



Shellfish Status Update and Forecast

Dominic Guadagnoli

Shellfish and Water Quality Program Manager

CRD Shellfish Program Overview

The Coastal Resources Division (CRD) Shellfish Program utilizes the National Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP) Model Ordinance to regulate Georgia's shellfish industry. CRD is responsible for:

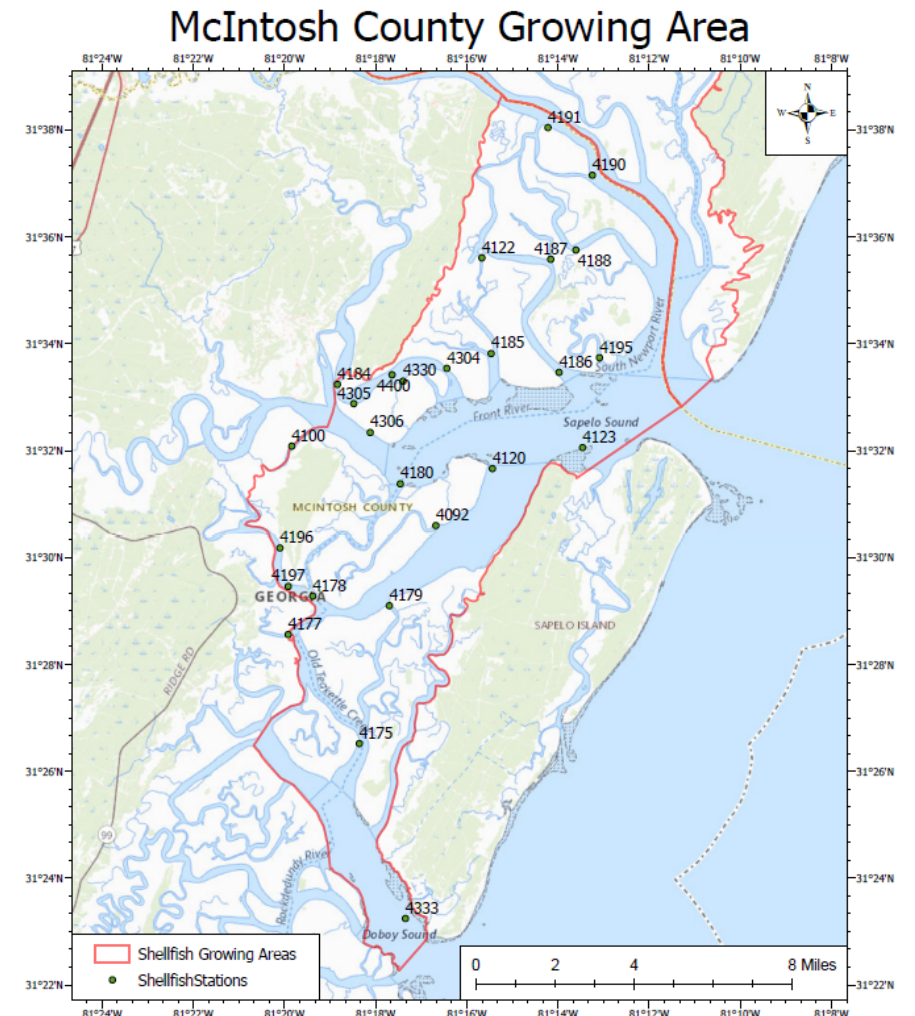
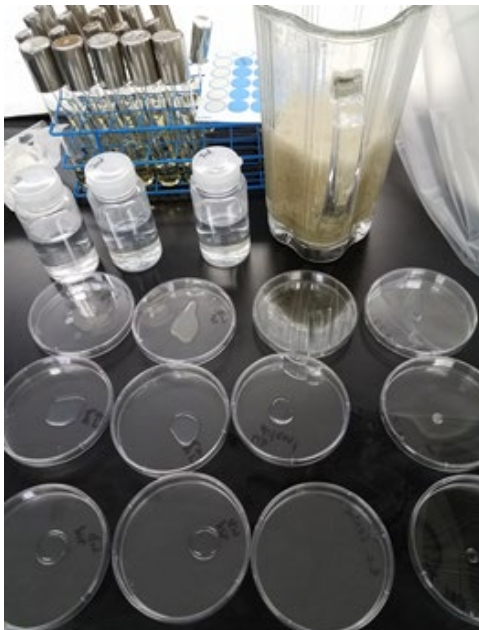
- Classification, sampling and laboratory analysis of shellfish growing area waters
- Lease management/permitting
- Harvester education and permitting
- Recreational area management

