

From Oyster Farm to Raw Bar and Back...or Not!



Raw oysters present an increased risk to public health due to the fact that they are regularly consumed live and whole.

It is not uncommon for product recalls to be issued several times per year due to various issues such as:

- Contamination of growing areas
- Illness outbreaks
- Mishandling of product
- Human error



In past years it was “relatively” easy for investigators to pin down the source of shellfish-related illness outbreaks.

The general practice of supplying a single “batch” of product to food service establishments helped simplify investigations.

During the past few years however, that practice has changed dramatically, especially in higher-end establishments.



The current trend, or fad, is for restaurants to serve as many different types of oysters as they can manage, often promoted in “sampler” platters.

It is interesting to note, that in essence, there are only 2 genetically separate oysters species grown in the US:

Crassostrea virginica (Atlantic oysters)



Crassostrea gigas (Pacific oysters)



“In North America there are at least 150 varieties of fresh oysters available for chefs to choose from for their menus. Yet all of these choices come from only 5 types of oysters: Kumamoto, Pacific oyster, Atlantic (Eastern) oyster, Olympia, and European Flats are the 5 species of oyster available in North America. It is from these 5 species that all the varieties spawn.”

“Oyster flavor profiles have advanced to the point of being akin to wine tasting. Connoisseurs discuss the salinity & complexity of the oyster, the finish, the hints of melon or cucumber. Other common tastes found in oysters include seaweed, mineral, iron, copper, sweet, vegetal, lettuce, umami and mushroom. It can be rather daunting to remember it all.”

Source: Chef’s Resources <https://www.chefs-resources.com/seafood/oysters/>



OYSTER FLAVOR = TASTE + TEXTURE + FINISH





GLACIER POINT OYSTER
Alaska, USA



KUMAMOTO OYSTER
Washington, USA



KUSSHI OYSTER
British Columbia, CAN



MOONSTONE OYSTER
Rhode Island, USA



ONSET OYSTER
Massachusetts, USA



PEMAQUID OYSTER
Maine, USA



SAINT SIMON OYSTER
New Brunswick, CAN



SUMMERSIDE OYSTER
Prince Edward Island, CAN



THATCH ISLAND OYSTER
Massachusetts, USA

Watch House Point Misty Point Oysters Alba Bras d'Or Lakes Oysters
Barnstable Oyster Beausoleil Oyster Bedeque Bay Oysters Belon Oysters -
Maine Blackberry Point oysters Blue Point Oysters Cape Breton Oysters
Cape North Oyster Cavendish Cup Oyster Chatham Oysters Chesapeake
Oyster Chincoteague Oysters Colville Bay Oysters Conway Cup Oysters
Cotuit Oysters Cuttyhunk Oysters Dune Shadow Oysters Duxbury Oysters
Forbidden Oysters French Kiss Oysters Glidden Point Oysters Hurricane
Harbor Oysters Island Creek Oysters James River Oysters Katama Bay
Oysters - Sweet Petite Oysters Malagash Thrumcap Oysters Malpeque Oyster
Martha's Vineyard Oysters Mecox Bay Oysters Moonstone Oysters Naked
Cowboy Oysters Olde Salt Oysters Oysterponds Oysters Paramour Oysters
Parrot Island Oysters Peconic Bay Oysters Pemaquid Oysters Pleasant Bay
Oysters Pipes Cove Oysters Quonset Point Oysters Ram Island Oysters
Rappahannock River Oysters Raspberry Point Oysters Saddlerock Oysters
Salt Pond Oysters - Salt Pond Selects Snow Hills Oysters South Hampton
Select Oysters Stingray Oysters Summerside Oyster Tatamagouche Oyster
Tomahawk Oysters Umami Oysters Wawenauk Oysters Watch Hill Oysters
Wellfleet Oysters Westport Island Oysters Whale Rock Oysters WiAnno
Oysters Widows Hole Oysters York River Oyster



Source: Chef's Resources <https://www.chefs-resources.com/seafood/oysters/>



This change in the way oysters are marketed and promoted is strongly reminiscent of the rise in microbreweries.



“Highlighting seasonal craft beer, craft spirits, and premium oysters, the event will feature 35 breweries and approximately 70 craft beers and spirits.”

“An Oyster Bar includes 15-20 varieties of oysters from California, Washington, Maine, New York Florida, British Columbia, Alaska Alabama, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Rhode Island, Virginia, and Connecticut”.



MD VA LA CA WA



NC

A

B

C

CT

NJ

RI

PEI



So, what's driving this cosmic shift in oyster marketing?



