



## **MONTHLY REPORT OCTOBER 2020**

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### **Commercial and Recreational Fisheries**

- For the month of October, the department documented commercial catch as follows: approximately 202 bushels of quahogs, 70 bushels of oysters and 35 bushels of blood clams. This represents only about half of the oysters harvested in 2019 and reflects the continuing market depression for oysters due to the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting loss of restaurant demand. The situation is further compounded by the normal post-summer and pre-holiday decline in oyster demand and the absence of the Wellfleet OysterFest venue for sales.
- While bay scallop season opened on October 1, to date, only half a bushel was recorded being landed at the pier. Dragger shellfishermen are reporting a lot of codium seaweed impeding their operations in the bay scallop grounds. Consider that in 2019, 442 bushels of bay scallops had been harvested. A decline in market demand tied to the loss of restaurants due to the pandemic could also be an explaining factor.
- The vibrio control plan ended on October 19. Icing oysters is no longer necessary.
- On October 1, South Lieutenant Island opened to the commercial harvest of oysters again, and all areas south of the Indian Neck Recreation Only Area opened for recreational harvesting. Recreational shellfishing went from two days a week to seven.
- The department documented that recreational fisheries had approximately 15 bushels of quahogs and 40 bushels of oysters harvested.
- The department is still seeing a significant increase in recreational harvesting in the harbor compared to 2019. Even with a slight decline in July and August numbers comparatively, permit use has increased roughly 13% for the year to date.
- On the last Sunday in October, the 25th, Chipman's Cove opened to both commercial and recreational harvesting. More than 100 shellfishermen, 84 of which were recreational harvesters, turned out. Our propagation efforts were met with success.

### **Enforcement**

- Several unlicensed people were caught harvesting shellfish recreationally during the month. Their shellfish was confiscated and returned to the harbor. The individuals were issued verbal warnings.
- A wild commercial harvester was inspected and found to have a significant number of undersized oysters. The entire catch was confiscated (a full limit) and a warning given.
- Several recreational harvesters were given verbal warnings for possessing seed oysters.

### **State and Town Relations**

- Dredging operations began on October 5 and have moved from the outer channel to the inner harbor throughout the month. On October 15, a tugboat grounded near the inner Mayo Beach grants and the propwash caused sediment damage to clam nets and topography on two grants. Documentation is ongoing.
- The department undertook a derelict aquaculture gear clean-up day with the Center for Coastal Studies, AmeriCorps Cape Cod and recreational shellfishing permit holders on October 19. Overall, 1,240 pounds of old aquaculture gear and trash was removed by the volunteers, much from Egg Island and Old Wharf Point. In addition,

590 zip ties were collected from Field Point. We are glad that Shellfish Advisory Board is taking up a review of alternatives to single use plastics in the harbor.

- Constable Nancy Civetta worked closely with local shellfishermen and dealers, the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) and Department of Public Health about initiating a program to allow direct sales of shellfish from shellfishermen to the public.
- The department took our DMF Area Biologist out on the boat to conduct water sampling around the harbor. All samples came back within normal levels.
- Civetta submitted a COVID-19 Relief Grant proposal to Barnstable County Extension. If approved, this would provide matching funds for the department to buy market-sized oysters for propagation of the Indian Neck Recreational Only shellfishing area.
- Civetta attended a Selectboard meeting about direct shellfish sales, ConsCom meetings about new rules for vessel storage on beaches and dredging, a Shellfish Advisory Board meeting, a Rights of Public Access Cmte meeting, and a meeting with Mass. Audubon of Wellfleet Bay and the Lt. Island Assn. about parking and access issues in the southwest corner of the island at Meadows Landing. Civetta also attended a site visit with the Conservation Dept. and an installation company to determine access and storage that would not compromise shellfish resources for a revetment project on Lt. Island.
- Civetta and Assistant Constable John Mankevetch attended a Mass. Shellfish Officer's Assn. meeting.

### **Propagation**

- The Department received another sizable donation of large oysters from shellfish farmer William "Chopper" Young, Jr. We have distributed approximately 78,000 oysters to recreational areas around the harbor due to his generosity to date.
- The department dispersed its remote set sea clam shells populated with oyster spat around the harbor. These had been placed in bags in Chipman's Cove in June and had collected a significant amount of spat.
- We had an AmeriCorps project day where members helped us remove our spat collectors from Chipman's Cove and tag our oyster grow bags.
- Our study to document late summer/early fall settlement of oysters in Chipman's Cove concluded its third year. In this year's study of 140 surf clam shells, no oyster spat were observed, which mirrored last year's results. In 2018, a total of eight spat were observed on 140 surf clam shells, and none were observed on shells deployed after Sept. 13.
- We received four more loads of sea clam shells, bringing to 10 our total loads for the 2021 cultching program.

### **Education and Public Relations**

- AmeriCorps Cape Cod has placed a team member with the department two days a week to assist with propagation and other projects. This is the third year that we have shared a member with the Health and Conservation Department.
- One commercial Town Shellfish Crier and two recreational Criers were distributed and new permitholders were sent welcome emails and brought up to date with pertinent news. Many individual communications with recreational shellfishing permitholders to answer questions were done.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Civetta, Shellfish Constable