Other Shellfish Program Regulatory Partners

- The Department of Agriculture, Food Safety Division, regulates handling and storage requirements, shucking, packing, shipping and/or sale of shellfish products within O.C.G.A. 40-7-12. Other responsibilities include HACCP and dealer training, dealer certification and dealer inspections.
- The Georgia Law Enforcement Division enforces Georgia shellfish laws O.C.G.A. 27-4-187 thru 204. LED works with CRD and DOA to enforce all laws pertaining to shellfish rules and regulations.
- The United States Army Corps of Engineers provides federal permitting of mariculture operations in all navigable waters.

FDA Certified Laboratory

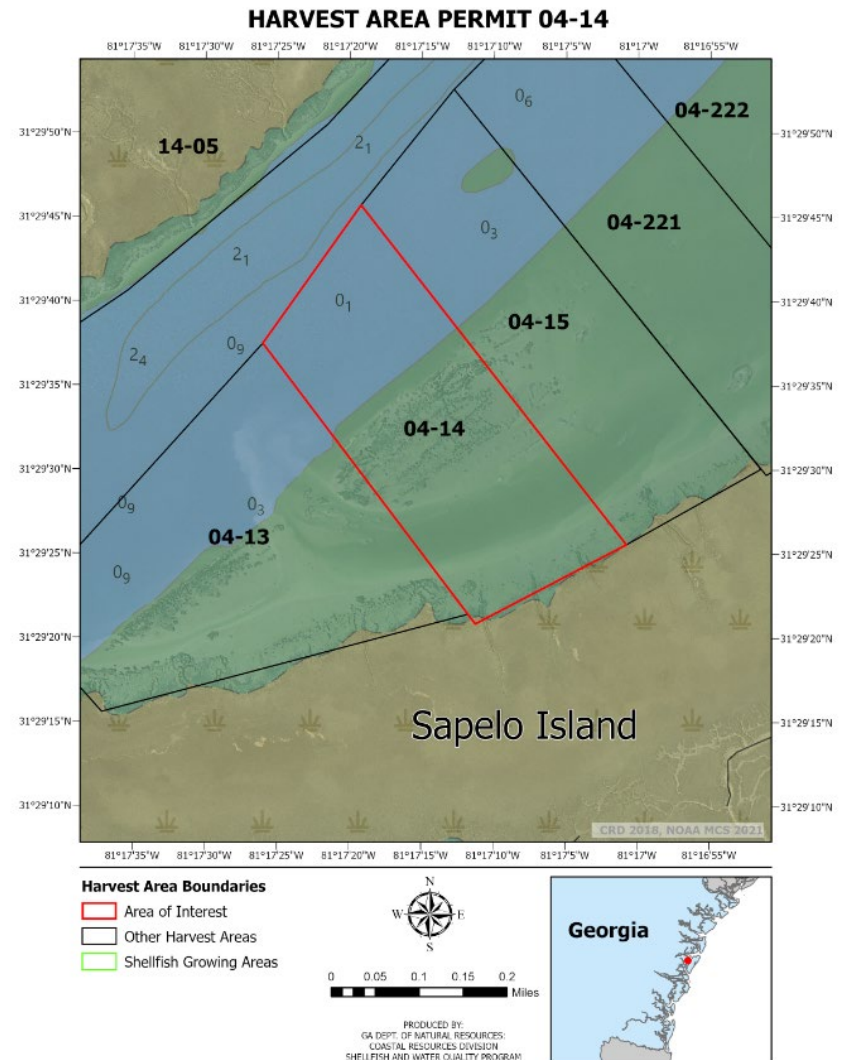
- Classification, sampling and laboratory analysis of shellfish growing area waters
 - Ensure bacteria levels are within acceptable ranges for safe harvest of shellfish intended for human consumption



