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30TH ANNIVERSARY

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**OYSTER RECOVERY  
PARTNERSHIP**



**CELEBRATING A GENERATIONAL LEAP IN RESTORATION.  
RALLYING SUPPORT FOR THE NEXT CHAPTER.**







“Fortunately, the Chesapeake Bay is now home to some of the most successful oyster restoration projects in the world. Under the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, federal-state efforts are on track to fully restore 11 Chesapeake Bay tributaries for oyster habitat by 2025. Monitoring of these restored reefs shows incredible success, with most reefs sustaining or expanding while meeting or exceeding criteria for oyster abundance.”

- Chesapeake Bay Foundation,  
Press Release, February 15, 2024



Dear Friends of ORP,

As the Oyster Recovery Partnership marks our 30<sup>th</sup> “Pearl” Anniversary, we reflect on a journey from dwindling Chesapeake oyster populations to a model of global recognition and unprecedented restoration.

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation’s (a nonprofit partner) recent acknowledgment of the Bay as hosting “some of the most successful oyster restoration projects in the world” underscores the significance of our collective efforts. This recognition, alongside the unwavering support from governments, partners, and community members like you, has been instrumental in our achievements to date.

With three decades of experience, ORP plays a central role in the revival of the Bay’s oysters, contributing to a healthier ecosystem and a thriving community. **In celebration of this milestone, we invite you to further your support, helping us to continue our impactful work.**

**Our work is far from done, and the potential for future success is limitless.** Your investment signifies a commitment to a thriving Chesapeake Bay, benefiting both the environment and the millions of people connected to it.

Thank you for being a pivotal part of our journey.



J. Tighe Merkert, Board Chair, Oyster Recovery Partnership

## WHY OYSTERS?

Oysters are the Bay’s keystone species, filtering excess nutrients from the waters, providing habitat for marine life, and supporting a vibrant commercial harvest.

In 2014, Maryland put oysters at the center of its Chesapeake Bay restoration strategy. In the years since, **ORP has planted billions of juvenile oysters in the Bay. Commercial oyster harvests are the highest since the 1980s. We’ve built the largest manmade oyster reefs in the world. And we’re about to complete one of the most ambitious environmental projects ever – restoring oyster populations in five major Bay tributaries.**



“It is often observed that no organism is more crucial to the health of the Chesapeake Bay. As filter feeders, oysters remove algae and excess nutrients from the water, their beds support a variety of marine life including fish and fellow shellfish. A healthy oyster population is crucial to a healthy ecosystem – and the more oysters in more places the better.”

- Surprise! The Chesapeake Oyster is Having a Very Good Year,  
*The Baltimore Sun* editorial, January 17, 2024



“Oysters alone brought in more than \$56.8 million in revenue in Maryland and Virginia in 2022. While this represents the second-highest-value fishery— behind blue crabs—oysters and their reefs are also the foundation of many other commercially and recreationally important fisheries in the Bay region.”

- Chesapeake Bay Foundation,  
2024, *Hope on the Half Shell* Report





A GENERATIONAL LEAP IN RESTORATION

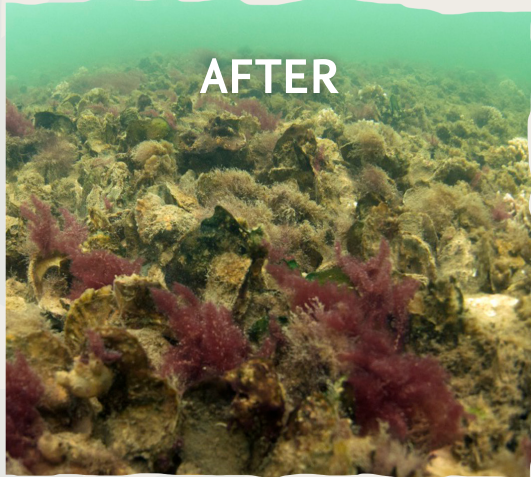
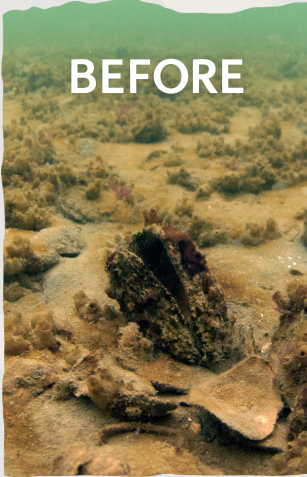
Chesapeake oysters are experiencing a renaissance that is decades in the making, encouraging signs of a tide turning towards a healthier, more vibrant Bay.

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“We have not recorded this extent of oyster spat recruitment in the fall survey in a generation. Both the quantity and the wide distribution of spat throughout the Bay, including several areas where our biologists have rarely observed spat in nearly 40 years of results, are outstanding.”

- Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Secretary Josh Kurtz, *The Washington Post*, January 12, 2024

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“Monitoring results show strong success relative to preestablished success criteria, with 99% of 6-year-old restored reefs meeting at least the minimum threshold oyster density and biomass, and 83% meeting the higher target density and biomass.”

- Chesapeake Bay Program, 2023, Chesapeake Bay Oyster Restoration Update

COLLECTIVE EFFORTS, UNPRECEDENTED RESULTS

Walking hand in hand with our partners, ORP’s decades of experience help steer monumental restoration efforts. Focusing our work on sanctuary restoration, public oyster reef replenishment, and support for the growing oyster aquaculture industry, **we’ve planted 11.5 billion oysters and breathed new life into vast acres of reefs**, setting the stage for a healthier Bay enriched by its thriving oyster population.

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“Planting 1.7 billion oysters this year shows the success of the broad partnership of watermen, scientists, academics, nonprofits, and state and federal government officials dedicated to this vital natural resource and economic driver for Maryland. I’d like to thank the partner organizations and our dedicated Department of Natural Resources staff who enabled the state to achieve this significant accomplishment.”

- Maryland Governor Wes Moore, Press Release, October 10, 2023

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MAGOTHY RIVER ASSOCIATION

JORDAN SALAFIE

SANCTUARIES

- Restoration work is underway in the Manokin River and completed in Harris Creek, and the Little Choptank, Tred Avon, and St. Mary’s Rivers
- 1,068 acres of oyster reefs are restored

PUBLIC REEFS

- ORP planted 450 million oysters on public oyster reefs in 2023, more than double the amount planted in 2020
- Maryland’s commercial oyster harvest is the highest in 30 years

OYSTER AQUACULTURE

- Oyster aquaculture is one of Maryland’s fastest growing industries
- ORP helps farmers obtain leases, shares technologies and expertise, and trains them in best practices



OUR SHARED FUTURE

On ORP’s 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, we stand at a pivotal moment, inspired by what we’ve achieved together and driven by the vision of what’s still to come.

Your generosity fuels our progress, enabling us to push the boundaries of what’s possible for the Chesapeake Bay and its native oysters. Help us embrace this challenge. The journey ahead is bright, filled with potential and promise, thanks to the power of collaboration and the generous spirit of supporters like you.

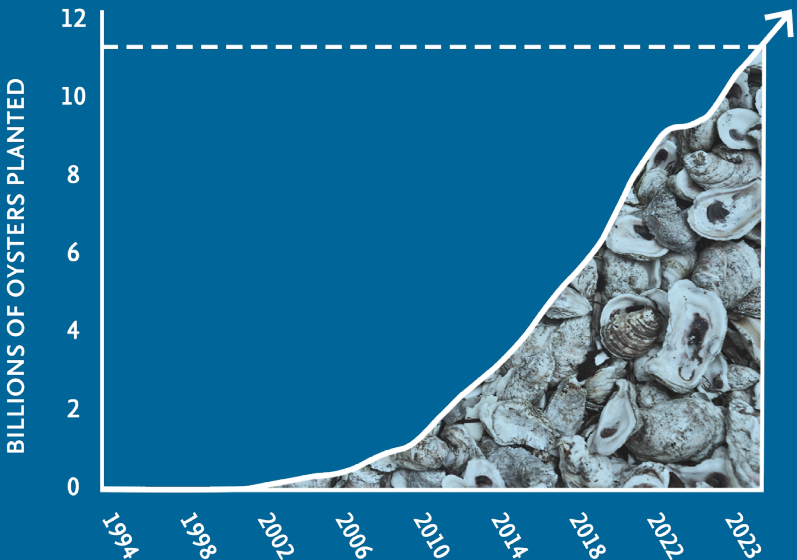
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“We planted 5 billion oysters in the last decade, and we hope to double that in the next ten.”

- H. Ward Slacum, Jr., ORP Executive Director

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THREE DECADES OF MARYLAND OYSTER RESTORATION



RESTORATION PARTNERS





## SUPPORT SUCCESSFUL OYSTER RESTORATION

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Thanks to the power of collaboration and science, Chesapeake oyster restoration efforts are acknowledged as among the most successful in the world.

Celebrating our 30<sup>th</sup> “Pearl” Anniversary, with more than 11.5 billion oysters planted and vast areas of reefs restored, ORP has significantly contributed to this - and the potential for even greater outcomes is immense. Further the impactful work that’s bringing about a healthier Bay and thriving community by making a donation today.

## WAYS TO DONATE

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Visit  
[OYSTERRECOVERY.ORG/DONATE30](https://OYSTERRECOVERY.ORG/DONATE30)

**Prefer to send a check?**

Oyster Recovery Partnership  
Attn: Spring Appeal  
1805A Virginia Street  
Annapolis MD 21401

**SCAN TO DONATE**

