



Brewers Oysters - Southeast of Salt Marsh Cove, Edgecomb

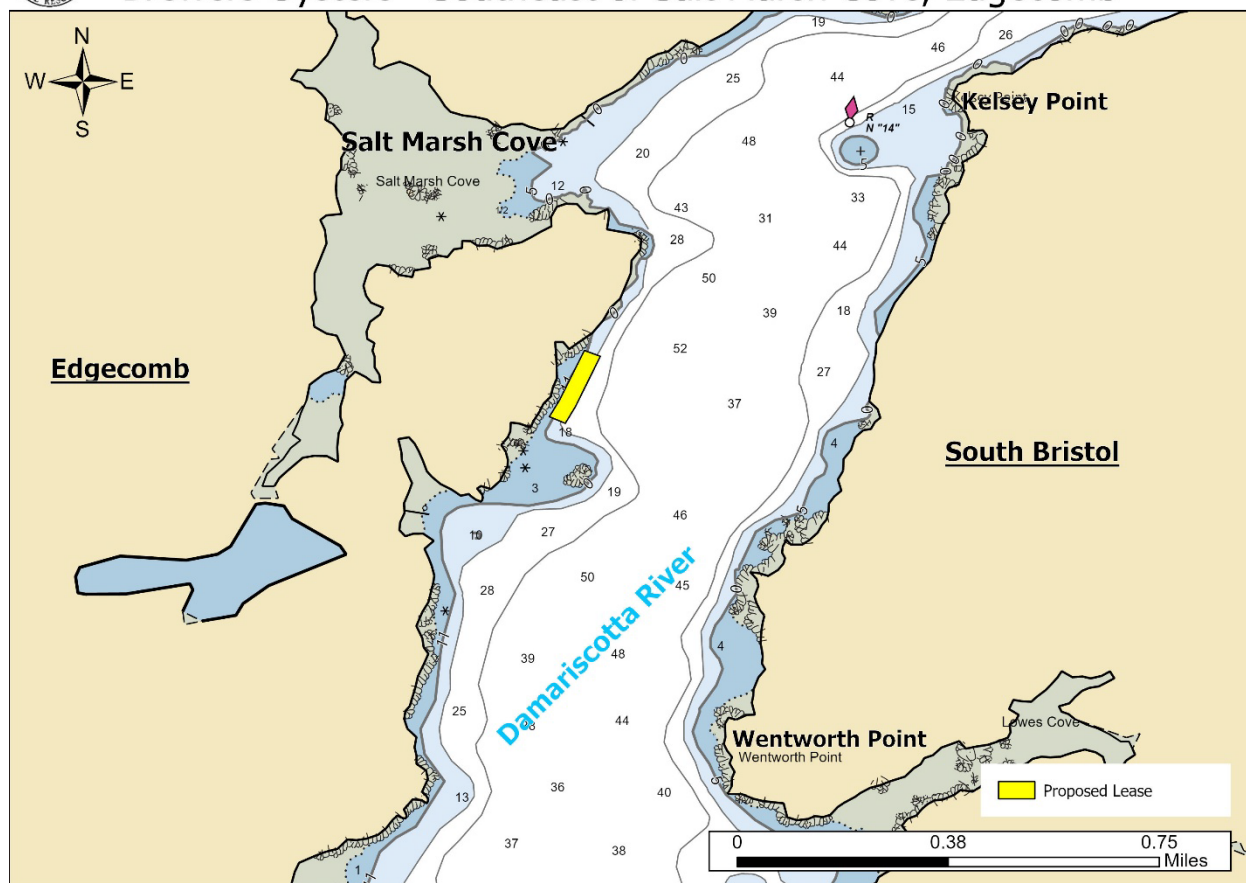


Figure 1. Vicinity map.¹

Location: Southeast of Salt Marsh Cove, Damariscotta River, Edgecomb, Lincoln County, Maine

Purpose: Experimental lease for suspended culture of American/Eastern oysters (*Crassostrea virginica*)

Site Review: Geoff Shook, Katie VonHohenleiten, and Peter Craig

Report Preparation: Peter Craig, Geoffrey Shook, 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.



Application Overview

The applicant, Brewers Oysters LLC, is requesting a 1.86-acre² experimental lease on the western side of the Damariscotta River in Edgecomb for the suspended culture of American/Eastern oysters. Moorings, mooring lines and chains, required lease boundary markers, and growing cages are intended to remain on site year-round. In the event of river ice or severe weather, cages would be sunk to the river bottom.³

General Characteristics

On June 11, 2026, Department of Marine Resources (DMR) scientists assessed the proposed lease site. DMR scientists arrived at the site at approximately 11:57 am. This section of the Damariscotta River in Edgecomb is characterized by rocky ledge covered with rockweed transitioning to forested uplands.

Depth

DMR scientists began collecting water depths at the proposed site shortly before low tide at approximately 1:06 PM (Table 1). Measured depths at corners of the proposed lease site ranged from 5.3 to 25.5 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 4.2 to 24.4 feet. Approximate depths at mean high water (MHW, 9.4 feet⁴) at the corners of the proposal are 13.6 to 33.8 feet (Table 2). The proposal is located in the subtidal zone. Water current was flowing south at the time of the site visit.

Table 1. Predicted tidal heights in Walpole, Maine.⁵

Date	Time	Height (ft)
6/11/2026	2:03 AM	0.2 L
6/11/2026	8:05 AM	8.7 H
6/11/2026	2:17 PM	0.3 L
6/11/2026	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)
1	6.6	5.5	14.9
2	23.1	22.0	31.4
3	25.5	24.4	33.8
4	24.0	22.9	32.3
5	9.8	8.7	18.1
6	5.3	4.2	13.6

² Applicant originally requested 1.90 acres. DMR calculations indicate the area is 1.86 acres.

³ Application pages 10

⁴ MHW in Walpole is 9.4 feet, NOAA Tide Station 8416731

⁵ <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 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 video footage. The bottom of the proposed lease site is composed of mud with an overlay of sheet algal beds, shell hash, and woody debris.

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
Biogenic Substrate	Unconsolidated Mineral Substrate	Shell Substrate	Shell Hash
Biogenic Substrate	Organic Substrate	Organic Debris	Woody Debris

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, Figures 2,3).

Application Coordinates (WGS84) - 1.86 Acres

<u>Corner</u>	<u>Latitude</u>	<u>Longitude</u>	
1	43.94656°	-69.58466°	then 121 feet at 117° True
2	43.94641°	-69.58425°	then 500 feet at 200° True
3	43.94512°	-69.58489°	then 171 feet at 204° True
4	43.94469°	-69.58515°	then 125 feet at 300° True
5	43.94486°	-69.58556°	then 175 feet at 24° True
6	43.94530°	-69.58529°	then 488 feet at 20° True to 1



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

Feature	Distance
Corner 2 to red navigation buoy "RN14"	~2,768' to the northeast
Corner 2 to Kelsey Point at MLW	~3,300' to the northeast
Corner 4 to Wentworth Point at MLW	~2,857' to the southeast
Corner 4 to mapped intertidal ledge at MLW	~400' to the southeast
Corner 4 to green navigation buoy "GC13"	~4,696 to the south
Corner 5 to Edgecomb shoreline at MLW	~37' to the west
Corner 1 to Edgecomb shoreline at MLW	~15' to the west