Disclaimer: This map is produced by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources for purpose of providing visual aid and illustrative context. This map is not for determination of any official legal extents, boundaries, or any other legal determinations. Do not use this map for navigational purposes. Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information presented herein, the Coastal Resources Division does not guarantee that this map is error-free.

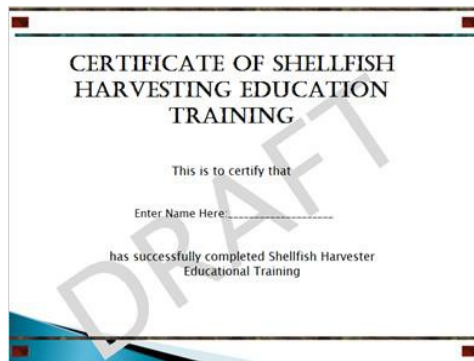
Shellfish Resource Management

- Lease management/permitting
 - Identify and lease state water bottoms suitable for commercial shellfish production
 - Ensure harvest areas are being used in a safe, productive, and sustainable manner



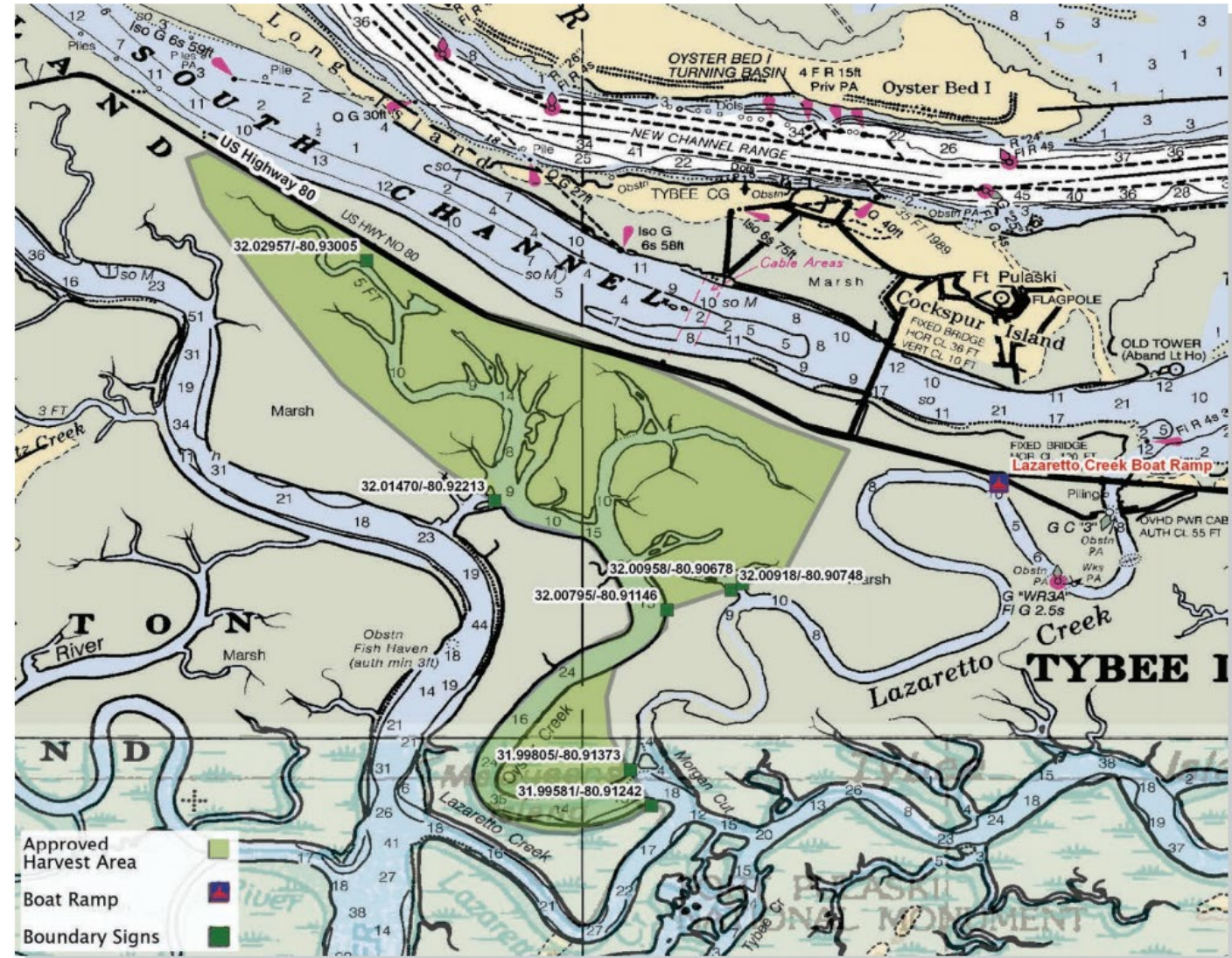
Education and Outreach

- Harvester education and permitting
 - Ensure authorized harvesters are educated in safe handling and harvesting techniques to avoid illnesses from consumption
 - Maintain a log of authorized harvesters to prevent illegal or unsafe harvesting



