

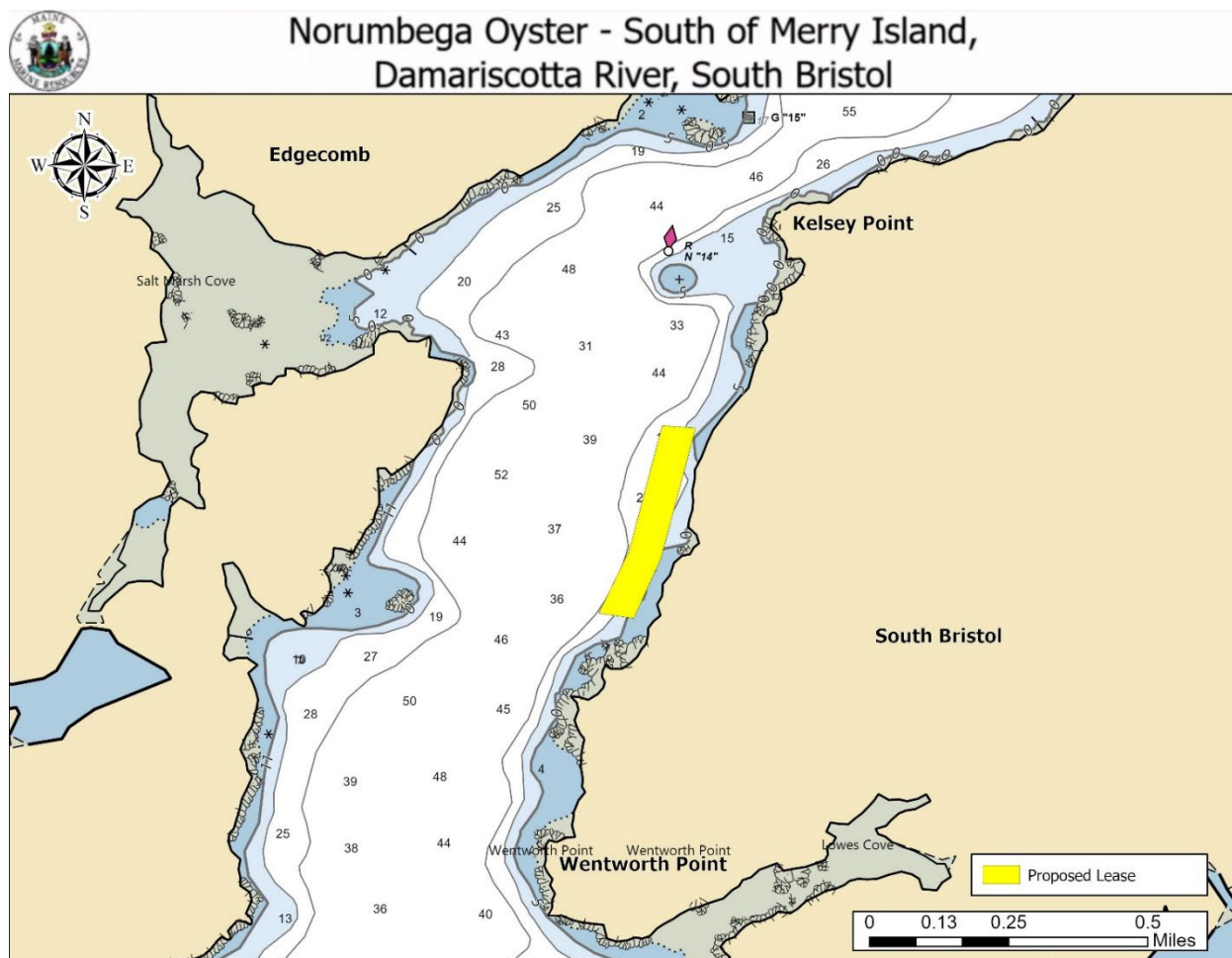


Figure 1. Vicinity map.¹

Location: South of Merry Island, Damariscotta River, South Bristol, Lincoln County, Maine

Purpose: Standard lease for the suspended culture of American/Eastern Oysters (*Crassostrea virginica*).

Site Review: Geoff Shook, Katie von Hohenleiten, and Peter Craig

Report Preparation: Katie von Hohenleiten and Meryl Grady

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all figures in this report were created in ArcGIS Pro version 3.5 using digitized NOAA Nautical Charts or geo-referenced aerial photographs provided by The Maine Office of GIS.



Department of Marine Resources Site Report

Norumbega Oyster
South of Merry Island, Damariscotta River
South Bristol

Application Overview

The applicant, Norumbega Oyster, is requesting a 9.74-acre standard lease south of Merry Island in the Damariscotta River, South Bristol for the suspended culture of American/Eastern oysters (*Crassostrea virginica*). The applicant currently operates experimental leases DAM Mlx and DAM Mlx2 within the footprint of the standard lease proposal (Figure 4). This proposal is larger than the combined existing experimental leases. The applicant is proposing to expand from 6.72² acres to 9.74 acres.

General Characteristics

On June 11, 2026, Department of Marine Resources (DMR) scientists assessed the proposed lease site. DMR scientists arrived on site at approximately 11:57 AM. The proposal is situated along the eastern shoreline of the Damariscotta River and is south of Kelsey Point. The shoreline of the Damariscotta River consisted of rock ledge shoreline covered with rockweed. The shoreline led to mixed forested uplands comprised of primarily coniferous forests.

Depth

DMR scientists began collecting water depths at the proposed site shortly before low tide at approximately 2:06 PM (Table 1). Measured depths at corners of the proposed lease site ranged from 5.1 to 31.9 feet. Correcting for tidal variation derives approximate water depths at corners of the proposal at mean low water (MLW, 0.0 feet) to be from 4.8 to 31.6 feet. Approximate depths at mean high water (MHW, 9.4 feet³) at corners of the proposal are 14.2 to 41.0 feet (Table 2). The proposal is located in the subtidal. Water current was at slack tide switching to northerly throughout the course of the site visit.

Table 1. Predicted tidal heights in Walpole, Maine.⁴

Date	Time	Height (ft)
2026/06/11	2:03 AM	0.2 L
2026/06/11	8:05 AM	8.8 H
2026/06/11	2:17 PM	0.3 L
2026/06/11	8:28 PM	10.1 H

Table 2. Collected and derived depths at corners of the proposed lease area.

Corner	Measured Depth (ft)	MLW Depth (ft)	MHW Depth (ft)
A	5.1	4.8	14.2
B	31.9	31.6	41.0
C	27.0	26.7	36.1
D	31.8	31.5	40.9
E	6.8	6.5	15.9
F	11.5	11.2	20.6

² Experimental lease DAM Mlx and DAM Mlx2 decision history pages 1

³ MHW in Walpole is 9.4 feet, NOAA Tide Station 8416731

⁴ <https://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/stationhome.html?id=8416731>



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Bottom Characteristics

DMR scientists observed the bottom characteristics of the proposed lease site via a remotely operated vehicle (ROV). Bottom characteristics were categorized using the Coastal and Marine Ecological Classification Standard (CMECS), a national standard for describing features of the marine environment (Table 3). Sediment information was determined based on visual analysis of the video. The bottom of the proposed lease site is composed of mud with an overlay of sheet algal beds.

Table 3. Bottom characteristics of the proposed site.

Substrate Origin	Substrate Class	Substrate Subclass	Substrate Group
Geologic Substrate	Unconsolidated Mineral Substrate	Fine Unconsolidated Substrate	Mud
Benthic/Attached Biota	Aquatic Vegetation Bed	Benthic Macroalgae	Sheet Algal Bed

Position and Distances to Shore

The measuring tool in ArcGIS Pro 3.5 was used to verify the distances and bearings between proposed lease corners. Distances to shore were determined using the measuring tool in ArcGIS Pro 3.5, a nautical chart provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the application coordinates (Table 4, Figure 2).

Application Coordinates (WGS84) – 9.74 Acres

<u>Corner</u>	<u>Latitude</u>	<u>Longitude</u>
A	43.947822°	-69.577150° then 229 feet at 276° True to
B	43.947883°	-69.578017° then 1,210 feet at 191° True to
C	43.944624°	-69.578881° then 620 feet at 199° True to
D	43.943019°	-69.579663° then 244 feet at 102° True to
E	43.942885°	-69.578756° then 599 feet at 018° True to
F	43.944445°	-69.578048° then 1,254 feet at 011° True to A

Table 4. Approximate distances from proposal corners to surrounding features (Figures 2 & 3).

Feature	Distance
Corner A to eastern Damariscotta River shoreline at MLW	~119' to the east
Corner A to Kelsey Point at MLW	~1,884' to the northeast
Corner B to western shore of Damariscotta River at MLW	~1,406' to the west
Corner B to red navigation buoy "14"	~1,652' to the north
Corner C to western shore of Damariscotta River at MLW	~1,699' to the west



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Feature	Distance
Corner D to western shore of Damariscotta River at MLW	~1,689' to the west
Corner D to green navigation buoy "13"	~4,387' to the southwest
Corner E to eastern Damariscotta River shoreline at MLW	~123' to the east
Corner F to eastern shore of Damariscotta River at MLW	~99' to the east