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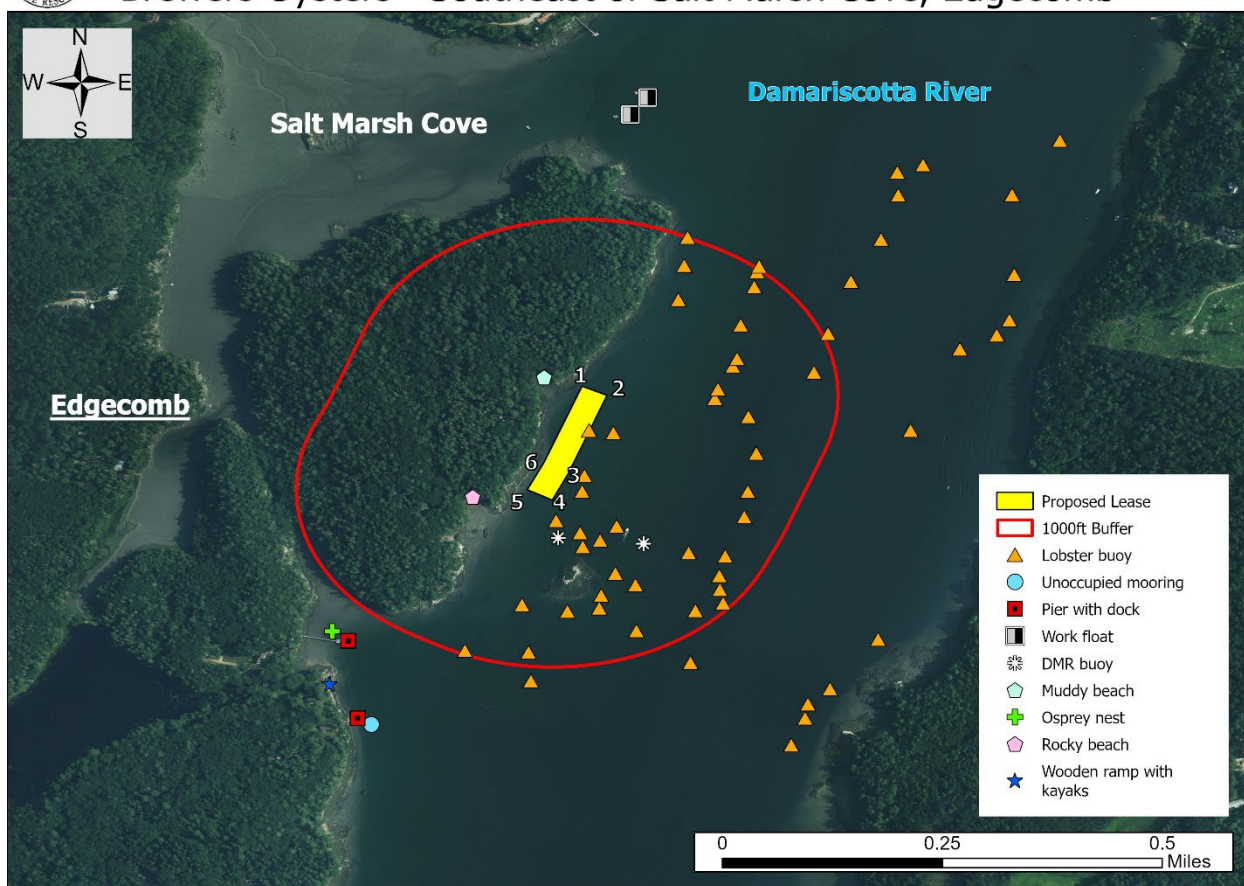


Figure 2. Proposed lease area with site observations.



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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, DMR scientists did not observe any buildings within the vicinity of the proposal and no buildings were visible along the western shoreline from within the proposal area. Across the Damariscotta River on the eastern shore, two buildings, located high up on the bank, were visible from the middle of the river approximately 2,800 feet northeast of the proposed lease site. A muddy beach and a rocky beach were observed west of the proposed site (Figure 2).

A Municipal Questionnaire was sent to the town of Edgecomb on March 26, 2026. DMR did not receive a response.

(2) Navigation

The proposal is located approximately 15 feet from the western shore of the Damariscotta River in Edgecomb at MLW. There is approximately 400 feet between corner 4 of the proposal and the mapped intertidal ledge to the southeast (Table 4). There is approximately 1,775 feet of navigable water between the proposal and the eastern shoreline of the Damariscotta River at MLW. The western edge of the main navigational channel is located approximately 215 feet to the east of corner 2 of the proposal. The western edge of the navigational channel is defined as a line drawn from green navigational buoy "GC13" to the northeast corner of the peninsula immediately west of the proposal at MLW (Figure 3).

During DMR's site visit, the following vessel traffic was observed: one jet ski traveling southbound in the channel, one commercial lobster boat traveling northbound in the channel, and one aquaculture skiff traveling southbound to DAM M1x and M1x2 across the river from the proposed site.



