

QUAHOG BAY CONSERVANCY



2025 ANNUAL REPORT



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CONTACT INFORMATION

QUAHOG BAY
CONSERVANCY

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DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I joined Quahog Bay Conservancy in September and immediately got to work: tumbling oysters, hauling green crabs, meeting community members, attending town meetings, and conducting a listening tour with marine science and conservation partners across Maine. I wanted to see clearly how our fieldwork, research, and community partnerships fit together and my first priority was to learn directly from the people and programs that make QBC strong.

QBC has a concrete and impactful past: protecting water quality, supporting the working waterfront, restoring habitat, and investing in local students. My responsibility is to build a bridge from that strong foundation to a hopeful, sustainable future.

This year, we launched an ambitious strategic planning process to clarify our priorities and strengthen long-term sustainability. We are collaborating with the new Marine Science Center to expand research partnerships, refine our monitoring programs, and explore durable revenue models that support both science and community access. At every step, we are committed to honoring the history of this working waterfront while ensuring it remains viable for future generations.

I could not imagine a better team to do this work with. Our staff, board, founders, and partners bring expertise, integrity, and deep love for this place. Together, we are building something that will last.

**LAURA
CAMPBELL**

Interim Executive Director



NONPROFIT STATUS

The Quahog Bay Conservancy (QBC) is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. 100% of every dollar raised goes towards funding our programs and paying the staff who implement them. We are an extremely lean and efficient organization.

QBC is funded in part by generous individual donors, private foundations, and state grants. The balance of our revenue comes from QBC's sustainable oyster farm, which grows hundreds of thousands of oysters each year, selling them to restaurants and wholesale buyers.

The donated funds and 100% of the proceeds from the sale of Snow Island Oysters go to QBC's programs, ensuring that we protect the ecological integrity of the bay.

OUR BAY. OUR RESPONSIBILITY.

New Mission!

Anchored in Quahog Bay, we use science, education, local knowledge and hands-on programs to protect and sustain the coastal Maine ecosystem and the communities that depends on it.



SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

MARINE RESEARCH

Marine research at QBC is entering a new phase, building on a decade of field-based stewardship and strengthening our role as a research partner along the Maine coast. In 2025, we focused on long-term, collaborative science: expanding nearshore monitoring, supporting applied research for fisheries and habitat management, and developing infrastructure to support visiting scientists and student researchers.

QBC continues collaborating on the design and construction of the Marine Science Center, which will include dry labs and a flowing seawater lab for fellows, grants, and applied research. Our work focuses on practical, place-based topics such as oyster growth, invasive species mitigation, and monitoring changes affecting commercial species. Interns support data collection, water quality testing, and field research that informs management decisions.

In 2025, we strengthened partnerships, clarified priorities, and advanced infrastructure to ensure Quahog Bay remains scientifically understood and ecologically resilient.

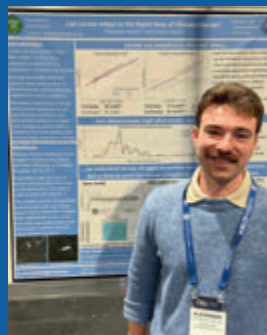


RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT: DR. ALEX ASCHER

Quahog Bay Conservancy is proud to continue to have Dr. Alex Ascher on our team. A post-doctoral researcher, Dr. Ascher focuses on larval ecology and the early life stages of marine organisms. Understanding how larvae disperse, settle, and survive is critical to sustaining marine life and managing coastal ecosystems.

Dr. Ascher's research explores the ecology of copepods, tiny but essential plankton that form the base of the marine food web. Understanding copepod dynamics helps scientists track broader ecosystem changes, including shifts in ocean conditions that affect commercially important species in the Gulf of Maine.

He also brings valuable experience studying lobster larvae diets and early development, research that has important implications for fisheries sustainability. Dr. Ascher is currently exploring the potential for establishing a lobster hatchery program at QBC to support research and restocking efforts. Stay tuned as this exciting idea continues to develop!



UMAINE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM ACCREDITATION

QBC AND THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE

Partnership with the University of Maine, School of Marine Sciences

Quahog Bay Conservancy hosts and manages Field Experiences in Marine Science (SMS 450), an accredited University of Maine course offered with academic oversight from Dr. Walt Golet.

