

GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION SPRING MEETING

Jason Rider, Biological Program Coordinator



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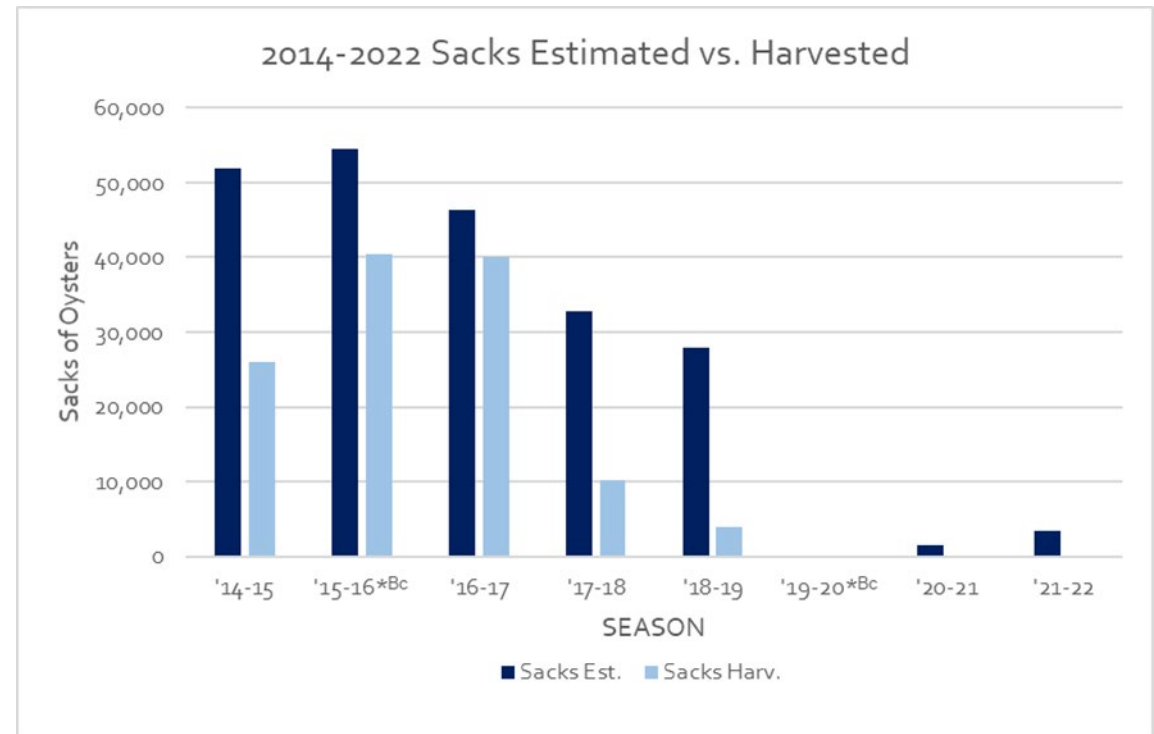
Mississippi Oyster Restoration Goals

- **Main Goal**

- Rebuild and enhance oyster reef production and balance size class dynamics to re-establish sustainable public harvesting

