

Olympia Oyster Restoration

A Regional Marine Resources Committee Project

Project Goals

Long-term goals for this project are to restore self-sustaining native Olympia oyster populations throughout their historic range in Puget Sound and create new structured habitat at priority sites for expansion of existing populations. The Marine Resources Committees (MRCs) involved in this effort are also focused on monitoring native oyster beds and evaluating success of seeding and habitat-enhancement projects. The purpose of re-establishing Olympia oysters is to restore valuable ecosystem services such as natural filtration, larval production and creation of complex nearshore habitat that supports a diverse community of organisms.

Overall Accomplishments

Olympia oyster populations have been protected and enhanced at multiple locations in the Northwest Straits region. Together, the Clallam, Jefferson, Skagit and Whatcom MRCs have planted over two million genetically-diverse “restoration grade” oyster seeds and worked tirelessly to monitor population growth and success, create new habitat through introduction of cultch material, conduct education and outreach events and increase understanding of Olympia oyster-enhancement strategies.



Olympia oysters growing on a Pacific oyster shell. Credit: Cheryl Lowe

Success in Numbers

Clallam MRC:

Site: 1 acre of Sequim Bay
2012-13: 210,000 oysters planted

Jefferson MRC:

Site: 1 acre of Discovery Bay
2002-04: 375,000 oysters planted
2006 & 2014: 9,000 oysters relocated

Skagit MRC:

Site: South Fidalgo Bay Trestle
2002-06: 1,429,570 oysters planted

Whatcom MRC:

Site: Drayton Harbor
2013: 40 bags of seeded cultch placed

This work made possible by many project partners over the years, including:

- Puget Sound Restoration Fund
- WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
- Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe