



## HARWICH, MA SHELLFISH AREA STATUS 05/01/2024 – Until Further Notice

### **SHELLFISH OPEN AND CLOSED AREAS-**

The status of shellfish areas can fall under the administration of several agencies at Town, State, and Federal levels. Therefore, it is best to check with the Natural Resources Department to learn of up to the minute reports on conditions.

### **ACTIVE DAYS FOR OPEN AREAS-**

**Jan 1- March 31** (everyday, temperature dependent)

**April 1 - April 30** Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday

**May 1 - May 31** Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday

**June 1 - Sept 30** Wednesday, Saturday

**Oct 1 - Oct 31** Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday

**Nov 1 - Dec 31** Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday

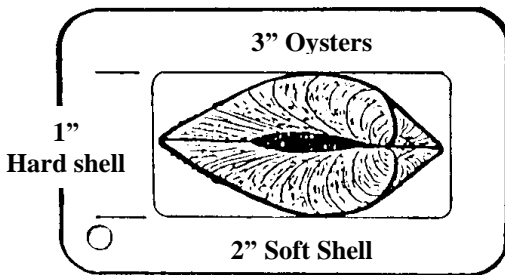
LOCATION	CONDITION	ACCESSIBILITY
Pleasant Bay	OPEN	All permits
Nantucket Sound Beaches	OPEN	All permits
Wychmere Harbor	OPEN	Recreational permits only
Allen Harbor (South Side and Oyster creek)	CLOSED	All permits
Round Cove	CLOSED	All permits
Saquatucket Harbor channel	OPEN	All permits
Herring River (S. of Rt. 28 bridge)	CLOSED	All permits
Herring River (N. of Rt. 28 bridge)	CLOSED	All permits
Muddy Creek (East of Rt. 28)	OPEN	Recreational permits only
Muddy Creek (W. of Rt. 28)	Permanently Closed	-----
Red River	Permanently Closed	-----

### **PERMANENTLY CLOSED AREAS-**

**Allen Harbor (North):** Permanently closed north side (defined by a line from Swanton Property dock to a point on the tip of the west side peninsula at the mouth of Oyster Creek).

**Muddy Creek (West)** Permanently closed west of the Route 28 dike.

**Red River-** Closed in its entirety.



### **Required Equipment-**

- Current town permit must be displayed.
- Shellfish measuring gauge.  
(clams shall not pass through opening)
- Calibrated Container- 10-quart basket
- Clamming Rake or Hand Digging (No shovels, forks, pumps, snorkeling or scuba)

**1. Applicability:** Persons taking shellfish/eels and/or eels in the Harwich waters must have a valid Harwich Shellfish Permit.

**2. Availability and Cost:** Permits can be obtained at the Harwich Natural Resources Office during normal business hours. Permit fees are as follows: Taxpayer \$30.00; Non-Taxpayer \$70.00; One-Day Non- Taxpayer \$30.00; Senior Taxpayer (age 65 years) \$15.00; replacement fee \$5.00.

**3. Assignment:** Shellfish permits cannot be reassigned or transferred. All permits are to be used by individuals that are 16 years of age and older (under 16 are required to be with permitted individual).

**4. Allowed Limit:** Individuals with Harwich permit may take quahogs, mussels, razorfish, sea clams and soft-shell clams on open days up to the total of one (1) ten-quart pail of shellfish per week from any classified open area. The shellfishing week runs from Monday through the following Sunday. During times when oysters may be taken, the ten-quart limit given above shall include their taking also.

**5. Mandatory Permits and Equipment:** Permit holders must have in their possession a Harwich Shellfish Permit, an open peck basket, mesh bag or calibrated bucket and make use of a standardized shellfish measuring device appropriate for determining legality of catch.

**6. Legal Time and Days:** The harvesting of shellfish is allowed from one-half hour before sunrise until sunset on open days (see Shellfishing Days below) in approved open areas for all shellfish except for scallops and oysters. Oysters may only be taken September 1st through April 30th only on open days as given above. Bay scallops may not be taken before November 1st at which time regulations will be issued governing their taking.