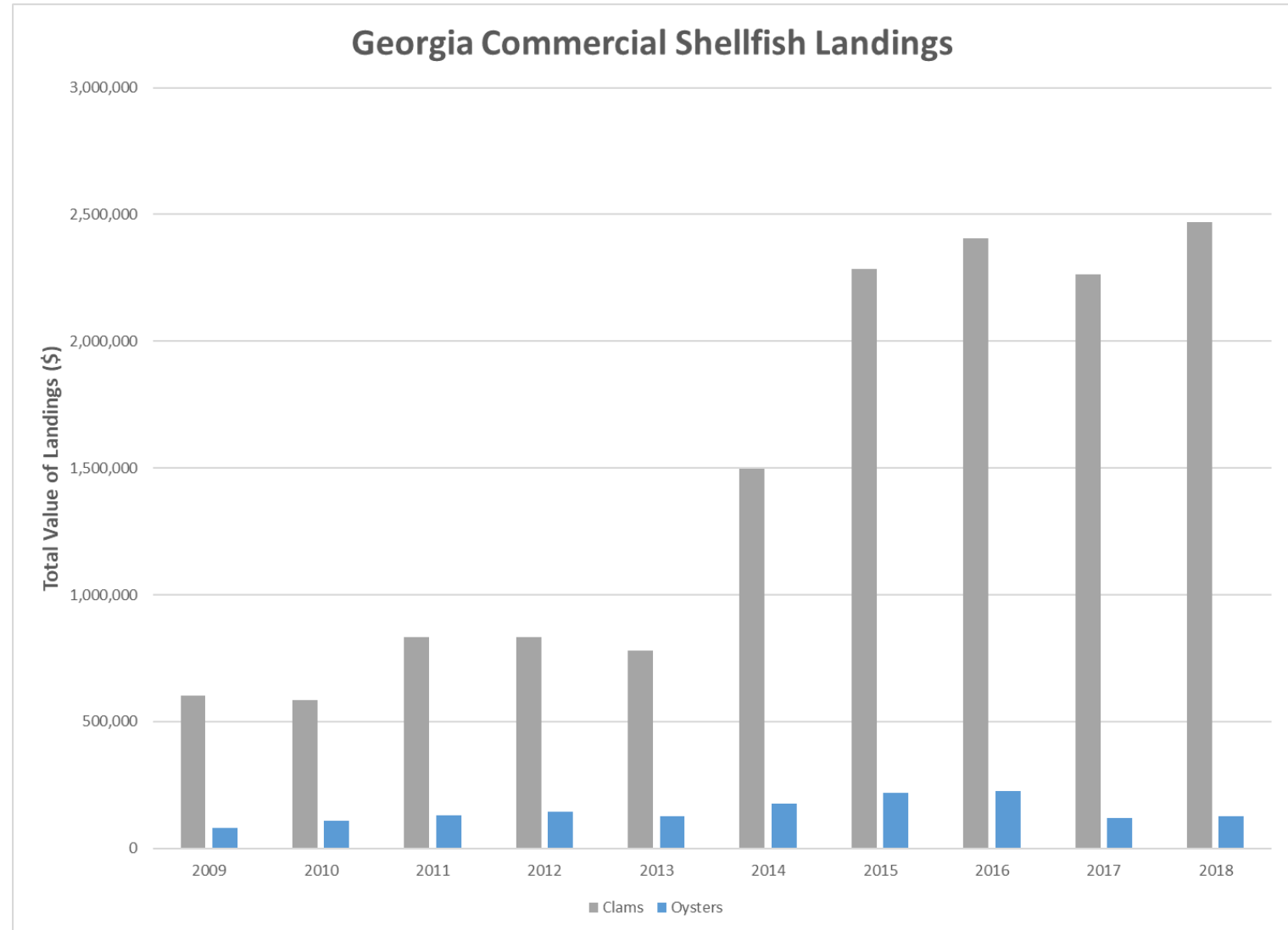
Recreational Harvest Opportunities

- Recreational area management
 - Maintenance and enhancement of recreational harvest areas to create harvest opportunities for the general public



Current Georgia Shellfish Industry

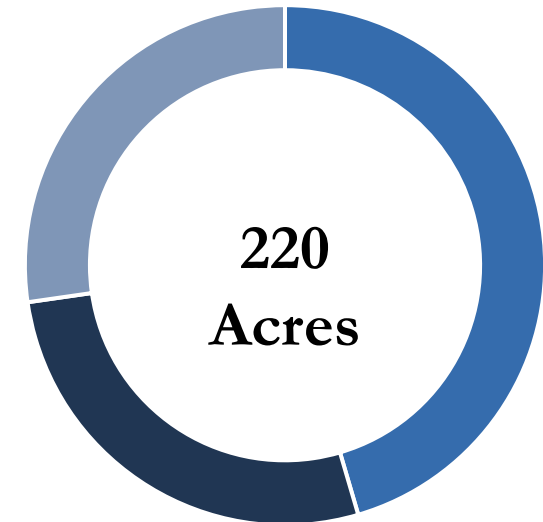
- 19 Commercial Shellfish Harvest Areas are permitted in Georgia.
 - 14 State Harvest Areas
 - 5 Private Harvest Areas
- Most permitted Harvest Areas produce wild oysters or farm raised clams.
- Georgia law ratified in 2020 permits the use of subtidal mariculture gear which should significantly increase the value of oysters in the shellfish industry



Post-HB 501 Recap

- 5 new intertidal harvest areas leased
 - Three in McIntosh County, 2 in Bryan County
 - 190 total estimated usable acres
- 2 Mariculture Zones Established
 - McIntosh County Mariculture Zone
 - 3 10-acre subtidal harvest areas leased
 - Potential for 2-3 more leases in the zone
 - Chatham County
 - Lottery soon to open for three 7.5-Acre leases
 - Currently in the state and federal permitting processes for marking mariculture zones with piling supported signage and adding to navigational charts
- Shellfish Policy Manual released by CRD to educate potential farmers on the laws, rules, and regulations regarding commercial shellfish operations

