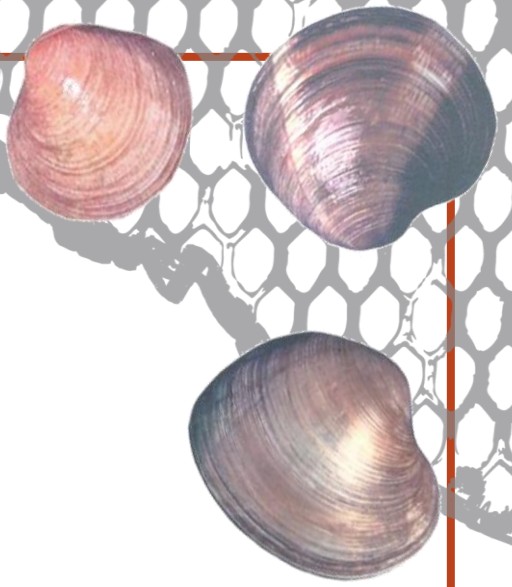
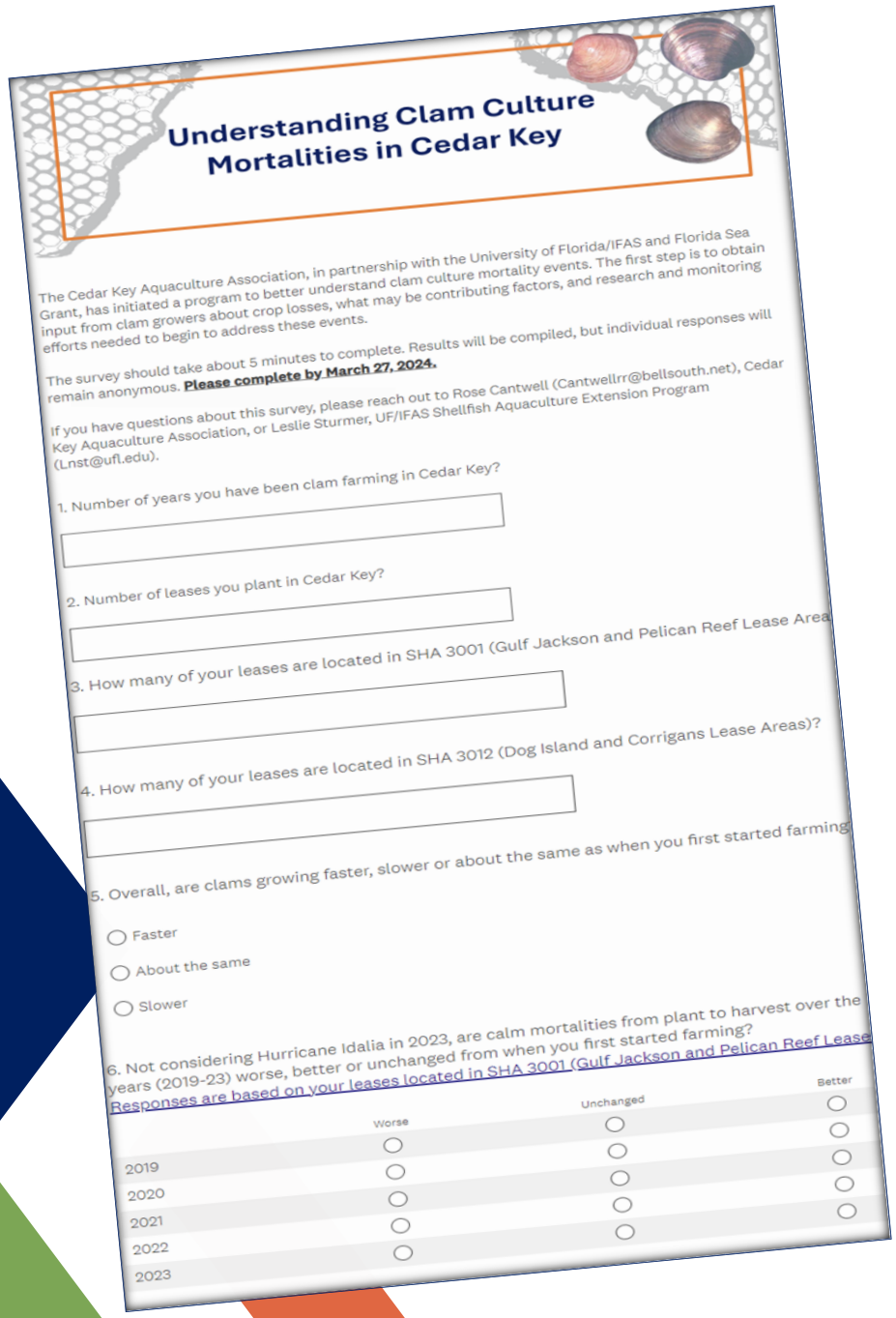


Understanding Clam Culture Mortalities in Cedar Key

Growers' Survey Results



Understanding Clam Culture Mortalities in Cedar Key

The Cedar Key Aquaculture Association, in partnership with the University of Florida/IFAS and Florida Sea Grant, has initiated a program to better understand clam culture mortality events. The first step is to obtain input from clam growers about crop losses, what may be contributing factors, and research and monitoring efforts needed to begin to address these events.