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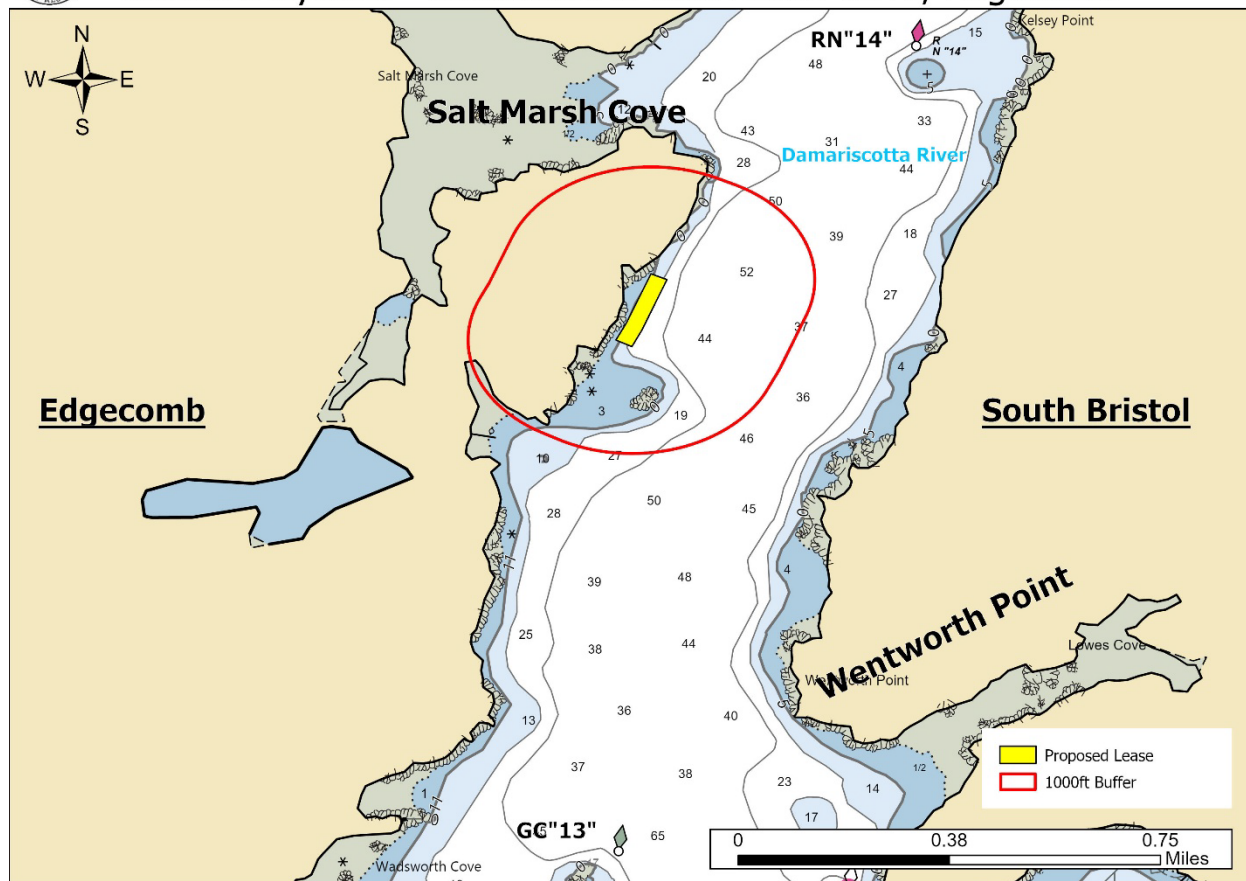


Figure 3. Navigational channels in the vicinity of the proposed lease area.

(3) Fishing and Other Uses

During the site visit, DMR observed 60 lobster buoys in the general vicinity of the proposal. The closest buoy was located within the proposed lease boundaries (Figure 2). A lobster boat was observed hauling/setting traps approximately 0.75 miles north of the proposed site. Additionally, an aquaculture skiff was observed working on aquaculture leases across the river (DAM M1x & DAM M1x2). Two small white buoys with DMR labels were visible to the south and southeast of the site. Their purpose was unknown (Figure 2).

(4) Other Aquaculture Uses

There are four licensed limited purpose aquaculture (LPA) sites (AROG121, AROG221, AROG321, AROG421) within 1,000 feet of the proposal (Figure 4). However, no aquaculture buoys were visible on the surface during the site visit. Two submerged yellow hardshell buoys were discovered south of the proposed lease area covered in significant sugar kelp growth.



