

Town of Plymouth

Shellfish Regulations

1.Regulations

- a. Shellfish regulations including seasons, digging areas and limits are established by the Board of Selectmen and enforced by Shellfish Constables under the authority of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 130
- b. The Town of Plymouth Shellfish Warden/Harbormaster may make changes, updates and revisions to shellfish regulations, as required. All changes, updates and revisions will be posted on the Plymouth Harbormaster website <http://www.plymouth-ma.gov/harbormaster>
- c. Information may also be obtained by calling the Harbormaster Office at 508-830-4182.

2.Non-Criminal Disposition of Violations.

- a. Anyone violating any provision of these Shellfish Regulations may be subject to a penalty of a \$100.00 - \$250.00 fine, confiscation of harvest, and/or loss of license.
- b. Each violation of each provision shall constitute a separate offense. For continued violations, each day or portion thereof during which a violation is continued shall constitute a separate offense.

3.Permits

- a. A Plymouth recreational shellfish permit is required to harvest soft-shell clams, quahogs, razor clams, blue mussels, surf clams and sea worms for recreational purposes within the Town of Plymouth. Shellfish and sea worms harvested with this permit may not be sold.
- b. The signed shellfish permit must be in possession while harvesting shellfish and must be shown upon demand to enforcement officers along with any harvested shellfish. Additional identification such as a driver's license or tribal identification card must be shown upon demand to confirm identity.
- c. Children age 17 and under may dig for shellfish if accompanied by a permit holder. The permit holder's shellfish limit is not increased by the presence of the child.
- d. Freshwater shellfishing is prohibited.
- e. Commercial shellfishing and sea worm harvest are prohibited in Plymouth to protect the Natural Resources of the Town and prevent over fishing and environmental damage.

4.Equipment

- a. Shellfish may only be dug with conventional tined tools. Shovels, clam guns and hand or motor-powered digging tools are not permitted.
- b. When harvesting species other than sea clams/worms, no container larger than 10 quarts may be brought to the digging area.
- c. Harvesting persons are required to have on their person a 2" ring, gauge, or other measuring device that is to be used to accurately measure shellfish size before it is taken.

5.Digging Areas

- a. It is unlawful to dig for shellfish in any area identified as "Closed to Shellfishing". Areas may be closed due to water quality, protection of resources or dangerous algae blooms.
- b. It is unlawful to dig for any shellfish in grass or within 20 feet of the roots of a marsh.

- c. It is unlawful to remove the shellfish from shells before leaving the digging area
- d. Persons digging on Plymouth Long Beach shall obey and abide by all Plymouth Long Beach Rules and Regulations.
- e. It is unlawful to dig for shellfish and worms between the hours of ½ hour after sunset and ½ hour before sunrise and when the air temperature is below 32 degrees Fahrenheit
- f. Large holes must be filled-in by the digger.
- g. Shellfishing is prohibited within 150ft. of a licensed aquaculture site

6.Harvest

- a. Sea clams may be harvested seven days a week throughout the year. The limit shall be 24 clams per calendar day.
- b. Soft-shell clams, quahogs, razor clams and blue mussels seasons:

Wednesdays and Saturdays September – November (fall open season)
Wednesdays and Saturdays April – May (spring open season)

- c. Sea worms may be harvested seven days a week throughout the year for recreational purposes. The limit shall be 50 worms per calendar day for personal use and not to be sold.
- d. Permit holders may harvest soft-shell clams, quahogs, razor clams, and blue mussels in a digging day but singly or in the aggregate, the total daily limit is six (6) quarts.
- e. No more than six (6) quarts of each species may be harvested in a week, which begins on Sunday.
- f. Minimum size for shellfish:
 - **Soft-Shell Clam minimum 2" shell diameter**
 - **Quahog minimum 1" shell thickness**
 - **Surf Clam minimum 5" shell diameter**
 - **Razor Clam minimum 5" shell length measured on the longest side**
- g. It is unlawful for a person to harvest any part of another's limit; unless age 17 or under
- h. Taking of the Tidewater Mucket, Eastern Pondmussel, Creeper or any other species listed under the Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program is explicitly prohibited.
- i. Species not listed in these regulations are governed by state law under *Code of Massachusetts Regulation (CMR) 322 6.00 - Regulation of Catches*. Refer to this CMR for further information.

The holder of any permit issued for digging and taking shellfish shall at all times conform to the above regulations and to the provisions of Chapter 130 of the M.G.L., 322 CMR, and any subsequent amendments thereto.

APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN AT THE JANUARY 10, 2017 MEETING.
EFFECTIVE DATE JANUARY 11, 2017.
A True Copy Attest.
Laurence R. Pizer, *Town Clerk*