The growing success of the scallop fishery is good news to Virginia’s industry and economy. It is significant that the fishery has recently prospered, in part, by virtue of a harvest management regime jointly fostered by Virginia’s scallop industry and government, led by scientists at VIMS. The use of special-area management zones to optimize fishing grounds, along with improvements in harvest-gear efficiency, have combined to create this success story.

What the harvesting and unloading of this volume of seafood products means to Virginia (besides the obvious financial contribution of the catch to harvesters) is a welcome boost in economic activity for at least a part of the state’s traditional seafood infrastructure. Viewing the growth in scallop-related business since 1994 provides a convenient timeline with which to update some earlier economic impact estimates.

Virginia’s Commercial Fishing Industry: “Its Economic Performance and Contributions,” a 1994 study completed by VIMS economist James Kirkley, used primary economic surveys and input/output modeling to ascertain the business activity associated with sea scallop harvesting, processing, marketing, and distribution. In fact, all of the state’s commercial fisheries were evaluated in that study, and the findings suggest that the earlier estimate of 1,900 employment equivalents stemming from the scallop industry is still a reasonable estimate. In view of this, efforts to maximize the value of the offshore fishery for the benefit of Virginia are to be considered good news.