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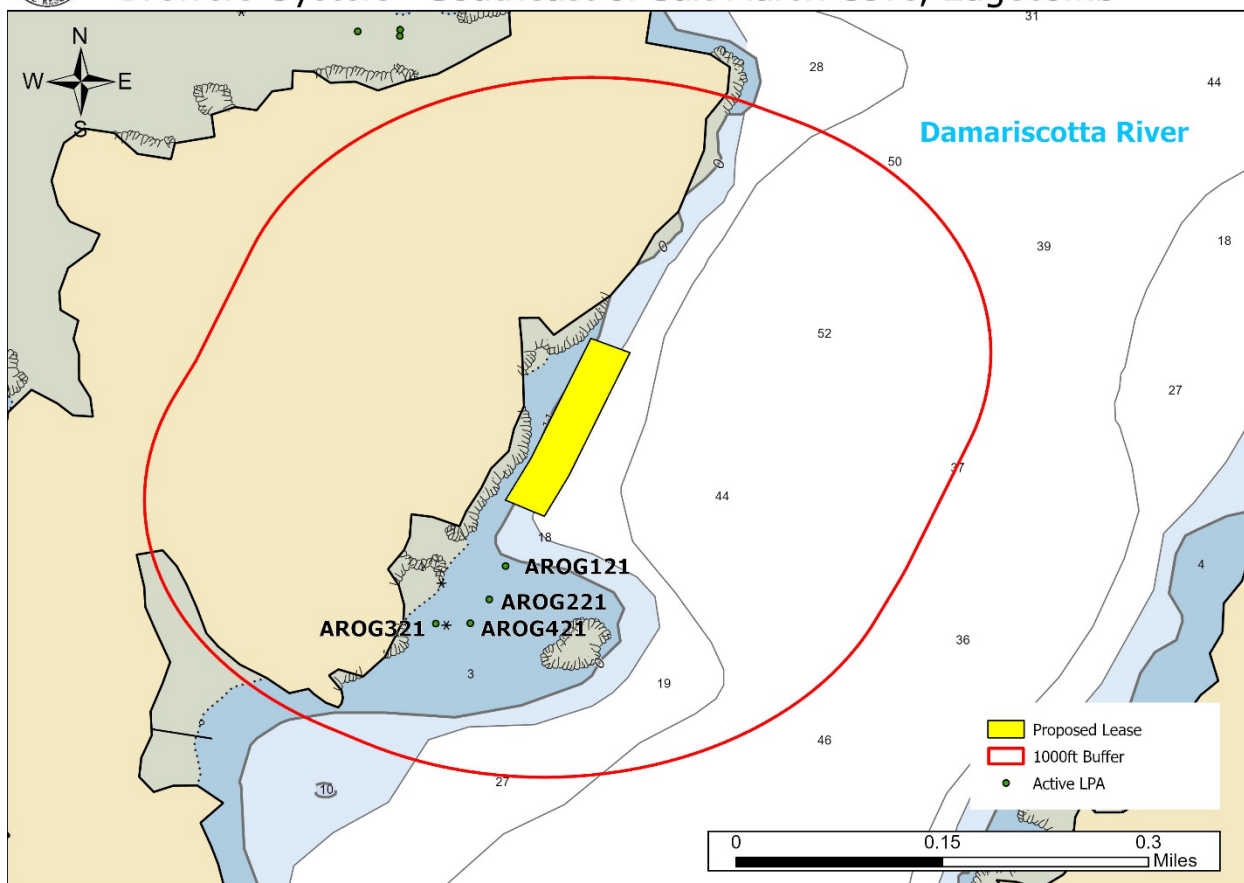


Figure 4. Aquaculture leases, LPA licenses, and applications under review by DMR in the vicinity of the proposed lease area.

(5) Existing System Support

Epibenthic Flora and Fauna

On June 11, 2026, DMR scientists utilized an ROV to access 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 in underwater video footage.

Observed Species	Abundance
Rock crab (<i>Cancer irroratus</i>)	Common
European oyster (<i>Ostrea edulis</i>)	Occasional
Surf clam (<i>Spisula solidissima</i>)	Occasional
Unidentified juvenile bony fish (<i>Osteichthyes</i> sp.)	Occasional



Eelgrass (*Zostera marina*)

Records of seagrass collected by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in 2023⁶ indicate no mapped eelgrass presence in the vicinity of the proposal (Figure 5). No eelgrass was observed on underwater video footage within the proposal boundaries during DMR's site visit.



