

Comptroller Hatches Reef Ball Tilghman Island – June 2004



Following his visit to the Poplar Island Environmental Restoration Project, Maryland Comptroller William Donald Schaefer joined Conway Gregory, Deputy Director of the Maryland Environmental Service (MES), for a tailgate Reef Ball demonstration. Wayne Young, MES Artificial Reef Coordinator, discussed the state's artificial reef program. He explained unique features of Reef Balls using a cutaway model and reported that mold systems for smaller Reef Balls provide a user friendly resource for environmental education and public outreach to help improve awareness of environmental restoration needs in the region. Schaefer assisted in removing the fiberglass mold from a 50 pound "Oyster Ball." The surface layer was washed off to create a highly variable texture and recessed attachment points for colonization by marine organisms once deployed.

MES is working on several reef development projects and will deploy more 375 Reef Balls at various artificial fishing reef sites. Grant support for Reef Balls and their deployment has been provided by the Abell Foundation, Chesapeake Bay Trust and FishAmerica Foundation. Organizations involved in these projects and similar reef development projects include Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Coastal Conservation Association Maryland, Magothy River Association, Maryland Charter Boat Association, Oyster Recovery Partnership, Solomons Charter Captains Association, the Maryland Saltwater Sportsfishermen's Association and others. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is providing fisheries management, policy and technical guidance, and coordination support for reef development.

Reef Ball molds for the MES Reef Ball project and demonstration pours were obtained with grant support from the Chesapeake Bay Trust, Exxon-Mobil Foundation, FishAmerica Foundation, Reef Ball Foundation and program research and development support from MES.

On display were three 250 pound mini Bay Balls that were produced at Annandale High School, Annandale, Virginia by freshman biology students and the MES reef management team. The pour assisted the high school in expanding its environmental education program. Also attending the tailgate demonstration were employees from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the Delaware Center for Inland Bays. After the event, the Center's staff picked up five mini Bay Balls from an earlier MES pour for field trials in their oyster restoration project.

Check the MES website at www.menv.com for additional information about the Maryland Environmental Service and the agency's environmental restoration work involving oyster recovery, the Poplar Island Environmental Restoration Project, Hart-Miller Island South Cell Habitat Development and artificial fishing reefs. Information about Reef Balls can be found at www.reefball.com.

Poplar Island Environmental Restoration Project



Tailgate Reef Ball "Hatching"

