



## **MONTHLY REPORT NOVEMBER 2020**

### **Commercial and Recreational Fisheries**

- Commercial shellfishermen harvested approximately 74 bushels of quahogs (about the same as 2019), 45 bushels of oysters (compared to 164 in 2019) and 51 bushels of blood clams (compared to 132 in 2019). Markets are still down with low wild harvesting activity on the flats. There is also very little shellfishing from dragger boats.
- Bay scallop harvest has been negligible...as compared to 428 bushels in 2019. This might be attributed to a combination of natural bay scallop cycles, the presence of codium seaweed, a steep decline in market demand due to the pandemic – and other pandemic-related ripple effects.
- Recreational shellfishermen harvested approximately 13 bushels of quahogs and 32 bushels of oysters. This is a gross estimate due to the departure of our seasonal deputy, which leaves us unable to fully patrol recreational fishing activities that now occur anywhere from Chipman's Cove south to Lieutenant's Island.
- In 2020, we sold a total of 181 commercial shellfishing permits (the same as 2019) and 780 recreational permits (100 less than 2019). Total revenue was \$87,405, about \$500 more than 2019, probably because some usual seasonal permit buyers bought the more expensive annual permits.
- December 1 begins the sale of 2021 shellfishing permits. No further 2020 permits will be sold.
- The department worked on the transition of 2020/2021 shellfishing licenses. All licenses will be purchased online, by making an appointment with Jeanne MacLauchlan or in person once a week in the Shellfish Dept. office. Recreational permits will still be sold by mail as well.

### **Enforcement**

- The department finally completed its 2020 grant inspections of all 154 grants.
- We conducted a final check of 2020 propagation permits and worked with farmers to make sure they were up to date.
- The department monitored Egg Island for night harvesting activity. A conversation was held with a grant holder, but no incident took place.
- A few seed oysters were found in recreational catches. All seed returned to waters. Verbal warnings given. Due to the large amount of seed warnings we gave to recreational shellfishermen in 2020, the department came up with a plan for enforcing our regulations in 2021 and communicated it to all recreational permit holders. In addition, a handout was created with these important details as well as educational information and will be given out with each 2021 permit issued.

### **State and Town Relations**

- Constable Nancy Civetta continued working with state agencies to create an operations plan to function within state shellfish regulations but with the feel of consumers being

able to buy directly from shellfishermen. The working name is the Wellfleet Shellfishermen's Farmers Market, and it is slated to take place on the pier each Saturday from noon to 2 p.m. She presented it to both the Board of Health and Shellfish Advisory Board – both approved of it. She is meeting and collaborating with shellfishermen and the Wellfleet Shellfishermen's Assn. to find the best ways to make this project work as it could create a new source of revenue for shellfishermen struggling with the decline in market demand for oysters and quahogs due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The department attended multiple meetings regarding the dredging incident on Mayo Beach grants adjacent to the channel and inspected damage done to these grants, GPSing the boundary corners for each grant, marking necessary ones with buoys.
- The department took our state biologist out for water sampling around the harbor.
- Civetta attended a Selectboard meeting for a grant transfer, a Shellfish Advisory Board meeting, a Dredging Task Force meeting, a Rights of Public Access committee meeting, and an Open Government call with N. Vail, H. Greenberg, and M. Trovato about permitting software. She also presented the department's FY22 CIP budget to the Finance Committee.

### **Propagation**

- The department's proposed propagation project was awarded a \$10,000 grant as part of the Sea Grant COVID-19 Related Rapid Response Municipal Propagation program, implemented by Woods Hole Sea Grant /Barnstable County Cape Cod Cooperative Extension. The Department matched the grant with \$10,000 from its Revolving Fund for Shellfish Propagation as approved at Annual Town Meeting. We organized an oyster buyback of 1,111 oysters from about 40 farmers with current propagation permits – each farmer received \$500.00 just in time for the holidays. Some farmers also elected to donate oysters to this propagation program. Close to 45,000 oysters were relayed to the Indian Neck Recreational Area, which has seen increased fishing pressure this past year.
- AmeriCorps members helped the department break down hats. Unfortunately, we did not catch an oyster set this year.
- The department relayed over 29,000 oyster seed to finish growing to legal size on the Indian Neck wild areas.
- The department has started the process of breaking down the propagation bed for winter.

### **Education and Public Relations**

- Civetta and our AmeriCorps individual placement member, Jordan Halloran, worked on a recreational shellfishing handout to be distributed with each 2021 permit issued.
- The department assisted with numerous sunfish standings throughout the harbor.
- We distributed two commercial Town Shellfish Criers and one recreational Crier, as well as welcome emails to new recreational shellfishing permit holders.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Civetta, Shellfish Constable