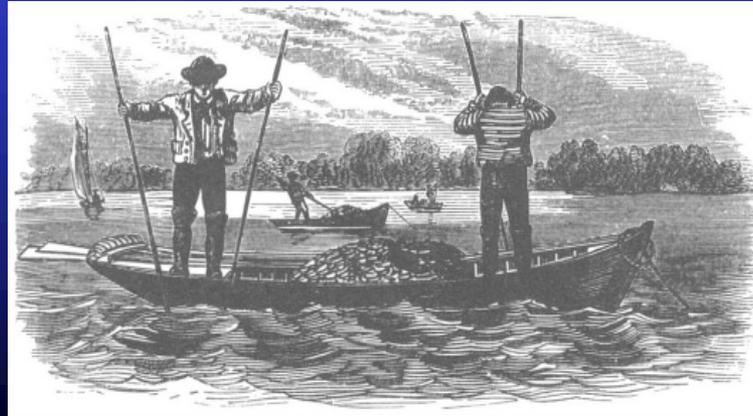
The promotion and expansion in US shellfish mariculture over the past several years has been the driving force.



Shellfish Leases North Carolina

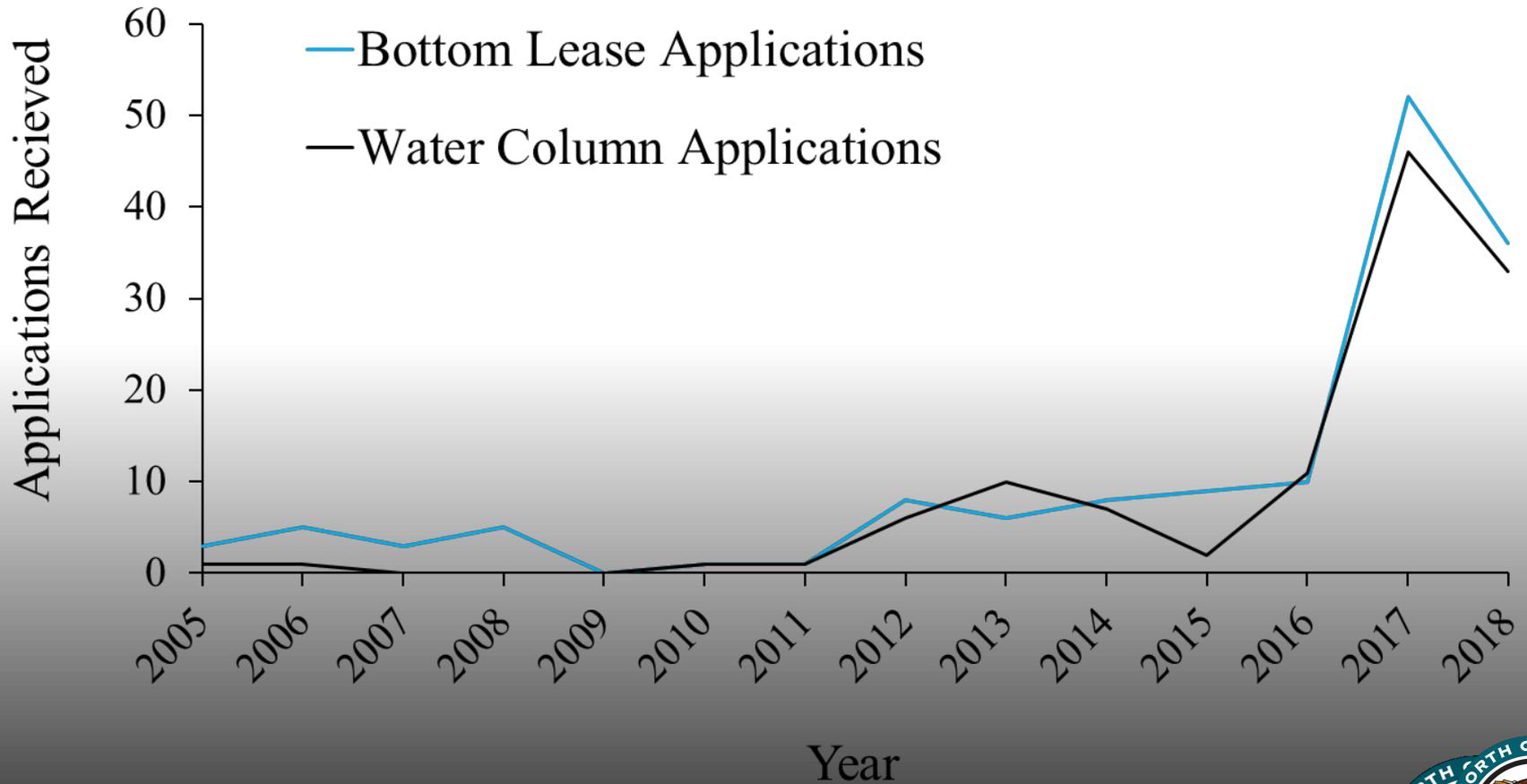
Historical

- Since 1858, private use of public trust waters for the production of shellfish by leasing to residents of North Carolina
- Traditionally used for bottom only, clams and oysters
- In 1989, legislation was enacted to allow the use of the water column above existing shellfish leases (1st water column lease issued in 1991)
- MFC authority to issue leases until circa 1995 when authority transferred to DEQ



