

SHELLFISH MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR 2024-25

for
Wells Maine

As required by DMR Regulations Chapter 7.20, the Town of Wells provides the state with the following information representing its Shellfish Management Plan for 2024-25. In accordance with the regulations this plan includes:

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

Statement of Management Goals and Objectives:

Goals:

The goal of the shellfish management plan for the Town of Wells is to protect, preserve and enhance the viability of harvesting softshell clams in this community. These goals are accomplished as follows:

Protection:

- *by limiting seasonal harvesting to holidays and every other weekend, December through March,*
- *by regulating and limiting license sales.*

Preservation:

- *by having a standing committee of volunteers to guide and oversee the operation and management of the town's clam hatchery, interface with the state, and ensure its municipal ordinances remain relevant.*
- *the shellfish committee interfaces with state resources to determine placement and quantity of clams to be seeded and assigns closures and restrictions to harvesting in those areas when recommended*

Enhancement:

- *by managing, operating and maintaining a town owned shellfish hatchery, The Wells Shellfish Laboratory, produces 10 MM clams which are used today to seed its intertidal zones.*

Objectives:

- *Protect the viability of the soft-shell clam resource. This is accomplished by a series of conservation measures taken by the town:*
 - *Harvesting Limitations: Harvesting in Wells is limited to every other weekend plus holidays from December 7 through March 30*

- *Licensing Limitations: Licenses are allocated based on prior approval by DMR. Licenses are issued to recreational harvesters only. There are no commercial licenses sold in Wells.*
 - *Under those guidelines the sale of seasonal recreational licenses in 2024-25 is limited to approximately 85 residents, 15 non-residents.*
 - *In addition, for 2024-25, the town provides 10 daily licenses to residents, 10 daily licenses to non-residents, 12 licenses to Senior Residents, 2 licenses to Senior Non-Residents and 5 licenses are awarded to volunteers performing 25 hrs. of conservation efforts on behalf of the resource.*
- *Preserve and enhance the viability of the soft-shell clam resources in Wells. This occurs through a series of initiatives to expand the output from the town owned clam rearing facility. Committee members, other volunteers and local high school students will participate in programs targeted at increasing the output of the shellfish lab.*
 - *Conservation Projects: The town is exploring ways to expand the output of the seed clams currently produced at the town owned hatchery. This effort will allow an expansion of seeding rates in its intertidal zones. The town is examining opportunities to offer seed for sale to other municipalities. The next planned seeding in the designated areas of the town flats is set to occur in September 2025.*
 - *Initiatives set for 2024-25 include:*
 - *Encouraging local high school teachers and their students to assist the town in designing, building and operating a growth facility for rearing algae as a food source for seed clams.*
 - *Producing a direct food source will accelerate growth rate, thereby increasing the total number of seed clams that can be produced at this hatchery.*
 - *Expanding seed production will mitigate the impact that predation has on clams within the town's intertidal zones.*
 - *Exploring ways to support surrounding communities with seed clams to help expand their harvests.*
 - *Expanding community awareness of the role that estuary and intertidal ecosystems play in the local economy.*