The QBC internship program provides students with exposure to various marine-related fields, offering hands-on experience that prepares them for success in future education and careers. By immersing interns in diverse marine disciplines, we equip them with practical skills and real-world knowledge to enhance their effectiveness. Our multidisciplinary approach empowers students to tackle complex challenges in marine ecosystems with innovation and insight, contributing to the long-term health and sustainability of coastal environments.



INTERNSHIP & SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

Investing in the next generation is central to Quahog Bay Conservancy's mission. Our internship and scholarship programs are designed to connect students directly to the bay through hands-on fieldwork, applied marine research, and meaningful financial support for continued study.

In 2025, interns worked alongside our team on oyster aquaculture, water quality testing, invasive species mitigation, and coastal monitoring, gaining practical experience grounded in working waterfront realities. Our scholarship recipients continue to pursue studies aligned with marine science, supporting the commercial fishing industry, and conservation. The following pages highlight the 2025 interns and scholarship awardees who are helping shape the future of coastal Maine.

For more information on internships and the scholarship program, visit our website (www.quahogbay.org) and download the requirements.

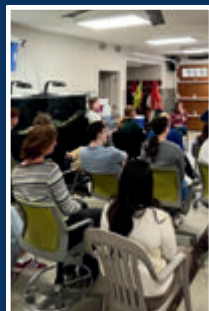


LEARN WITH QBC

Working Waterfront Science Scholarship. The Working Waterfront Science Scholarship supports Harpswell students pursuing education and training connected to the marine environment and the future of our working waterfront. Open to graduating seniors, the scholarship provides \$5,000 and a new laptop to help recipients take the next step in fields such as marine science, conservation, aquaculture, and related trades. By investing in local students, this program strengthens the pipeline of talent needed to sustain Maine's coastal communities and ensures that the next generation remains connected to and prepared to steward Quahog Bay.

Marine Science Award. QBC is pleased to also provide support for undergraduate students conducting senior-level research projects at any university in New England. Since 2016, we have allocated \$10,000 annually to fund internship experiences and student-driven capstone projects through the Marine Science Award (MSA). These projects should align with QBC's mission and programs, focusing on fields such as marine biology, marine conservation, marine science, aquaculture, and climate change.

Applicants must be full-time undergraduates in good standing pursuing a senior research project in marine science or a related field.



INTERNSHIP & SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

—CONTINUED



Annabella Williams, Bowdoin College, Biology; Summer Intern 2025:

Originally from Juneau, Alaska, Annabella chose to spend her summer at QBC to connect with the Harpswell community and gain hands-on experience in aquaculture. Drawn to QBC's community-based approach to environmental conservation, Annabella is particularly interested in how science can be applied to create meaningful change.

This summer, she studied how juvenile Atlantic herring abundance is influenced by both biotic and abiotic factors—such as prey availability, sea surface temperature, and spawning stock biomass—across longer timescales. Using R, she combined data from multiple sources, including the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI), National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and QBC. Annabella enjoyed learning how to communicate her findings to different audiences. Beyond her research, she also looked forward to daily boat rides, trash clean-ups, and field trips offered through the internship.

"QBC offered a unique experience that opened my eyes to the breadth of marine biology. With the abundance of aquaculture-related tasks, networking opportunities, and fieldwork we were exposed to, I feel more confident moving forward toward graduate school and a career in scientific research."

Megan Reed, Eckerd College; Marine Science Major and a minor in Applied Mathematics and Coastal Management; Summer Intern 2025:

Megan is from Bowdoinham, Maine, where she grew up spending time outdoors and near the ocean. Her passion for marine life started at a young age, leading her to the QBC internship program. It was particularly special for Megan as she spent lots of time in the midcoast region growing up. Megan most enjoyed spending the summer outside on the water and learning more about the local coastal environment. Her favorite project was the CBASS environmental surveys; she enjoyed learning about the different fish species caught.



