



## SHELLFISH AND AQUACULTURE SERIES

*Scallops and Mussels: More Incredible Edibles from the Great Salt Pond!*

### THE BAY SCALLOP

The Bay scallop (*Argopecten irradians*) is a highly prized GSP bivalve, and the opening day of its – two month season is eagerly anticipated. Bay scallops have experienced significant regional habitat loss and population decline. Block Island is fortunate to have a viable bay scallop population, resulting from seeding efforts, clean water, and a limited recreational-only season.

Bay scallops only live about two years, using camouflage and their ability to move (by rapidly opening and shutting their shell) to avoid predation. In season, they are legal to take after one year of growth, as indicated by a growth ring. The most popular methods of scalloping are wetsuit snorkeling and use of a dip net and view box. Taking scallops using powered equipment such as dredges or using SCUBA equipment is prohibited in the GSP.

In contrast, the Atlantic sea scallop (*Placopecten magellanicus*) is the type of scallop most often served in a restaurant. Larger than the bay scallop, it is commercially fished using deep water dredges in the open ocean.

### THE BLUE MUSSEL

The Blue mussel (*Mytilus edulis*) is native to Block Island and is the same species as the P.E.I. (Prince Edward Island) mussel that is commonly served in restaurants. To harvest they must be at least two inches in length (center hole of shellfish gauge) and have seasonal restrictions like the quahog.

Also present along the banks of the GSP is the ribbed mussel (*Geukensia demissa*). In contrast to the blue mussel, which prefers normal salinity, the ribbed mussel is found partially buried in mud at the edge of the high tide line. The ribbed mussel contains a higher level of organic bacteria and is not commonly eaten.



*Bay Scallop Shell*



*Live Atlantic bay scallop. Photo by Mayscallop, Marine Biological Laboratory, Woods Hole, MA*



*Blue Mussel, Courtesy Wikipedia*



*Ribbed Mussel in intertidal zone sediment*

**OUR MISSION:** To protect and enhance the environmental quality of the Great Salt Pond, including its shorelines and wetlands, and to promote appropriate and productive uses of the Pond's resources by residents, visitors and local businesses.

**FUNDING:** Individual contributions, membership dues, special events, program grants. IRS 501(c)3 non-profit. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Please consider becoming a member of The Committee for the Great Salt Pond. For information and details, visit our website at [cgspblockisland.org](http://cgspblockisland.org).