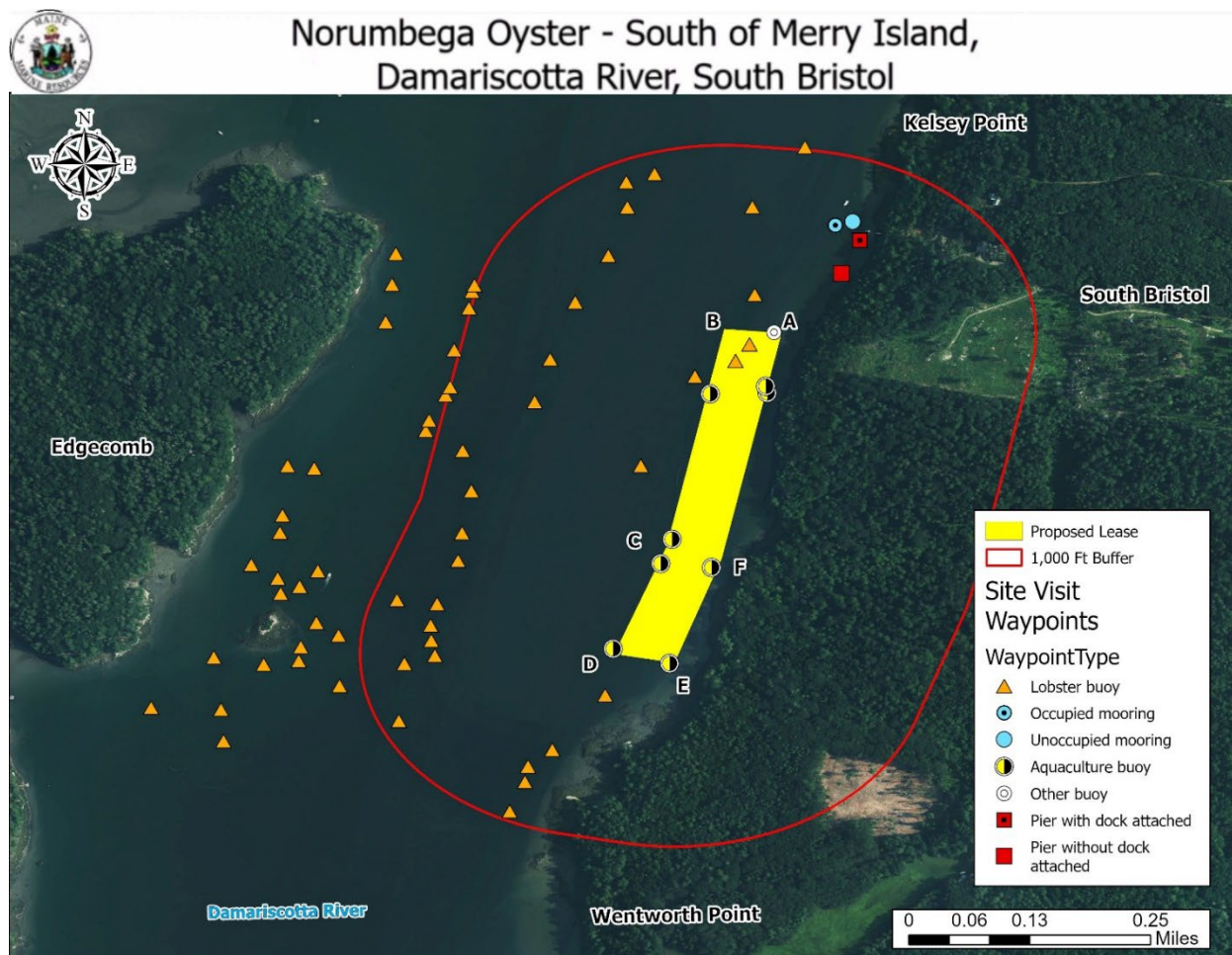


Figure 2. Proposed lease area with site visit observations.

Pursuant to statute and regulation, aquaculture leases are evaluated in consideration of applicable decision criteria. The Site Report documents DMR's observations of the area and other information, in consideration of those criteria, as noted below:

(1) Riparian Ingress and Egress

During the site visit on June 11, 2026, DMR scientists observed one pier without a dock approximately 400 feet northeast of the proposal, and one pier with a dock attached approximately 590 feet to the northeast of the proposal (Figure 2). The pier with a dock attached had three kayaks, one paddleboard, and an 8-foot inflatable boat stored on top of the dock. DMR



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scientists also observed an occupied mooring with a 27-foot powerboat attached to it approximately 623 feet to the northeast of the proposal, as well as an unoccupied mooring approximately 667 feet to the northeast of the proposal.

DMR scientists stated that no structures were visible on land adjacent to the proposal. However, two structures on top of the hill on the eastern shore of Damariscotta River are visible from the middle of the navigational channel northwest of the proposal.

DMR scientists also observed one black buoy located near corner A of the proposal (Figure 2, Image 1). The purpose of the buoy was unknown.

A Municipal Questionnaire was sent to the Town of South Bristol on April 15, 2025. DMR did not receive a response.

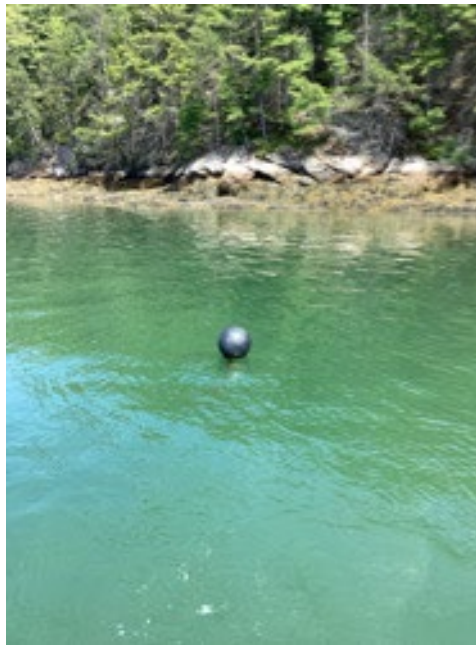


Image 1. Unidentified black buoy near corner A of the proposal.

