



Rhode Island  
Department of Environmental Management

DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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TO: Janet Coit, Director DEM  
FROM: Mark Gibson, Deputy Chief, Marine Fisheries  
DATE: September 19, 2012  
SUBJECT: Request for decisions on Shellfish Management Area Opening Schedules  
for the 2012-2013 Winter Season

Recommendations pertaining to Shellfish Management Area regulations for the 2012-2013 winter shellfish harvest season are hereby presented for final decision. The issues were reviewed by the RI Marine Fisheries Council at their September 10, 2012 meeting. As the regulatory issues in question involve shellfish management areas, no public hearing was required or conducted.

Supporting documents associated with this memo include:

- Minutes of the August 1, 2012 Shellfish Advisory Panel meeting
- Minutes of the September 10, 2012 Marine Fisheries Council meeting
- Part IV- Shellfish, 2012-2013 Winter Management Area Proposed Revisions

On August 1, 2012 the Council's Shellfish Advisory Panel (SAP) convened to consider industry proposals for the 2012-2013 winter Shellfish Management Area (SMA) fishing season. The SAP provided recommendations to the RI Marine Fisheries Council (RIMFC) relating to the proposed harvest schedules. The RIMFC considered the recommended changes at their September 10, 2012 meetings. The schedule changes apply to the western portion of Greenwich Bay (GB Sub Areas 1 and 2), Bristol Harbor, Bissel Cove/Fox Island, Potowomut, and High Banks SMAs. The SAP voted to support the industry proposed winter shellfish harvest schedules. The proposals were then brought before the RIMFC. There were no objections to the proposals, and the Council voted to recommend adoption.

***Having reviewed the entire record, and conferred with staff, I hereby urge adoption of the proposed changes. If you concur, please indicate by signing this memo at the end and returning it to me. Upon receipt of the signed memo, I will initiate the filing process. If you feel the need to make any changes that differ from those proposed, please delineate those changes via a separate memo.***

The proposed changes are summarized below and detailed in the attached annotated regulatory document.

Summary of Proposed Changes:

- (1) Winter Harvest Schedule for Western Greenwich Bay (both GB Sub Areas 1 and 2): Open from January 1, 2013 through April 30, 2013 between 8 AM to 12 noon on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays
  
- (2) Winter Shellfish Harvest Schedule for the following Shellfish Management Areas:  
Bristol Harbor, Bissel Cove/Fox Island, High Banks, and Potowomut
  - a) For December 2012 - Open on December 12, 14, 17, 19, 21, 24, 26, 28, and 31; from 8 AM to 12 noon.
  - b) For January 2013 – Open on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 8 AM to 12 noon.
  - c) For February 1, 2013 through April 30, 2013 – Open Mondays through Fridays from sunrise to 12 noon.

I recommend adoption of the winter schedule and access. As noted, the SAP and Council voted in support of this proposal and that the Division has no objections to the proposed schedule. The Division's stock assessment indicates that, on a baywide basis, quahog abundance and mortality rates are at sustainable levels. We need to do more work in stratifying our assessment by area to provide more spatially explicit information but for now this schedule of access is acceptable.

**Time Sensitivity**- The winter harvest schedules need to be filed by November 16, 2012, so a decision back to DFW would be appreciated by COB 11/9/2012, if not sooner.



**Approved for filing as presented**



**Janet L. Coit, Director**



**Date**