Megan greatly enjoyed the opportunities learning about the marine science community through field trips and networking at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI), the GMRI, and the UMaine Pelagic Fisheries Lab (PFL). She particularly enjoyed the day offshore with PFL tagging highly migratory Blue sharks. Moving forward, Megan plans to pursue a career in the marine sciences with a focus in biology, and hopes to be involved with sharks.

"This summer internship experience through QBC was exceptionally valuable to me this summer. I was able to learn so much about marine science and the different paths it can lead to. This was one of the coolest marine science experiences I have had so far, and I am deeply thankful to QBC for it. I am looking forward to seeing where the knowledge I gained this summer will lead me."

INTERNSHIP & SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

—CONTINUED



Eliza Chase, Hobart and William Smith College; Biology and Environmental Studies Majors; Summer Intern 2025:

Eliza, a senior Biology and Environmental Studies major at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, grew up in Falmouth, Maine exploring Casco Bay. Her interest in aquaculture and passion for marine science led her to the QBC internship, where she was inspired by its commitment to realistic, sustainable bay conservation.

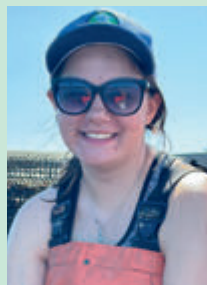
Eliza's favorite days were spent on the water, especially tumbling oysters on the float. She valued networking with professionals from GMRI, WHOI, and PFL, and appreciated learning R programming. She looks forward to applying her lab, field, and networking experience from QBC in future roles. After graduation, she plans to move to Alaska to pursue a career in marine conservation.

"My internship with Quahog Bay Conservancy was an extraordinary and unforgettable experience that connected classroom learning with hands-on fieldwork, strengthened my passion for marine science, and gave me invaluable skills to carry into my future career. I am grateful to everyone at QBC for the opportunity to be part of something so special. I learned so much and had a ton of fun doing it!"

Caroline Salvatierra, University of Maine; dual degree in Marine Science and Environmental Science with concentration in Marine Ecosystem Ecology; Summer Intern 2025:

Caroline grew up in North Reading, Massachusetts, where she had easy access to the coast and fell in love with the ocean at The New England Aquarium. She was drawn to QBC due to its variety of conservation initiatives that closely align with her interests in the field of marine science.

She joined QBC to gain hands-on experience in marine conservation, strengthen her research and coding skills, and spend her summer working outdoors. Highlights included daily fieldwork on the water, learning about QBC's conservation programs, and an inspiring trip to Woods Hole, where she gained insight into opportunities at WHOI and the importance of collaboration between engineering and science. Throughout the internship, she built diverse skills—from crab trapping and oyster farming to coding in R—and plans to continue developing these abilities at UMaine and in future internships. She aims to pursue graduate school and ultimately work in conservation-focused policy.



"The internship at Quahog Bay Conservancy was a unique, hands-on experience combining fieldwork, lab work, and research while earning college credit. I learned from a passionate team, built valuable skills, and gained a strong foundation for my future in marine science."

INTERNSHIP & SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

—CONTINUED



Joseph Clark, University of Richmond; Finance and Data Analytics Major and a minor in History; Summer Intern 2025:

Joseph grew up in Aspen, Colorado, developing an early love for the outdoors that later expanded to coastal environments through his work with Quahog Bay Conservancy. He joined QBC after learning about its new seafood retail project, seeing an opportunity to apply his business skills to a mission-driven effort.

Over the summer, Joseph developed a business plan for QBC, conducting market research and community outreach for the seafood retail project to understand what locals wanted. He also enjoyed working on the oyster float, gaining a deeper appreciation for the fieldwork behind QBC's conservation efforts. His favorite moment was the final presentations, seeing the team's work come together.

Joseph highlighted teamwork, flexibility, and collaboration as key lessons and hopes to pursue roles that blend business, sustainability, and community impact. He described his QBC internship as an unforgettable experience that connected classroom learning with hands-on fieldwork and strengthened his passion for marine science.

2025 AWARD AND SCHOLARSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

MARINE SCIENCE AWARD

**Reuven Frye, Bates College; Major: Environmental Science
2024 QBC Summer Intern**

Reuven received the Marine Science Award to research on thermal performance, genetic connectivity, and ecological variation of intertidal blue mussel populations in the Gulf of Maine.

