



SC-29: Spawning, dispersal potential and population persistence of Pacific Oysters, *Crassostrea gigas*, in Milford Haven.

Aquaculture of oysters in NW Europe is almost entirely made up of Pacific oyster production, and development of farming of this species represents a significant opportunity for growth in shellfish farming in Wales. However, the potential for spawning and spread of Pacific oysters into natural habitats under prevailing environmental conditions in Welsh coast waters remains an area of uncertainty. The species does occur through wild settlement in some sites, including the Milford Haven Waterway, that have been observed over several decades but has not established widespread invasive populations. This uncertainty can restrict approval of new production areas and investment by producers in new farms.

Impact

This project is applying a combination of hydrodynamic and seawater temperature models to predict the likelihood of spawning of farmed and wild Pacific oysters in Milford Haven and the potential range of dispersal and settlement of larvae. It will also investigate the distribution and age structure of feral oysters to assess the frequency of historical settlement events to assess the stability of the current patchy distribution and the potential for use of sterile triploid oysters on farms to limit the potential for dispersal of larvae from aquaculture stocks.



Project Officer

Prof. Lewis LeVay is the lead researcher for SC-29

Project Partner

Tethys Oysters Limited



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The Shellfish Centre is a research and innovation initiative supporting development of the shellfish sector in Wales. The Centre will collaborate with businesses to deliver science to support growth. The main focus of the project is shellfish aquaculture and the related supply chain, with scope also for research to support new/ underexploited shellfisheries and aquaculture of non-shellfish species that are compatible with shellfish production

A Research & Innovation Initiative: Supporting the development of the Shellfish Sector in Wales

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