The survey should take about 5 minutes to complete. Results will be compiled, but individual responses will remain anonymous. **Please complete by March 27, 2024.**

If you have questions about this survey, please reach out to Rose Cantwell (Cantwellrr@bellsouth.net), Cedar Key Aquaculture Association, or Leslie Sturmer, UF/IFAS Shellfish Aquaculture Extension Program (Lnst@ufl.edu).

1. Number of years you have been clam farming in Cedar Key?

2. Number of leases you plant in Cedar Key?

3. How many of your leases are located in SHA 3001 (Gulf Jackson and Pelican Reef Lease Area

4. How many of your leases are located in SHA 3012 (Dog Island and Corrigans Lease Areas)?

5. Overall, are clams growing faster, slower or about the same as when you first started farming

- Faster
- About the same
- Slower

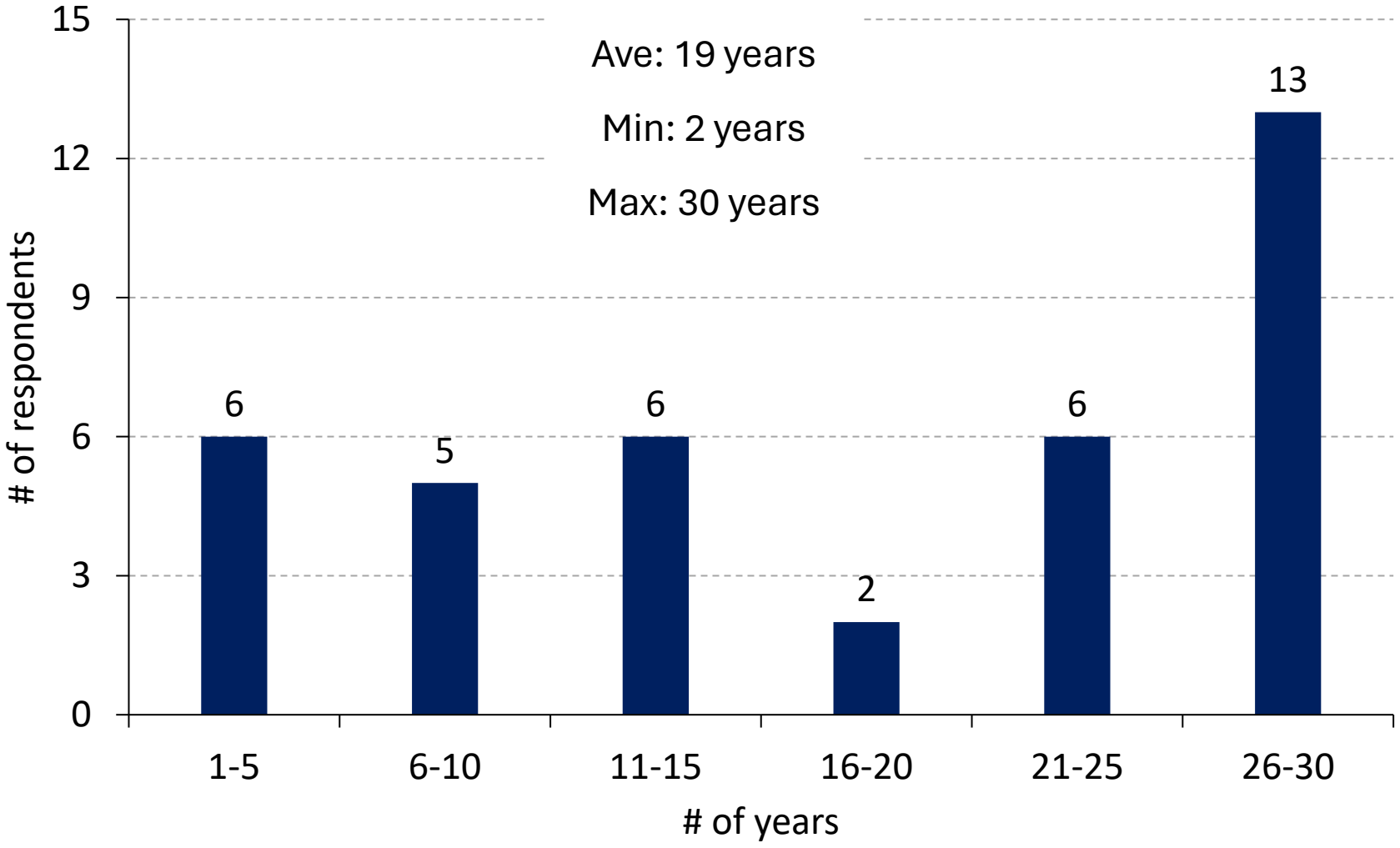
6. Not considering Hurricane Idalia in 2023, are calm mortalities from plant to harvest over the years (2019-23) worse, better or unchanged from when you first started farming?
Responses are based on your leases located in SHA 3001 (Gulf Jackson and Pelican Reef Lease