Status of Shellfish Leases

Number of Applications



Types of Shellfish Leases

Bottom Cages



Rack and Bag



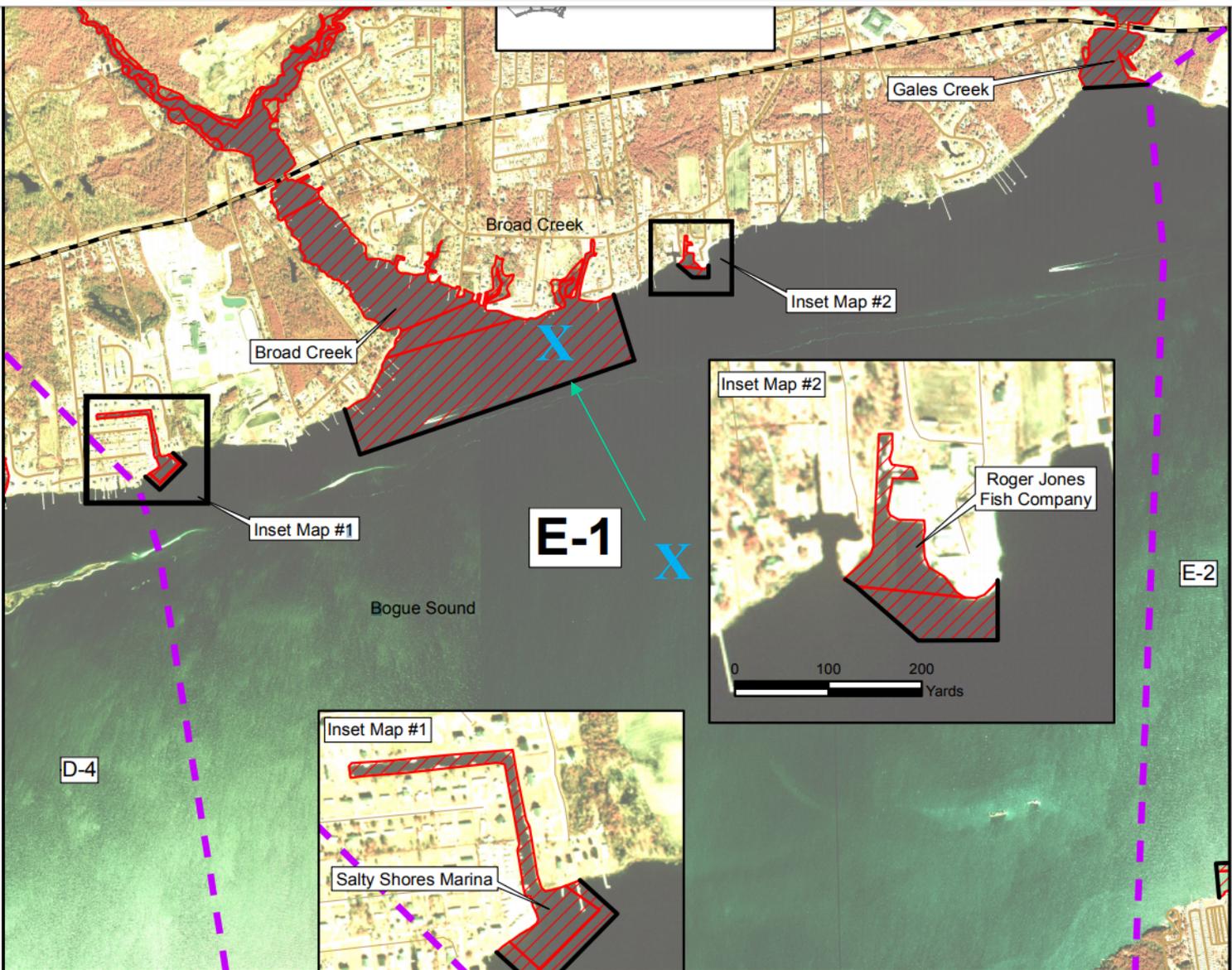
Floating gear



An unanticipated issue with the popularity of shellfish mariculture here and across most of the country is the increase in the number of “novice” lease holders.

In past years most shellfish leases were held by long-time commercial fishermen who mostly utilized leases as a supplement to their other fishing activities.





Map 33



In a second case in March a new lease holder was found to be illegally selling shellfish direct to retail establishments.

