

Shellfish Conservation Committee Minutes

DATE 6/1/2021 TIME: 7:00 PM

MEETING LOCATION: LOG CABIN

Commission Members:

Attendance: A for absent, P for present

Attendance	Name	Town	Term
P	Harold Hibbard III	North Yarmouth	June 30, 2023
P	Kevin Oliver	North Yarmouth	June 30, 2021
P	Len Kaminow	North Yarmouth	June 30, 2022
P	Judy Colby-George	Yarmouth	December 31, 2022
		Yarmouth	December 31, 2021
P	Ben Tupper	Yarmouth	December 31, 2023

Staff Members:

Attendance	Name	Title/Role
P	Will Owen	Shellfish Warden
A	Randy Bates	Town Council Liaison
A	Ari Leach	Dept. of Marine Resources

Guests/Diggers :

Minutes –

Votes/Quorum: All final votes of the commission shall require the affirmative vote of a majority of those members present and voting provided a quorum is present. A quorum shall be deemed present if a minimum of four (4) members are present. A CHAPTER 305 10 quorum shall be required for the transaction of all business except that a smaller number can adjourn to another time.

Reviewed Minutes for May 4, 2021

Vote taken, 5 for, 0 against, 0 abstain.

Agenda topics

1. DISCUSSION	Warden's Report	
See attached.		
Will let us know that Bob Byron will be working 3 days/wk, welcome back Bob!		
ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE

2. DISCUSSION	Survey Results				
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Date	Low Tide	Tide Level	Meeting Time	Meeting Location	Survey Location
April 24	3:33	-0.2	12:30	Town Landing	Lower Cousins
May 8	4:05	+0.7	1:00	Town Landing	Lanes Island

The May 8 survey was accidentally attached to last months minutes, so both results are attached here.

Fall Survey

Date	Low Tide	Tide Level	Meeting Time	Meeting Location	Survey Location
Sept 12	9:30	0.0	7:00	Town Landing	Middle Cousins

See attached proposed survey areas and proposed survey schedule.

Discussion considered if the areas were appropriate and setting out the long-term schedule makes sense. After much discussion we decided we were not ready yet, but we would work on a set of tasks for the next meeting in September.

Thoughts and discussion included looking into paying for surveys in order to get more done per year. Further discussion about the level of depuration digging. Apparently some communities have greater influence over the duration and level of depuration digging. Also working with Ari to get results of walk over surveys that are done regularly by DMR in the Royal River.

Another question was how we add observational data to the survey results, for instance presence of predators, mud conditions, etc.

How do we archive survey data? Where will it be stored?

What is our budget? Could we sustain paying for surveys? How do we ensure that diggers also have the opportunity to participate in surveys?

Do we need to propose changes to the town council related to the authority of the board? Or related to depuration harvesting? What do other towns do?

ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
Check with other Towns about Depuration Harvesting controls	Kevin	9/7/21
Talk to neighboring towns and Manomet and others about costs for surveying	Kevin	9/7/21
Original Data Archive Plan	Ben/Will	9/7/21
Calculate areas of flats in each survey area	Judy	9/7/21
Find out existing budget/funds for Shellfish from town	Will	9/7/21

3. DISCUSSION	Licensing Discussion
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The idea of a non-softshell clam species license is up for discussion.

Below is a working on a list of what information we would need to manage this license. The following list is a first attempt:

1. All future surveys count all species in our ordinance.
2. 2 extra surveys done by Summer intern
3. Get landings data for all other species in our ordinance
4. Understanding of pricing of other species/cyclical, dependable?
5. Recommend that we agree to have at least one non-softshell license in 2022 so that we have someone harvesting those species in order to get a sense of the level of effort for return, can we add to that license a requirement to provide us with information on harvesting effort?

Postponed until October

ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE

OLD BUSINESS	
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Motion: *Cancel the July & August meetings and reconvene on September 7.*
 Moved by Judy, Seconded by Ben, voted **5 for**, 0 against, 0 abstained

NEW BUSINESS	
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Joe Delano asks the board to consider predator control as a method for accruing conservation points.

Board had a discussion about how this would work, what controls would be needed, is it useful. The board was essentially supportive of the idea as long as it can be documented. Will agreed to work with harvesters to track participation and assign points.

Motion: Predator Control for Green Crabs can accrue up to 1 point/week for up to 12 weeks for trapping and removing green crabs from harvestable areas. Traps would need to be checked 2x per week. Trap locations must be provided to the warden and commission. Harvesters will record dates and time of harvesting, take photo of crabs removed, weigh them and record weight on data sheets and dispose of crabs. Each harvester must check in with Warden before starting and submit document to the Warden every 6 weeks while they are participating.

