



MONTHLY REPORT JULY 2020

Commercial and Recreational Fisheries

- The wild commercial harvests are still low with the markets being slow due to COVID-19. The boats are mainly harvesting for quahogs and blood clams.
- Even grant holders seem slow, and few dealer trucks are coming to the pier.
- We observed approximately 91 bushels of quahogs, 44 bushels of oysters and about 87.5 bushels of blood clams harvested in the commercial fishery this month.
- The number of people out per week in the Indian Neck recreation only area was down approximately 20% from the 2019 weekly use numbers. The decision to not sell seasonal licenses could be a possible reason for the lower numbers. This is the first decrease in usage we have recorded since we started keeping track in March.
- The recreational catch totals observed were 21.35 bushels of quahogs and 21 bushels of oysters.
- Grant inspections continued through the month.
- We continue to spend a lot of time corresponding with recreational shellfishing permit applicants and assisting them with getting their 2020 permits online. Many thanks to the Beach Department for fielding the greatest number of these calls!

Enforcement

- Unlicensed individuals were caught harvesting shellfish on Indian Neck, the Herring River and Mayo Beach. They were given an educational explanation, and the shellfish were returned to the water.
- A complaint was made of dead oysters being dumped along Omaha Road. The incident was investigated, and the individual responsible cleaned up the shell piles within 24 hours of our department being notified.
- We visited a grant holder with our GPS to document grant boundary markers that are the subject of a dispute.

State and Town Relations

- Shellfish Constable Nancy Civetta took incoming Selectboard member Ryan Curley on low tide patrol.
- Nancy met Amy Costa from the Center for Coastal Studies and showed her a diversity of sites for Ph testing around Wellfleet Harbor for an ocean acidification grant they received.
- Nancy attended two Selectboard meetings, one with a grant transfer and approval of overwintering regulation changes, and a Wastewater Committee meeting.
- Deputy Constable Chris Manulla attended Conservation Committee hearing on a beach re-nourishment project as well as a training on the new phone system.
- We took our state biologist out for water quality sampling.

- We worked with a local dragger to provide Wellfleet Harbor dragged quahogs to Barnstable County for a study on quahog disease they are conducting with Roxanne Smolowitz from Roger-Williams University.
- We educated the state about Wellfleet's diverse shellfish harvest sectors so as many local shellfishermen as possible will be eligible for different allocations of CARES Act relief funds.

Propagation

- The last of the 2019 spat collector oyster seed (donations from grant holders) was moved from 4mm mesh seed bags into 14mm mesh grow bags at the beginning of the month. As of July 31, observations have shown it growing exponentially.
- The department put out its own spat collectors on July 2, with 31 placed in Chipman's Cove and 10 on the town propagation bed (which we call our grant) by the Chequessett Yacht and Country Club.
- We received 145,000 seed oysters on the July 14 from Cape Cod Oyster Co. from County and State funds and an additional 100,000 on the July 16, from our budget. These were put out on the grant in 4mm bags to grow.
- We participated in the State contaminated quahog relay from July 21 – 24 for a total of 501 bushels. 276 bushels were placed in Chipman's Cove and 225 bushels on the jetty side of the Indian Neck recreation only area. We owe the DPW a great big THANK YOU for all their help in picking the quahogs up from Sagamore and moving them with us.
- The department has been harvesting quahogs from the town grant and relocating them to the open area in the Indian Neck recreation only area. To date, 11 bushels have been placed there from our grant. We are grateful to a number of recreational shellfishermen for volunteering to help us dig these clams.
- We received three truckloads of whole sea clam shell from Atlantic Capes for our 2021 cultch program at the Transfer Station.
- We learned that Barnstable County will have a matching grant program for fisheries enhancement available to towns this fall to help deal with the ripple effects from COVID-19. In Wellfleet's case, we think that we are likely to have oyster growers with a surplus of over three-inch oysters due to the market downturn, and we are also experiencing an increase in recreational fishing pressure at Indian Neck. We can apply for a matching grant from the County with a proposal to buy the surplus oysters from grant holders and distribute them to Indian Neck for recreational harvest.

Education and Public Relations

- Assistant Constable John Mankevetch held an educational site visit to our town grant and the Herring River with the Mass. Oyster Project Board of Directors to discuss Wellfleet's wild shellfishery, aquaculture operations and the town's propagation efforts.
- We continue to send a welcome email to all new recreational permit holders with specific guidance on shellfishing and COVID-19 social distancing protocols on the flats.
- We distributed one commercial and one recreational Town Shellfish Crier this month.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Civetta, Shellfish Constable