- **Secondary Goals**

- Ecosystem Services
- Water Quality Improvements
- Shoreline Protection



Shellfish Bureau Accomplishments

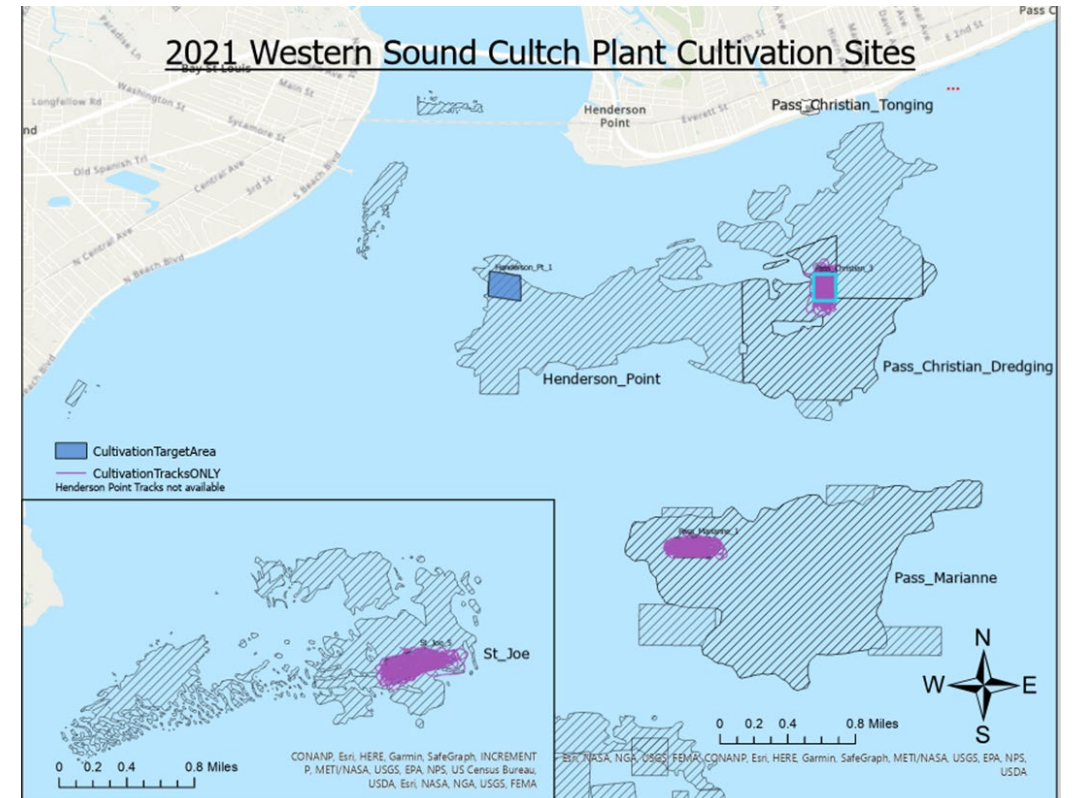
- Updated Title 22
 - Combined all shellfish related rules and regulations into one Part From Part 1, 13 and 17 to Part 1
 - Removed wording that was already covered in Mississippi Code and the NSSP Model Ordinance. Referenced the applicable statutory or regulatory authorities
 - Updated the format to “Rules” and “Sources” to conform with the format prescribed by the Secretary of States Office
 - Added new language / Updated old language
- Completed the MDMR Oyster Restoration and Recovery Plan
- Assisted with proposed legislation to adjust on-bottom leasing regulations in the state



Current Activities

- **Reef Cultivation**

- Cultivation occurred during April and May of 2021
- Cultivation was done with the R/V Conservationist and the use of the ArcGIS and QuickCapture Technology to monitor/verify cultivation tracks.
- 160 Total Acres in the Western Sound were targeted for cultivation
- Approximately 100 miles of cultivation tracks were logged, not including Henderson Point site.



