



Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

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DEM ANNOUNCES SEASONAL CLOSURES OF SHELLFISHING AREAS AND OTHER CHANGE TO TAKE EFFECT ON SATURDAY, MAY 26

PROVIDENCE – The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) today announced that about 46 acres of Bluff Hill Cove on the eastern side of Point Judith Pond between Great Island and the Narragansett shoreline are closed to shellfishing based on recent water quality monitoring results. This area must be closed because of unacceptably high bacteria levels. DEM is working with the Town of Narragansett to identify and resolve the causes of this closure.

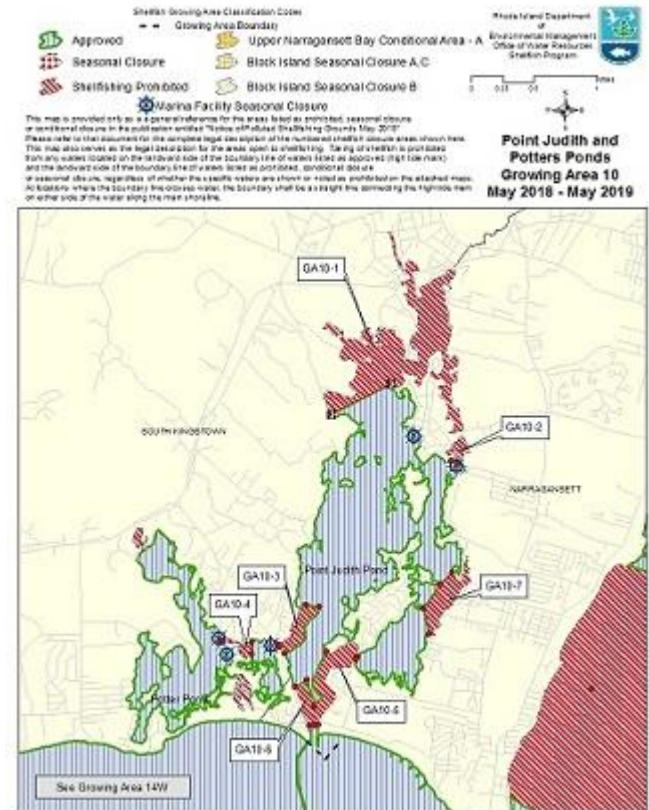
Also announced today are seasonal shellfish area closures – due to potential water quality impacts associated with marinas and mooring fields. The closures take effect at sunrise tomorrow, Saturday, May 26, and will remain in place until Tuesday, October 10. The areas are within:

- Bristol Harbor
- Dutch Harbor Area, Jamestown
- Fishing Cove, Wickford Harbor
- Great Salt Pond and Trims Pond, Block Island
- Potter Cove, Prudence Island
- Sakonnet Harbor, Little Compton

Also, DEM is announcing that smaller marina closures in the southern coastal ponds, Fort Wetherill, and the Kickemuit River in Warren will also go into effect.

[A year ago, DEM announced that it was lifting rainfall related shellfishing restrictions for parts of Upper Narragansett Bay for the first time in 70 years.](#) Similarly, based on water quality evidence and shellfish tissue data it has collected, DEM is hopeful about being able to reopen the lower Providence River as a new conditional area within a year. DEM continues to work alongside partners to finalize the details of a conditional area and shellfish management plan to make that hope a reality. Such an action – which would allow for the harvest of shellfish from the River for the first time in more than 70 years – shows water quality

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For more detail, please see bigger map attached to this release.

improvements resulting from decades of intense effort to clean up Providence River and Narragansett Bay, most notably improvements by the Narragansett Bay Commission to reduce the discharge of combined sewer overflows.

“The effort to clean up Narragansett Bay has been monumental,” said DEM Director Janet Coit. “It’s taken longer than any of us would have liked, but it’s been undeniably steady. It’s required federal, state, and local government cooperation. And we should acknowledge and celebrate that the work we’re all doing is resulting in a cleaner Bay.”

Coit credited Governor Gina M. Raimondo’s “coherent and progressive food strategy” – part of which was the creation of [the Rhode Island Shellfish Initiative](#) – as “being instrumental toward creating, sustaining, and growing markets for Rhode Island shellfish; retaining and expanding shellfish-related businesses; and prioritizing sustainable practices.”

Launched in 2017, the Rhode Island Shellfish Initiative promotes the importance of shellfish to Rhode Island and as part of continuing state efforts to support a strong local food economy. Through it, state agencies, industry, academia, and community partners will further efforts to sustainably manage local shellfish stock, promote economic growth and jobs, and celebrate Rhode Island’s unique food cultures. The Initiative consists of three focus areas and related actions:

1. **FOOD:** Create, sustain and grow markets for RI shellfish
2. **JOBS:** Retain and expand shellfish-related businesses
3. **MANAGEMENT:** Prioritize sustainable practices and continued research

Rhode Island is known for its food and diverse food cultures. The state’s booming local food sector supports more than 60,000 jobs, and the local fishing industry has been, and continues to be, a vital part of the equation. **Last year, more than 100 million pounds of seafood arrived at local ports – with an export value over \$1 billion.** A significant contributor to Rhode Island’s commercial fishing industry, wild harvest shellfish support the livelihoods of hundreds of fishers year-round and provide nourishment and enjoyment to Rhode Islanders and tourists. More than 28 million quahogs were harvested from Narragansett Bay and local coastal waters last year, contributing some \$5.5 million to the economy; a value that increases significantly as the product hits the market.

For more information on the shellfish harvesting reclassification, review the [annual notice](#) available at www.dem.ri.gov.

For information on emergency and conditional area shellfish closures, call DEM’s 24-hour shellfishing hotline at 401.222.2900. Follow DEM on Twitter (@RhodeIslandDEM) or Facebook at www.facebook.com/RhodeIslandDEM for timely updates.