

# Town of Phippsburg

## RECREATIONAL SHELLFISH INFORMATION FOR SOFTSHELL CLAMS, HEN/SURF CLAMS, AND QUAHOGS

Each person must obtain a **license** from the Town Office or Camping Area for harvesting of Softshell Clams, Hen/Surf Clams, and Quahogs.

- A **Resident License** is only valid while residing in Town. If camping or renting a summer cottage your license becomes invalid once you are no longer camping or renting in Town. A person who wants to “day trip” from outside of Town must purchase a **Non-Resident License**.
- Fees: \$25.00 for Resident License, \$30.00 for Non-Resident License. Persons 16 years and younger or 65 years of age and older can obtain free licenses. Licenses are valid from the date of issue until June 30th of the next year.
- Minimum Softshell Clam Size: **2 inches**
- Minimum Quahog Size: **1 inch on the hinge**
- Maximum amount of Softshell Clams and Quahogs per **PERSON** per **DAY**: **1 peck each**
- Maximum amount of Hen/Surf Clams per **PERSON** per **DAY**: **1 bushel**
- Shellfish shall not be sold

**1 Peck = 1/4 Bushel = 2 Gallons = 8 Quarts = Several inches below the top of a 2 1/2 Gallon Bucket**

**Clam flats in Phippsburg may close from time to time for:**

**Pollution** by human or animal fecal coliform bacteria. Consumption of contaminated shellfish can cause abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever and in extreme cases death may result. If symptoms occur, call for medical aid immediately, Telephone 9-1-1.

**Red Tide** or paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP). The neurotoxin that causes PSP blocks nerve impulses, causing paralysis of the respiratory muscles and extremities. It is so poisonous that consumption of just one mussel could be fatal. Symptoms most often occur within 30 minutes of ingestion and include a tingling, numbness or burning sensation of the lips, gums, tongue and face, and death may result. If symptoms occur, call for medical aid immediately, Telephone 9-1-1.

**Conservation activities**. Such as reseeded of young clams to increase yields in sparse areas.

To monitor fecal coliform pollution, volunteers from Phippsburg collect water and clam samples regularly at the request of the State lab at Boothbay for testing. If these tests show continuing high levels of fecal bacteria, the State will close the flats to protect the public health until the pollution clears or until we locate the source and make corrections. Heavy rains cause pollutants from the land to be washed into the waterways. Failing in-ground septic systems or faulty overboard discharge systems can cause high fecal coliform counts on nearby flats and malfunction of the sewage treatment plant in Bath can also cause problems.

To monitor Red Tide contamination, the State regularly samples mussels and clams along the coast and tests them at the Boothbay lab. High levels cause the State to close flats.

As part of managing our clam resource, the Phippsburg Shellfish Committee carries on a program of "re-seeding" depleted flats with very young clams taken from areas where they have set in thickly. The Town then closes the re-seeded "conservation" area for several years to allow the young clams to grow to the 2" minimum harvestable size.

Most shellfish commonly eaten in Phippsburg are bivalves having two shells, hinged together. They include oysters, clams, mussels, scallops, and cockles. Single-shelled mollusks such as snails and welks are also eaten, but less frequently. Clams have an extremely efficient method of filtration and will concentrate microorganisms at much higher levels in their tissue than are found in their habitat. The level of harmful bacteria in a mollusk can be from three to twenty times that found in the water from which it was taken.

### **INFORMATION ON CLOSED AREAS**

Information on closed areas can be found on the Shellfish Bulletin Board inside the Town Office which is open Monday through Friday (9-1 and 2-5). A listing is also available on the outside Bulletin Board and website. These are only updated during the week.

During closures the Shellfish Warden will make every attempt to post 8 1/2 by 11 inch signs at the major points of access to some of the flats. However, never trust the absence of a sign, for they can be vandalized, damaged, or just plain vanish. The best thing to do to be safe is to either call the Town Office at 389-2653, check the Shellfish Bulletin Board inside/outside the Town Office, or call Doug Alexander, Shellfish warden at 443-3114. Also, the red tide Hot Line telephone number is 1-800-232-4733.