



# **Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission**

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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*Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries*

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### **ASMFC Releases New Habitat Management Series Report on Atlantic States Shell Recycling**

Arlington, VA – The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) has released the latest installment in its Habitat Management Series, *Atlantic States Shell Recycling*. The report highlights the growing role of shell recycling programs in supporting oyster reef restoration, coastal resilience, and sustainable fisheries management along the US Atlantic coast.

Oyster reefs are among the most valuable habitats in coastal ecosystems, improving water quality, stabilizing shorelines, and providing critical habitat for commercially and recreationally important species. However, the availability of suitable shell for restoration has become a limiting factor in many regions. Shell recycling programs address this need by collecting used shell from restaurants and community partners, curing it to meet public health and biosecurity standards, and returning it to the water to create or enhance oyster reefs and living shorelines.

The report outlines common program models, curing standards, equipment and logistics considerations, permitting frameworks, and performance metrics. Developed in collaboration with state and regional partners, the report provides practical guidance for states seeking to expand or establish shell recycling initiatives. It highlights how collaboration among state agencies, nonprofit organizations, industry partners, and volunteers has strengthened restoration capacity and community engagement.

“This report showcases how shell recycling programs transform a waste product into a critical restoration resource,” said Russ Babb, New Jersey Bureau of Marine Habitat & Shellfisheries. “By sharing lessons learned and common standards, we aim to support states in building efficient, scalable programs that advance oyster reef restoration and habitat resilience across the coast.”

The Atlantic States Shell Recycling report is available for download at <https://asmfc.org/resources/habitat-special-report/atlantic-states-shell-recycling-february-2026/> or via the Commission’s website at <https://asmfc.org/programs/habitat/>. For more information, please contact Simen Kaalstad, Habitat Program Coordinator, at [skaalstad@asmfc.org](mailto:skaalstad@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0743.

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The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as a deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and diadromous species.