected year-round, more often during the warmer months of the year when visitors frequent our local participating restaurants. The Center hosts several "bagging" events each year. It's a great team-building event for organizations.

Partner Restaurants (2021)

99 Sea Level
Big Oyster Brewery
Bluecoast (Bethany)
Bluecoast (Rehoboth)
Catch 54
Chesapeake & Maine
Claws Seafood House
Fins Ale House (Bethany)
Fins Ale House (Rehoboth)
Fins Fish House
Fish On
Hammerheads Dockside
Henlopen City Oyster House
Hooked Up
Lobster Shanty
Matt's Fish Camp
Pig & Publican
Salted Rim
Smitty McGee's
Starboard RAW
The Blue Crab
Wheelhouse
Zoggs





Oyster shells from partner restaurants were bagged and used in a living shoreline project.

CCMP Focus Area

This project fulfills objectives outlined in the Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP) for the Delaware Inland Bays:

- Focus Area: Managing Living Resources and their Habitat
- Objective: Increase the economic and environmental benefits of shellfish
- Action: Enhance populations of eastern oysters

What Can You Do?

- Enjoy oysters in our local participating restaurants.
- Volunteer to help the Center bag shells, build reefs, or join our Oyster Gardening program.
- For more information and to find restaurants visit, inlandbays.org/dont-chuck-your-shucks.

Outcomes/Conclusions

As of 2020, more than 19,000 bushels of oyster shells have been collected by the DCYS program. That's over 600 tons of oyster shells diverted from landfills. These shells have supported the first three oyster reefs completed by the Center and living shorelines completed with a diversity of partners.

Project Highlights

In 2020, 3,008 bushels of shells were collected from participating DCYS restaurants. The Center hopes to collect at least 4,000 bushels of shells in 2021.

Funding Partners

The program is funded by a combination of private donations and grants from the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. All fundraising activities are supported by private funds.



In 2021, 23 area restaurant partners participated in the program.



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The Delaware Center for the Inland Bays is a nonprofit organization established in 1994 to promote the wise use and enhancement of the Inland Bays and its watershed. With its many partners, the Center conducts public outreach and education, develops and implements restoration projects, encourages scientific inquiry and sponsors research. To learn how you can get on board with the bays, please visit www.inlandbays.org and follow us on Facebook @[deinlandbays](https://www.facebook.com/deinlandbays)!