	Worse	Unchanged	Better
2019			
2020			
2021			
2022			
2023			

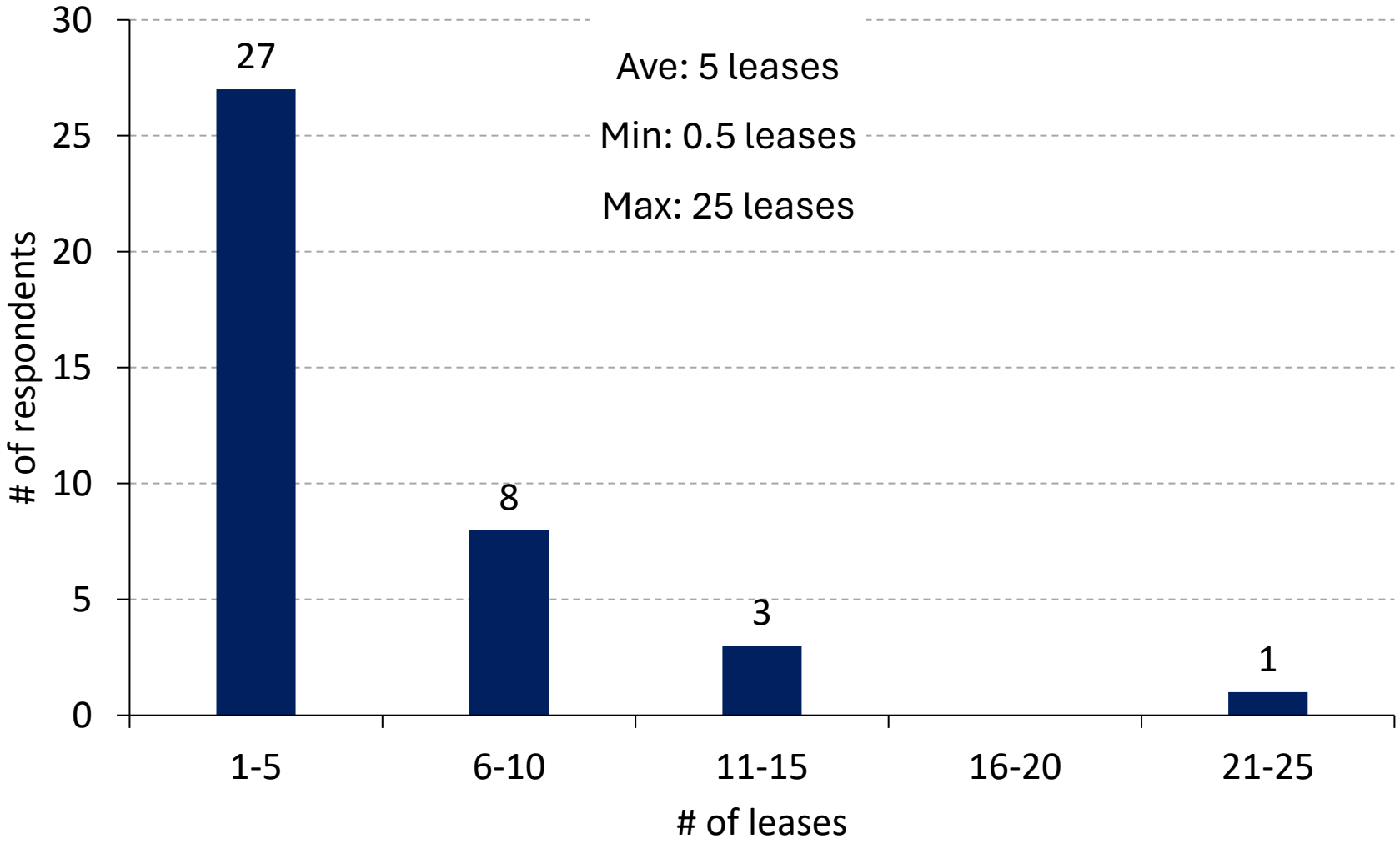
Growers' Survey

- Survey sent by Cedar Key Aquaculture Association
- Emailed to 163 certified leaseholders in Cedar Key
- 39 responded (24%)
- Start date: March 13, 2024
- End date: March 29, 2024

