

WJZ Baltimore, Maryland News Weather Helping Restore Native Bay Oyster

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'Reef Balls' Helping Restore Native Bay Oyster



Alex DeMetrick
Reporting

(WJZ) Officials from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) say they have seen a significant success shows using "reef balls" can be a successful approach to restoring the native Bay oyster.

CBF and project partners Maryland Environmental Service (MES) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) will take boat trips to the reef ball site, and will lift several out of the water to highlight the project's accomplishments. The results of the trips will be available on the boat for visual comparisons.

CBF, MES and NOAA, with funding from the Fish America Foundation, planted 69 reef balls on the site "set," meaning tiny oysters had attached to the reef balls at CBF's Oyster Restoration Center. Less than a year after being planted at the Eastern Bay reef, these oysters have grown over two inches in length, and have an excellent survival rate.

Reef balls - large, igloo-like concrete structures - are still a relatively new approach to restoring oyster reefs in the Bay, and oysters can attach themselves to the concrete "reefs." There, the oysters can filter pollutants from the water and creating a rich habitat for fish and other creatures. Project partners also include Chesapeake Bay Federation volunteers, who helped create the reef balls.

WJZ'S Alex DeMetrick spoke to a member of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. "We also have to pr

oysters to sit on, so that they're up off the bottom, out of the mud, where they get a good supply of how they thrive." said Stephanie Reynolds.

From spraying massive shell deposits into the Choptank River to create oyster bars, to oyster nurseri back could help clean bay waters. Because oysters feed on nutrients that block sunlight, crucial to ur bring enough oysters back.

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation is part of the oyster recovery partnership, which includes state and up to eight million oysters into the bay each year.

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