

Press contact:
Elana Knopp
Communications Director
NY/NJ Baykeeper
elana@nynjbaykeeper.org
732-430-6736

8/16/2018

Press Release

NY/NJ Baykeeper deploys 1.5 million oysters to expand Living Shoreline

Matawan, NJ--As part of its mission to construct the first living shoreline in New Jersey portion of the Raritan Bay, NY/NJ Baykeeper conducted an **oyster deployment and oyster castle installation** (concrete oyster “homes”) **on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, August 14-16.**

Approximately 1.5 million juvenile oysters were transported from Leonardo State Marina aboard the Baykeeper patrol boat and taken to the Living Shoreline at Naval Weapons Station Earle (NWSE), where the fledgling oysters were introduced by NY/NJ Baykeeper’s team of scientists.

NY/NJ Baykeeper cultivates juvenile oysters at the NWSE facility, where the oyster larvae are grown and then released onto NY/NJ Baykeeper’s oyster reefs in Raritan Bay and monitored for growth and survivorship.

NY/NJ Baykeeper Restoration Program Director Meredith Comi, NY/NJ Baykeeper Captain Pete Cangeloso, Raritan Riverkeeper Bill Schultz and the NY/NJ Baykeeper Diving Team were joined by members of the U.S. Navy stationed at Naval Weapons Stations Earle.

In 2011, NY/NJ Baykeeper formed a partnership with NWSE to execute oyster restoration work.

The oyster is now functionally extinct in the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary due to rampant development, over-harvesting and pollution. NY/NJ Baykeeper is working to restore the oyster population for the many benefits this vital species provides, including protecting the coastline against erosion, serving as speed bumps for waves during storms, acting as natural water filters and adding a habitat for marine life.

In 2016, NY/NJ Baykeeper and the Rutgers University Center for Urban Environmental Sustainability (CUES) installed a 0.91-acre Living Shoreline adjacent to Ware Creek at NWSE using oysters set on vertical oyster reef structures, or castles, which can reduce storm energies and soil erosion.

“The idea was to see if oysters could survive, and if so could we bring back this important species,” Comi said of the program’s launch almost two decades ago. “They did, in fact, survive and the oyster gardening program was borne out of that. Over the past few years we’ve shifted to a whole ecosystem approach—a living shoreline involving multiple species. Ultimately, we are testing restoration methods in an urban area that we hope can be replicated in other urban estuaries. The big picture is all about fortifying our coasts and increasing habitat for other important species in our waters. We always say that if we can do this work here, we can do it anywhere.”

In November 2017, NY/NJ Baykeeper found that its oysters were naturally reproducing on its reef for the first time. The millions of oysters NY/NJ Baykeeper placed on the reef had grown and spawned, resulting in larvae settling back on the reef –all indicators of a healthy habitat.

“We are very proud of our work with the U.S. Navy, Rutgers University and others at Earle Naval Base on Raritan Bay, but we are also incredibly grateful to the bold actions of NY/NJ Baykeeper Founder Andy Willner and former NY/NJ Baykeeper Board Chair Ben Longstreth when they placed a barge load of oyster shells at the feet of Lady Liberty more than two decades ago,” NY/NJ Baykeeper CEO Greg Remaud said. “That barge of oysters was the first tangible step in what has in recent years led to widespread oyster restoration projects around the NY-NJ Harbor and brought oyster restoration in the region to new heights.”

NY/NJ Baykeeper has restored more than 3.5 million oysters back to NY-NJ Harbor Estuary waters with 200,000 – 500,000 new oysters introduced annually through its oyster restoration program.

About NY/NJ Baykeeper

NY/NJ Baykeeper's mission is to protect, preserve and restore the ecological integrity and productivity of the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary. NY/NJ Baykeeper fights to protect the health of local waterways through advocacy campaigns, legal actions and boat programs.

www.nynjbaykeeper.org

NY/NJ Baykeeper
30 Washington Street
Matawan, NJ 07747