

Shellfish Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
March 18, 2026, from 10:30 AM - 1:30 PM
DMR Augusta or Virtual via [Microsoft Teams](#)

Call to order – Mike Pinkham

10:30-10:31

Roll call – William Fearn / Lindsay Buckland records

10:31-10:35

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Jeff Auger | 8. Ronald Parritt |
| 2. Bobbie Bernier | 9. Mike Pinkham |
| 3. Chris Cline | 10. Ray Trombley |
| 4. Lori Howell | 11. Chris Warner |
| 5. Tora Johnson | 12. David Wilson |
| 6. Joan McDonald | 13. David Cale |
| 7. Marissa McMahan | 14. Abby Burrows |

Adoption of minutes from last meeting on November 21, 2025 – Mike Pinkham

10:35-10:40

Motion: Mike Pinkham moved to adopt the minutes from the November 21, 2025, meeting.

Second: Marissa McMahan

Discussion: None

Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

Welcome new ShAC members – Mike Pinkham

10:40-10:55

- David Cale (Machiasport) Shellfish Harvester
- Abby Burrows (Deer Isle) Shellfish Aquaculture

2026 officer positions – Mike Pinkham

10:55-11:10

- Chair
- Vice Chair

Motion: Tora Johnson nominated Mike Pinkham and Marissa McMahan to continue in their roles.

Second: Lori Howell

Discussion: None

Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

Shellfish Landings Report – NSMRS

11:10-11:30

Katie Miller shared the report and cover letters on softshell and quahog data with the group. Towns may request more information on confidential species or further specifics. The cover letters explain the table included in the reports. The report data includes Maine State totals for the Shellstock's, the average dollar per pound, and average pounds per trip. The data is organized by county, with a year-over-year breakdown for softshell clams. Brunswick led the list of top 10 towns for harvesting of Softshell Clams. The value of softshell clams has risen significantly by roughly \$1.00 per pound since last year's findings.

Katie Miller conveyed Katie Tilton's report for Quahogs. West Bath led the list of top 10 towns for harvesting of Quahogs, with Brunswick second on the list. A significant amount of this data comes from confidential locations. The dollar per pound of Quahog has a slight uptick from the previous year, despite having a dip in the pounds collected.

Lori Howell asks if both sets of data include confidential town numbers in the totals. Katie Miller specifies that they are not included in the town average but are included in the statewide totals. Tora Johnson asked if the totals are included in the County data, and Katie Miller explained that they are not, but area biologists can give further details upon request. Marissa McMahan asks if the New Meadows State-licensed data is recorded by collection location or by the license holder's address. Katie states that they should be reporting by collection location. Ben Wahle added that DMR is still reviewing the data methods to interpret details like this.

Jeff Auger noted his surprise regarding a roughly 40% drop in quahog landings. Ben Wahle speculated the reduction in quahog fishing efforts may account for the correlation in the landings decline. Many harvesters switched to softshell clams.

Lab Sample Summary – Amy Webb

11:30-11:50

Amy Webb, Microbiologist Supervisor for DMR, shared the collective sample data summary on behalf of both the Boothbay and Lamoine labs. The data was organized by lab and testing run.

Fishermen's Forum/Shellfish Focus Day recap – Marissa McMahan

11:50-12:10

Marissa McMahan described a great day and focused on the ShAC sessions. The first session was about ShAC's progress in the legislation, Safety, the Impact Study, and Warden Enforcement. After the panel presented, the group opened the floor for discussion on the Regional Shellfish meetings and how the committee can improve attendance and engagement. Small meetings, ShAC bolstering involvement, Marine Biologist engagement, and the annual shellfish report were among the ideas discussed. Town meetings, including space for feedback or topics of concern, were another. Tora Johnson's takeaway was that Harvesters were hoping for us to come to them. A suggestion was made to assign ShAC members to regions to collect feedback. She followed up on the uptick in interest in a community safety resource guide. Mike Pinkham thinks it is important that harvesters make a commitment to showing up as an investment in their future. Suggestions were made to record a session as was done during the pandemic, as well as reviving a newsletter option that includes relevant news.