Harvest Areas Leased from 2020-Now

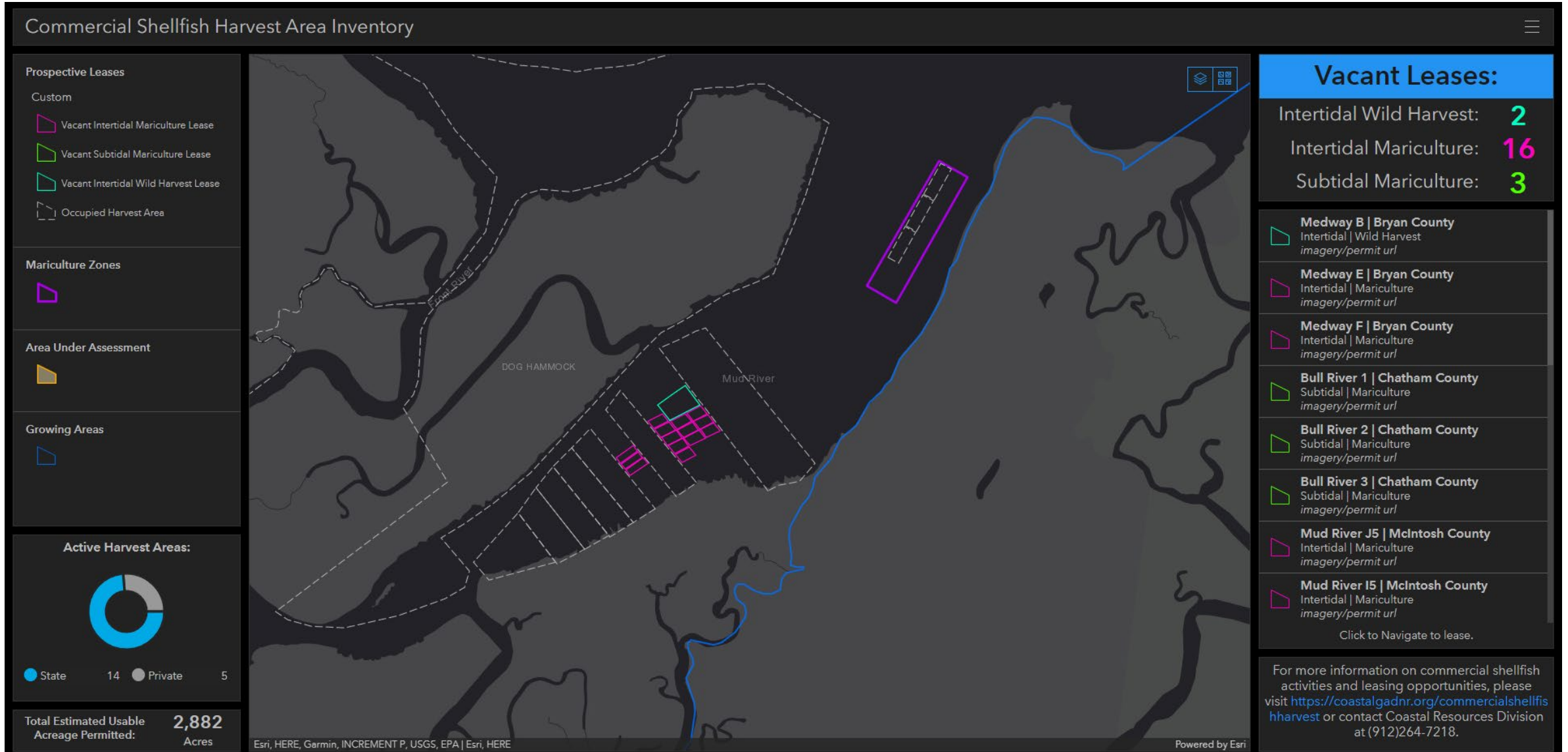


■ Intertidal Leases (5) ■ Subtidal Leases (3) ■ Subtidal Leases Pending Lottery (3)

