Shellfish improve water quality as they feed by filtering microscopic particles from the water. This removes problematic sediments and phytoplankton and their associated nutrients. Some of the nitrogen is incorporated into protein and the rest is deposited on the bottom, where it can be consumed by worms and other organisms.

Shellfish remove microscopic plants as they feed.
- Nitrogen contained in shellfish tissues is removed when animals are harvested.
- Shellfish feeding stimulates denitrification.
- Improved light penetration and reduced nitrogen help eelgrass recover.

Shellfish Aquaculture Stimulates Diversity
- Recent studies reveal that shellfish aquaculture can improve species abundance and diversity.
- Shells and aquaculture structures provide habitat for juvenile fish, crabs and other organisms.

Cultured shellfish have gotten a thumbs up from environmental groups such as Environmental Defense, the Chef’s Collaborative’s Seafood Solutions, and others. These groups work to steer consumers towards sustainably harvested seafoods. Oysters are a keystone species, meaning they control the environment in which they live by cleaning the water, while the spaces between their shells provide habitat for juvenile fish, crabs, and the organisms on which they feed.

As both water clarity and light penetration are improved, the eelgrass is able to recover in waters that have not supported seagrasses for decades. Clearly shellfish aquaculture should be an element of any eelgrass restoration project.
Filter-feeding shellfish improve water quality.

Shellfish farming provides habitat for fish and improves species diversity.

Shellfish aquaculture is sustainable and good for the environment.

For more information please visit our website: www.ECSGA.org

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Did you know?

Shellfish Aquaculture is GOOD for the Environment!

This pamphlet was financed by the Rhode Island Aquaculture Initiative and Rhode Island Sea Grant

An oyster farmer tends his crop at low tide.

• Filter-feeding shellfish improve water quality.

• Shellfish farming provides habitat for fish and improves species diversity.

• Shellfish aquaculture is sustainable and good for the environment.