Mera Brothers Oysters, LLC
109 Finch Loop • Beaufort, NC 28516
License ID No. 1963255
edavierr@merabrothersoysters.com

Mera Brothers Oysters

Harvest Date 2/19/14
Harvest Time 5:00 PM
Harvest Location Oyster Creek, Davis NC E-2
Quantity 100

Consuming raw or undercooked meats, poultry, seafood, shellfish, or eggs may increase your risk of foodborne illness, especially if you have a medical condition.

Do you notice anything wrong with this tag?



An unanticipated benefit to increased shellfish mariculture has been the utilization of previously un-desirable product.



“Durham restaurant first in state to offer green gill oysters!” WRAL.com



What we can do

- Push shellstock tag retention
- Take time to carefully re
- Check for tagged contain
- remove any untagged pro
- EUDCATE, EDUCATE,
- Keep in contact with She

SALE TAG

MOON N SEA NC, INC
(dba KGI Trading NC)
12810 Virkler Dr. Suite 103 · Charlotte, NC 28273
NC 749 SS

Original Shipper Cert. No. _____

Harvest Date: _____

Harvest Area: _____

Type & Quantity _____

THIS TAG IS REQUIRED TO BE ATTACHED UNTIL CONTAINER IS EMPTY OR RETAGGED AND THEREAFTER KEPT ON FILE, IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER, FOR 90 DAYS. RETAILERS: DATE WHEN LAST SHELLFISH FROM THIS CONTAINER SOLD OR SERVED _____.

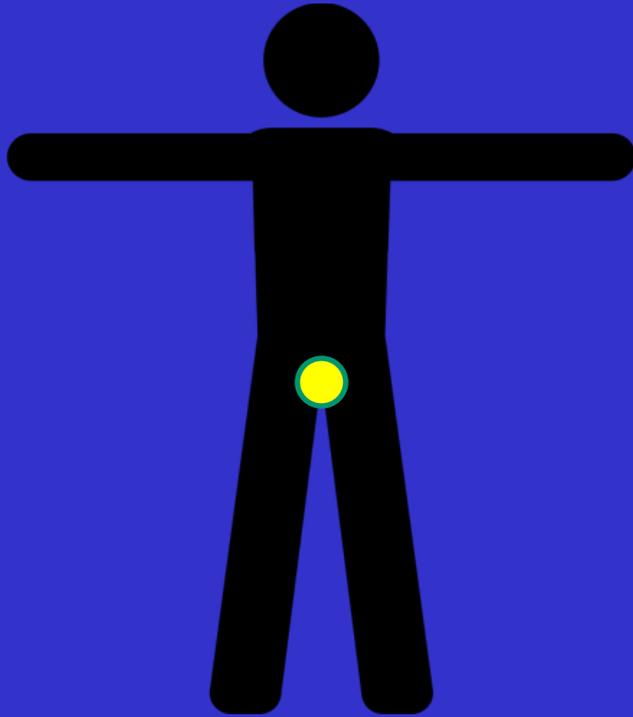
KEEP REFRIGERATED
CONSUMER ADVISORY

Eating raw, or undercooked oysters, clams, or mussels may cause severe illness. People with the following conditions are at especially high risk: liver disease, alcoholism, diabetes, cancer, stomach or blood disorder, or weakened *immune system*. *Ask your doctor if you are unsure of your risk. If you eat raw, or undercooked shell fish and become sick, see a doctor immediately.*

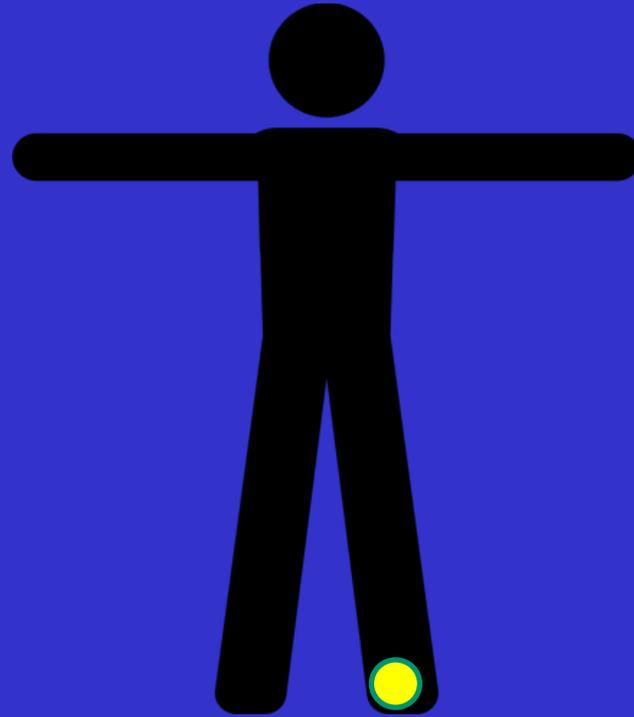
TO: _____



Funny story time!!!



Front



Back



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