



MONTHLY REPORT AUGUST 2020

Commercial and Recreational Fisheries

- There continues to be a preoccupying slowness to the commercial shellfishing industry due to markets not buying oysters. What we have heard is that with New York City restaurants not open to indoor dining and no Las Vegas nor cruise ship markets to speak of, many shellfishermen are not able to sell their usual quantities of oysters and some are not able to sell any at all. This seems true both in the wild fishery and with farms.
- We observed approximately 130 bushels of quahogs, 40 bushels of oysters and about 120 bushels of blood clams harvested in the commercial fishery this month.
- The recreational catch totals observed were approximately 18 bushels of quahogs and 15 bushels of oysters.
- For the first two weeks of the month, the number of people out per week in the Indian Neck recreational-only area continued the downward trend seen in July. Then during the last two weeks, recreational shellfishing picked up, and numbers were equal to or above last year's numbers. Therefore, the overall trend for August was equal to 2019 numbers. The larger low tides during the last two weeks of August in addition to the busy vacation population could be attributed to this pick-up in shellfishing.
- Grant inspections continued, and we are three-quarters of the way through our close to 100 shellfish farms.
- We have sold a total of 739 recreational shellfishing permits for 2020 to date, representing \$41,650 in revenue. This is 123 less permits than last year, equal to a \$1,660 decrease in revenue to date. This does not seem troubling given that we decided not to sell seasonal permits.
- Shellfish Constable Nancy Civetta celebrated her third year on the job, while Assistant Constable Johnny Mankevetch marked his 15th year here in July.

Enforcement

- There was a family shellfishing in the Herring River. We received a text message from a commercial fisherman, who then told the family about needing a commercial permit and how local livelihoods depend on this. They stopped, and there was no incident.
- We conducted spot checks at Omaha Landing for vibrio compliance. No violations.
- We received a complaint from a homeowner on Indian Neck that trucks were speeding and about concerns over the weight of vehicles. We are corresponding with the homeowner and have been monitoring this with no infractions seen.
- We received a complaint from an Old Wharf Point farmer about dogs on beach. New signage will be needed.
- We stopped unlicensed fishermen from harvesting at Indian Neck and Egg Island and had educational conversations with them. We returned the product to the harbor.

State and Town Relations

- Civetta took the new Town Administrator Maria Broadbent on a low tide patrol ride-along to show her Wellfleet Harbor and discuss the shellfishing industry's importance to the town. We also had a Zoom meeting for her to meet the whole department.
- Mankevetch and Civetta had a conference call with Scott Horsley, wastewater consultant for the town's Watershed Permit, about the potential use of shellfish for nitrogen mitigation and getting credit for all of the aquaculture and commercial and recreational fisheries shellfish landings.
- Deputy Constable Chris Manulla took our state biologist out for water quality sampling and to survey our mooring areas.
- Civetta and Manulla met with Mass Audubon Cape Director Melissa Lowe to visit shellfishing landings on Lieutenant Island and discuss access.
- We worked with Harbormasters and IFAW on dolphin standings in early August.
- Civetta attended a Wastewater Committee meeting, an EMT COVID meeting and two Selectboard meetings; at one, she had a grant transfer and provided comment on the importance of water flow into and out of Hawes Pond to ensure sustainable eel and fish populations as part of the redesign of the Route 6 traffic light intersection at Main St.

Propagation

- Mankevetch, Manulla and Deputy Constable Drew Ryan planted 150,000 "R6" quahog seed from ARC on the town propagation bed.
- The department worked on oyster seed separation into lower density oyster grow bags.
- The department received thousands of oysters from shellfisherman Chopper Young. We distributed the oysters from 96 grow-out bags to Indian Neck and plan to transfer more throughout harbor with additional donations he has offered. The Indian Neck recreational-only area has been under significant pressure with much shellfishing taking place, so these oysters are both welcome and needed. Many thanks to Chopper!
- The 2020 overall cultch weight was reported by the DPW, with 352,840 pounds of sea clam shells being distributed in cultch strips throughout the harbor.

Education and Public Relations

- Civetta did an interview with the new *Cape and Islands Magazine* about the women who harvest wild shellfish in Wellfleet.
- We continued to send welcome/orientation emails to all new recreational shellfishing permitholders.
- We distributed two commercial Town Shellfish Criers, one focusing on CARES Act money available to shellfishermen.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Civetta, Shellfish Constable