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## Types of Licenses

All harvesting activities for certain shellfish species require a town license. The town provides a small number of commercial licenses for harvesters who make a living from the sea. Commercial harvesters follow all of the same laws and regulations that recreational harvesters follow except for the volume of daily harvest. Limited numbers of annual recreational licenses are available for residents (Yarmouth and North Yarmouth) and non-residents alike. To obtain a license you must appear in person at the Yarmouth town office, to inquire about available licenses call **207-846-9036**.

## Public Access Locations

The town of Yarmouth is blessed with acres of intertidal mudflats which are prime shellfish habitat. The town maintains a public boat ramp at the head of the Royal River as well as public docks and waterfront parks. Unfortunately, there are limited points of access if you don't have a boat. Commercial harvesters in Yarmouth are careful to develop positive working relationships with waterfront owners, and they ask that recreational harvesters do the same. Maine law provides for lawful fishing activities within the intertidal zone including licensed shellfish harvest, but it is always good to develop positive working relationships with local residents.

If you need help in planning your dig or you aren't sure where you can go, please call the Shellfish Warden at **207-846-3333** who can provide you meaningful guidance.

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## Important Contacts

### DMR Shellfish Hotline

**1-800-232-4733**

<https://www.maine.gov/dmr>

Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) maintains a 24 hour hotline you can call to determine if the area you would plan to dig is open for harvesting. Please call this number **first** before you harvest to ensure that you are taking shellfish from approved areas.

### Yarmouth Shellfish Warden

**Will Owen**

**207-846-3333**

The Shellfish Warden enforces local and state laws regarding the digging and harvesting of crustaceans in the Yarmouth jurisdiction. Will Owen is available to answer your questions and can help you have a successful dig. This number will connect you to the area public safety dispatch operator - ask to speak to the warden.



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# Shellfish Harvesting in Yarmouth ME

Important information to know when harvesting shellfish.



From 'The Pine-tree Coast' by Samuel Adams Drake, Boston, Estes & Laurent, 1891.

## The importance of following conservation and safety closures.

Shellfish are filter feeders; they ingest seawater to filter out plankton (small plants and animals) for food. By this same filtering mechanism they can accumulate bacteria, viruses, pollutants, biotoxins and harmful plankton - sometimes accumulating enough to risk poisoning the people who consume the shellfish. Shellfish harvesting areas are monitored for pollution, biotoxins and harmful plankton blooms, and also for conservation purposes to maintain sustainable harvest levels.

Harvestable areas may be classified as *prohibited*, *restricted* or *approved*, and classifications for a given area may be changed at any time. Recreational harvesters may only dig from areas that are **approved** at the time they dig. To determine if an area is approved for harvest, always contact Maine Department of Marine Resources or the Shellfish Warden before you dig. Up-to-date information is also posted at Yarmouth Town Hall.

### DMR Shellfish Hotline

**1-800-232-4733**

**<https://www.maine.gov/dmr>**

**Never** assume that an area is safe and legal to harvest shellfish from until you have verified with DMR that the area is safe for harvest. There are legal penalties for harvesting from prohibited, restricted or otherwise closed shellfish areas. When in doubt, reach out to DMR or the warden who can help you have a successful harvest.

## Regulated Shellfish Species

The Town of Yarmouth regulates the harvest of the following shellfish above line of the low tide. More information can be found at <https://www.maine.gov/dmr/laws-regulations/regulations/index.html>

Shellfish	Minimum Size	Maximum Harvest
<b>Softshell clams</b> <i>Mya Arenaria</i> (aka steamers, softshells, longnecks, Ipswich clams, or Essex clams)	<b>2" length</b>	<b>1 peck per person per day</b>
<b>Northern Quahogs</b> <i>Mercenaria mercenari</i> (aka quahaug, round clam, cherrystones, littlenecks, countnecks, or hard-shell clam)	<b>1" hinge width</b>	<b>1 peck per person per day</b>
<b>Razor Clams</b> <i>Ensis directus</i> (aka Atlantic Jackknife or bamboo clam)	<b>4" length</b>	<b>1 peck per person per day</b>
<b>American Oysters</b> <i>Crassostrea virginica</i> (aka Eastern, Wellfleet, Atlantic or Virginia oyster)	<b>2.5" length</b>	<b>1 peck per person per day</b>
<b>European Oysters</b> <i>Ostrea edulis</i> (aka European flat, Belons, mud or edible oyster) Always prohibited June 15 to September 15	<b>3" length</b>	<b>1 peck per person per day</b>

Harvest regulation details can be found here <https://www.maine.gov/dmr> and <https://yarmouth.me.us>

Updated maps and information on approved and closed areas can be found at DMR's online mapping tool found here <https://www.maine.gov/dmr/shellfish-sanitation-management>

1 peck is a unit of volume equivalent to 2 gallons. Call the warden if you are not sure how to measure shellfish properly. An easy way to measure a 2" clam is to use a clam ring or short section of 2" inner diameter pipe. If the widest part of the clam cannot pass through the ring then it is OK to harvest.

**Always equip yourself with up to date information** before harvesting. In recent years Casco Bay has experienced new and rapidly changing challenges to safe harvest practices. Local governments, including Yarmouth, and commercial harvesters rely upon the science and management staff at DMR to provide timely updates on harvest safety and sustainability - **you should, too.**