

From the Shellfish Warden

Over the past year, several issues have come up that affect both Commercial and Recreational. Much of the work done over the last year has involved documenting the current condition of the shellfish resource in Gouldsboro.

Participation in shellfish conservation activities

While I have seen increased citizen involvement in some specific issues, the overall level of participation in shellfish management has remained about the same. The major limit on the Shellfish Committee is the availability of labor. Volunteers are limited and there is not enough money in the budget to hire and pay people to do all the shellfish conservation work that could be done.

It is always easy to complain about things and anyone can do so. It is quite another thing to make an investment in your town and industry and actually take the time to pursue solutions.

As I did last year, this year I ask the diggers in Gouldsboro to actively participate in the management of the shellfish resource in Gouldsboro. One of the simplest ways to get involved is to show up at the monthly Shellfish Committee Meetings. They are held at the Town Office, at 7 PM on the second Wednesday of each month. The Shellfish Conservation Committee needs your experience, concerns and observations to manage the resource.

Proposed Mussel aquaculture lease in Bunker Cove

In September 2006, there was a preliminary; Department of Marine Resources (DMR) sponsored "scoping session" concerning a proposed mussel lease in Bunkers Cove. At the scoping session, the Shellfish Committee, Selectmen and numerous local citizens made it clear to DMR and the lease applicant that there is clear opposition to a mussel lease in Bunkers Cove. As of this writing, April 2007, the applicant has not gone forward in the formal lease application process.

Mussel dragging in the intertidal zone

In the last several years some of our flats, most notably Stave Island Bar and Jones Cove, have been impacted by mussel dragging higher into the intertidal zone. This expands the areas that mussels cover and tends to choke out soft shell clams. Almost everyone involved with clamming has noticed that there are mussels growing in places where they have not been in the past.

DMR Pilot Project

In response to many of these concerns, DMR is working on a pilot project involving Gouldsboro, Bar Harbor and Deer Isle/Stonington that would allow the towns to have more control over marine resources in the intertidal zone. This project is in the initial planning phase and should be in place by this time next year.

Licenses

Anyone who digs for soft shell clams in Gouldsboro must purchase a Municipal Shellfish Digging License at the Town Office. Both recreational and commercial diggers must have a municipal license. The minimum fine for digging shellfish in Gouldsboro without a municipal license is \$300. At the end of this letter is a summary of the open and closed clam flats in Gouldsboro. When you purchase a license this year, you will also notice several changes in the license package that should make taking shellfish (legally) in Gouldsboro easier.

At the Town Meeting in June 2006 several changes to the Municipal Ordinance were approved. The major change as of 1 July 2007 is that people wanting to purchase a Commercial shellfish license must complete 10 hours of Conservation time. No conservation time, no commercial license. These changes are detailed in the license packages at the Town Office.

It's your Town and Resource

Even if you cannot become more active in Shellfish Resource Management, you can pay attention to our shore line. If you are a clam digger, own shorefront property, have access to the shore, have a view of a clam flat, or simply have a question concerning the digging of shellfish in Gouldsboro, please don't hesitate to contact me. The things that you see and the concerns that you may have are very helpful in managing the shellfish resource in Gouldsboro. In the last two years several people have seen individuals digging on the flats that they did not recognize or noticed possible pollution sources. In every instance, I have been able to find the people, check out what they were doing and follow up on the concerns that have been brought up.

To contact the Warden, call the Town Office at 963-5589 or the Hancock County Dispatch (RCC) at 667-7575. Leave a short message that includes a contact number and the best time to call you back.

Summary of Gouldsboro clam flat closures as of 1 July 2007

<u>Map #</u>	<u>Flat Name</u>	<u>Closure Status</u>
1	John Small Cove	OPEN
1	Bunker Cove	OPEN
2	Freemans Point	CLOSED
3	Jones Cove	Open
4	South Gouldsboro	CLOSED 1 July 2007 to 31Dec 2007 OPEN 1 Jan 2008 to 30 June 2008
4	Stave Island Bar	CLOSED 1 July 2007 to 31Dec 2007 OPEN 1 Jan 2008 to 30 June 2008
5	Wonsqueak Harbor/Bunkers Harbor	STATE CLOSURE
6	Prospect Harbor	STATE CLOSURE
6	Birch Harbor	CLOSED
7	Flats off West Bay Road	OPEN
8	Deep Cove	OPEN 1 July 2007 to 31 Dec 2007 CLOSED 1 Jan 2008 to 30 June 2008
9	Gouldsboro Bay/Paul Bunyan Road	CLOSED 1 July 2007 to 31Dec 2007 OPEN 1 Jan 2008 to 30 June 2008
9	Tom Newman Cove	CLOSED until 31 Dec 2007
9	Mill Pond	CLOSED until 31 Dec 2007
10	Northern West Bay/Timber Cove	OPEN
11	Joy Bay and Joy Cove	STATE CLOSURE