"Thank you for providing me the opportunity to conduct my summer research project that will lead into my senior thesis. The intertidal ecosystem was something that I was unfamiliar with, but I was fascinated by. The ability for the organisms that inhabit this ecosystem and how they have adapted to an environment that undergoes a significant transformation twice a day is astonishing."



2025 AWARD AND SCHOLARSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

MARINE SCIENCE AWARD

Gary O'Neil, Maine Maritime Academy;
Major: Marine Biology
Interned at Rosario Beach Marine Lab,
Anacortes Washington



"[The Marine Science Award] has benefited me in doing something I have been working towards my whole life, working with octopuses... As someone who has only lived on the east coast and has never traveled anywhere outside of that. It was an amazing and memorable opportunity to travel across the country and witness what the Pacific Northwest has to offer.

Traveling out there has by far been my best experience and one of my favorite places I have ever traveled to. The SCUBA diving experience I had with my professor was jaw dropping. Nearly every dive, I witnessed a ruby or giant pacific octopus in the wild. Witnessing them in their natural habitat was a goal I've always dreamt of, and I feel incredibly fortunate to have had that opportunity and share that with the people I know and others I meet along the way."



Emma Archambault and Haylie Calver,
University of Maine, School of Marine
Science, Marine Biology



Over the summer, Emma Archambault and Haylie Calver conducted field sampling in Castine, Maine, as part of a capstone research project on bioluminescent dinoflagellates. They used a plankton net to collect plankton samples and investigate the organisms responsible for the bioluminescence in the region.

Emma also became a Registered Maine Guide in Castine and led sea kayak tours, including night tours in bioluminescent waters. This experience enabled her to make qualitative observations during tours and engage in public outreach, sharing the science behind bioluminescent organisms and emphasizing the importance of preserving night conditions to enhance their visibility.



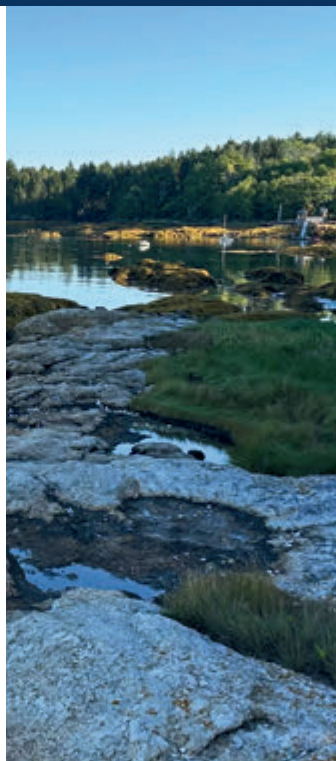
2025 AWARD AND SCHOLARSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

WORKING WATERFRONT SCIENCE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

**Elizabeth Kelly, Freshman at
University of New Hampshire;
Forensic Science and Biology**



"Your scholarship has allowed me to focus more fully on my studies and athletics, and the computer you provided has been an invaluable tool for my coursework. Thank you again for your generosity and support."



**Molly Greenleaf, Freshman at
Husson University; College of
Life Sciences and Agriculture**



"The funding I received from the Working Waterfront Scholarship has made a world of a difference while I've been at school. Because the funding alleviated some pressure in regards to the cost of college, I feel as though I can prioritize my education. Overall, this funding has made my transition to college much easier than it would have been without it."





