

Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center (CBEC) Tagging & Fishing Survey

Background: CBEC is a 510-acre wildlife preserve whose mission revolves around inspiring stewardship through education, conservation, research and restoration. The site is considered a “restoration-demonstration site” whereby state, federal, private agencies and educational institutions can try out restoration and research techniques “on grounds”. CBEC has established, through the help of MD DNR, four artificial reefs within a recently designated oyster sanctuary (287 acres in Prospect Bay) adjacent to the property. The CBEC reef ball area is the only shallow reef ball placement (4-7 depth) in the Maryland portion of the Chesapeake Bay and is of interest to many groups.

As a result of limited funding for monitoring artificial reefs and/or creating new reefs, CBEC is developing a monitoring program that will produce data as to the efficiency of reef balls, in particular, as habitat for fish, oysters and invertebrates. This data will be useful to many agencies contemplating the use and funding of reef balls (comparing shallow vs. deep placements; testing various concrete mixtures in the shape of reef balls etc.) as valid restoration tools in an estuarine setting.

The CBEC fishing survey and tagging components are part the overall plan to collect baseline data on artificial reefs and supplement Maryland Environmental Service’s (MES) data on older reef placements and “materials of opportunity”.

Objectives:

1. Tag and identify the fish species that show a “fidelity” to CBEC’s reef ball area.
2. Aid in identifying possible spawning grounds based on recapture by DNR/volunteers during the spring spawning surveys.
3. See whether tagged fish return to the CBEC reef ball area through recapture.

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