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A Report on the Jail Island Repletion Area in the James River

By

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and
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Gloucester Point, Virginia 23062**

February, 1982

**Virginia Marine Resource
Report #82-3**



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COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY
VIRGINIA INSTITUTE OF MARINE SCIENCE
SCHOOL OF MARINE SCIENCE



Gloucester Point, Virginia 23062

February 19, 1982

Phone (804) 642-2111

Honorable James E. Douglas, Jr.
Virginia Marine Resources Commission
P. O. Box 756
Newport News, Virginia 23607

Dear Commissioner Douglas:

This report is in response to your memorandum of 5 February 1982 which concerns the Jail Island repletion area (632 acres) in the James River.

In reviewing information for this report, we have reviewed our spatfall studies of the area and have determined bottom type from our Baylor Survey study. Moreover, there was an extensive discussion of the area at the Repletion meeting on February 17, 1982.

The Jail Island management area does grow market-sized oysters and meat quality is often above average for the James, especially during April and May. Most of the seed areas in the mid and upper James do not do this. The area is shallow (6 ft or less) and the natural bottom is largely shelly-sand or shelly-mud, except where shells or oysters have been planted.

This management area has received much shell starting in 1969, and in 1972 seed oysters from Deep Water Shoal were planted there. About 60,000 bushels of shell were planted there in 1980.

This area is inshore of Wreck Shoal and on the average it receives a set which is slightly lower than the Wreck Shoal area. It appears that the 60,000 bushels of shells planted there in 1980 received an exceptional heavy strike; probably some of the older shells and seed planted in previous years also received a good set.

It now appears that the area is used as a good source of market-sized oysters, and as a good source of high count seed.

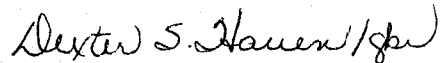
My opinion is that the area should remain as a seed area until the end of the 1982 season. When the season closes the VMRC should survey the area to determine how much high count seed remains and if large oysters are abundant.

Honorable James E. Douglas, Jr.
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If the latter situation is the case and most of the high count seed has been harvested, I would recommend the Commission consider setting the area aside as a clean cull area. My reasons follow: The James has many areas suitable for growing seed on planted shell. It has only a few areas which are as suitable as the Jail Island area for growing oysters to market size.

I also recommend that the status of the Jail Island area (as a seed, "soup" or market oyster area) be reconsidered annually prior to each season.

Sincerely,



Dexter S. Haven, Head,
Department of Applied Biology

DSH/gbr

cc Dr. Herbert Austin