WATER QUALITY MONITORING

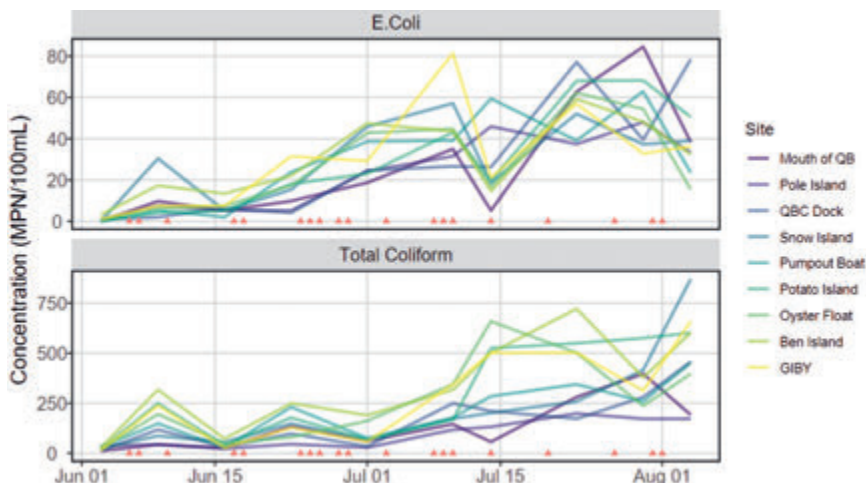
Water quality monitoring is the foundation of Quahog Bay Conservancy's work. When QBC was founded in 2015, portions of Quahog Bay had been closed to shellfishing for nearly 30 years due to poor water quality. Targeted interventions, like septic upgrades, marine debris removal, a free pump-out program for boaters, and oyster aquaculture, helped reverse that trajectory, while monitoring measures their cumulative impact.

In 2025, we continued consistent testing and expanded coordination across the bay. Regular sampling provides critical data on bacterial levels and overall water conditions, informing local shellfish management and supporting sustainable access. Monitoring also engages interns and students, giving them hands-on experience in marine science and community stewardship.

The reopening of Quahog Bay to clamming was a milestone, but sustaining it requires vigilance. In 2025, QBC reaffirmed its commitment to rigorous monitoring, transparent data, and practical solutions that protect ecosystem health, shellfish harvests, and the working waterfront. Clean water remains the foundation for both ecological resilience and a thriving coastal economy.



Contaminant load in Most Probable Number of cells per 100mL for E. coli (top panel) and total coliform (bottom panel) across our sampling sites in 2025. Lines are color coded by site. red triangles along the x-axis indicate dates with measurable rainfall, which is expected to affect contaminant loads in surface waters.



CASCO BAY AQUATIC SYSTEM SURVEY

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE GULF OF MAINE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Casco Bay Aquatic Systems Survey

Quahog Bay Conservancy partners with Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI) on the Casco Bay Aquatic Systems Survey (CBASS), a long-term nearshore monitoring initiative that tracks ecosystem change across the region.

In 2023, CBASS sampling expanded to include Quahog Bay, increasing spatial coverage and strengthening data on temperature, habitat conditions, and species dynamics.

In 2025, QBC continued to collaborate on this effort to connect local fieldwork to regional science, ensuring that changes observed in Quahog Bay contribute to a broader understanding of coastal resilience and inform fisheries and habitat management decisions.



As part of this collaboration, scientists at GMRI work with QBC to design research protocols and study topics of interest.

The goal is to provide essential information for fisheries and coastal resource management by understanding the influence of physical and biological environments on coastal populations and communities.



Link to GMRI's Casco Bay Monitoring Report where the partnership with QBC is highlighted:
<https://gmri.org/stories/2025-casco-bay-ecosystem-monitoring-report/>

INVASIVE SPECIES

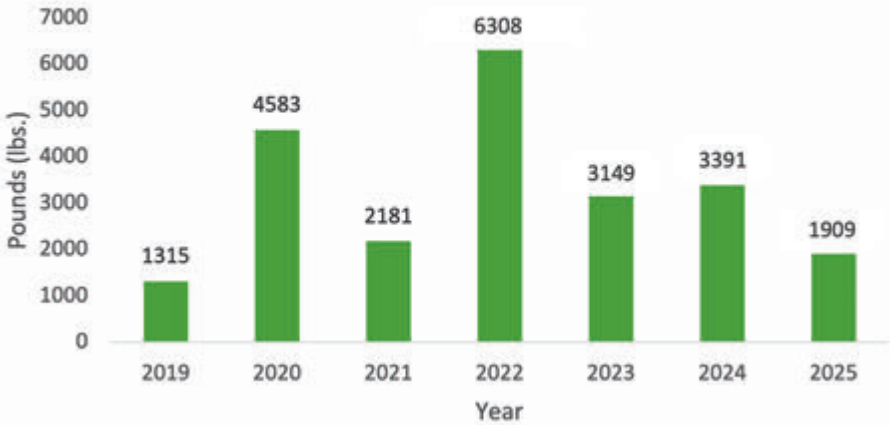
Our work is grounded in collaboration with local harvesters, municipal stakeholders, and regional partners along the Maine coast, improving data sharing, refining trapping strategies, and positioning Quahog Bay as a model for scalable mitigation. This year, we strengthened our green crab program through operational improvements and new partnerships, expanding beyond removal to include productive reuse by supplying green crabs to Wolfe’s Neck Farm for nutrient-rich compost.

