

## CLAM FACT SHEET

Spawning occurs mid May through June, depending on geographic location. There can be a six week difference between York County and Washington County.

Clams' growth is directly related to their position in the intertidal zone. Clams may reach 2" in one and a half growing seasons near the low water mark. It might take 8 – 10 years to reach that size at high intertidal areas.

### Clam Growth

Early spring to 1 <sup>st</sup> week of June	15% of growth
June to mid August	65% of growth
Mid August to mid October	20% of growth

No more than 1% growth occurs from October to the following spring.

A clam 1" to 1 ¼" can filter 2.6 quarts of water per hour (12 gallons per day) in the summer.

A fertilized egg will rapidly develop in a day or two into a two-shelled swimming animal call a *veliger larva*, which grows for 3 – 6 weeks before developing a foot. Then it settles out of the water column and onto the mudflat as a juvenile clam.

At the time of settlement the clam is smaller than the size of a grain of sand – 1/50".

A juvenile clam 1 mm in size has a byssal gland in its foot that produces a byssal thread, which is used to help anchor it to the bottom. When the clam grows to 1" its byssal gland disappears.

A 2 1/2" female clam can produce about one to two million eggs, but only a small percentage will actually become fertilized. Only 0.1% of the fertilized eggs settle to the intertidal zone.