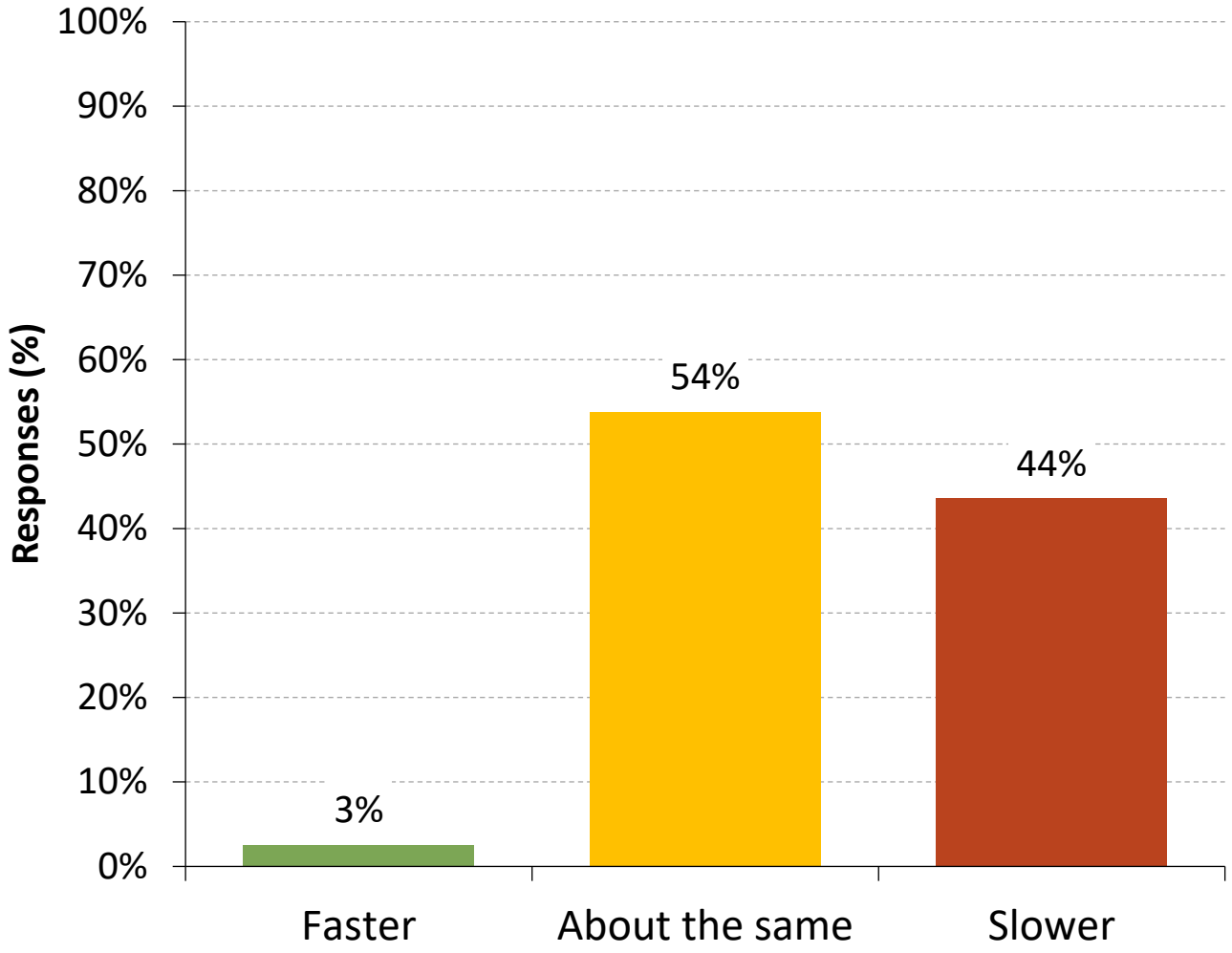
Number of years you have been clam farming in Cedar Key?