Moved by Judy, Seconded by Ben, voted **5 for**, 0 against, 0 abstained.

Kevin asked the board to consider withholding the unclaimed resident commercial license that currently exists for this year.

Kevin explained that without more information we should not allow that license to be purchased for this year. We should not be putting a greater strain on the resource given the landings from this past year and evidence from diggers of the reduction in resources. Judy disagreed that we have evidence of a precipitous decline in resource. Ben also felt that we didn't have information to support withholding the license. Will believed that the license should be awarded through a lottery. Kevin felt that if we didn't agree to a conservation closures because we didn't have evidence that we should also agree that there is not enough evidence to allow this license to be awarded. Kevin and Harold both agree that the resource has been diminished over time. There could be many reasons for this, climate changes, loss of brood stock especially due to heavy depuration pressure, overharvesting in the past, and other reasons. Judy pointed out that it was not clear that we can change the number of licenses once they have been approved by the town council. Certainly, the board could not, but Kevin felt that we could ask the council and DMR to withhold that license.

Motion: Recommend to the Town Council & DMR that the town withhold the unclaimed commercial license for this year.

Moved by Kevin, motion was not seconded by a member of the commission and therefore no vote was held.

NEXT MEETING DATE	September 7, 2021
MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE COMMUNITY ROOM IN THE TOWN HALL.	Agenda for Next Meeting: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review Minutes 2. Warden's Report 3. Grant Report - Amanda 4. Regional Shellfish Meetings 5. Shellfish Management Plan/Survey Plan 6. Grant Revisions 7. New Business 8. Set Agenda

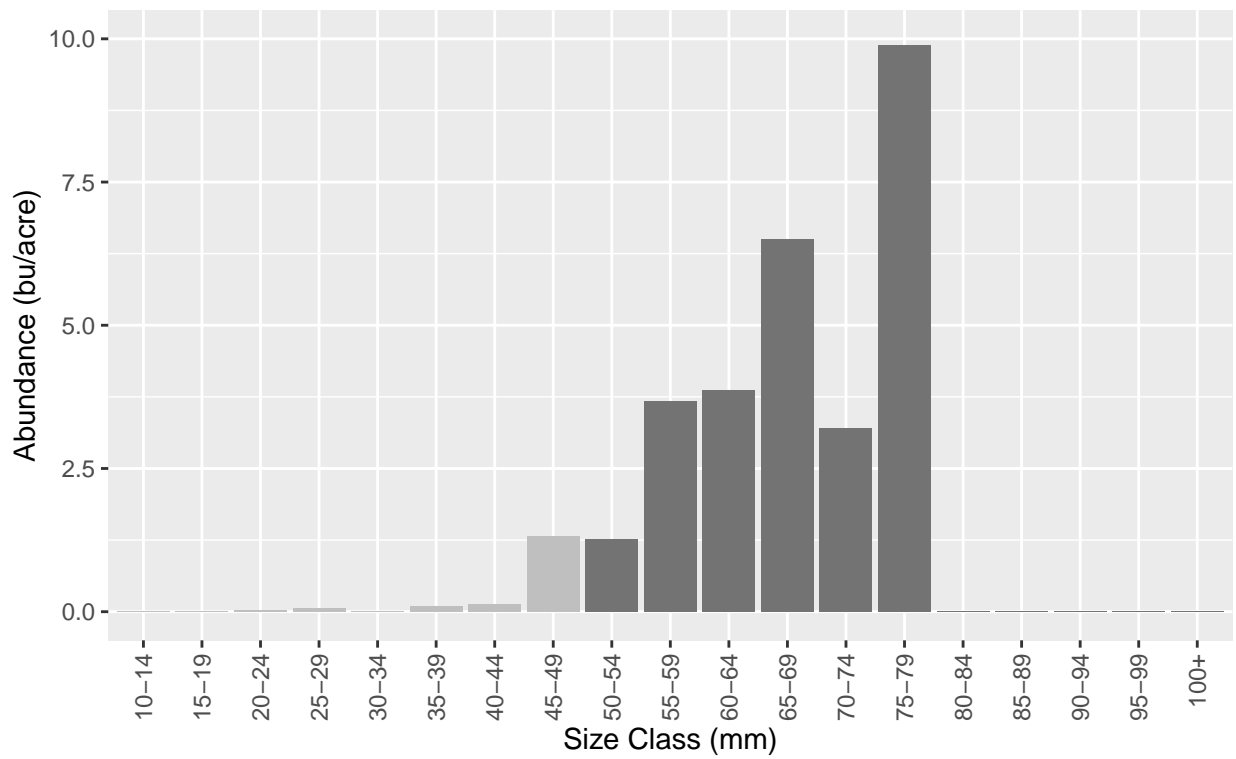
TIME MEETING ADJOURNED: 9:15 pm

Softshell Survey Result

Softshell Survey data: 2020-05-08, Yarmouth, Lane's Island (south)
N plots: 58, Plot intervals: 25' x 50', Area: 1.7 acres
Abundance: 30.0 bushels per acre
Legally sized abundance (> 50mm), 28.4 bushels per acre

