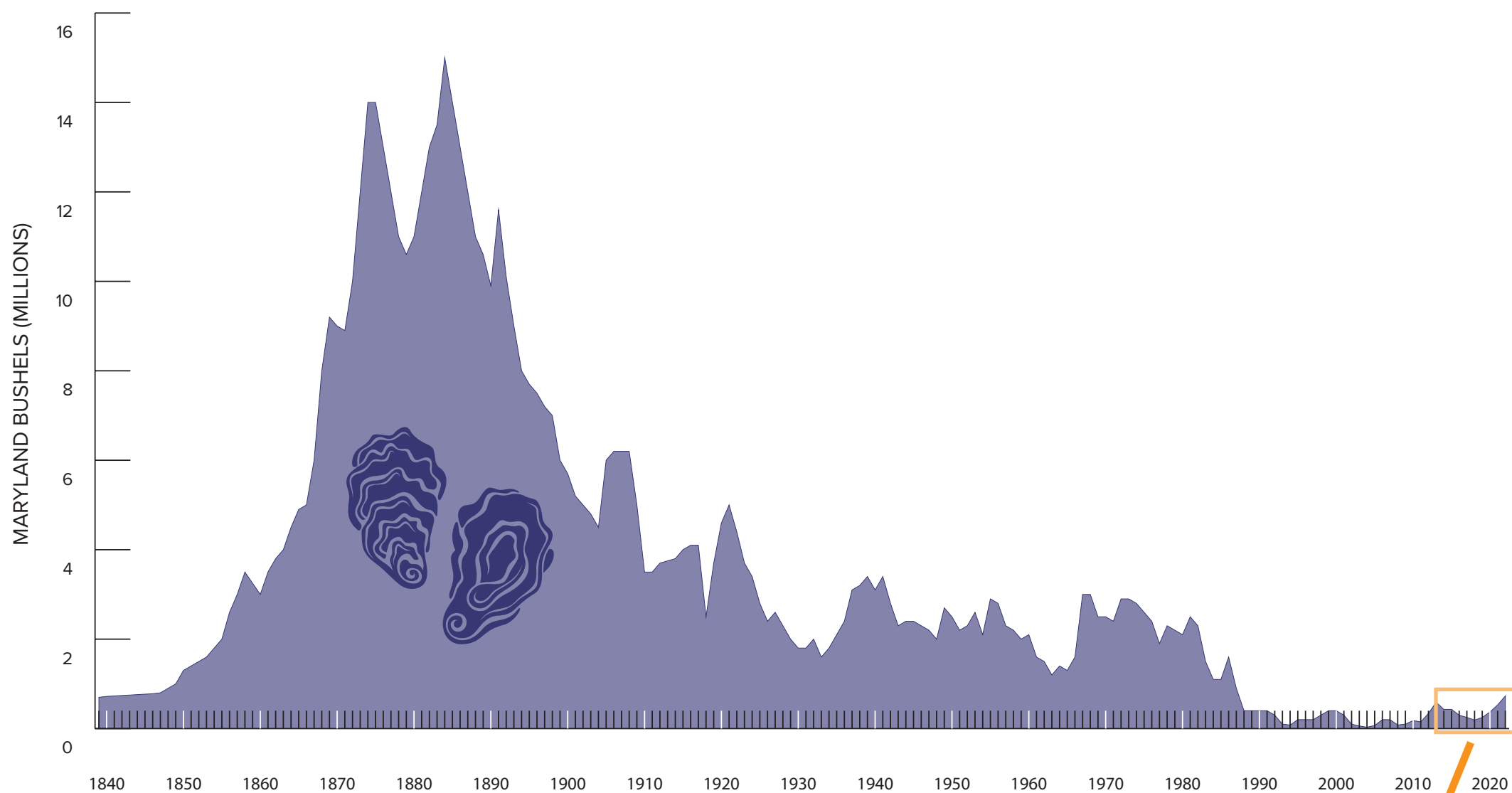


A History of Oyster Harvests and Laws in Maryland 1839-2022



History of Oyster Harvests and Laws

1852: Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Reaches Ohio River, expanding the oyster market to western communities; northern oyster packers opened plants in Baltimore.

1882: Oyster Commission—surveyed Maryland oyster beds, recommended conservation measures and oyster farming.

1890: Cull Law—set minimum legal size for market oysters and required return of shells with spat and young oysters to natural oyster bars.

1906: Haman Oyster Culture Law—Shellfish Commission increased leasing allowance, a proposal rendered ineffectual by later legislation; commissioned Maryland Oyster Survey (Yates Survey).

1906-12: Yates Survey of Natural Oyster Bars—conducted extensive biological and environmental surveys of Maryland's oyster bars.

1957-1959: MSX first documented in Delaware Bay, causing massive oyster mortalities. Two years later, it was found in the lower Chesapeake Bay, causing many watermen to come ashore for jobs.

1971: Bruce Decision—overturned the regulation that restricted watermen engaged in crabbing and oystering from working in county waters other than those in which they reside.

1993: Oyster Roundtable Action Plan—an agreement reached by major stakeholders in the oyster fishery, including watermen and scientists, to develop a science-based plan for sustainable restoration.

2002: Record high disease levels devastated the Maryland population, killing 58% of the oysters statewide.

2009: Aquaculture Shellfish Leasing Bill—revamped leasing laws to make it easier for watermen and others to grow shellfish in the Bay, a result of work by Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources, Maryland Dept. of Agriculture, University of Maryland, and UMCES Horn Point Laboratory.

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