

SHELLFISH MANAGEMENT PLAN

for

Town of Southwest Harbor

The Town of Southwest Harbor submits the following information as required by DMR Regulations Chapter 7.20, which states that the Shellfish Management Plan shall consist of:

- A. A written statement of goals and objectives the municipality plans to achieve as a result of its conservation program and
- B. A description of the various conservation measures the municipality intends to employ to reach those goals.

GOAL:

It is the goal of Southwest Harbor's Shellfish Management Plan to maximize sustainable long term opportunity for local citizens to enjoy safe and nutritious softshell clams (*Mya arenaria*) taken from surrounding ocean clamflats managed by the town and to maximize other benefits of town stewardship of this important marine resource.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Maintain a sustained and clear focus on recreational harvest as the best means of assuring long term opportunity for a maximum number of local citizens to enjoy use of this important local resource.
2. Acquire adequate data on the status and health of the softshell clam resource to enable the Shellfish Conservation Committee plan actions to sustain it.
3. Maximize total benefit of town stewardship by allocating any surplus production of local clamflats to commercial diggers but only if it can be done without jeopardizing the ability to accomplish objective #1 above.
4. Utilize temporary conservation closures to protect and restore clam populations shown to have been depleted to the point that sustainable use is not supported.
5. Recognize that one of the overall benefits of town management of these flats is that they can support the educational benefits for our local student population. Pematic students can be exposed to natural resource management practices and learn about participating in the civic life of their community.
6. Monitor the latest scientific information on the biology and protection of this valuable resource and be prepared to utilize new measures to protect and enhance it if the committee feels that it can be done in an effective and economical manner.

CONSERVATION MEASURES TO BE UTILIZED:

- A) Unless data clearly supports that commercial harvest can be allowed without jeopardizing opportunity for recreational harvest, licenses will only be issued for recreational digging.
- B) Recreational harvest will be limited to 1 peck per day of legal size (> 2") per licensee.
- C) Recreation harvest will be further limited by prohibiting night digging.

D) Conduct surveys to support resource management and protection activities in cooperation with the local school whenever possible and practical. Essential data to be acquired will be: clamflat population surveys, watershed searches for potential sources of pollution which may limit the potential for human consumption, assessment of the presence of other target shellfish species which may be populating our flats (e.g. oysters and other clam species), and organisms which may imperil our shellfish resource such as invasive green crabs.

E) React to the data in D above to craft appropriate and legal responses.

F) Monitor changes and threats to maintenance of public access to the ocean, and take action through legal opportunities to protect and enhance public access. Clam harvest is a long held public right from the intertidal zone, and the public can not use and enjoy this resource if they can not access it.