2020-05-08: Lane's Island (south)

Area: 1.7 acres, Abund: 30.0 bu/acre, Abund legal: 28.4 bu/acre

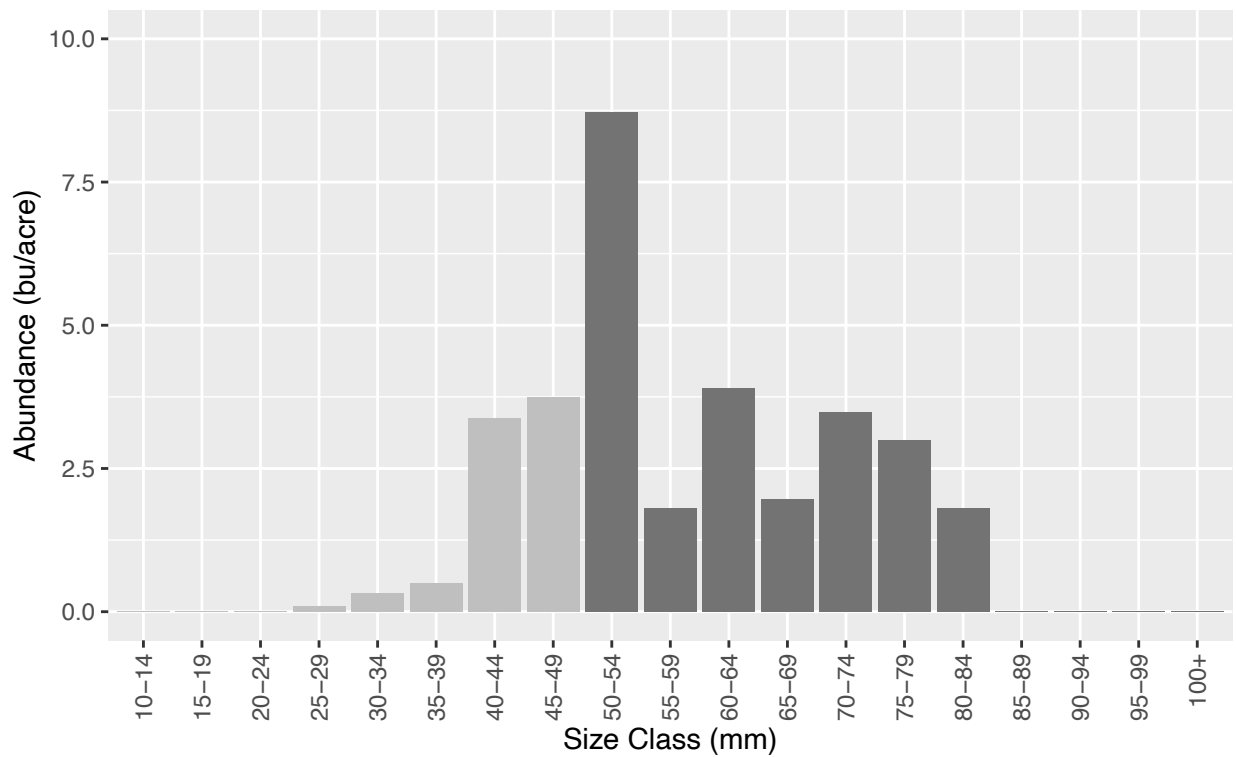


Softshell Survey Result

Softshell Survey data: 2021-04-24, Yarmouth, Lower Cousins
N plots: 32, Plot intervals: 25' x 50', Area: 0.9 acres
Abundance: 32.7 bushels per acre
Legally sized abundance (> 50mm), 24.7 bushels per acre

2021-04-24: Lower Cousins

Area: 0.9 acres, Abund: 32.7 bu/acre, Abund legal: 24.7 bu/acre



Softshell Survey Result

Softshell Survey data: 2017-09-16, Yarmouth, Lower Cousins
N plots: 41, Plot intervals: 100' x 100', Area: 9.4 acres
Abundance: 189.8 bushels per acre
Legally sized abundance (> 50mm), 180.9 bushels per acre

2017-09-16: Lower Cousins

Area: 9.4 acres, Abund: 189.8 bu/acre, Abund legal: 180.9 bu/acre