(2) Navigation

The proposal is approximately 99 feet to the west of the eastern shore of the Damariscotta River. The eastern edge of the main navigational channel is located approximately 134 feet west of the proposal (Figure 3), as measured by the red navigational buoy "14" and the mapped intertidal area southwest of the proposal. There is approximately 1,406 feet of navigable water between corner B of the proposal and the western shore of the Damariscotta River.

DMR scientists observed one jet ski transiting downriver to the west of the proposal during the site visit on June 11, 2026.

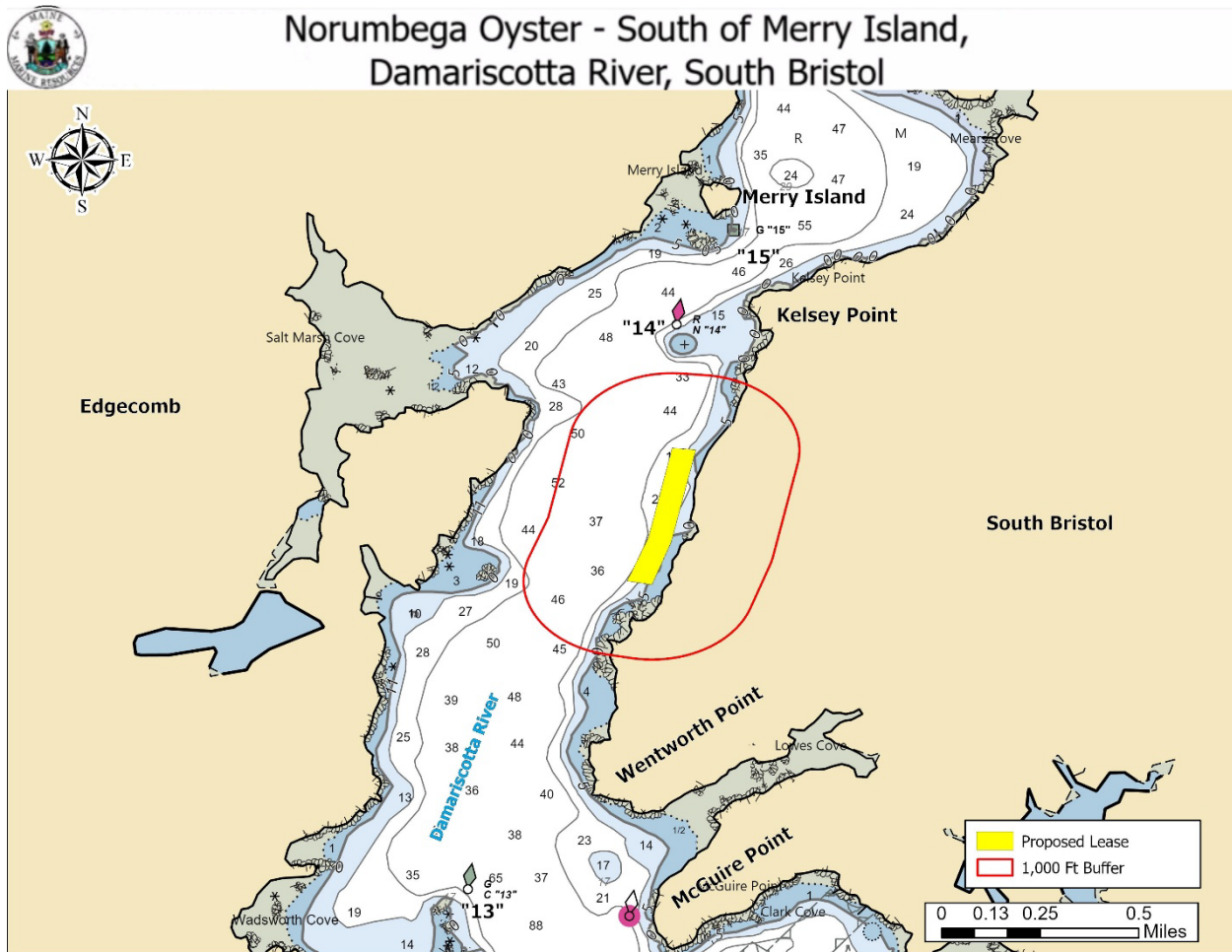


Figure 3. Navigational channels in the vicinity of the proposed lease area.

(3) Fishing and Other Uses

During DMR's site visit on June 11, 2026, scientists observed a lobster boat actively hauling lobster traps approximately 0.5 miles north of the proposed lease, as well as a lobster boat transiting north in the navigational channel to the west of the proposal.

During the site visit, DMR scientists observed 69 lobster buoys in the vicinity of the proposal. Two of the observed lobster buoys were within the boundaries of the proposal (Figure 2).

