



Oyster Landings in Maryland

The Eastern Oyster was once the most highly prized seafood product in the Chesapeake Bay. In the 1880s, millions of bushels were harvested from the Bay floor and sold to packing houses in Maryland and Virginia. In the 1950s, two diseases – known as MSX and Dermo – were introduced to the ecosystem that have had a harmful effect on the oyster fishery in the past fifty years.

When a waterman sells his catch, the amount of oysters caught is reported to an organization called the National Marine Fisheries Service. The weight of the catch is entered in a database that keeps records of every waterman's daily total. By doing this, scientists can keep track of how many pounds of oysters were caught by fishermen that year.

Scientists use this data to make decisions about how many oysters can be caught the following season. On the next page, the weight of the annual oyster harvest in Maryland has been put into the form of a bar graph. On the bottom of the graph are the years ranging from 1957 to 2018, while on the left-hand side of the graph is the total weight of oysters caught in millions of pounds.

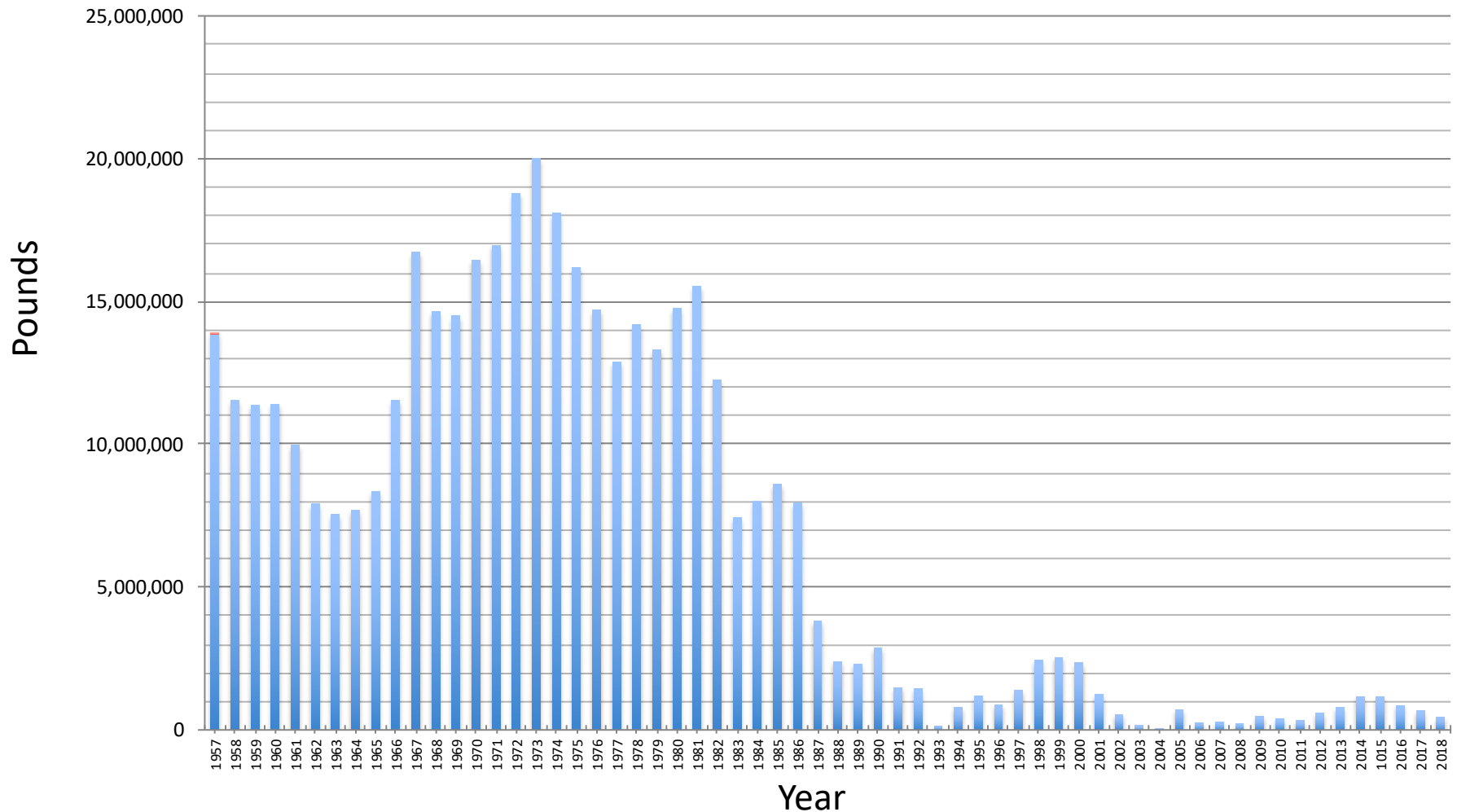
Examine the graph to see if you can find any trends in the data, then answer the questions on the third page to assess the health of the oyster fishery.





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1957 - 2018





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1. What year were the most oysters caught? Approximately how many pounds of oysters were caught that year?

2. What year were the least amount of oysters caught? Approximately how many pounds of oysters were caught that year?

3. What is the trend in the catch data from 1963 to 1973?

4. What is the trend in the catch data from 1973 to 1993?

5. Look at the catch data from the last five years on the graph (2014 – 2018). Based on the data, would you recommend allowing more oysters, fewer oysters, or the same amount of oysters to be caught in 2019?

