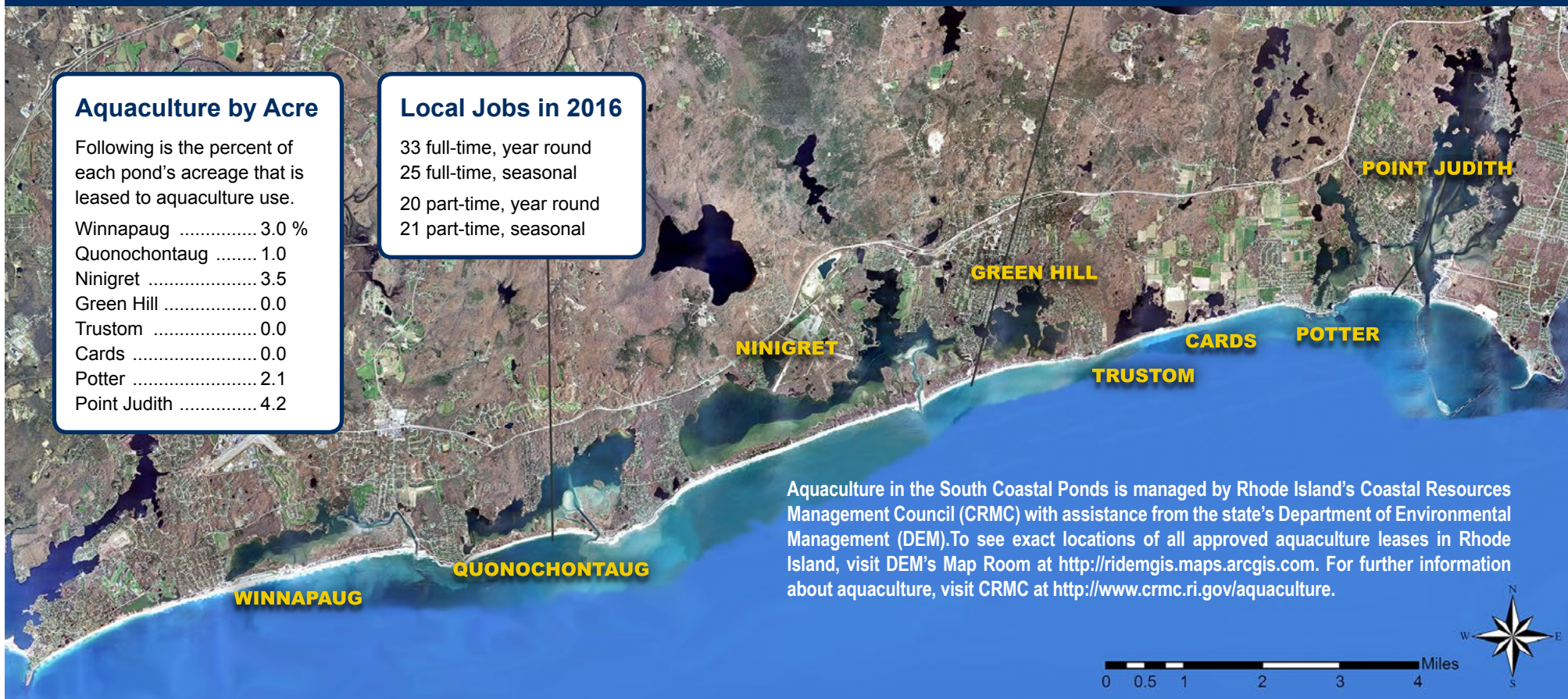


# SHELLFISH, AQUACULTURE, & RHODE ISLAND'S SOUTH COASTAL PONDS



Information in this flyer has been provided by the RI's Coastal Resources Management Council, RI's Department of Environmental Management and the Salt Ponds Coalition.

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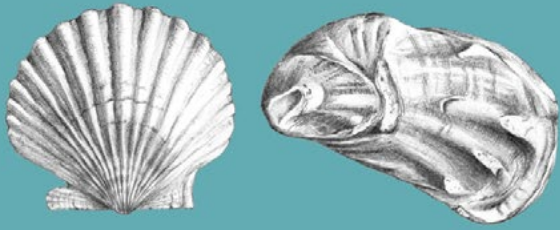
**In 2016, the South Coastal Ponds represented...**

**68.8%** of RI's aquaculture oysters.

**47%** of RI's aquaculture acreage.

**100%** of RI's aquaculture littlenecks.

**\$3,635,607** in wholesale value of oysters produced.



## The Rhode Island Shellfish Initiative

recognizes the economic, environmental, and cultural value of shellfish and is an effort of Governor Gina Raimondo and a host of partners—state agencies, industry, academic and local communities. The focus is on leveraging collaborative and creative opportunities to sustainably manage local shellfish stock, promote economic growth and jobs, and celebrate Rhode Island's unique food cultures.

Visit [rismp.org](http://rismp.org)  
to learn  
more.



# AN OVERVIEW OF SHELLFISH AQUACULTURE

## The Annual Cycle

### Spring

Seed is purchased; new seed is obtained every year, which gives the farmer a rolling supply of shellfish at different stages of growth.

### Summer

Animals are cleaned and sorted by size a few times; bio-fouling is removed from gear.

### Fall

Animals are cleaned, sorted, and “put to bed” for winter.

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Harvesting occurs as animals attain marketable size throughout the year.

## Techniques and Gear Used by Shellfish Farmers

### Direct bottom plant

Individual animals are placed on or directly into the sediment (no gear).

### Rack and bag

Shellfish are placed in a bag, which is then placed on a rack that is typically open-topped. Stackable racks are also open-topped. Racks rest on a clean, firm surface on the bottom in shallow water, where farmers can walk out to them.

### Cage

Resembling a lobster pot, the enclosure varies in size and has shelves for the bags of shellfish; it may rest on the bottom in shallow water or be attached to a buoy and hauled up from deeper water. The cage bottom holds a specific substrate.

### Suspended

Commonly found in deeper water, a line is suspended by a buoy and anchored. Shellfish are hung off the line, in cages or on ropes. This gear is always below the water's surface and may be used anywhere, with any substrate type.

### Floating

Highly visible, floating cages, bags, and/or Taylor floats (a rack that cannot flip over) are filled with oysters and anchored. This gear may be used anywhere, with any substrate type.

### Flip bags

An anchored, T-shaped system made of PVC and threaded line that uses tidal currents to tumble and turn attached bags of oysters. The bags are also submerged and exposed by tidal flows. This gear is a relatively new innovation for Rhode Island waters.