



MONTHLY REPORT August 2019

Commercial and Recreational Fisheries

- There was significant commercial shellfish harvesting activity in the harbor this month, mostly concentrated in the dragger fishery and on aquaculture grants. Many wild quahogs are being brought to market by draggers, while grants are moving tens of thousands of farmed oysters.
- The Selectboard approval of opening Lieutenant Island South (Audubon area) to the harvest of clams has proven productive. Many commercial intertidal harvesters have been meeting their daily catch quotas in the area throughout August.
- A rough, conservative estimate of commercial catches for the month is more than 96 bushels of oysters (down from 120 in July), more than 310 bushels of quahogs (up from the July harvest of 120) and 34+ bushels of blood clams as tracked on commercial patrol.
- The increased market price of quahogs is being attributed to the rise in August catch amounts, with dredge boats and intertidal harvesters focusing on that product. This, in addition to vibrio protocols, could also be attributed to the decrease in wild oyster harvests for the month.
- Recreational shellfish permit sales for August were eight Annual Resident, 20 Annual Senior Resident, five Seasonal Resident, and 42 Seasonal Non-Resident. Revenue totaled \$4,650, bringing the total number of recreational permits sold to date up to 859 = \$43,330.
- We estimate that more than 40 bushels of oysters and 16 bushels of quahogs were harvested by recreational harvesters this month from Indian Neck. The oyster harvest numbers for this late in the summer are a testament to the sustainable nature of the oyster stock at Indian Neck!

Enforcement

- A single source case of vibrio parahaemolyticus (Vp) from Wellfleet on July 1 or 2, was reported by the State on August 2. The Shellfish Department worked with the state on follow up, however, it was determined that harvesters had amply followed protocol. The truth is Vp is in our waters, and the state control plan helps us avoid it, but it can occur from time to time. This single incidence did not result in a closure to oyster harvesting.
- Grant inspections were begun by the Department in July and have been ongoing throughout August. Because many grants are dependent on certain negative tides and because scheduling has been hit and miss, we are about halfway through this effort.
- Dog owners bringing their pets onto public beaches and tide flats has continued to be an issue during the summer months. Numerous parties were talked to during the month, particularly on Indian Neck and Mayo Beaches, where current Beach Regulations prohibit dogs.
- Multiple individuals were caught poaching shellfish during August, with a concentration occurring during the spring tides (extremely low ones) at the beginning at end of the month. Verbal warnings were given to most individuals, with one individual receiving a written citation and fine for a second offence. The \$150 fine was paid.
- Issues with shack being dumped in Chipman's Cove were reported during the month. An information campaign was initiated by the department that this practice is prohibited by state regulations and that all shack should either be returned to the grant of origin or disposed of at the transfer station.
- The DPW reported that shack was being disposed of in the trash bin at Powers Landing. Grant holders using that landing were advised to stop and told about state regulations.
- A few verbal warnings were given throughout the month regarding proper icing and ice times per vibrio protocols. Overall, time-to-ice and icing have not been problematic this season.

- A report of beach grass being dug up and transplanted by a landowner was investigated by the department and information was passed along to the Conservation Dept.
- A few parties were caught harvesting without licenses in the recreational area of Indian Neck. The parties stated that the area was reported to be open on Wednesdays and Sundays, but did not realize they also needed to have a license in order to harvest. Their product was confiscated and returned to the tide flats by the patrolling deputy.

State and Town Relations

- We took the appraiser hired by the Town on a tour of the HDYLTA Trust property.
- Constable Civetta met with County and Mass. Dept. of Agricultural Resources representatives about an upcoming International Trade field trip here to promote oysters to foreign buyers.
- Civetta attended a Shellfish Advisory Board meeting focused especially on overwintering aquaculture gear. As a follow up, the department solicited feedback regarding ideas for overwintering regulation changes as well as info requested from SAB on how many racks were in Wellfleet Harbor during the summer season (more than 11,000) and on transferring oysters at Indian Neck parking lot during vibrio season (no real interest).
- Civetta attended a Selectboard meeting for a grant transfer and overwintering regulations.
- We responded to a citizen complaint about shellfishermen's usage of Old Pier Rd. access to Chipman's Cove through the Conservation Committee and Selectboard.
- We responded to complaint about shellfishermen using Chequessett Yacht & Country Club access to Herring River. Town records show a public landing there. A more thorough investigation with Town Counsel is ongoing, as is collaborative communication with CYCC.

Propagation

- After feedback from the transfer station, we called off any further deliveries of sea clam shell until after Labor Day due to the smell.
- The sepa bags stuffed with clam shell and placed on racks in Chipman's Cove to collect spat were evaluated. Inspections revealed many baby oysters (spat) were caught on the shell.
- We evaluated the cultch that was placed around the harbor and found that Indian Neck, Herring River and Chipman's Cove showed incredible sets of spat, while Lieutenant's Island and Blackfish Creek demonstrated less but still reasonable amounts of spat.
- The contaminated quahogs from the Taunton River that were put out to purge at Burton Baker Beach and in Chipman's Cove were tested per state procedures. Water samples and a random selection of quahogs from the sites were sent off to the Mass DMF on August 19. Test results cleared clams for harvest when they complete the 90-day spawning period on September 16. Chipman's Cove will not open until its usual date of the last Sunday in October, while we will open the Burton Baker area for recreational harvest the last two weeks of September and then close it again until next summer.
- Oysters on our propagation bed are growing well, and we spent time separating them into lower densities for continued optimum growth. We are finding ourselves constricted because we don't have enough gear. More gear is being ordered.
- Clam nets were swept and maintained.

Education and Public Relations

- Civetta took Courtney Butler, the Assistant to the Town Administrator, on a patrol ride-a-long.
- Civetta did an interview survey with the Friends of the Herring River.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Civetta, Shellfish Constable