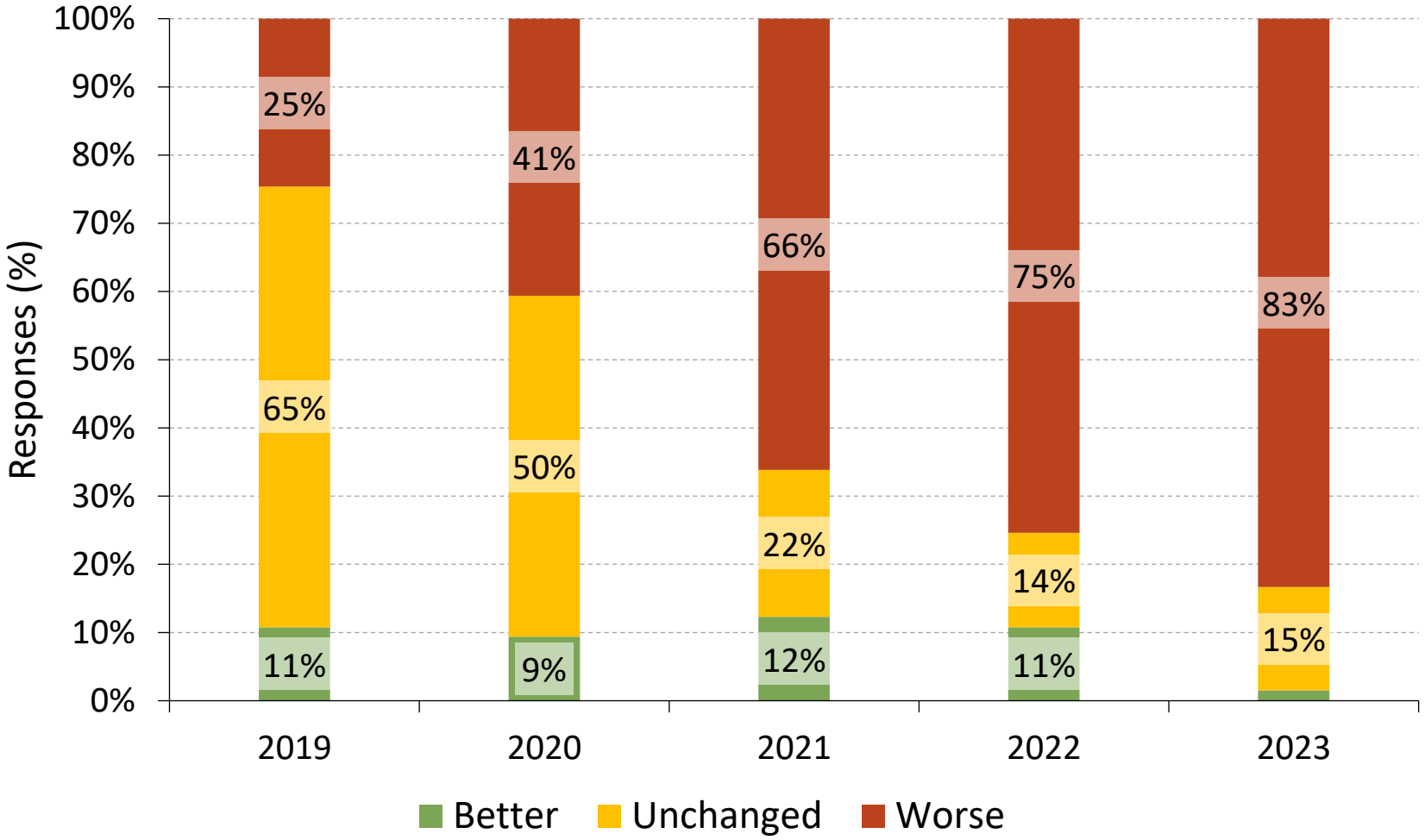
Number of leases you plant in Cedar Key?



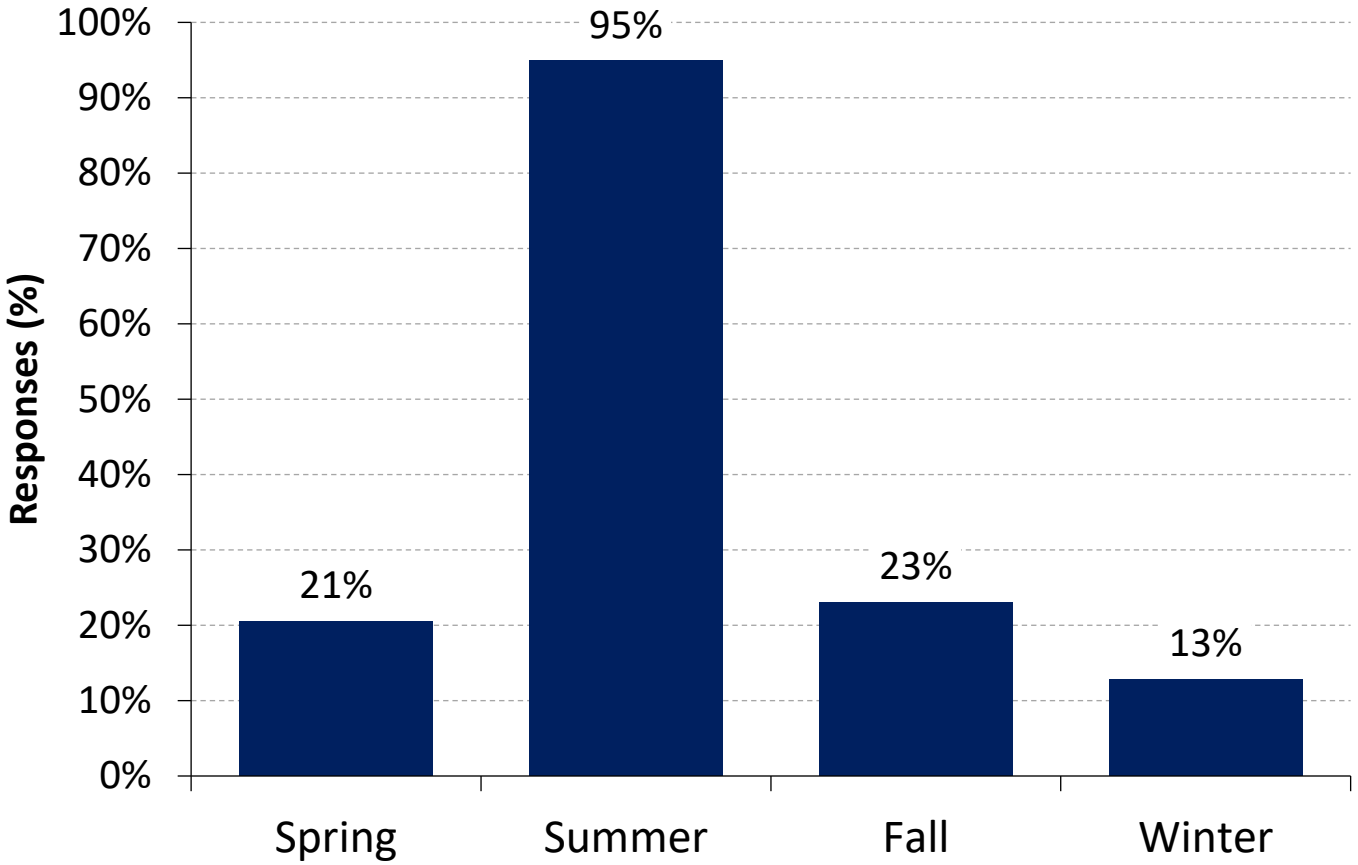
Are clams growing faster, slower or about the same as when you first started farming?



