

## WHAT IS MERROIR?

Like wines, an oyster's flavor reflects where it was grown. The merroir is an oyster's taste of a place, and Ninigret oysters have been described as "crisp, briny, with a buttery sweet finish" and as having "subtle brine with a clean, earthy finish."

## DOING GOOD THINGS FOR THE POND, AND FOR YOU

- Oysters are nature's filtering powerhouses. One oyster can filter up to 50 gallons of water each day; an acre of oysters can filter the entire pond in just over one day.
- Oysters absorb nitrogen, removing it from the water where too much of it can cause harm.
- Natural oyster reefs, as well as aquaculture gear such as cages, provide habitat for marine life and nursery areas for a variety of species to grow.
- Oysters pack a big health punch, containing only 47 calories per six medium oysters, while providing heaps of vitamin B12, iron, zinc, manganese and selenium. In addition to health-boosting omega-3 fatty acids, oyster farming requires no inputs like food fertilizer, pesticides, or antibiotics and requires little freshwater. In fact, farmed shellfish have the lowest carbon footprint of any protein source.



*Hungry yet? Scan here to learn where to buy local oysters, how to eat them at home, and to see oyster farmers in action.*

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# OYSTER FARMING ON NINIGRET POND

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW





## NINIGRET POND: OUR STATE'S BLUE JEWEL

Ninigret Pond is a 1,700-acre coastal lagoon. It is one of our state's largest, located within the town of Charlestown. The pond is beloved by all who experience it, whether for recreation or for their jobs. Shellfish farming aquaculture, one of many activities on the pond, is a year-round operation. Statewide, aquaculture adds over \$5 million to Rhode Island's economy, supporting hundreds of jobs and contributing to our culinary culture and robust appetite for local seafood.

Rhode Island small businesses have grown shellfish and Ninigret Pond since 1978. Today there are around 64 acres of farming activity, about 4% of the pond. The farms on these acres grow oysters and sell them to local, regional, and national markets and restaurants. As with all aquaculture in the state, the submerged land is leased, rather than owned, by the growers and is approved and managed by the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council in coordination with other state and local



agencies and stakeholders. The rigorous review and approval process is designed to ensure that farming operations are not harming the local environment, are compatible with other water uses, and are providing benefit to the industry and the public commons on which they operate.

## WHAT YOU'LL SEE ON THE POND

As you go to the pond, you are likely to encounter different signs of aquaculture activity. Growing oysters takes place in either submerged cages or directly on the bottom. You might see cages upright out of the water, a technique used to dry algae and other fouling organisms that stall oyster growth. Farmers are often on their small boats or barges at work on their farms, which require tending daily. You may also see small tanks, called FLUPSYS (or floating upweller systems), used to grow baby oysters to planting size, at various docks and marinas around the pond.

Besides growing oysters for consumption, Ninigret farms also host restoration activities, growing oysters to benefit the environment, in cooperation with state agencies.

