



**Town Recreational Shellfishing Crier
May 1, 2023**

1. Town's Dredging of Mooring Basin Calls for an Exchange of Shellfishing Areas as Mitigation: Learn Details at Selectboard Public Hearing Tomorrow Evening, Tuesday, May 2, at 7:30 p.m., in person and on Zoom.

Per the Army Corps of Engineers, in order for the Chipman's Cove mooring basin to be dredged, the Town must create 28 acres of restoration area using cultch to create habitat for oysters. The commercial shellfishing community came together and suggested the upper reaches of Blackfish Creek, which has high nitrogen levels in the water that oysters could help clean up. The area in discussion is just above and below where Drummers Cove empties into Blackfish and has been underproducing shellfish for many years.

Background:

The Town has received \$2.5M in state funding for dredging the mooring basin and needs to have a company lined up to dredge it by June 30, to receive the funds. However, the Town is waiting for its Army Corps of Engineers permit, and because the mooring basin has not been dredged in more than 50 years, the federal government considers it "improvement" dredging and not "maintenance" dredging. They see it as a destruction of habitat with impacts on species and are requiring the Town to mitigate for it. The Town could either pay the federal government ~\$4.5M or restore 28 acres of habitat with degraded water quality elsewhere in the harbor.

If the dredging of the channel around the marina is any example, we can expect that the wild harvest areas of Chipman's Cove will improve greatly after the mooring basin is dredged. In addition, creating an area with some harvest restrictions can improve habitat, boost juvenile shellfish recruitment and increase oyster populations, which could have ripple effects in the surrounding areas, as well.

The Shellfish Department will be required to cultch these areas and provide other shellfish inputs such as oyster seed and clams from the state quahog relay. The area will have permanent harvest restrictions, but perhaps not a complete closure to shellfishing. Because the Mass. Division of Marine Fisheries (MADMF) will not allow any area to be closed more than three years, the Shellfish Department will have to open the restricted area at least for a short period of time every three years.

Please join the meeting to learn more.

In-person: Wellfleet ACC, 715 Old King's Highway, Wellfleet.

Via Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85689604806?pwd=blpIVFBZzViQ0xNWkZKMm9iMVdrdz09>

Phone: +1 929 205 6099 ~ Meeting ID: 856 8960 4806 ~ Passcode: 611877

2. Regulation Reminders

As a part of our continuing education and enforcement of Town of Wellfleet shellfishing regulations, we would like to remind you about our enforcement methods. We are entrusted by both the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Town of Wellfleet to uphold state and town laws and regulations in both the commercial and recreational fisheries. This is all part of our mission and directive to ensure a sustainable shellfish fishery for today and into the future.

If you are found in violation of any of our regulations and depending on the severity of the violation, your permit will either be marked and noted, which will constitute a written warning, or we will issue you a ticket for \$50, and/or we will confiscate your catch. If you are found in violation of a regulation again, depending on severity and previous violation, you will be issued a ticket and/or have your catch confiscated according to the [Town's regulations](#), Section 11.5. Penalty Fees.

IMPORTANT TAKE-AWAYS

1. **Taking of Seed Prohibited:** oysters must measure at least three inches long, quahogs must measure at least one inch across the hinge width, soft shell clams (steamers) must measure at least two inches long and bay scallops must have an easily discernable (by sight and touch) annual growth ring. **By allowing shellfish to mature to legal sizes, you can reasonably assume that the animal has spawned, thus contributing to future populations of wild shellfish in Wellfleet Harbor.**
2. **Limits:** Each recreational permit holder is allowed one 10-quart basket a week of any kind of mixed shellfish. **Once shellfish is in your basket, it is considered your catch; therefore, you should measure and cull as you go before placing it in your basket.** The new week begins on Sundays.
3. **Open/Closed Days:** From June 1 to September 30, recreational shellfishing can only take place at the Indian Neck recreational shellfishing area and only on Sundays and Wednesdays. **From October 1 through May 31, the Indian Neck recreational shellfishing area (except Burton Baker Beach and the area near the jetty as described in Saturday's "Crier") and all of South Wellfleet are open to recreational shellfishing seven days a week.** From the last Sunday in October to April 30, Chipman's Cove is also open to recreational harvest seven days/week.
4. **Other Regulations:** Please familiarize yourself with our regulations [here](#). The high points are also printed on the permit you receive each year. We are always available to answer your questions on the flats or on the phone, as well.

We thank you in advance for your help in ensuring a prolific future for our wild shellfish in Wellfleet Harbor. We are undertaking many propagation efforts to supplement Mother Nature so that there are plenty of legal shellfish for you all to harvest. It takes a village!

Thank you!

Nancy Civetta

John Mankevetch

Chris Manulla



Shellfish Constable

Assistant Shellfish Constable

Deputy Shellfish Constable