

OYSTER CONSERVATIONIST PROGRAM

It Takes a Village to Raise an Oyster

Oyster Conservationists are volunteers throughout New Hampshire and along the Piscataqua River in Maine that grow and care for juvenile oysters (also known as “spat on shell”) in cages off their docks or moorings throughout the Great Bay estuary and its tributaries. More than 300 volunteers across 85 sites participate in this 10-week program from July to September each year. At the end of the season, the homegrown oysters are deposited on our oyster restoration sites to contribute to our reef restoration efforts in Great Bay. Additionally, data collected by volunteers throughout the season helps to inform and support future oyster restoration efforts. We are grateful to these amazing and dedicated volunteers for directly contributing to oyster restoration efforts in a powerful and positive way!



ABOVE: Volunteers prepare cages of oysters for the Oyster Conservation Program. © Emily Lord/Nature Groupie
LEFT: John Bloom measures the oyster spat found on the shells in his grandparent’s oyster cage in Dover. © Jennifer Emerling

OYSTER CONSERVATIONIST PROGRAM VISION:
To foster a program that inspires individuals and connects communities to contribute and advance conservation strategies in coastal New Hampshire.

The Nature Conservancy 
nature.org/NHoysters

MAY-JUNE

Volunteers help with cage preparation and move oyster shell into cages.

EARLY JULY

Oyster larvae arrive and are set on oyster shells at UNH Jackson Estuarine Lab in remote setting tanks. After ~2 weeks, volunteers count spat for the program’s first spat counting week.

MID JULY-EARLY SEPT

Young oysters are put into cages and delivered to Oyster Conservationist (OC) volunteers. OC’s take care of spat and record data for 10 weeks.

MID SEPT

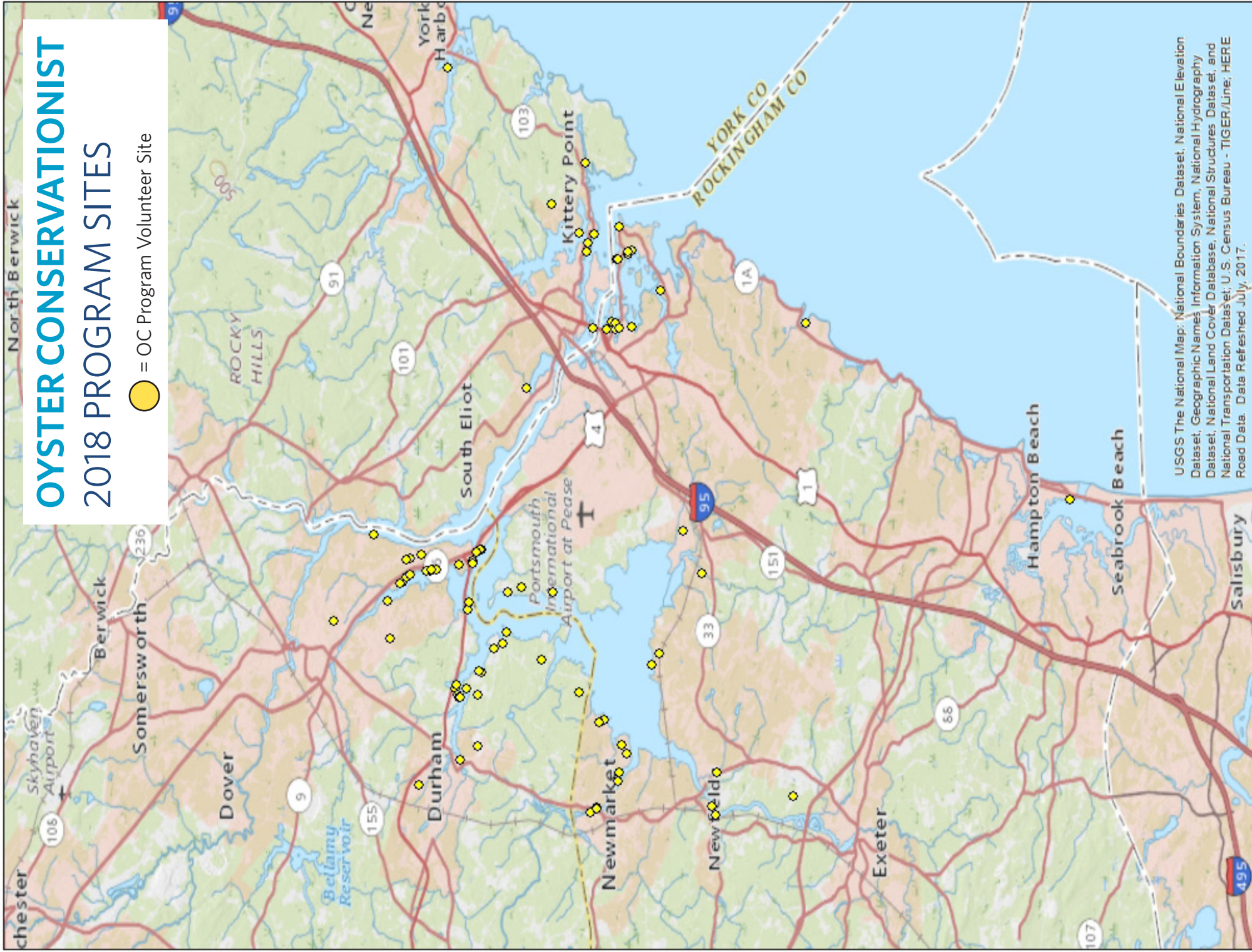
Collect cages from OC’s. Volunteers count and measure spat for the program’s second spat counting week.

EARLY OCT

OC’s and TNC staff take the Gundalow, a historic replica vessel, out to place oysters (more than 90,000) grown by the volunteers all summer on top of the oyster restoration sites.

OYSTER CONSERVATIONIST 2018 PROGRAM SITES

 = OC Program Volunteer Site



USGS The National Map: National Boundaries Dataset, National Elevation Dataset, Geographic Names Information System, National Hydrography Dataset, National Land Cover Database, National Structures Dataset, and National Transportation Dataset; U.S. Census Bureau - TIGER/Line; HERE Road Data. Data Refreshed July, 2017.