Revamped Leasing Process

- New leasing dashboard in progress accompanied by a new intertidal leasing process
 - Reworked, streamlined application process for intertidal leases
 - Dashboard will provide more access to information on available leases
 - New process will allow us to provide continued opportunities for the foreseeable future
- New survey for Interested parties available on our webpage
 - Results used to determine where to direct efforts siting new leases
- Subscription service (gov delivery) utilized for interested parties to subscribe to all shellfish leasing related updates

New Leasing Dashboard



Information Available for Vacant Leases

Commercial Shellfish Harvest Area Inventory
☰

Prospective Leases

Custom

- ▭ Vacant Intertidal Mariculture Lease
- ▭ Vacant Subtidal Mariculture Lease
- ▭ Vacant Intertidal Wild Harvest Lease
- ▭ Occupied Harvest Area

Mariculture Zones

- ▭

Area Under Assessment

- ▭

🔍 Zoom to 📏 Pan

Mud River K ✕

LEASE_NAME	Mud River K
LEASE_HOLD	None
Status	Vacant Lease
Water Bottoms Type	Intertidal
Designated Use	Wild Harvest
Usable Acreage	18
Harvest Area Type	State
Total Acreage	18

Mud River K

Vacant Leases:

- Intertidal Wild Harvest: 2
- Intertidal Mariculture: 16
- Subtidal Mariculture: 3

- ▭ **Mud River I3 | McIntosh County**
Intertidal | Mariculture
[imagery/permit url](#)
- ▭ **Mud River H4 | McIntosh County**
Intertidal | Mariculture
[imagery/permit url](#)
- ▭ **Mud River H3 | McIntosh County**
Intertidal | Mariculture
[imagery/permit url](#)
- ▭ **Mud River F3 | McIntosh County**
Intertidal | Mariculture
[imagery/permit url](#)
- ▭ **Mud River F2 | McIntosh County**
Intertidal | Mariculture
[imagery/permit url](#)
- ▭ **Mud River K | McIntosh County**
Intertidal | Wild Harvest
[imagery/permit url](#)
- ▭ **Mud River F1 | McIntosh County**
Intertidal | Mariculture
[imagery/permit url](#)
- ▭ **Mud River H7 | McIntosh County**
Intertidal | Mariculture
[imagery/permit url](#)

Click to Navigate to lease.

For more information on commercial shellfish activities and leasing opportunities, please visit <https://coastalgadnr.org/commercialshellfishharvest> or contact Coastal Resources Division at (912)264-7218.

Active Harvest Areas:

● State 14 ● Private 5

Total Estimated Usable Acreage Permitted: 2,882 Acres

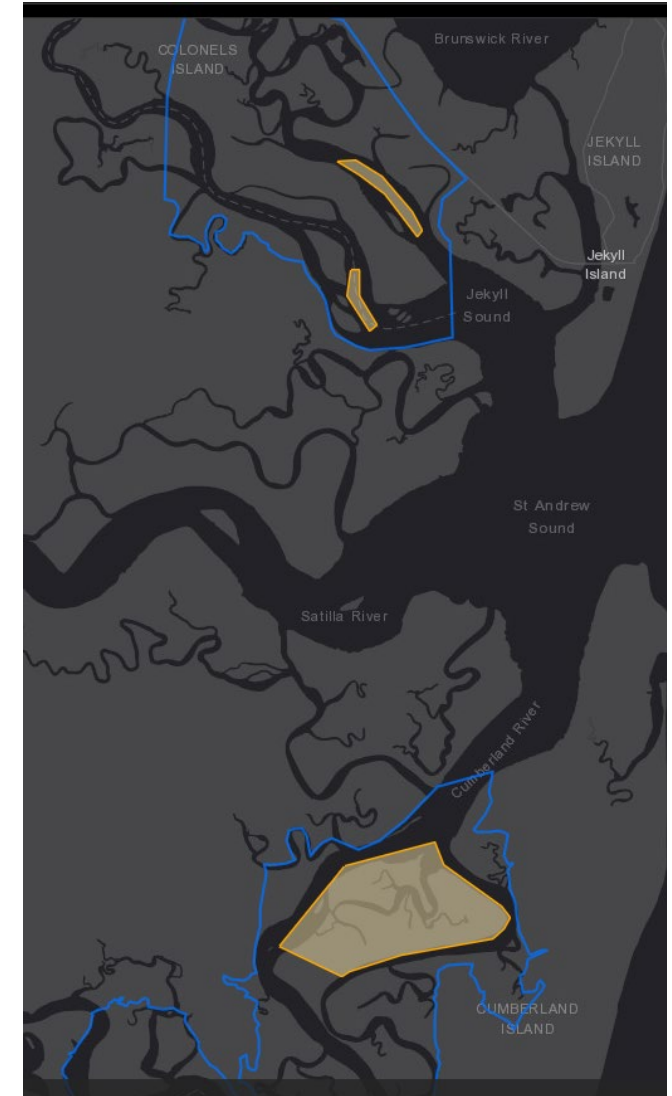
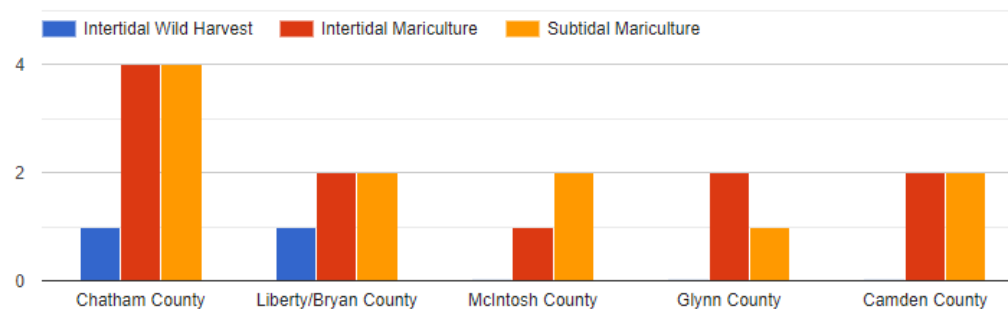
Esri, HERE, Garmin, INCREMENT P, USGS, EPA

Powered by Esri

Survey Driven Assessment Areas

- Chatham interest mostly addressed by new mariculture zone
- Potential Subtidal Mariculture Zone in the Glynn/Camden Growing Area under assessment
- Intertidal water bottoms being assessed and divided on a previous lease site in Camden Growing Area
- Intertidal leases soon to be made available in McIntosh and Bryan County
- Future sites to be determined by survey

What type of commercial shellfish activities are you interested in, and where?



Challenges Facing the Industry

- Federal Permitting
 - Several current growers awaiting NWP verification
 - Lengthy and challenging process for many of the interested parties, including commercial fishermen
 - Addressing the issue via providing products to aid leaseholders with permitting processes
 - SMP Application has been designed to aid the federal permitting process, but pending times still linger
 - Have permitting agencies participate in the education to be provided by the UGA Shellfish Research Laboratory

Challenges Facing the Industry

- Garnering interest from potential leaseholders
 - Only 7 responses to the survey so far from prospective growers
 - Social media will be utilized to promote leasing opportunities as they arise
 - Partner with UGA MAREX to develop an education and outreach materials to educate potential farmers and the general public of the opportunities and benefits of shellfish mariculture
 - Provide more educational materials on recreational harvest to potentially build interest in commercial opportunities
 - Work with other organizations to disseminate information and educate potential investors of commercial leasing opportunities



Questions and Comments