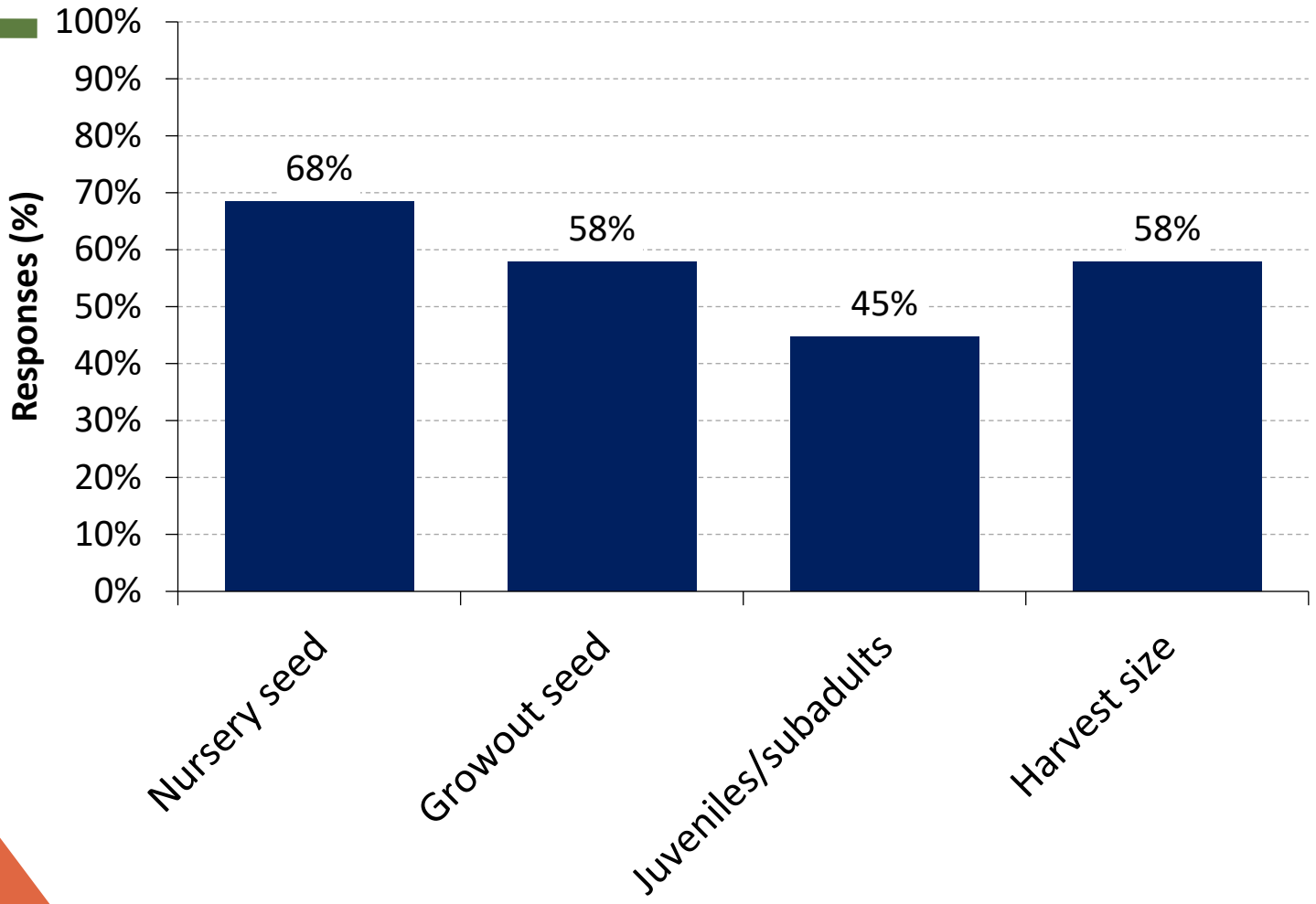
Are clam mortalities from plant to harvest over the past 5 years (2019-23) worse, better or unchanged from when you first started farming?