(4) Other Aquaculture Uses

The applicant currently operates two experimental leases, DAM Mlx and DAM Mlx2, within the footprint of this standard lease proposal (Figure 4). The applicant is proposing an expansion from 6.72⁵

⁵ Experimental lease DAM Mlx and DAM Mlx2 decision history pages 1



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acres to 9.74 acres. There are no other pending aquaculture leases or Limited Purpose Aquaculture Sites (LPAs) within 1,000 feet of the proposed lease site.

During the site visit on June 11, 2026, DMR scientists observed an aquaculture skiff navigating to DAM Mlx and DAM Mlx2 to tend to the lease sites. DMR scientists also recorded the locations of several aquaculture buoys associated with DAM Mlx and DAM Mlx2 (Figure 2).

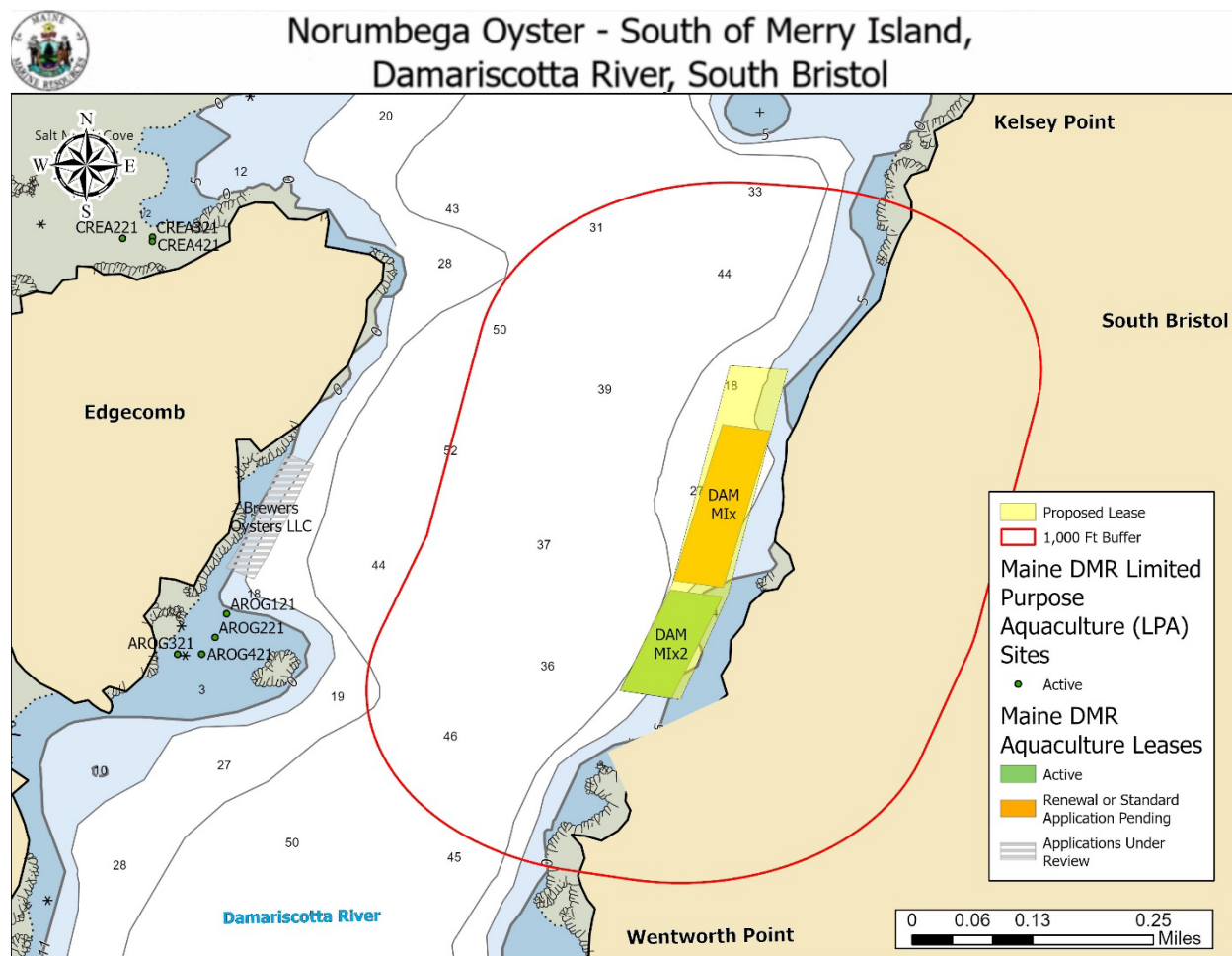


Figure 4. Aquaculture leases and LPA licenses in the vicinity of the proposed lease area.

(5) Existing System Support

Epibenthic Flora and Fauna

On June 11, 2026, DMR scientists utilized an ROV to assess the epibenthic ecology of the proposed lease. The relative abundance of epibenthic flora and fauna observed in the video footage is described below in Table 5.



