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## A Report on Surf Clam Shells as Cultch Material On the Seaside of the Eastern Shore

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A Report on Surf Clam Shells as Cultch Material  
On the Seaside of the Eastern Shore

by

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At the request of Mr. Daniels, Repletion officer of the Virginia Marine Resources Commission, we examined plantings of surf clam shells. These plantings were located off Oyster in the vicinity of New Marsh and were on bottoms leased by Mr. Harvey West.

We left Oyster at about 12 noon on March 16. On the scow were Inspectors Hundley and Bois, Mr. Daniels (Repletion Officer), Dexter Haven and Mr. West.

Mr. West showed us about 8-10 surf clam shell plantings. Some were in 5-6 feet of water; several were intertidal.

In general, the plantings were elevated about 6 inches to 1 foot above the surrounding bottom. The surf clam shells raised by the tongs were sometimes entire, but more often they were fragmented into 2 to 10 pieces.

In almost all areas the fragments as well as unbroken shells had a good set (1983). Numbers of spat ranged from 1-2 on fragments to 15-20 on whole shells.

Oyster shell cultch plantings were also examined and they appeared to have obtained a similar set.

### Conclusion

Surf clam shells are larger and lighter than oyster shells and tend to be transported by water currents during and after planting to a greater degree than oyster shells. Also, they may "pack" more but this will be offset by their lower cost.

If planted in locations which are somewhat protected against wave action and strong currents, they should remain in place.

Spat set on this cultch to the same degree as on oyster shell. Moreover, surf clam shells are available on the Seaside while it is difficult to obtain enough oyster shell.

I strongly recommend that this cultch be used in 1984 on the Seaside and that the VMRC carefully monitor the results with the aim of using larger quantities in 1985 if results are satisfactory.