**7. Open Areas and Area Closures:** A commercial shellfish permit holder may not shellfish on a family permit for any commercially harvestable species in a family designated area. No person shall take or attempt to take shellfish from an area under a "closed status", a prohibited area or any "Resource Propagation Zone". No digging of shellfish shall be allowed in vegetated areas in accordance with the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Harwich Wetlands Protection By-Law. Areas of the shoreline or flats may be closed from time to time by the Natural Resources Department for the protection and development of juvenile shellfish populations. Development areas will be designated by signs reading "Resource Propagation Zone". Since many locations are affected by seasonal restrictions permit holders should check with the Selectmen's Office or Natural Resources Department (telephone 508-430-7532) on the status of conditionally approved areas before venturing out.

**8. Size Limit:** Shellfish shall be culled, and all seed shall be returned to the waters and flats immediately. All shellfish must be brought home in the shell. Persons shall not take or have in their possession (in basket, bucket, bag or other container): Soft-shell clams less than two (2) inches in the longest diameter; Quahogs less than one (1) inch in shell thickness (hinge width); Oysters less than three (3) inches in the longest diameter; Sea Clams less than five (5) inches in the longest diameter; Eels or elvers less than four (4) inches in total length.

**9. Temperature Restriction:** Dry digging quahogs and dry taking of soft-shell clams shall not be allowed when the shaded air temperature falls below 30°F (-1°C). All holes shall be filled and seed clams replanted with the "neck" of the clam up at the time and place where dug. The restriction for all sub-tidal shellfish harvesting shall take effect when the shaded air temperature falls below 25° F (-3.9°C). **For accurate weather call (508)945-5034.**

**10. Gear Restrictions:** Soft-shell clams and razorfish clams may be taken by hand, with standard clam hoe (rake) or hand plunger and dipnet; Quahogs may be taken by hand, rakes, tongs, or bull rake. Oysters may be taken by tongs and box rake. No shovels, forks, mechanical hydraulic pump, or other devices shall be used. Skin or scuba diving for shellfish is prohibited. Eels may be speared or a total of three clearly marked (last name) eel pots per permit may be set.

**11. Wet Storage:** The wet storage of shellfish is prohibited, except with the written permission of the Natural Resources Department.

**12. Predator Control:** As a means of controlling the losses of shellfish to natural means, starfish, wrinkles, cockles, green, calico and spider crabs, shall be deposited above the high-water mark.

**13. Renewal:** Permits shall be issued from January 1st to the following December 31st, at the Selectmen's Office. The applicant shall submit a prior year catch report as part of the application.

**14. Inspection:** All persons taking shellfish shall land or walk ashore at any place designated by the Shellfish Constable to allow for inspection.

**15. Penalties:** The penalties for violation of any of these regulations shall be a fine of not less than \$10.00 and not more than \$50.00 for each offense or the revocation of license or permit by the Selectmen or both. The revenue of any said fine shall be paid to the Town of Harwich. Town ordinance provides that any license or permit may be denied, revoked, or suspended for non-payment of taxes, fees, assessments, betterments or other municipal charges, Chapter 40, Sec. 57 MGL.

**16. Contaminated Areas:** Under General Law the penalty for taking shellfish from any contaminated /closed area is between \$50.00 and \$300.00 or by imprisonment of not more than sixty days, or both.

**17. Enforcement:** The foregoing regulations shall be enforced by the Shellfish Constables, Deputy Shellfish Constables, Natural Resources Officers, and any Police Officer of the Town of Harwich, hereinafter called "enforcing persons". Permits may be suspended for violation of the regulations by the enforcing person. A hearing may be scheduled for reinstatement of the permit may be held at the next meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Enforcing persons may in their discretion, initiate criminal proceedings for any violation thereof. Alternatively, enforcing persons may utilize the method of non-criminal disposition established by Chapter 40, Sec. 21D, MGL.