



Wellfleet Shellfish Department



300 Main Street, Wellfleet, Massachusetts 02667

DATE: August 21, 2023

TO: Shellfish Advisory Board Chair Karen Johnson, Vice Chair/Clerk Ethan Estey, members Rebecca Taylor, John Duane, Nick Sirucek, Stephen Pickard and Adrien Kmiec, and alternate members Damian Parkington and Brad Morse

FROM: Nancy Civetta, Shellfish Constable

RE: Number of recreational permit holders with multiple household purchases

Dear Shellfish Advisory Board members:

You were interested in discussing the possibility of adding a family permit to our recreational shellfishing permit types. This memo provides you with some information in that regard. The Wellfleet Shellfishing Policy and Regulations do not allow for anyone but the permit holder to harvest shellfish. We are required to enforce that.

Attached is a sample recreational shellfishing permit, which also specifies the non-transferability of shellfishing permits. Deputy Shellfish Constable Chris Manulla has been with the department for 23 years and said that it has always been like this in Wellfleet. However, the Shellfish Department does allow children up to 14 years old to shellfish with adult permit holders. We also allow elderly and disabled people to have assistants of any age help them shellfish. Over the years, most people have communicated with us first when they wanted to do this.

To the best of my knowledge, Wellfleet is the only Town in the Commonwealth with a year-round recreational oyster shellfishery, and other towns do not allow oyster harvest during the summer. This is an amazing benefit to those who purchase Wellfleet permits. Think of how many recreational permit holders frequent Chipman's Cove to harvest oysters in the off season and how many summer visitors we are able to accommodate at Indian Neck looking for oysters.

I have included a memo sent to SAB for its 10-8-2020 meeting, which has relevance. Meeting minutes [here](#).

Here below are the current regulations, and I found similar "singular person" language that goes back to at least 1987. (See attached 1987 regulations, page 2 definition of Permit and 4.1.2 on page 3.)

wellfleet-ma.gov/shellfish-department

Phone (508) 349-0325



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5.2.1. Eligibility for Noncommercial Permits

Annual and seasonal noncommercial permits may be issued to anyone, twelve (12) years of age or older. Veterans of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are entitled to a fee not greater than the fee charged to residents of the Town of Wellfleet upon presentation of their Veteran ID card. In addition, non-resident employees of the Town of Wellfleet are entitled to one (1) recreational shellfishing permit at the resident rate; this is only valid for the employee him- or her-self while currently employed by the Town.

5.2.2. Noncommercial Permit Fee Schedule (amended 12/20/2022: \$10 increase)

| <b>Annual Permits (Jan.1-Dec. 31)</b>                     |              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Resident or Taxpayer                                      | 70.00        |
| Resident or Taxpayer over 65 years old                    | 30.00        |
| Nonresident or Nontaxpayer                                | 220.00       |
| Massachusetts Resident Veteran Permit*                    | 70.00        |
| Massachusetts Resident Veteran Permit over 65 years old * | 30.00        |
| Town of Wellfleet Employee                                | 70.00        |
| Town of Wellfleet Employee over 65 years old              | 30.00        |
| <b>Seasonal Noncommercial Permits (June 1 – Sept. 30)</b> |              |
| Resident or Taxpayer                                      | 50.00        |
| Non-resident or Non-taxpayer                              | 95.00        |
| Massachusetts Resident Veteran Permit*                    | 50.00        |
| Town of Wellfleet employee                                | 50.00        |
| <b>Replacement Fee (for all categories)</b>               | <b>30.00</b> |

\*To enjoy the Massachusetts Veteran Discount, applicants must provide:

1. A Massachusetts license bearing the Veteran seal,
2. A Massachusetts license and a DD-214 form
3. A Massachusetts license and a Veteran ID card issued by the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs

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As of August 10, we had sold the following breakdown of recreational shellfishing permits by household:

Total Permits = 975

Addresses with 1 permit = 609

Addresses with 1+ permits (almost 100%, two individuals) = 366

This means that more than a third (**38%**) of recreational shellfishermen represent households who have bought more than one permit as the regulations specify. During a 6-week time period between July 2 and August 10, seasonal Deputy Shellfish Constables Erika Smith and Mark Howards, who patrol the Indian Neck Recreational Shellfishing Area, documented 26 conversations with people who had other adults shellfishing with them. That represents **less than three percent** of permit holders.

The rules have not changed, although it is true that between October 1 and May 31, we do not always have a robust recreational shellfishing patrol, and people may have been harvesting with friends, spouses, etc. and gotten used to that. When we encounter these folks, we explain that it is only fair, when so many households do buy multiple permits, that they comply with the regulations, as well. We also let them know that Wellfleet is the only oyster shellfishery open in the summer and that their permit fees directly fund our propagation efforts and do not go into the General Fund for the Town's operating budget. Most people appreciate that permits are non-transferable when they learn this.

As of today, we have sold 992 recreational shellfishing permits = \$ 56,575.00, and 236 commercial permits = \$55,361.00. If you decide to advise the Selectboard to introduce a family permit, please consider lost revenue, which will directly affect the department's Revolving Fund for Propagation, and perhaps price it accordingly to compensate for that. Those 366 individual permits sold to the same households could be cut in half when that household only has to buy one permit.

We always let people know that Eastham and Chatham offer inexpensive family permits, although they don't have oysters year-round as Wellfleet does.

[Eastham offers a recreational permit](#) for individuals and specific others:

"Recreational Permit" – a recreational license issued which permits an individual, husband, wife or life partners, and dependent(s), who are domiciled and living under the same roof to harvest shellfish.

Chatham offers a family permit ([see FAQ](#)). Here is their definition:

WHO MAY USE MY FAMILY SHELLFISH PERMIT?

Immediate members of family only: means married spouses and dependent(s), providing they are living in the same dwelling and the dependent has not reached the age of 21 and is living with and supported by the permit holder on a year-round basis. No friends or other relatives may shellfish on your license. Children under the age of 13 may accompany any adult with a valid family permit.

I hope this information is helpful. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Thank you,



Nancy Civetta, Shellfish Constable