The group discussed these methods of engagement and agreed that this topic shouldn't be tabled for long. Committee members Tora Johnson, Mike Pinkham, and Marissa McMahan will open the discussion up to input and plan a meeting to discuss this further.

Work plan

12:10-12:40

Current Work

1. Shellfish Economic Study – GMRI

The chair has requested to strike this completed work from the list. Tora Johnson requested to host the Economic Study on the ShAC website.

2. Green Crab Composting Facilities

The group discussed industry interest and improvement. The interest has been resurgent as we saw at the Fisherman's Forum and the Boston Seafood Expo. Marissa McMahan shared that there is a Portland Green Crab Working Summit during Green Crab Week coming up. Tickets are live on www.greencrab.org currently. There will be restaurants and industry from all over the State and beyond.

3. Committees

a. Regional Shellfish Meeting – Tora Johnson

A poll will go out to the Council to schedule the next meeting. DMR reminded the committee that Shellfish Warden Training is scheduled for April 1-2, 2026.

b. Softshell Seed Stock – Jeff Auger

Jeff Auger agrees to meet, discuss potential industry growth, talk with his subject expert, and have more information at the next meeting. DMR agrees to assist with phone calls to incorporate speakers on this topic in a future meeting, if a contact list is provided. Cost for softshell seed stock has almost doubled. The overhead involved with overwintering contributes to this cost. The group agreed to incorporate harvesters to present at a future meeting.

c. MSCW Training – Michael Boucher

Michael Boucher will be sending a meeting request email in the next couple of weeks. This committee will focus on safety and professionalism. DMR discussed Harbor Master training. All attendees passed the training.

Potential Future Work

1. Municipal Shellfish Management Priorities Review

This was a list of 90 or so concerns that harvesters brought forward. William Fearn will redistribute the list before the next meeting. Committees tend to have 3 committees at a time, and as work wraps up, the list is there as a resource to prioritize from.

2. Modernizing Laws and Rules Governing Municipal Programs

The committee agreed to review and update the language that has evolved since its inception over 50 years ago. This will be prioritized as one of the next committees that become established. An example cited was the reference to "softshell management," which should now reflect "shellfish management." Harvester engagement to determine what needs modernization would be useful.

Public input

12:40-12:50

Other business

12:50-01:00

Mike Pinkham asked about Landings in relation to red tide closures, water quality, and toxin closures. Ben Wahle explains the premise of this analysis: on any given day, there is only a finite number of acres open, and comparing this with pounds per harvest would require extensive research to cross-reference with closure data. DMR agreed to report back to the Council on the scope of such a project and estimate the staff time that would be necessary. The committee feels that this analysis would be a valuable resource to engage communities after reviewing the fishery impacts that unresolved issues have created. Having a robust Fishery that we are unable to fish negatively impacts harvesters. The group discussed available grant resources that, if awarded, would assist towns in updating equipment like rain gauges. Wastewater Treatment updates are so effective in reducing Combined Sewage Discharges or CSOs, which helps to keep the flats open. These closures due to rainfall can generate a 21-day closure of a conditional area.

Jeff Auger questions what we can do to bolster the Quahog industry. Ray Trombley said that there are buyers who are willing to assist in transport. The Brunswick area harvesters have had an issue harvesting. Buyers are interested in building a network to purchase and collect harvests from other areas.

DMR reminded the group of the upcoming NESSA conference that is being hosted in Maine. The Northeast Shellfish Sanitation Association rotates back to Maine once every 7 years. The event focuses on policy, mitigation of sanitization strategies, and scientific discovery across the Eastern seaboard. Government rate rooms are still available, and details are going out in a GovDelivery.

Adjourn

01:00-01:00

Motion: Mike Pinkham moved to adjourn the meeting.

Second: Tora Johnson

Discussion: None

Vote: Motion carried unanimously.