



Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

235 Promenade Street | Providence, RI 02908 | 401.222.4700 | www.dem.ri.gov | @RhodeIslandDEM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

October 7, 2016

CONTACT: Gail Mastrati, DEM – 401.222.4700

gail.mastrati@dem.ri.gov

UPDATE ON EMERGENCY SHELLFISH CLOSURE IN RI WATERS

Additional areas closed effective sunrise on Saturday, October 8

PROVIDENCE - In an update to the precautionary shellfish harvesting closure announced yesterday for Narragansett Bay, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) today announced shellfishing is also prohibited in all waters of Mt. Hope Bay, Kickemuit River and the Sakonnet River north of a line from Sachuest Point in Newport to Sakonnet Point in Little Compton, effective sunrise on Saturday, October 8. All tributaries to those waters are restricted as well.

The closures are due to a confirmed harmful algae bloom (HAB) caused by the presence of toxic phytoplankton, *Pseudo-nitzschia spp.* The harvest restriction does not apply to carnivorous snails such as whelk and moon snails.

Given the high concentrations of phytoplankton in several areas of Narragansett Bay and the confirmed presence of toxins in the phytoplankton, and out of an abundance of caution, all portions of the Bay where these elevated levels were found are being closed to shellfish harvesting.

DEM, in partnership with RIDOH, has and will continue to collect local shellfish for analysis to determine if the toxins are present in shellfish meats at levels of concern. The toxin, known as domoic acid, produced by these phytoplankton is responsible for causing amnesiac shellfish poisoning (ASP) in humans. Symptoms of ASP include short- and long-term memory loss along with other serious health effects.

For updates on shellfish closure areas, contact the DEM 24-hour shellfishing hotline at 401-222-2900. For more information on [DEM](#) divisions and programs, visit www.dem.ri.gov. Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/RhodeIslandDEM or on Twitter (@RhodeIslandDEM) for timely updates.

-30-