

SHELLFISH MANAGEMENT PLAN

for

Yarmouth/North Yarmouth Shellfish Commission

Yarmouth/North Yarmouth 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
- B. A description of the various conservation measures the municipality intends to employ to reach those goals.

Statement of Management Goals and Objectives

It is the goal of Yarmouth/North Yarmouth's Shellfish Management Plan to protect, maintain, and enhance both the number of shellfish and the open areas for harvesting. Our program is designed to maximize the number of shellfish available by increasing water quality and opening as many areas as possible to commercial and recreational harvesters. In order to maintain the productivity of individual harvesters we are limiting licenses for the harvesting of softshell clams, quahogs, razor clams, surf clams, American oysters, and European oysters. We will continue to encourage recreational harvesting to encourage citizens to be engaged in the issues related to near shore water quality and protection of the intertidal zone. Public awareness and support for shellfish harvest activities are essential to maintaining access to harvestable areas. Telling the "story of shellfish" by harvesters and stakeholders could provide a helpful backdrop to working with the public. Awareness will be created through a communications plan, which will include our brochure, updating our webpage, and developing other methods of communicating the importance of the intertidal zone to the community.

The Shellfish Commission believes that informed resource management requires regular and systematic assessments of those resources. We will continue to conduct data gathering activities related to all the species in our ordinance. We will work to develop an enhancement program to increase softshell clam and quahog resources through a town-owned upweller and use judicious closures to allow for growth and protection of resources.

Objectives

- **Licensing:** limit commercial licenses to maximize individual harvest and maintain relatively open licensing for recreational harvesters to introduce a wide variety of people to the resource and increase understanding of the intertidal zone.
- **Conservation:** conduct enhancement activities to increase resources and use closures and/or harvest limits to maintain a healthy population of shellfish. We are also working toward developing an upweller to be placed in the town dock in order to grow seed and distribute to flats in the town.
- **Water Quality:** the Commission will review water quality data on a regular basis to determine if further steps are needed to protect and enhance the water quality in Yarmouth coastal waters and the contributing upland areas.
- **Access:** maintain and improve access to the shore, with consideration being given to informal access points.

- Data Gathering: shoreline surveys, water quality monitoring, population surveys, sediment types, and other types of information used to understand and monitor the water quality and the shellfish population.
- Education: Shellfish Commission members will regularly attend meetings and education opportunities provided by DMR and others. Attendance is intended to increase understanding of the issues facing wild shellfish harvesting, and that members bring what they have learned back to the Commission.
- Public awareness: brochure for recreational license holders, signs at locations where people gather related to picking up dog waste.

Description of Conservation Measures

- Licensing:
 - We will maximize commercial harvest by limiting licenses. Recommendations for license numbers will be based on population resource surveys done on a rotational basis, and on DMR landings data from Yarmouth over the previous five years. We will also review the number of recreational licenses taken out in the previous year to understand the demand for licensing. Finally, we will continue to work with recreational harvesters to gather voluntary data from them on how often and what species and how much they are collecting during the season. For informational purposes only, we will also look at any available data from surrounding communities. This will be strictly big picture information and not used for determining licensing.
- Conservation:
 - Closures: The Shellfish Commission will consider and implement conservation closures or restriction of amount of harvesting at a particular locations if the commission feels there is data to support the need for allowing a particular population time to recover or to allow seeded stock to develop.
 - Population surveys will be carried out by members of the Shellfish Committee and commercial license holders (at least 2 per year) in exchange for conservation credits. The Shellfish Commission will also contract with an outside team to conduct three surveys per year. All shellfish surveys shall be done using the DMR recommended methodology and in a rotating pattern in order to cover all the areas of the town over time. Specific details of our sampling plan:
 - all regulated species should be assessed on a regular basis,
 - completed on a schedule such that all areas assessed on a regular basis,
 - performed using methods sanctioned by regulators by trained staff and/or volunteers,
 - documented in accordance with standardized practices,
 - published in both summary and detail form that is accessible to the public.
 - original data sheets and summary data of all surveys will be maintained by the Shellfish Warden.
 - all regions with potential for harvestable shellfish should be assessed on a regular basis
 - all regions should be assessed regardless of regulatory state or commercial harvest value, with the understanding that any survey done in closed areas needs prior approval from DMR.

- The town is committed to building and upweller in the town dock to enhance seeding programs, provide an opportunity for young people to be involved in protecting their community and enhancing the wild stock of shellfish, and provide a space which can be rented to help fund other shellfish activities. The town has applied for and received grants and developed specifications for the upweller. The town has received a grant from DMR for \$7,000 towards implementing the upweller system. It has also received other grant funds for replacing the docks, so the project will move forward in the Spring of 2025.
- We will enhance the softshell clam and quahog resource through growing seed in an upweller and distributing the seed in various locations. The town will purchase seed in June or July, depending on seed availability and DMR approval. Seed will be grown in the town upweller through the summer and fall, overwintered, and then distributed to areas identified by the Commission. Seeded areas will be closed through a conservation closure for at least 12 months. This effort will be evaluated through annual resource population surveys from the spring following the seeding effort until 50% of the resource has reached market size.
- Green crab trapping has been done in recent years and may occur this year
- Water quality: basis throughout the coastal areas of town and areas which contribute to nearby streams. Activities to be undertaken by the Commission include:
 - Review of DMR P90 data on at least a yearly basis
 - conduct shoreline surveys
 - test any outflow discovered in shoreline surveys at the town Water Treatment plant
 - Maintain a spatial database of septic systems that are over 20-year-old and along the shore of any tidal waters.
 - Continue to look for opportunities to study water flow and better map closure areas around regulatory closures.
- Access: The town has worked with Manomet to identify all the formal and informal access points in town. The shellfish commission will continue to monitor and work with landowners to maintain access and encourage formalization where possible.
- Data Gathering: The town will continue to maintain long term data that has been collected to make good sound management decisions. Data will be stored as geospatial data and other forms of databases. The information will be held by the town to be used over time. These data include:
 - Shoreline surveys, locations, and observations
 - Water quality testing results
 - Population survey raw data and reports
 - Coastal septic system locations and data
 - Working with various organizations to identify sediment types
 - Collecting any other data in the area that can help with understanding the population and water quality.