

Diane Cooper

Aquatic Nuisance Species: The Shellfish Industry Perspective

Biography

Diane Cooper is employed by Taylor Shellfish Farms, one of the country's largest producers of shellfish. Taylor Shellfish owns and manages over 8500 acres of tidelands in Washington for the cultivation of shellfish. Working in environmental policy and project development for the company, Diane helps the company develop Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) policies as well as acts as the industry representative on State and local ANS task forces. Diane has 15 years experience in natural resource management in both government and private sectors. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in marine science with a focus on estuarine systems.

Presentation Abstract

The shellfish industry in Washington continues to grow and is currently the country's largest producer of Manila clams and farmed oysters. Technological advances in hatchery production of seed over the past three decades have positioned the northwest states as world leaders in farmed shellfish production. As such, the increased level of shellstock movement up and down the West Coast means an increase in the risk of transferring Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) from one area to another. The industry also monitors and cooperates in control efforts for ANS that pose a threat to shellfish, such as the European Green Crab, or shellfish beds, such as Spartina.

In response to our enhanced understanding of ANS and recognizing our role as both victim and vector, the shellfish industry is proactively altering culture practices as well as modifying processing plants to avoid or minimize impacts from ANS. Industry representatives survey tidelands for ANS threats and immediately respond according to approved protocols. As a major stakeholder in the process for developing State plans, the shellfish industry actively participates in all forums that deal with ANS and will continue to apply resources to effective prevention, eradication and/or control of ANS.