



Contact: Monica Allen  
301-713-2370

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**NOAA Partners with New Shellfish Research Institute  
to Examine Ecological Effects of Growing Shellfish**

NOAA's Milford Laboratory and the newly formed East Coast Shellfish Growers Research Institute have teamed up to study how growing and harvesting shellfish will affect the marine ecosystem. The partnership reaffirms the Bush Administration's support for a robust and healthy aquaculture industry, a focal point of President Bush's Ocean Action Plan.

"Our scientists will study how various methods of shellfish planting and subsequent mechanical harvesting affects the benthic communities of coastal estuaries. The U.S. has been a leader in aquaculture innovation. This research will continue that tradition," said Christopher L. Brown, Ph.D., a fisheries biologist who directs the NOAA aquaculture laboratory in Milford, Conn.

NOAA awarded the lab and institute \$423,000 for this project and other research on issues faced by the shellfish industry. The award will be officially presented next week at the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Milford Aquaculture Seminar.

Shellfish aquaculture is a more than \$200 million industry in the United States, representing 20 percent of all domestic aquaculture. In many New England states, shellfish farming is growing at double-digit rates.

This year's annual Milford Aquaculture Seminar, Feb. 25-27 at Four Points by Sheraton in Meriden, Conn., will bring together more than 100 scientists, regulators and industry leaders to hear presentations on and discuss the latest advances in marine animal nutrition, disease prevention and improved methods for the culture of shellfish and finfish. A schedule of seminar presentations is available online at: <http://mi.nefsc.noaa.gov/seminarworkshop>.

For 28 years, the Milford Aquaculture Seminar has worked to address real world problems faced by the men and women who grow shellfish and finfish in the marine waters of the United States and around the world. New ideas that contribute to industry success and innovative solutions to baffling problems are the annual products of this public seminar.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 70 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

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On the Web:

NOAA: [www.noaa.gov](http://www.noaa.gov)

NOAA's Fisheries Service: [www.nmfs.noaa.gov](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov)

NOAA's Milford Laboratory: <http://mi.nefsc.noaa.gov>