Table 5. Species observed on underwater video footage.

Species Observed	Abundance
Moon Jellyfish (<i>Aurelia aurita</i>)	Abundant
Lions Mane Jellyfish (<i>Cyanea capillata</i>)	Common
Sea Lettuce (<i>Ulva lactuca</i>)	Common
Sand Shrimp (<i>Crangon septemspinosa</i>)	Common
Crab sp. (<i>Cancer.</i>)	Common
Sugar Kelp (<i>Saccharina latissima</i>)	Occasional
Green Crab (<i>Carcinus maenas</i>)	Occasional

Eelgrass (*Zostera marina*)

Records of seagrass collected by Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in 2023 indicates no mapped eelgrass presence in the vicinity of the proposal (Figure 5).⁶ No eelgrass was observed within the proposal boundaries during DMR's site visit.



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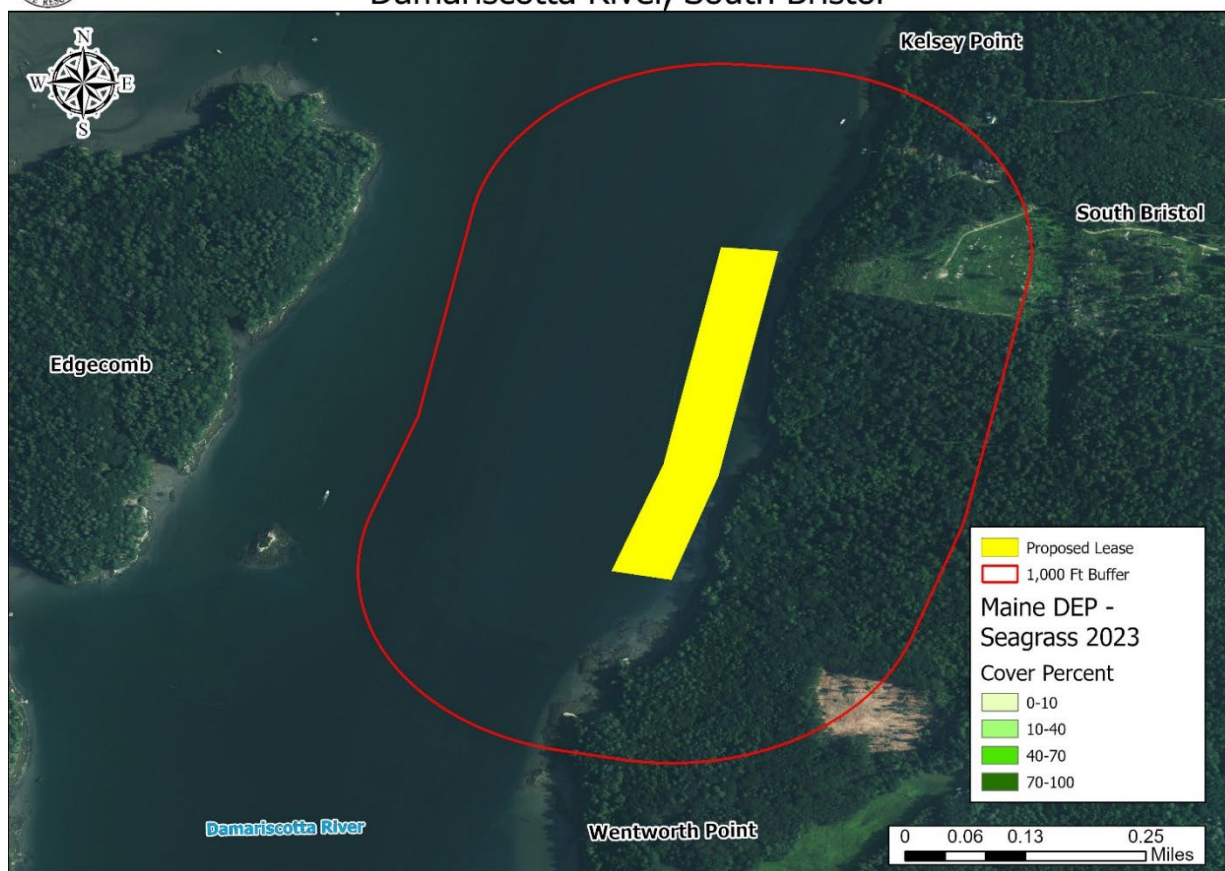


Figure 5. Mapped eelgrass (*Z. marina*) in the vicinity of the proposed lease area.

⁶ Data obtained from The Maine Office of GIS "GISVIEW.MEDEP.Seagrass2023". Widgeon grass was observed only in a tributary to the Great Salt Bay, upstream of a culvert that likely restricts tidal flow. Eelgrass was the dominant vascular species in all other locations. This is the most current record of mapped eelgrass within the vicinity of the proposal.



