



Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

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BAN LIFTED ON WHELK HARVESTING IN LOWER NARRAGANSETT BAY, NEARBY WATERS

Areas remain closed to all other shellfish harvesting

PROVIDENCE – The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) announced today that harvesting of carnivorous snails, including whelk and moon snails, is now permitted in lower Narragansett Bay, lower Sakonnet River, and a portion of Rhode Island Sound. The harvesting closure, associated with the harmful algae bloom being monitored in local waters, for all other types of shellfish remains in effect for these areas.

Impacted waters include all waters north of a line from Point Judith to Sakonnet Point Light and south of a line from the southern extension of 2nd street in the Sauga Point area of North Kingstown to Conanicut Point in Jamestown to the day marker at Halfway Rock in Portsmouth. The restriction also extends to waters south of an east/west line across the Sakonnet River lying one-quarter mile south of the pipeline found just south of Black Point. Shellfish harvested from the open portions of Harvester Tagging Areas 4A and 3W should temporarily be identified as 4A North and 3W North.

Since announcing the precautionary shellfishing closure for these areas on October 21, DEM and the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) have continued to collect and test water and shellfish samples for the presence of domoic acid – which is responsible for amnesic shellfish poisoning in humans. Whelk collected from the closed areas yesterday have tested negative for the toxin, allowing the harvesting ban for carnivorous snails to be lifted. Shellfish samples from throughout Rhode Island waters will continue to be collected and analyzed until the bloom subsides.

For updates on shellfish closure areas, contact the DEM 24-hour shellfishing hotline at 401-222-2900. Subscribe to the DEM Marine Fisheries email list at rimarinefisheries-subscribe@listserve.ri.gov or visit www.dem.ri.gov/shellfishclosure for more information on the harmful algae bloom in Rhode Island waters.

For more information on DEM programs and initiatives, visit www.dem.ri.gov. Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/RhodeIslandDEM or on Twitter (@RhodeIslandDEM) for timely updates.

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