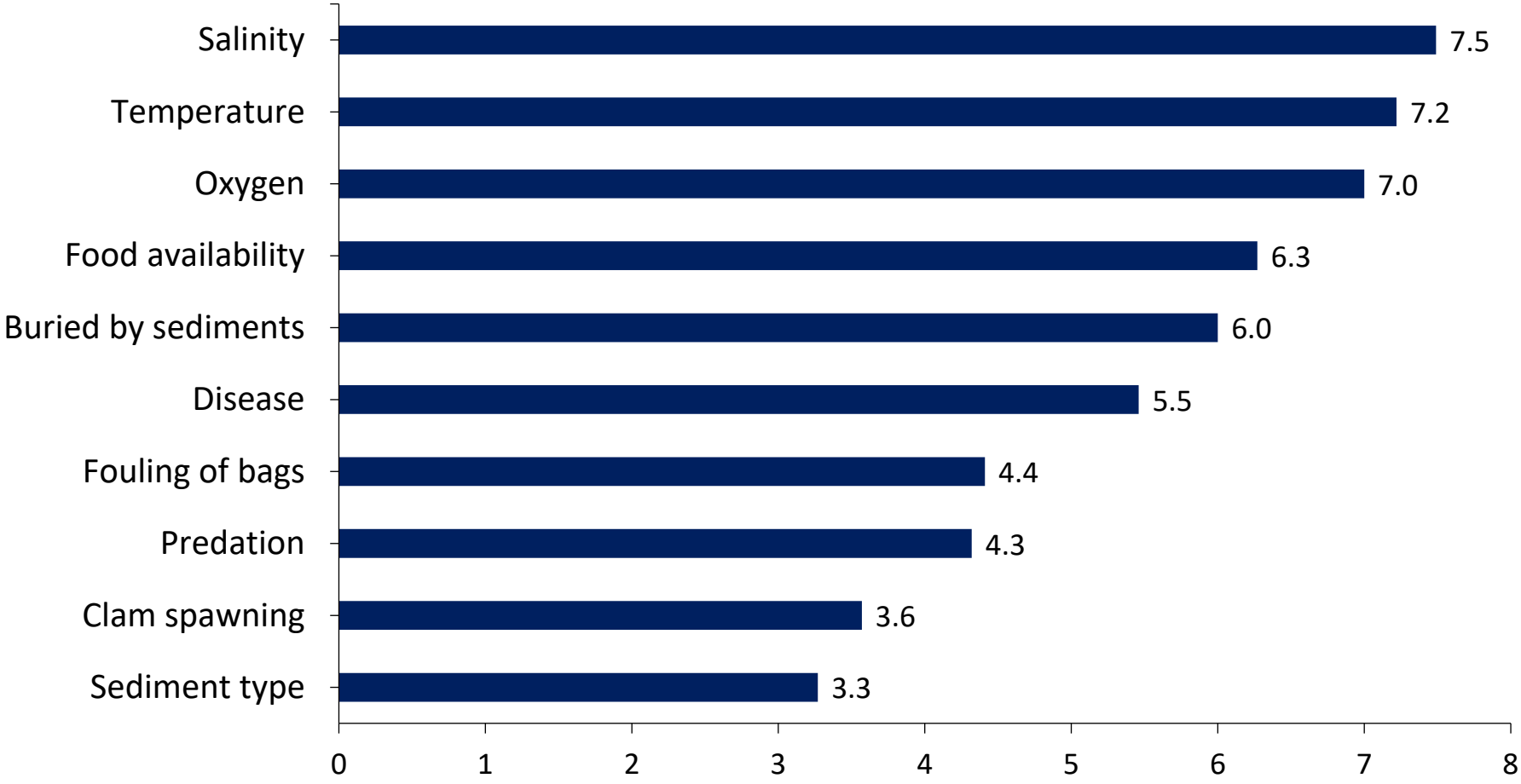
During what season are crop mortalities usually observed (check all that apply)?



What sizes of clams are most vulnerable to mortality events (check all that apply)?



What do you consider the top causes of clam mortalities?

