

## Oyster Heaven launches UK's largest oyster reef restoration project with support from Purina

**2025 September 10:** Oyster Heaven, the marine conservation organisation dedicated to restoring oyster reefs across Europe, is proud to announce the launch of the UK's largest oyster reef restoration project off the North Norfolk coast. With support from Purina, Oyster Heaven will embed a minimum of four million individual oysters to help restore healthy marine ecosystems by improving water quality and providing a home for a wide range of species.

Native European oysters, once plentiful along the UK coastline, play a crucial role in maintaining healthy marine ecosystems. Oyster reefs generate biodiversity by providing a home for a multitude of different species and are natural water filterers, removing pollutants including excess nitrogen which helps improve water quality. With the disappearance of the species from UK waters in the past century, this ecosystem function has been lost. The reintroduction of oysters through building reefs is expected to significantly restore water clarity along the Norfolk Coast while also boosting biodiversity.

In September, Oyster Heaven will deploy the first batch of specially designed clay bricks known as Mother Reefs, which serve as homes for juvenile oysters and pave the way for large-scale deployment. By the end of 2026, 40,000 Mother Reefs are expected to be installed containing a total of four million young oysters. Working together with Norfolk Seaweed, a local family-run aquaculture business, Oyster Heaven will install the new reefs, drawing on their deep knowledge of the area's marine environment.

George Birch, Founder of Oyster Heaven, explains the process:

***"Building an oyster reef is all about large numbers to create population tipping points and provide a suitable habitat. It starts with the creation of Mother Reefs, specially designed clay structures. Each reef is pre-charged with over a hundred baby oysters, known as spats, in a controlled environment to ensure their survival and growth. Local teams from Norfolk Seaweed will then carefully place the Mother Reefs on the seafloor, allowing the spat to grow into mature oysters. These oyster reef systems then act as a foundation for the whole ecosystem, generating an oasis of life on the seafloor."***

This milestone project along the Norfolk coastline builds on Oyster Heaven's growing European restoration network, including a site already underway in Veerse Meer, Netherlands. Together with Purina, Oyster Heaven is on track to deliver the largest oyster reef restoration initiative in Europe.

Claire Robinson-Davies, Corporate Affairs & Sustainability Director at Purina UK, added:

***"We source fish by-products, the parts of fish not eaten by humans, for our pet food – meaning none of the fish goes to waste while delivering valuable vitamins and minerals to help keep pets healthy. We are thrilled to be working with Oyster Heaven, marking an important step towards improving marine restoration along the Norfolk coastline and a first for Purina in the UK. As marine biodiversity faces significant challenges, it is essential we come together for collective restoration efforts. We urge other companies and organisations to work together on collaborative solutions for the benefit of ocean health."***