Supply of Juvenile and Larval Horseshoe Crabs (*Limulus polyphemus*) in Great Bay, NJ

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**Abstract**

Regional populations of Atlantic horseshoe crab (*Limulus polyphemus*) have experienced decline in recent years. To gain a better understanding of their population structure, I focused on early life stages (larval and juvenile). Data from weekly plankton tows, collected from 2004 to 2014, revealed a recurring peak in larval supply between mid-June to late July. Juveniles collected via suction dredging were found in shallow waters and ranged from 5 to 14 mm in carapace width. Management plans should take into account larval supply and juvenile distribution to promote sustainable populations.

**Objectives**

- To better understand patterns of larval supply and juvenile distribution.

**Methods**

**Larval supply:** Horseshoe crab larval data were obtained using long-term plankton collections, performed weekly from 2004 to 2014. Net dimensions were 1 meter in diameter, 1 mm mesh.

**Juveniles:** A suction dredge (pictured below) towed behind a boat was used to sample juveniles underwater. In areas where water was too shallow (≤50 cm), quadrats were sampled directly with the hose, without the T attachment.

**Conclusions**

- Larval density is usually highest during July 11 – 20. 2008 is considered an exceptional year.

**Juvenile Distribution (2014)**

**References**


**Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank the technicians and staff at the Rutgers University Marine Field Station and my fellow interns. I also extend gratitude to Dr. W. H. Burton and the firm Versar for allowing us to borrow the T attachment and hoses.