We also partnered with nonprofit Khmer Maine through GreenCrab.org in an effort to improve markets for this under-utilized species. Using QBC donated green crab Khmer Maine developed Kdam Prai, a traditional Cambodian fermented salted crab condiment traditionally made from rice paddy crabs and known for its deep umami flavor.

While removal alone cannot solve coastal ecosystem challenges, sustained trapping reduces predation pressure, protects vulnerable shellfish beds, and supports eelgrass resilience. Through fieldwork, partnerships, and innovation, QBC is building a responsive, adaptive program to protect the ecological and economic future of Quahog Bay.



Total Weight of Green Crabs removed from Quahog Bay, ME (2019-2025)



POLLUTION REMEDiation

Pollution prevention and remediation remain foundational to Quahog Bay Conservancy's mission. Clean water is the precondition for shellfish harvest, aquaculture viability, and ecosystem resilience — and it requires active management.

Pumpout Service

From the beginning, QBC has addressed pollution at its source. Our free pumpout service for transient boaters reduces the discharge of untreated waste into the bay, helping protect water quality and sustain shellfish areas that were once closed for decades.

In 2025, QBC continued regular pumpout operations throughout the boating season, ensuring reliable access for visiting and local vessels. We also worked to strengthen outreach so that boaters understand both the availability and importance of using the service.



Non Discharge Areas:

A "No Discharge Area" or "NDA" is a federally designated body of water where the discharge of both treated and untreated boat sewage is prohibited. Federal Law prohibits the discharge of untreated sewage from vessels within all navigable waters of the United States, which includes waters within three miles of shore. For more information on Maine's NDA's please visit: <https://www.maine.gov/dep/water/wd/vessel/nda/index.html>

Marine Debris

Marine debris removal remains another critical intervention. Abandoned gear, derelict traps, and shoreline debris degrade habitat and pose risks to navigation and marine life. In 2025, QBC coordinated targeted cleanups along the working waterfront and intertidal zones, partnering with volunteers and local stakeholders to remove harmful materials from the bay.

Pollution remediation may be quiet work, but it delivers measurable results. By preventing waste discharge and removing debris before it causes further harm, QBC protects both the ecological health and economic future of Quahog Bay.



**In need
of a boat
pumpout?**

**Call (207)
522-1105**

or reach us
by email
**Office@quahog
bay.org**



Available for
service mid-May
to October

SNOW ISLAND OYSTERS



Oysters are central to Quahog Bay Conservancy's model of conservation through action. They improve water quality, support working waterfront livelihoods, and generate earned revenue that is reinvested directly into science and restoration. In 2025, we strengthened and refined our oyster program to align with our broader strategic goals: ecological impact, operational discipline, and long-term sustainability.

Oysters are natural filter feeders. A single adult oyster can filter up to 50 gallons of water per day, removing excess nutrients and improving water quality. In a bay that experienced decades of shellfish closures due to poor water quality, oyster aquaculture represents both restoration and resilience. By cultivating oysters in Quahog Bay, we contribute to nutrient management while reinforcing the bay's historic identity as a working shellfish ground.



Help Fund The Gear That Makes Restoration Work Lighter Cages. Happier Oysters. Stronger Bay.

With your donation we can upgrade to lighter, more efficient oyster cages, grow healthier oysters and use the oyster revenue to directly support our conservation projects.



Donation Today!



Our First Newsletter: *Currents From Quahog*

This year QBC published its first newsletter! *Currents From Quahog* will be a quarterly newsletter containing updated information, new projects, team spotlights, volunteer opportunities, and much more!

