



Meeting Summary Casco Bay Regional Shellfish Working Group

April 27, 2023
Freeport

Participants:

Nathan Orff (Scarborough shellfish harvester), Meredith White (DMR), Blaine Lund (Brunswick shellfish harvester), Chris Green (Brunswick shellfish harvester), Dan Devereaux (Brunswick Coastal Resources Manager), Darcie Couture (Whiskey Stones Oyster Farm), Kevin Oliver (Yarmouth shellfish harvester), Christi Holmes (Cumberland recreational shellfish harvester), David Wilson (Harpwell shellfish harvester and Chair, Marine Resource Committee), Rebecca Rundquist (Sea Meadow Marine, Yarmouth), Virginia Hawkins (Resilience Corps Fellow, GPCOG/Manomet), Jessica Joyce (Tidal Bay Consulting); and Marissa McMahan, Emily Farr and Jessie Batchelder (Manomet).

Jessica Joyce briefly offered the mission and purpose of the Working Group (WG), which is to equip municipalities with the knowledge and experience to manage their wild intertidal shellfish resources in the changing Casco Bay ecosystem, through providing a forum for sharing information, resources, and tools.

Updates on current initiatives:

- Marissa McMahan gave an update on Manomet's work on developing an ecological survey, which they have final methodology for, and are working on final formatting of data sheets and a data entry process. DMR will be leading a broad discussion on intertidal survey work and survey methods over the next year, which the WG team will be a part of.
- Jessie Batchelder gave several updates on Manomet's crab monitoring initiatives. They started their green crab monitoring for 2023 and will continue monitoring sites in Yarmouth, New Meadows and Georgetown this year. Last year Manomet started trapping blue crabs in the New Meadows Ponds and caught 22 crabs from September - November. They built a reporting [survey](#) and

[map](#) where crab sightings can be viewed and are very interested in hearing about any blue crab sightings. Feel free to fill out the survey or reach out directly to Jessie at jbatchelder@manomet.org.

- Emily Farr gave updates on the WG's involvement in the Yarmouth Clam Festival this year. The WG will have a float in the Clam Festival parade on July 21. The theme of the parade is "People in your Neighborhood", and we are using it as an opportunity to raise awareness about the clam fishery. We will also be developing tide-to-table placemats with information about the clam fishery to be used in the food area during the festival.
- Virginia Hawkins provided updates on her recent work compiling soft-shell and quahog landings data over the last five years for the Casco Bay region and each of the towns. These graphs were distributed at the meeting, and will soon be available on the WG website.

Following up from discussions at the December 2022 WG meeting, Virginia also started reviewing ordinances and conducting interviews with harvesters, shellfish wardens, and committee members around residency requirements for licenses. Several meeting participants filled out a questionnaire on this topic. Through this research, we hope to gain a better understanding of how residency requirements in municipal shellfish ordinances are affecting shellfish harvesters' ability to maintain their commercial licenses as the cost of living in coastal Maine towns continues to increase. By this summer, we plan to distribute a guidance document to support towns navigating these challenging decisions.

Visit our website for more information and updates:

<https://www.cascobayregionalsHELLfishworkinggroup.org/initiatives>

Clam Festival brainstorming session:

We discussed ideas around the parade float for the Yarmouth Clam festival on July 21, 2023. Attendees suggested that a large wooden hod be built that would sit on the trailer. Other ideas included having a fake clam squirting water, sewing clam costumes or stuffed clams to put in the hod, and walking along the float wearing hip waders and carrying the tools of the trade. Several people volunteered to help build the float and participate in the parade. We also discussed slogans for the parade that focused on coastal access.