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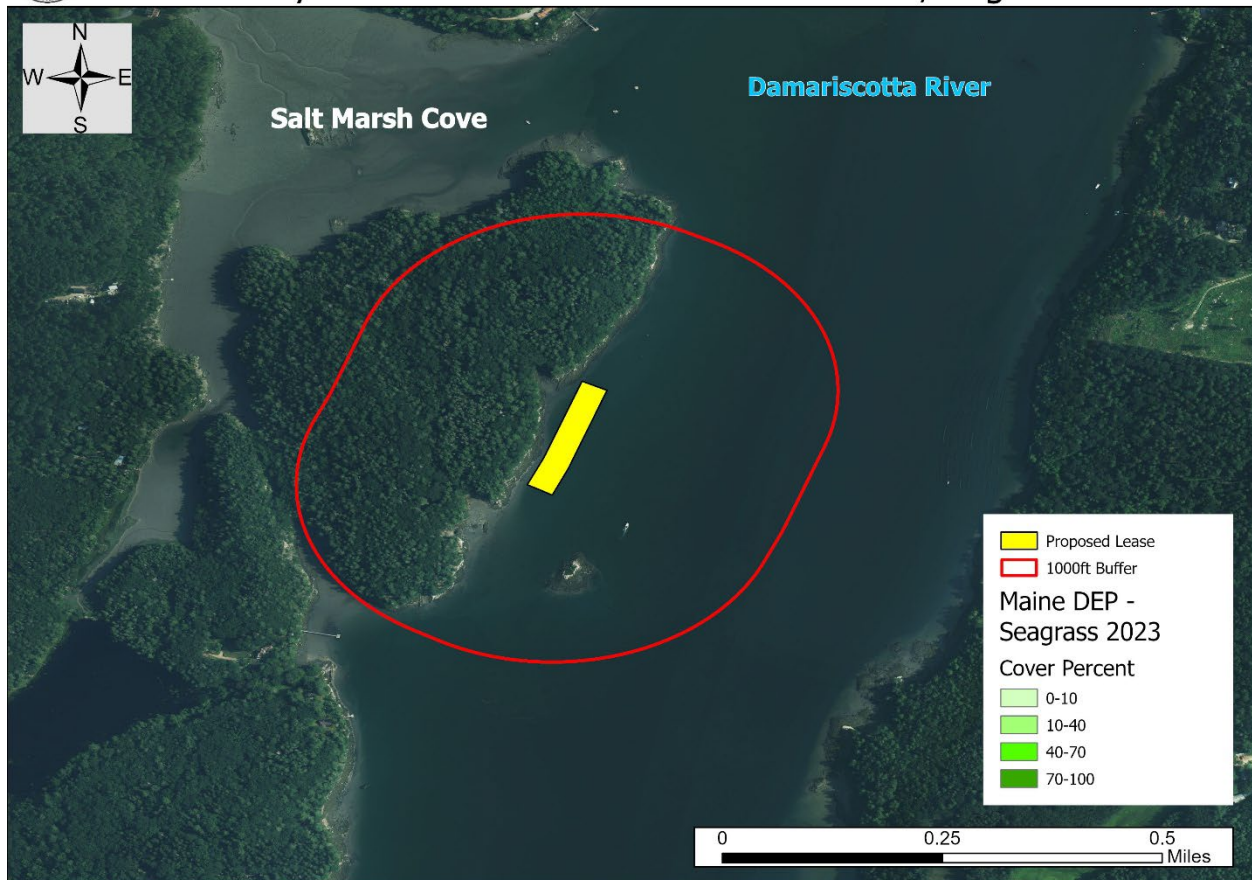


Figure 5. Mapped eelgrass (*Z. marina*) in the vicinity of the proposed lease area.

Wildlife

During DMR's site visit, scientists observed common tern (*Sterna hirundo*), great cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), lesser black backed gull (*Larus fuscus*), double-crested cormorant (*Nannopterum auritum*), American crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), lion's mane jellyfish (*Cyanea capillata*), moon jellyfish (*Aurelia aurita*), mallard duck (*Anas platyrhynchos*), and harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina*) in the general vicinity of the proposal. The harbor seals were observed swimming, splashing, and breaching in the vicinity of the proposal.