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Wildlife

During DMR's site visit, scientists observed mallard ducks (*Anas platyrhynchos*), lesser backed gulls (*Larus fuscus*), an osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), double-crested cormorants (*Nannopterum auritum*), great cormorants (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), common terns (*Sterna hirundo*), an oven bird (*Seiurus aurocapilla*), a chipping sparrow (*Spizella passerina*), an American crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), and three harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina*) in the general vicinity of the proposal. The harbor seals were observed swimming in the navigational channel to the west of the proposal; one was heavily splashing and surfacing during the site visit.

The Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IFW) has jurisdiction over inland fisheries and wildlife resources of the state. IFW also has the authority to conserve wildlife populations and their ecosystems through applicable state laws and rules. DMR provides IFW with notice and the opportunity to comment on all complete lease applications. In addition, the Site Report also includes IFW designated and mapped habitat types that are within 1,000 feet of the lease proposal, if applicable.

According to Geographic Information System (GIS) data maintained by IFW and available through the Maine Office of GIS (MEGIS), there is no mapped habitat type within 1,000 feet of the lease proposal (Figure 6).

Though bald eagles are no longer listed on Maine's Endangered and Threatened Species List, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) may also have jurisdiction over the management and conservation of the species based on applicable law and rule. Data collected by USFWS in 2023 by aerial nest survey shows there is no mapped bald eagle nesting site within 1,000 feet of the proposal. The closest mapped eagle nest is approximately 0.7 miles north of the proposal (Figure 6).

IFW was provided with the opportunity to comment on this proposal. On April 24, 2025, a Resource Biologist with IFW responded by email to a "Request for Agency Review and Comment" stating that minimal impacts to wildlife are anticipated for this project.⁷

⁷ Email correspondence between IFW and DMR

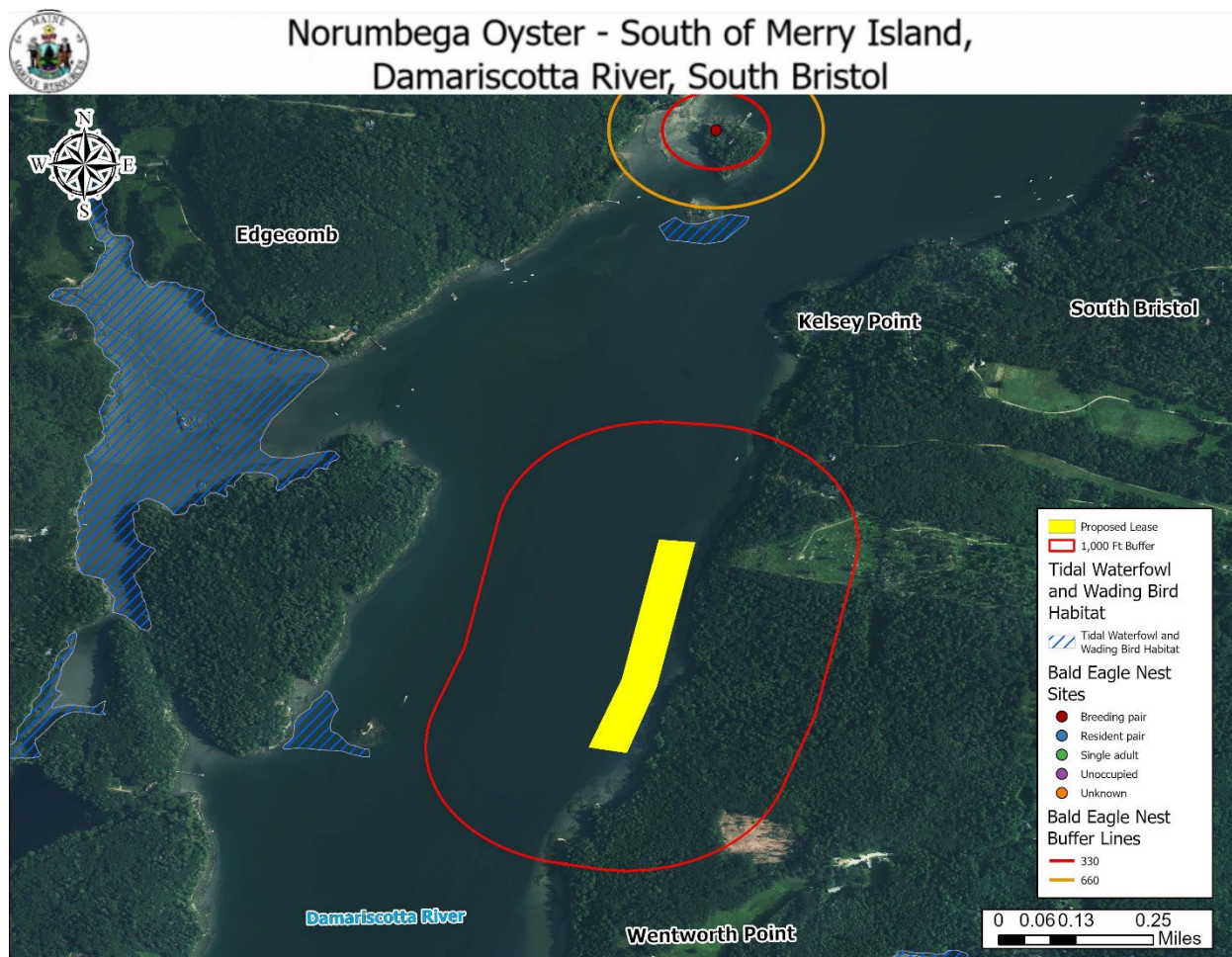


Figure 6. Mapped habitats in the vicinity of the proposed lease area. ⁸

⁸ Data obtained from USFWS "Bald_Eagle_Nests_-_Maine_2023" and IFW "EHRTERN", "EHPLVTRN", "GISVIEW.MEIFW.Twwh", "ShorebirdAreas", and "SNI".



