

Scallops make late return

Harvesters note recent uptick after years of die-off

BY MARK HARRINGTON

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Peconic Bay scallops, after three consecutive years of early-season die-offs, are making a late-season comeback with just a week remaining in the harvest.

Seafood shops from Hampton Bays to Southold have been offering the local scallops for sale in recent weeks, at prices ranging from \$35 to \$48 a pound. The harvest, which starts in November, ends March 31.

"This is the first time we had some this time of year in a long time," said Mike Hanrahan, co-owner of Lighthouse Seafood in Hampton Bays. "It's an end-of-season comeback."

Stephen Tettelbach, a shellfish ecologist at the Cornell Cooperative Extension's marine program, said scallop harvesters, who dredge the waters of Peconic and Gardiners bays, confirmed news of an uptick in recent landings and he found the news encouraging.



RANDE DADDONA

Peconic Bay scallops have reappeared just before harvest season ends.

FIRST IN NEWSDAY

"Obviously guys are finding spots where there are some, which is surprising to me, and great news to hear," he said, though he cautioned that the number of scallops isn't anywhere near the record landings of 2018 and 2019.

"They are not huge numbers, but I'm hoping it's Mother Nature responding already to this and the survivors are spawning themselves and whatever level of resistance in the natural populations is increasing."

Cornell conducts scallop surveys in the fall and spring, but

does not do a winter survey because its boats are out of the water for insurance reasons. Cornell is working with Stony Brook University to culture new strains of bay scallops that are more resistant to the warmer waters and disease that some believe could be causing the die-offs.

Charlie Manwaring, owner of Southold Fish Market, said the bay scallops he's been selling have come from waters across the Peconic, from Flanders to Orient. He said the amounts aren't huge, but enough to keep fishermen, and the market for scallops, active.

"We've had them on and off through the winter," he said.

Early prices started at \$55 a pound, but have settled at \$35 this week. He's getting 15 to 18 pounds a day, "just enough to keep the market going."

Manwaring said he hopes the increasing abundance late this season bodes well for the 2022 stock later this year. "Hopefully we're getting back on track," he said.

Keith Reda, manager of Braun Seafood in Cutchogue, said he's been getting "a little bit" more scallops than earlier in the season "but not a great amount. It's not like we're getting hundreds of pounds. I wish we were."

In 2018, when the total Peconic Bay scallop landings were 108,115 pounds, Braun's would sell 40 to 50 pounds a day. This year's late-season increase, while encouraging, are likely "not enough to make any difference" in sales, Reda said.

But Hanrahan of Lighthouse, also known as Cor-J Seafood, said customers for the past six weeks have been scarfing up all his inventory.

"As soon as we get them in they're sold," he said. "It's a good sign. It's nice to have them now. People love them. Hopefully in spring and summer, it will show a little bit of a comeback."

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THIS DATE IN HISTORY

1911 A total of 146 people, mostly young female immigrants, were killed when fire broke out at the Triangle Shirtwaist Co. in Manhattan.

1915 The U.S. Navy lost its first commissioned submarine as the USS F-4 sank off Hawaii, claiming the lives of all 21 crew members.

1931 In the so-called "Scottsboro Boys" case, nine young Black men were taken off a train in Alabama, accused of raping two white women. After years of convictions, death sentences and imprisonment, the nine were vindicated.

1965 The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. led 25,000 people to the Alabama state capitol in Montgomery after a five-day march from Selma to protest the denial of voting rights to Blacks.

1990 Eighty-seven people, most Honduran and Dominican immigrants, were killed in a blaze at an illegal social club in the Bronx. (An arsonist set the fire after being thrown out of the Happy Land club following an argument with his girlfriend; Julio Gonzalez died in prison in 2016.)

Belles of the ball

Rockville Centre.

Rose Curti and Gloria Hunt mark their 101st birthdays during Centenarian Celebrations at The Grand Pavilion for Rehabilitation and Nursing at Rockville Centre on Thursday.



HOWARD SCHNAPP