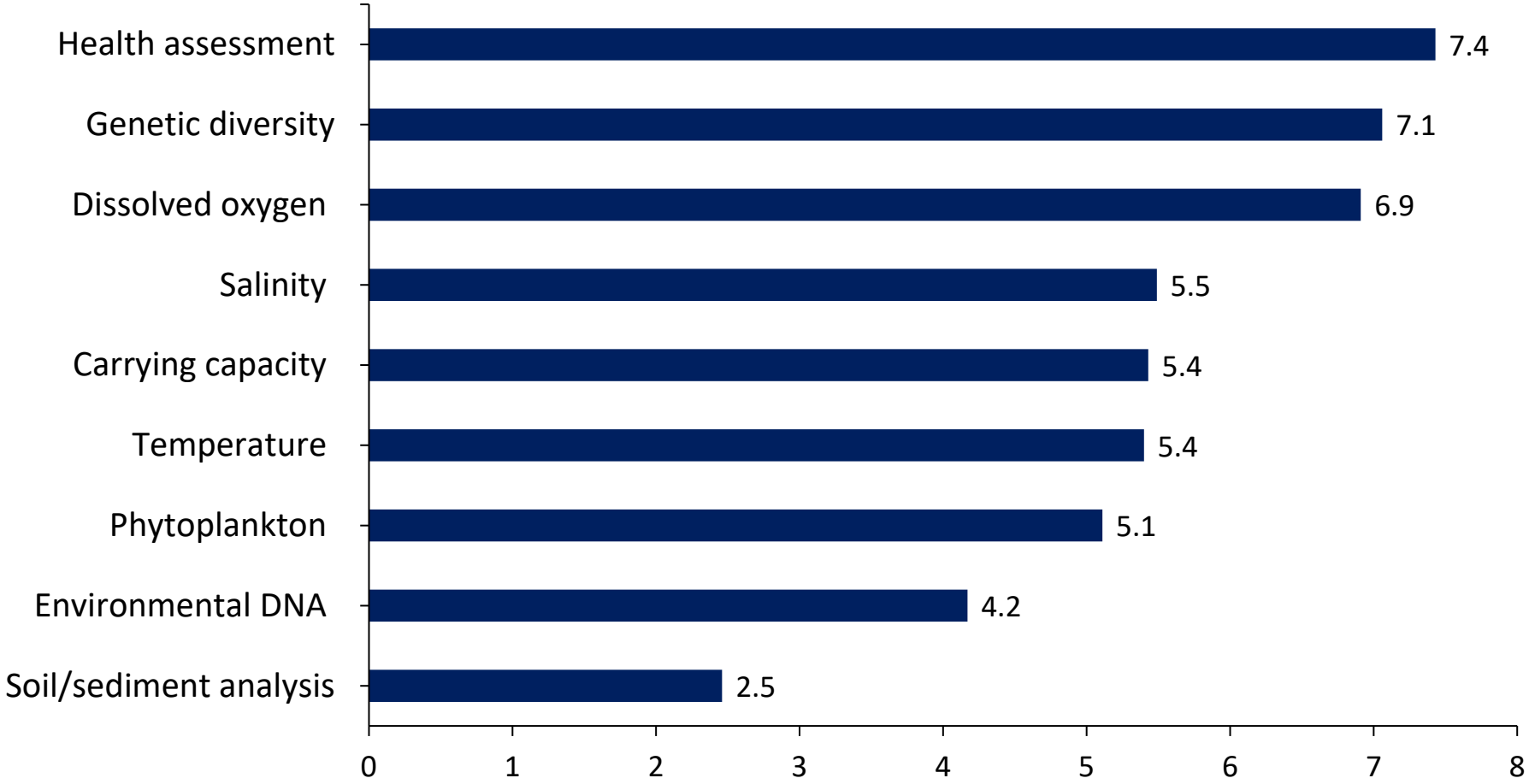


Least Important

Weighted Score

More Important

What areas of research and monitoring would you like to see started this summer?



Least Important

Weighted Score

More Important

Comments provided

- Density of clams planted at lease areas are likely throwing the water chemistry out of equilibrium. "Successful" leases are concentrated around the perimeter of lease areas. It is a noticeable difference.
- Perhaps high-density leases create pathogen breeding grounds when historical high temperatures are achieved. Lowering densities and creating buffer zones may quarantine diseases and mitigate spread of our almost annual summer clamdemic.
- It seems since the Dog Island expansion over the last ten years, problems are more common compared to before, too many clams to the acre maybe.
- I fear clams we are planting today are not the same "pure bred" clams from 25 years ago. While many things have changed in that time, I think the clams are biologically different, resulting in inferior survival rates.
- We have bmp's but there is no standard way of planting or harvesting. I believe the reason other ag crops are successful is because they work together in standardizing crop planting and harvesting.

Comments provided

- I think erosion of the Big Reef, Long Cabbage Reef restoration area has allowed river water and other unhealthy contaminants to flow to Pelican Reef and Gulf Jackson.
- It appears that salinity of the water has changed since the rocks have been transported to the mouth of the river.
- The lease areas of Pelican and Gulf Jackson have been impacted by the river in such a way in the past 4 to 5 years that they are unusable. I have 5 leases on Pelican that for more then 20 years I have done great with and up until the oyster restoration project was completed. It is now unusable bottom! Such a shame!

- Love my job want to keep it!