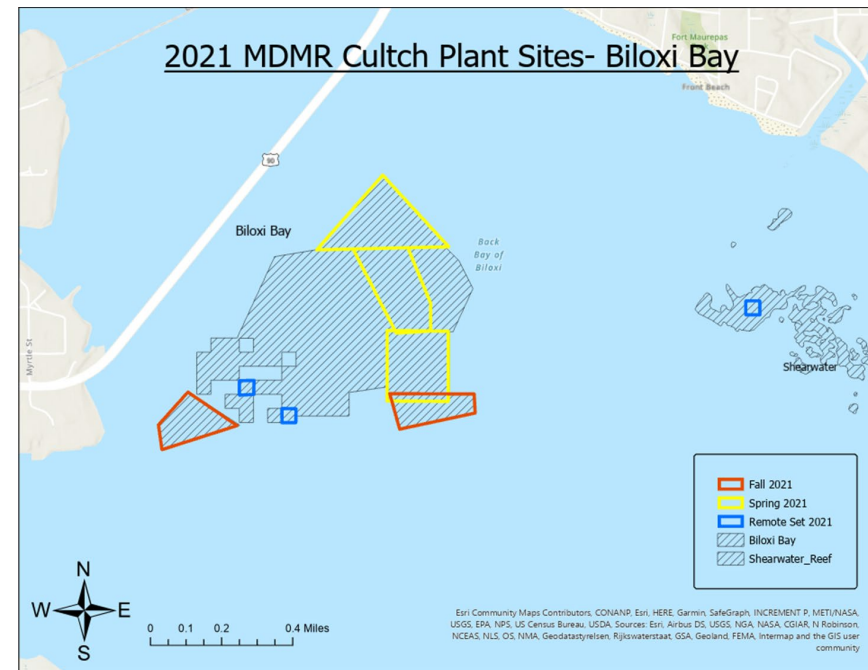
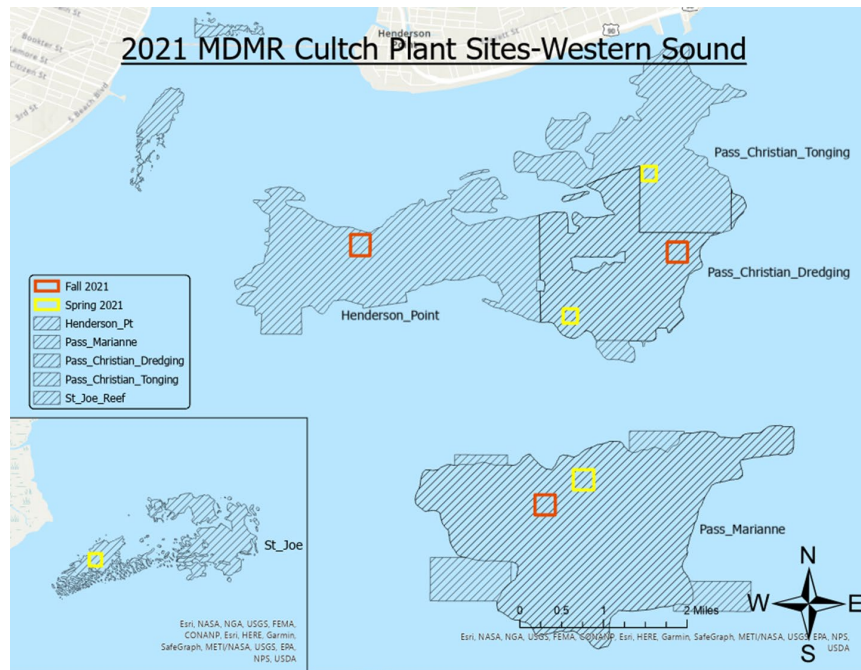
Current Activities

- **Reef Assessments**

- Completed 124 one-minute dredge tows
- 175 square meter dive samples
 - Identifies bottom type which assist in determining cultch plant locations and size classes

- **Clutch Planting**

- Spring cultch plant – 100 acres of oyster reef
- Fall cultch plant – 100 acres of oyster reef



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Current Activities

- **Off-Bottom Oyster Aquaculture**

- 17 Active Off-Bottom harvesters for 2021
- 465 acres permitted in the MDMR Commercial Aquaculture Park with 51 Acres privately leased
- 3.3 million oyster seed deployed by harvesters
- Commercial operations harvested approx. 213,907 oysters in 2021.
- Off-Bottom Oyster Aquaculture training classes began in June of 2021

- **Sanitary Surveys**

- Annual evaluation of all environmental factors that affect the water quality of shellfish growing waters

- **Investigation of Source Points**

- Assess and address high levels of fecal coliforms present in areas of the MS Sound



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Current Activities

- **Remote Oyster Setting Facility Project - Phase I**

- **Phase I**

- Project proposes to deploy 2.5 billion eyed larvae annually to assist with rebuilding oyster reefs faster than could be achieved naturally
- Assess the overall feasibility
- Determine infrastructure layout
- Determine operational and maintenance costs
- Deployed 11,703,819 oyster spat on shell oysters
- Cost per oyster - \$0.005 (half a cent)

- **Water Quality Analysis**

- Monthly fecal coliform analysis for FDA Compliance

- **Harmful Algal Bloom Analysis**

- Monthly seawater samples are collected at 15 locations for cell identification



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Thank you

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