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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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 one mapped habitat type within 1,000 feet of the lease proposal. An area of mapped Tidal Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat (TWWH) is located approximately 191 feet south of the proposed site (Figure 6), which is a type of Significant Wildlife Habitat designated and regulated by IFW.⁷

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 the vicinity of the proposal.

IFW was provided with the opportunity to comment on this proposal. On April 8, 2026, a Senior Resource Biologist with IFW responded stating that MDIFW does not have any mapped jurisdictional resources in the lease footprint, and anticipates minimal impacts to wildlife.⁸

⁷ <https://www.maine.gov/ifw/programs-resources/environmental-review/significant.html>

⁸ Email correspondence between IFW and DMR



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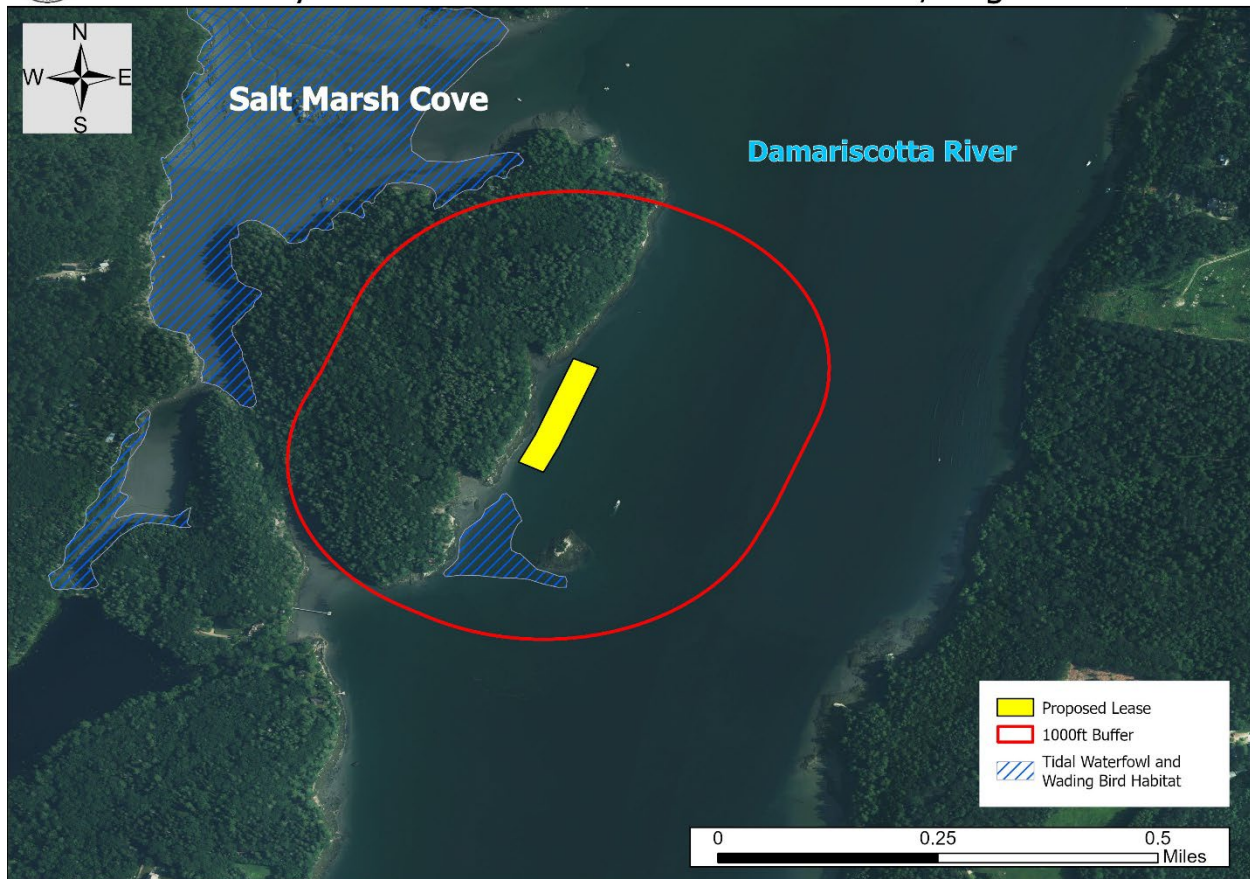


Figure 6. Mapped habitats in the vicinity of the proposed lease area.

(6) Interference with Public Facilities

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

(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 (BPHA).