

**Shellfish Advisory Council**  
**Meeting Agenda**  
**November 21, 2025, from 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM**  
**Moore Community Center in Ellsworth or Virtually via [Microsoft Teams](#)**

**Call to order – Mike Pinkham** **10:00-10:01**  
The Meeting was called to order by Mike Pinkham.

**Roll call – William Fearn** **10:01-10:05**

**Members Present:**

Jeff Auger  
Chris Cline  
Lori Howell  
Tora Johnson  
Joan McDonald  
Marissa McMahan  
Ronald Parritt  
Mike Pinkham  
Ray Trombley

**Members Absent:**

Bobbie Bernier  
Chris Warner  
David Wilson

A quorum was present.

**Adoption of minutes from last meeting on September 23, 2025 – Mike Pinkham** **10:05-10:10**

**Motion:** Ronald Parritt moved to adopt the minutes from the September 23, 2025, meeting.

**Second:** Tora Johnson and Marissa McMahan

**Discussion:** None

**Vote:** Motion carried unanimously.

**Open ShAC positions – Mike Pinkham** **10:10-10:25**

1. Commercial Shellfish License Holder (Eastern Maine) Potential candidates discussed:
  - **Wayne Bishko (Gouldsboro)**
  - **Dan Curtis (Steuben)**
  - **David Cale (Machiasport)**
2. Shellfish Aquaculture Lease Holder (Eastern Maine) Potential candidates discussed:
  - **Abby Burrows (Deer Isle)**

**Fishermen’s Forum/Shellfish Focus Day – Marissa McMahan** **10:25-10:40**

Marissa McMahan described a request for ShAC participation on a panel addressing safety, predation, and applied conservation.

Discussion highlights:

- Tora Johnson suggested incorporating information from the Harbor Community Emergency Planning Guide.
- Emphasis was placed on ensuring community representation.
- Jeff Auger, Abby Burrows, and Lewis Pinkham expressed interest in participating on the panel.
- Tora Johnson proposed soliciting topic suggestions from forum attendees for future regional meetings; this was supported by Marissa McMahan.

### **Green Crab Fertilizer – Sam Cheeney**

**10:40-10:55**

Sam Cheeney described his work developing fertilizer products from invasive green crabs:

- Harvesting and processing green crabs into dry and wet fertilizer products.
- Using crushed shells as crab meal fertilizer.
- Selling products at fairs and exploring retail opportunities.
- Interest in scaling production using shipping containers positioned along the coast.

Challenges discussed:

- Conservation laws restricting the sharing of green crab catch.
- Licensing requirements to sell harvested green crabs (available for \$10).
- Interest in producing both human-grade and animal feed products.

Marissa McMahan noted the success of “Green Crab Week,” during which restaurants featured green crab dishes. Mike Pinkham suggested further discussion at a future meeting regarding licensing and regulatory pathways.

### **Council Member FOAA Training – Dierdre Gilbert**

**10:55-11:10**

Deirdre Gilbert reviewed requirements related to the Maine Freedom of Access Act (FOAA) and the federal Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Key points included:

- Council members must complete required FOAA training by **January 21, 2026**.
- A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document must be reviewed, and an acknowledgment form must be submitted.
- New members will be required to complete this training upon appointment.
- Public proceedings must be open to the public with appropriate notice; gatherings of three or more members constitute a meeting.
- FOAA does not prohibit email communication, but email is not a substitute for public meetings.
- Record retention and transparency are critical.
- Public Access Officers manage requests; agencies must acknowledge requests within five days and provide records within a reasonable timeframe.

### **Legislative Update – Dierdre Gilbert**

**11:10-11:20**

Deirdre Gilbert provided an update on pending legislation:

- Representative Tuell submitted a bill proposing reduced shellfish license fees for veterans; the bill has been accepted into the second legislative process.
- The bill language had not yet been received at the time of the meeting.

Discussion included:

- Questions regarding the number of shellfish licenses held by veterans and potential fiscal impacts.
- Concerns that reduced fees could affect revenue for the Commercial Shellfisheries Fund.

- The importance of fiscal impact notes before legislative approval.
- Potential precedent-setting effects for other fisheries.

**Consensus:** The Council unanimously agreed to allow the Department of Marine Resources (DMR) to manage the issue and communicate its position, including consideration of long-term impacts.

**Northeast Shellfish Sanitation Association (NESSA)– David Miller**

**11:20-11:30**

David Miller announced the upcoming NESSA meeting scheduled for **April 8–9, 2026**, at the Harraseeket Inn in Freeport, Maine. This will be the first time the meeting has been held in Maine in 6–7 years.

Key points:

- Topics and speaker suggestions are being solicited.
- Attendance typically includes state regulators, FDA representatives, and academic researchers.
- Anticipated registration fee: approximately \$250.

Suggested topics included:

- Bird impacts on public health and Vibrio
- Aquaculture scallop testing
- Water quality pollution sources and mitigation
- Septic system failures and watershed risk assessment
- Fecal coliform contamination
- PFAS testing in shellfish and water
- Overboard discharge cleanup funding
- Migration and climate-related impacts

Members were encouraged to contact David Miller, William Fearn, or Bryant Lewis with ideas.

**Shellfish Economic Study update – GMRI**

**11:30-12:00**

GMRI presented findings from the **Economic Impacts of Shellfish Harvesting** study, with a focus on softshell clams.

Key findings:

- Landings have declined statewide over the past two decades.
- Prices have remained relatively stable, with notable volatility linked to low landings and market disruptions.
- Significant price spikes occurred in 2017 and during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021.
- Environmental factors such as sea level rise and water temperature changes are suspected contributors, though data availability remains limited.
- Seasonal patterns persist and are becoming more pronounced.
- Global and regional market forces influence local pricing.

Discussion topics:

- Whether inflation was accounted for (confirmed that it was).
- Potential geographic correlations between closures and pricing.
- Impacts of tourism, aging harvesters, and inter-fishery dynamics (e.g., lobster industry downturns).
- Possibility of further analysis using existing datasets.

**Work plan****12:40-12:50****Current Work**

1. Shellfish Economic Study (GMRI) – presented at this meeting.
2. Green Crab Composting Facilities – Sam Cheeney.
3. Committee Updates:
  - Regional Shellfish Meetings: Tora Johnson reported on survey development to guide meeting structure and topics; members were asked to provide feedback.
  - Softshell Clam Seed Stock: Jeff Auger.
  - MSCW Training: Michael Boucher.

**Potential Future Work**

1. Review of Municipal Shellfish Management Priorities.
2. Modernization of laws and rules governing municipal shellfish programs.

**Public input****12:50-12:55****Public comments included:**

- Interest in implementing swipe card systems
- Concerns regarding minimum hours for shellfish wardens
- Safety concerns for wardens, including a lack of legal protections and exposure to assault
- Sustainability concerns related to enforcement capacity
- William Fearn announced that Shellfish Warden Training is scheduled for April 1–2, 2026.

**Other business****12:55-01:00**

No additional business was raised.

**Adjourn****01:00-01:00**

**Motion:** Tora Johnson moved to adjourn.

**Second:** Ronald Parritt

**Vote:** Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 PM.