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Delaware Bay Oyster Mortalities

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Abstract

In approximately six weeks in the spring of 1957 over 50 per cent of the oysters planted on leased grounds in Delaware Bay died in an epizootic. The kill was most intense in the center of the leased grounds and decreased in intensity with distance from this center. No unusual mortalities were detected in the eastern planted areas nor on the seed beds in the Upper Bay. By fall of 1958 oysters were dying in the Upper Bay seed beds and in all areas on the planted grounds. Seed oysters planted in the spring of 1958 had an average mortality of 52 per cent by that same fall. A year later the minimal kill of this population was 80 per cent.

A new sporozoan has been identified as the causative agent in this epizootic kill. Experimental studies of several imported stocks have shown differences in susceptibility to the pathogen and have demonstrated the seasonal patterns of kill.

Rehabilitation of Disease-Depleted Oyster Populations in Eastern Canada

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INTRODUCTION

IN EASTERN CANADA, oysters, *Crassostrea virginica*, Gmelin, occur in those portions of the provinces of Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia bordering the southwestern Gulf of St. Lawrence.

In 1915 oysters started dying in large numbers in Malpeque Bay, Prince Edward Island. Mortalities fanned out from an apparent epidemic centre and soon involved Cascumpeque and Bedeque Bays. By 1920 the fishery of these waters was prostrate. Subsequent investigation, ten or more years after the subsidence of spectacular mortality, suggested:

(1) that in infectious, epidemic disease was involved;

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