(6) Interference with Public Facilities

The proposed lease is not within 1,000 feet of any beach, park, docking facility, or conserved lands owned by federal, state, or municipal governments (Figure 7).

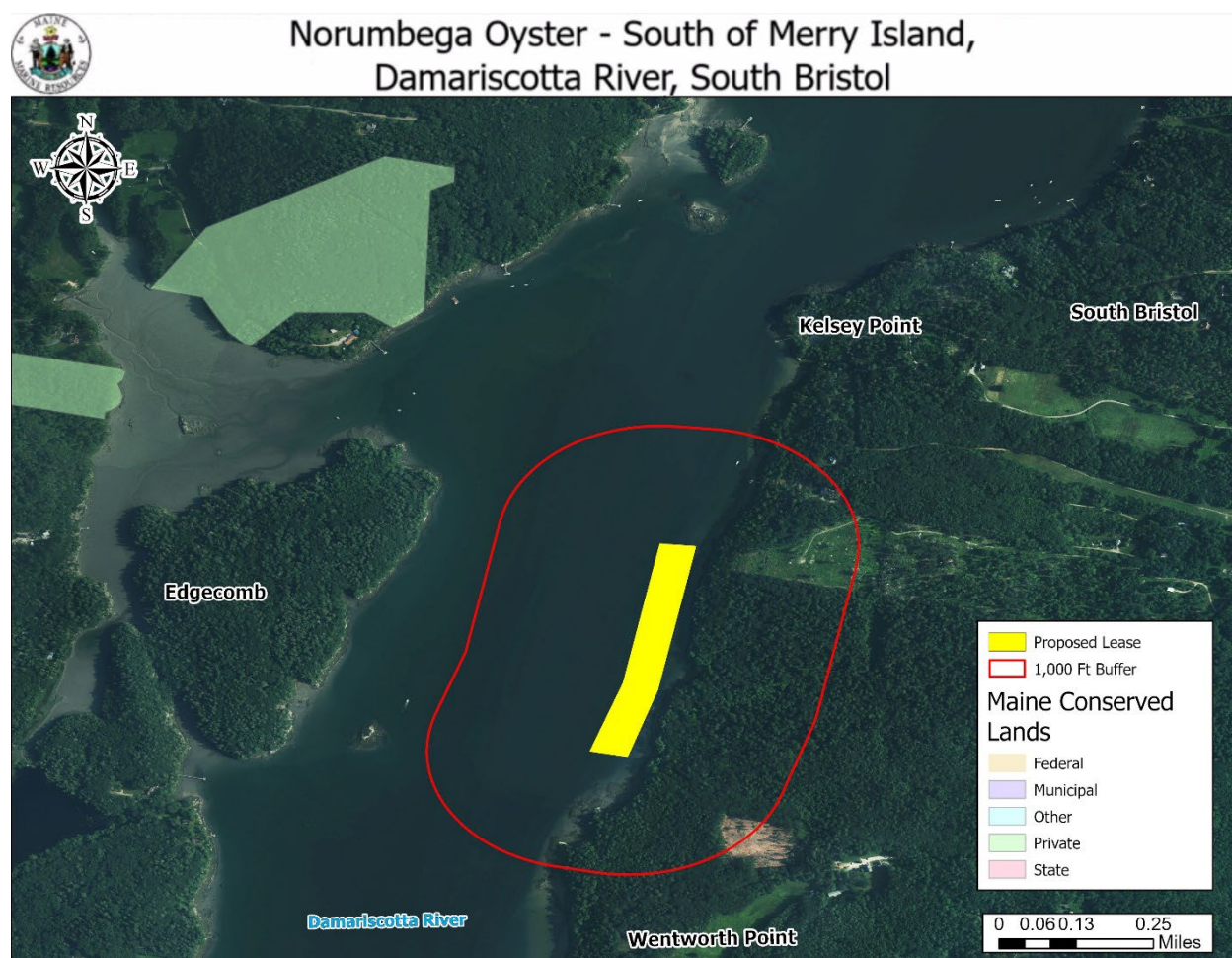


Figure 7. Public facilities near the proposed lease site.⁹

(7) Growing Area Classification

The proposed lease is currently located within an area classified as Approved by the DMR Bureau of Public Health and Aquaculture.

⁹ Data obtained from The Maine Office of GIS "GISVIEW.MECONSLANDS.Conserved_Lands"