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WATERSHED WATCH

ST. MARY'S RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION
PO Box 94
St. Mary's City, MD 20686

August 21, 2018

Oyster Surveys Reveal Thriving Sanctuary

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>>Sanctuary Thriving

>>Summer Interns



Over the past month, interns Emma Gilligan, Jack O'Brien, and Christy Pototsky have been conducting scientific surveys of oyster densities at oyster bars in the St. Mary's River Oyster Sanctuary. Two different methods have been employed to gain this valuable information: hand tonging (as demonstrated by intern Emma Gilligan in the photo above) and diving surveys. At least four samples were

taken at each site, and all were analyzed for oyster survival, size class, and spat recruitment.



The state considers an oyster bar "restored" at densities of more than 15 oysters per square meter. According to our data, oyster densities ranged from 165-300 oysters per square meter across 10 sites. In addition, mortality ranged from 3-11%. We can conclude





from these findings that our oyster bars in the sanctuary are thriving! Several factors have contributed to the success of these bars, including improved water quality, enforcement of harvest prohibition, and the recruitment success of all oyster bars networking together. Collecting data and monitoring the progress of our efforts is an essential part of oyster restoration, and we can use these findings to direct future projects.

Interns Learn New Skills Share Workload with College Staff



Partnering with the college is where our Association began in 2002-2004. This summer we expanded our partnership benefits not only students and professors that we have worked closely with over the years, but to this summer's workload collaboration benefitting the waterfront and its staff. After all, we utilize the waterfront routinely to access our work sites in the river, hold workshops and field

trips, grow oysters, and generally have a presence on the river.



Summer interns Christy Pototsky and Jack O'Brien (pictured above) along with returning intern Emma Gilligan (top photo) learned new

skills in dock maintenance. If you have these skills you understand that removing and replacing old deck boards can be difficult and demanding work. Christy and Jack are currently learning to prepare and paint the bottom of the Biology Department's vessel. In exchange for this work the college waterfront staff have been most supportive of our work and will assist us with maintenance on our barge in preparation for major reef building activities in 2019. Our sincere thanks to the waterfront staff and the St. Mary's College community!



OUR MISSION

To protect, improve, and promote the sustainability of the St. Mary's River Watershed through the collaborative efforts of economic, agricultural, environmental, social, cultural, and political stakeholders in the community.

We're on the web!

www.smrwa.org



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Upcoming Events:

- MGO Cage Fill & Distribution
Saturday, August 25
11:30 to 1:30
SMCM waterfront
- [RiverFest 2018](#)
September 22
11:00 to 4:00
Historic St. Mary's City

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