

ENORI

ESSEX NATIVE OYSTER RESTORATION INITIATIVE



The Essex Native Oyster Restoration Initiative (ENORI) is a collaboration comprising of oystermen, environmental conservation groups, universities and government groups, working hard to bring wild native oysters back to Essex in a big way! Our vision is for the Essex estuaries to have self-sustaining populations of native oysters, providing ecosystem services, sustainable fisheries and increased biodiversity whilst recognising their cultural importance.

Oyster beds provide many benefits to the environment and people, such as improving water clarity and quality, and enhancing fish recruitment. Healthy oyster beds are hugely productive, with a rich biodiversity of associated species. They have a positive effect on the health of the entire ecosystem and provide refuge to juvenile fish and invertebrates.

However, wild native oyster stocks have declined by over 90% in the UK and are now one of the most threatened marine habitats in Europe.

ENORI are working within the Blackwater, Crouch, Roach and Colne Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), the only MCZ in the UK that is designated to protect native oyster beds!

ENORI are restoring the native oyster beds by adding cultch - old shell and gravels - to the seabed. This addresses the first main issue facing oysters within the MCZ; a limited amount of settlement material. With the loss of oyster beds, the MCZ is lacking the hard substrate that oyster larvae require to settle. The primary substrate is currently soft, muddy ground, this is not conducive to good recruitment. Adding cultch therefore allows oyster larvae to settle and grow into mature oysters.

The second approach that ENORI are undertaking is the creation of a 'Mother Oyster' sanctuary. This addresses the second main issue facing oysters within the MCZ; a lack of mature oysters and low reproductive success. ENORI are moving mature oysters into the Restoration Box, which, when spawning, will increase the number of larvae attempting to settle on the improved seabed substrate.

The ENORI team would love to hear from you, please contact essexnativeoyster@zsl.org or for more information and regular updates check out our social media pages!



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