

Reports

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*Cheryl Teagle
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Marine Resource Report No. 82-12

A Report on the Area Impacted by
the Tug "Tunnel" near the mouth of
Onancock Creek from November 21 and 23

1982

by

Dexter S. Haven

Virginia Institute of Marine Science
of the College of William and Mary

December 20, 1982

Introduction

On November 16, 1982 VIMS was asked by Mr. Mears of the VMRC to inspect the site impacted by a tug and barge which ran aground in Onancock Creek, Va.

The Tug "Tunnel" towing a 300 foot barge loaded with gravel ran aground on P.G. Tract No. 1 just inside the entrance of the creek on November 21 and was freed November 23. The area impacted and other details are given in a separate VMRC report. This report covers some general observations made by the author on December 2 and 6 1982.

Results

On December 2 we visited the site but dense fog prevented our examining the area. We did observe however, a shallow sandy bar about 200 ft. long and about 2 ft. below the surface near the center of the impact area. The inspectors said this had been caused by the wash of the propellor of the tug as it tried to free the barge.

On December 6 I visited the area again on the survey vessel Wolftrap. On board were the vessel crew, Mr. Mears, Mr. Charles Crockett, and Mr. Hundley.

Mr. Mears had the vessel maneuvered slowly over the staked area, and over the area where the tug had grounded while a recording fathometer was recording on a paper tape. My general observations follows:

- A. Toward the center of the staked plot adjacent to the shallow sandy bar were "holes" ranging up to 10-15 feet deep. According to the inspectors these holes were not normal for the area. Around the edges of the plot the tape showed a fairly level bottom, sloping upward toward land.
- B. About 25 grabs were made using patent tongs on the Wolftrap on Tract 1 to obtain bottom samples. A few of the grabs raised live oysters and unburied shell but most raised a combination of buried and surface shells, a combination of unburied oysters and recently buried live oysters. The exterior of the buried oysters had started to turn black. The buried live oysters will die in a week or two. The interior cavity of the live oysters often contained sand grains.
- C. In one of the 10-15 feet holes the patent tong grab brought up 15-20 oval balls of soft gray and yellow clay. These clay balls ranged from 3-8, in. diameter and 1-1 1/2 ft. long. They are not typical of an unmodified oyster bar.

TABLE 1

We obtained one grab of a normal oyster rock in Onancock Creek on Tract 2 which is close to Tract 1. Tables 1 and 2 (attached) gives our analysis of the material collected. A brief summary follows:

Number of Market oysters per bu = 20

Number of Small oysters per bu = 130

Number of Spat oysters per bu = 65

Number of Quarts of Shell per bu = 37.5

Number of Quarts of Oyster per bu = 12.5

The above counts are typical of a productive oyster bar in this area.

ONANCOCK

Lengths of Oysters Collected In Sample No. 1

Length in M.M.

Date Collected

12-6-82

D. Haven

	<u>Market</u>	<u>Small</u>	<u>Yearling</u>	<u>Spat</u>
1.	80.2	67.5	40.2	21.0
2.	83.0	71.3	31.8	14.2
3.	83.2	44.2	32.0	13.3
4.	<u>80.8</u>	71.2	<u>30.3</u>	13.2
5.		63.5		20.2
6.		44.2		21.3
7.		72.0		20.2
8.		72.0		14.0
9.		58.9		21.2
10.		53.2		25.3
11.		59.4		16.2
12.		37.2		18.4
13.		63.0		<u>23.2</u>
14.		40.2		
15.		45.8		
16.		56.2		
17.		50.3		
18.		51.2		
19.		62.3		
20.		67.2		
21.		45.3		
22.		44.2		
23.		42.3		
24.		43.8		
25.		47.2		
26.		<u>48.3</u>		