

CHILMARK POND COMMISSIONERS' REPORT
June 2020

Pond Openings 2019/2020

November 4-14, 2019
December 17, 2019-January 6, 2020
February 20-28, 2020
April 7-24, 2020
June 1-

All of our openings were of sufficient duration to be considered a successful flushing of the pond. The shortest was 8 days long and the longest was 20 days.

Due to the shoaling of the pond, we have had to open on a more frequent basis. The times between the closing of a cut and the need to open again ranged from 33 to 45 days. In looking at the more recent opening data, we have seen an increase in the number of openings per year. From 2014-2016, we averaged two openings per year. From 2016-2019, we averaged three openings per year. However, two of those years included exceptionally long openings (one of 52 days and another of 82 days) which kept the total number down. This year, as you can see, we have had to open five times. Of course, the amount of rainfall that we receive in a given year also affects the number of openings.

The eutrophication (when a body of water becomes overly enriched with nutrients) of the pond is a natural process, which we have hoped to slow by the flushing of the pond to remove the nutrients that encourage aquatic plant growth. The abundance of aquatic plants usually results in the depletion of dissolved oxygen, which makes the pond less habitable for fish and shellfish. Unfortunately, openings also increase the shoaling of the pond due to the influx of sand. For your education, included is a relevant section of an article sent to us by (former CPA President) Peter Bruce...

Eutrophic bodies of water are considered old or dying ponds or lakes. Eutrophic lakes and ponds are extremely well nourished with nitrogen and phosphorus, leading to an abundance of aquatic plant growth. As the pond or lake continues to age, the sides continue to flatten out and what were once steep sides is now gently sloping. The bottom of the pond is now filled with organic sediment and mud. The overall depth of the pond or lake is continually decreasing and the clarity continues to decrease. As the pond or lake fills in and the weeds grow larger, the total open water area shrinks as well. If left alone, the pond or lake will eventually fill in completely, and become a swamp or wetland at best. Most existing farm ponds fall in the eutrophic category and need help quickly to slow the aging process. (Joe Holtz, Kasco Marine "Irragazette" 2020)

This shows the importance of the Chilmark Pond Foundation and its planned work on the restoration of the fishery. We believe that improving water exchange and circulation in the ponds will help improve the water quality of Chilmark Pond.

Respectfully Submitted,

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