

## 2018 WELLFLEET SHELLFISH DEPARTMENT ANNUAL REPORT

*Submitted by: Nancy Civetta, Shellfish Constable*

We dedicated ourselves to getting a shellfish nursery program going with multi-pronged efforts to build oyster and quahog clam populations for the future. Our motto: “To propagate and preserve!” The shellfishing community was very supportive. We got great feedback and participation from commercial and recreational harvesters, grant lease holders and employees, boards and committees, and science and marketing partners. John Mankevetch was promoted to Assistant Constable-Propagation. Deputy Constable Chris Manulla celebrated 18 years with us.

- In 2018, based on preliminary state reports, Wellfleet was first in the state for blood clam landings, second for oysters and third for quahogs. It was first in the state for the value of its shellfish landings with more than \$6.8M earned by hard-working local shellfishermen.
- About 15% of the town’s population of 3,100 is involved in shellfish harvesting. We’re the town’s biggest year-round industry!
- We sold 157 commercial shellfishing permits, 15 more than 2017, equal to \$36,285, and 867 recreational permits, totaling \$43,695, about the same as 2017.
- There has been a doubling of draggers working the harbor, targeting oysters, quahogs, bay scallops and blood clams. We increased our boat patrols and dockside inspections. Fishermen reported good catches and lots of oyster and bay scallop seed in the harbor.
- We hired a part-time, seasonal deputy constable, Andrew Ryan, to work on propagation two days/week and monitor the recreational fishery.
- From June-September, when recreational shellfishing is allowed on Sundays and Wednesdays only at Indian Neck recreational area, a total of 1,237 recreational users harvested about 80,000 oysters (raw bar value of \$200,00) and about 25,000 clams.
- We planted 255,000 juvenile oysters (seed) and 334,000 quahog clam seed. Oysters were distributed to Chipman’s Cove and Indian Neck; clams will take a number of years to grow to a predator-resistant size when we can distribute them in the harbor.
- We participated in a state-run quahog relay program that we hope will add good clam genetics and lots more baby quahogs to our marine environment, in addition to providing harvesting opportunities to recreational and commercial harvesters.
- A dozen grant holders donated more than 150,000 juvenile oysters to the department, which we are overwintering in our pits, and a couple donated 160 bushels of legal size oysters they could not store or sell. What community good will we’ve earned!
- We distributed sea clam cultch around the harbor, providing the perfect habitat for baby oysters to grow on, ensuring a future for the wild fishery. We ordered a new cultch barge from Bay Sails Marine; we’ve already sanded and painted the pontoons.
- A grant was given back to the town, which no one can remember ever happening before. We held a lottery, which awarded it to a younger commercial harvester. Next generation!
- Mother Nature giveth and taketh away: She gave us five closures due to rain, cold or coastal flooding, but oysters grew very well this year and there was a big set of oyster spat all around Wellfleet harbor. This is very encouraging!
- For a more detailed report, visit <http://www.wellfleet-ma.gov/shellfish-department>