

# Why Alaska's only shellfish hatchery is a vital tool for future of coastal Alaska

The opportunities for adding new jobs in Alaska's seafood industry are slim. Few wild fisheries resources are not fully utilized and the trend among developed fisheries is to trim the number of fishermen and processing workers. With the demise of the timber industry, downturn in tourism and shrinkage of the seafood industry, most coastal communities have experienced a steady outmigration of residents as jobs disappear from the docks.

Aquatic farming is one of the most promising opportunities in coastal Alaska to create new year-round jobs. A vital key to the future of the industry is the continued operation of the state's only shellfish hatchery. Under state law and policies, oysters are the only shellfish seed that can be imported into the state.

Consequently, promising opportunities to use aquaculture techniques to strengthen wild resources such king crab, sea cucumbers, geoducks and razor clams depend upon continued operation of the Alutiiq Pride Shellfish Hatchery. As do farming opportunities such as the culture of geoducks, rock scallops, cockles and littleneck clams.

Alutiiq Pride was forced to close down for five months of 2009 because of a funding shortfall. The hatchery was able to reopen in January 2010 on the strength of a \$100,000 federal stimulus grant. Continued operation of the hatchery beyond July 1, 2010, hinges upon a state contribution in the capital budget of \$150,000.

Approval of this appropriation request will ensure the hatchery will be able to continue to produce shellfish seed for farmers and fulfill its role as one of the state's most active and important marine research center. Alutiiq Pride currently collaborates in and serves as the primary laboratory for highly successful research into king crab aquaculture, and its staff is conducting research into production of seed for sea cucumbers, razor clams, rock scallops and cockles, species which have not been produced by any other North American hatcheries.

The \$150,000 appropriation will represent about half of the revenues the hatchery needs to continue operating until mid-2011. The remaining revenues will come from seed sales, income from leasing floor space to the king crab project, and Bureau of Indian Affairs maintenance grant.

**Capital Budget Request:**     **\$150,000**  
**Named Recipient:**           **Alutiiq Pride Shellfish Hatchery**



***Alutiiq Pride Shellfish Hatchery***  
***PO Box 369 Seward, AK***  
***(907) 224-5181 224-5282 fax***



This juvenile red king crab was raised at the Alutiiq Pride Shellfish Hatchery in Seward and is about 5 months old. 2009 production trials produced 100,000 juvenile crab for use in a wide variety of research projects.

## Alutiiq Pride Shellfish Hatchery 2009 Project Highlights

2009 marked the third year of research into mass production of juvenile red and blue king crab. The hatchery's production team continued to improve upon its early success, raising survival rates and initiating a number of nursery experiments. The large number of juvenile crab produced will support a variety of research projects by scientists working in Seward, Kodiak, Juneau and the Alaska Fisheries Research Center lab in Newport, Oregon. The research will provide information on king crab life histories, predator-prey relationships, habitat preferences and a host of other issues important to state and federal resource managers. APSH also is working with Old Harbor to train local residents as laboratory technicians and research divers.

### 2009 Hatchery Projects

Oysters 3 million seed for aquatic farms and nurseries in Prince William Sound (PWS) and Southeast (SE).

Geoducks 200,000 seed sales to farmers based in Ketchikan, Sitka, Kake and Juneau..

Cockles Produced seed for projects in Tatitlek and Naukati

Littleneck Clams Produced seed for enhancement projects at Native villages in PWS and Cook Inlet, and a farming experiment in SE.

Sea Cucumbers Experiments with culturing sea cucumbers in partnership with SE dive fishermen.

Rock Scallops Experiments with Kachemak Bay broodstock.

Mussel Watch Program Participant in national monitoring program.

Molluscan Broodstock Program Raising oysters for this West Coast project.

### Geoducks, Sea Cucumbers, Oysters, Cockles, Littleneck Clams, Rock Scallops

One of APSH's biggest challenges has been to figure out how to produce shellfish seed from a wide variety of species that have never seen the inside of a hatchery. State statutes and regulations essentially limit Alaska's aquatic farmers to cultivating Pacific oysters and indigenous marine species. Geoduck clams have been cultured in hatcheries for the past 20 years and culture techniques can be adapted from other hatcheries, but that's not the case for other species. APSH has been successful at culturing sea cucumbers, razor clams, littleneck clams, purple-hinged rock scallops, and cockles. This pioneering work is continuing this year.



**Juvenile Geoduck**