To sign up send an email to: office@quahogbay.org

SNOW ISLAND OYSTERS

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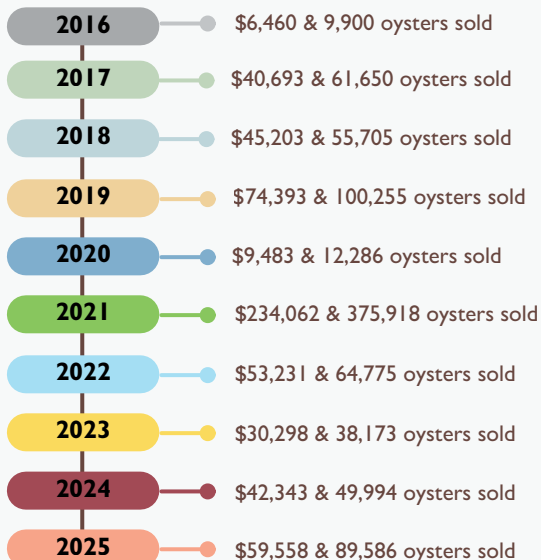
This year, we focused on hands-on operations and infrastructure improvements, from tumbling and grading oysters to maintaining cages and monitoring growth. We refined practices to improve survival, consistency, and product quality while maximizing ecological benefit.

Snow Island Oysters remains a mission-driven enterprise within QBC's financial model, with proceeds supporting water quality monitoring, invasive species mitigation, internships, and research partnerships. As we plan for the new Marine Science Center, we are exploring how expanded lab and dock space can strengthen aquaculture and training.

Our oyster program reflects QBC's place-based conservation approach: supporting cleaner water, viable shellfish resources, and a resilient working waterfront.



QBC Yearly Oyster Income





OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Outreach at Quahog Bay Conservancy connects science with community. Our green crab work has become a platform for collaboration, education, and shared problem-solving.

We continue partnering with Wolfe's Neck Farm to compost crushed green crabs, transforming an ecological threat into an agricultural resource. In 2025, we expanded outreach through a collaboration with Khmer Maine and GreenCrab.org, highlighting the cultural, culinary, and environmental dimensions of green crab mitigation through a joint blog post and community engagement.

QBC also strengthened elementary marine education with hands-on programs focused on water quality, shellfish ecology, and coastal stewardship. In partnership with the Gulf of Maine Research Institute, we support field-based training and applied research experiences that prepare the next generation of marine scientists.



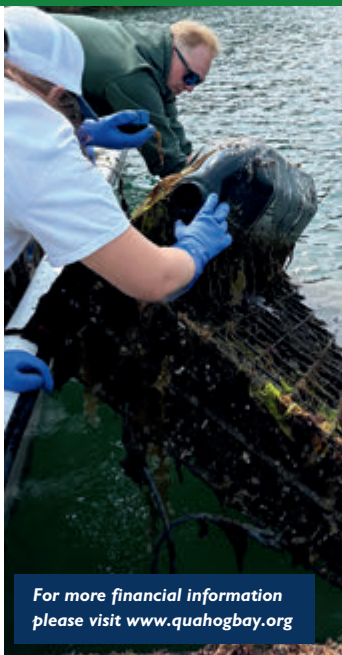
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

In 2025, QBC's total income was \$790,092, with expenses of \$453,868. Consistent with our mission, net income will be reinvested in programs that protect and sustain coastal Maine ecosystems and the communities that depend on it.

Contributions from individuals and revenue from Snow Island Oysters both grew by over 40%, reflecting strong community engagement and emerging financial sustainability.

- **Snow Island Oyster Revenue: +41%**
- **Individual Donations: +44%**

QBC continues to prioritize investment in research, education, and working waterfront initiatives while building the operational foundation for long-term growth.



For more financial information
please visit www.quahogbay.org

QBC invests over 60%
of expenses in:

- Conservation
- Education and Outreach
- Research and Development Programs







OUR BAY. OUR RESPONSIBILITY.

**286 Bethel Point Road
Harpwell, Maine 04079**

207-522-1105

www.quahogbay.org



GIVE A SHUCK.