



RHODE ISLAND Shellfish Initiative

Shellfish are central to our history and culture in Rhode Island. They support our environment, health, family traditions, and economy. And they are an important part of our future.



**100+ million
pounds of seafood**

landed in RI in 2016 with an
export value over \$1 billion



**1,200+ commercial
fishermen**

landing over 100 species with an
off-the-boat value of \$87 million



**28 million+
quahogs harvested**

from Narragansett Bay in 2016



**270+ acres
leased**

as oyster growing
areas in RI waters

From the quahog's importance to indigenous culture through the heyday of the oyster industry in the 1900s and beyond, shellfish have played a foundational role in our modern economy and forging our identity as a state. They are also a vital part of our marine environment, helping to improve water quality, support other marine life, and strengthen our climate resilience.

A significant contributor to Rhode Island's commercial fishing industry, wild harvest and aquaculture shellfish support the livelihoods of hundreds of fishers year-round and provide nourishment and enjoyment to Rhode Islanders and tourists. Combined, local shellfish industries contribute more than \$12 million to the economy each year – a value that increases significantly as the product hits the market.

In recognition of the importance of shellfish to Rhode Island and as part of continued efforts to support a strong local food economy, Governor Gina M. Raimondo, along with many partners, launched the Rhode Island Shellfish Initiative. Through it, state agencies, industry, academia, and community partners will further efforts to sustainably manage local shellfish stock, promote economic growth and jobs, and celebrate Rhode Island's unique food cultures. The Initiative consists of three focus areas and related actions:

FOOD:

Create, sustain & grow
markets for Rhode
Island shellfish

JOBS:

Retain & expand
shellfish-related
businesses

MANAGEMENT:

Prioritize sustainable
practices & continued
research

This Initiative builds on earlier efforts through the Rhode Island Shellfish Management Plan (SMP) to protect and enhance the state's shellfish resources. While tailored to unique needs and opportunities in Rhode Island, the Initiative is also part of a national effort to increase shellfish stock throughout U.S. coastal waters and reap the environmental, social, and economic benefits.

Honoring the vision of the RI Shellfish Management Plan to “preserve, protect, manage and when necessary, restore shellfish resources and essential habitats using the best available information and science...”

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THE RHODE ISLAND

Shellfish Initiative

honors the legacy and vital role shellfish play in supporting our environment, families, traditions, and economy. Through a partnership of government, business, academia, and community, the Initiative will strengthen our state's shellfish management practices and promote growth and innovation within our local seafood industry.



International Buzz

Rhode Island's food scene has been touted by Zagat, The NY Times, Forbes, Thrillist, GQ, BuzzFeed & more



600+ commercial shellfishmen

landed \$6.5 million in wild harvest shellfish. RI's 70 aquaculture businesses harvested \$5.5 million in product in 2016



9,000+ acres

of Rhode Island waters are rated for shellfish harvesting and over 700 acres are available for oyster restoration



FOOD:

CREATE, SUSTAIN & GROW MARKETS FOR RHODE ISLAND SHELLFISH

- a. Support and strengthen efforts related to Rhode Island's first statewide food strategy
- b. Increase awareness of local shellfish products under the state's seafood brand, RI Seafood
- c. Support direct-to-retail market opportunities & address regulatory barriers
- d. Expand connections between producers and buyers

JOBS:

RETAIN & EXPAND SHELLFISH-RELATED BUSINESSES

- a. Invest in recruitment & job training programs
- b. Focus on sustainable growth that is centered around the state's unique strengths and values
- c. Promote & strengthen eco-tourism opportunities
- d. Continue to improve Rhode Island's port infrastructure

MANAGEMENT:

PRIORITIZE SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES & CONTINUED RESEARCH

- a. Continue to invest in restoration efforts
- b. Support efforts to improve water quality & address pollution sources
- c. Invest in seed production infrastructure & programs
- d. Foster collaboration between government and industry
- e. Support broader efforts to strengthen Rhode Island's climate resilience
- f. Continue to invest in research & innovation

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