

## Chapter 3. Clam Management Programs in Maine

In 1997, 56 coastal towns in Maine managed their local shellfish resources with a municipal ordinance. Table 2 lists Maine towns with clam ordinances and wardens.

### • Municipal Programs (Town-funded; some professional management)

Programs that hire both clam management and enforcement expertise require substantial funding beyond the income derived from license sales and fines for violation of the ordinance. Maine towns typically spend under \$50,000 per year on clam management programs. In contrast, coastal towns in Massachusetts typically budget \$200,000 to \$500,000 annually for their municipal shellfish management programs, which usually involve management of several shellfish species.

Several southern Maine coastal towns fund clam management programs with municipal funds, supplemented by monies from grants, license fees, and collected fines. The volunteer shellfish management committee, appointed by the municipal officers, works with a professional manager and shellfish warden to manage the area's clam resources. Scientific information about the clam resource may be collected by a professional consultant hired to survey a specific area. These towns periodically assess and publicize the value of the clam resource to the local economy in order to maintain continued taxpayer support for the clam management program. Towns with centralized, municipally funded clam management programs include Harpswell, Freeport, Scarborough, and Brunswick.

Table 2.

#### Maine Towns with Clam Ordinances and Wardens

<u>Washington County:</u>	<u>Lincoln County:</u>
Addison	Bremen
Beals	Bristol
Cutler	Boothbay
East Machias	Boothbay Harbor
Eastport	Damariscotta
Edmunds/Trescott	Edgecomb
Harrington	Newcastle
Jonesboro	South Bristol
Jonesport	Waldoboro
Lubec	Wiscasset
Machiasport	Westport
Pembroke	
Perry	<u>Sagadahoc County:</u>
Roque Bluffs	Georgetown
Steuben	Phippsburg
Whiting	Woolwich
	West Bath
<u>Hancock County:</u>	<u>Cumberland County:</u>
Bar Harbor	Brunswick
Brooklin	Cumberland
Surry	Falmouth
Swans Island	Freeport
	Harpswell
<u>Waldo County:</u>	Scarborough
Islesboro	Yarmouth
Searsport	North Yarmouth (no warden)
<u>Knox County:</u>	<u>York County:</u>
Cushing	Kennebunkport
Friendship	Kittery (no warden)
Rockport	Ogunquit
South Thomaston	Wells
St. George	York
Thomaston	
Warren	

## **Brunswick**

Brunswick's clam management program is often cited as the best in Maine. A volunteer Marine Resources Committee, appointed by the city government, works with a natural resources planner and a part-time and full-time shellfish warden. Management tools used by Brunswick include management closures of specific flats, closed seasons, reseeding flats with hatchery seed, and surveys of estimated commercial standing crop and harvester effort. There were 69 commercial clam licenses issued in 1997.

## **Freeport**

The town of Freeport manages its clam resource with a shellfish program coordinator, a part-time municipal employee who works with the Freeport Shellfish Commission. Population surveys are performed by a consulting firm which conducts surveys and resource enhancement studies with the volunteer assistance of Freeport harvesters. The Freeport shellfish ordinance requires license holders to spend volunteer time in resource assessment and enhancement activities. Harvesting effort is controlled by varying license numbers, according to recommendations of a professional biologist/consultant. In 1997, 59 commercial licenses were issued, including six issued to non-residents.

### **• Municipal Programs (Self-supporting)**

Most Maine towns with shellfish ordinances have clam management programs run by a municipally-appointed volunteer shellfish committee, and minimal general town funds are budgeted for operating the program. Funding comes from grants, license fees and fines collected for violations, or private sources.

A professional shellfish warden is hired primarily for enforcement and may or may not perform any stock assessment or enhancement work. Most or all management activities are done by volunteers. Harvesters often do stock assessment or stock enhancement work as part of their qualification for a commercial license. East of the Kennebec River, the Maine coastal towns with municipal clam management ordinances (as of 1997) all run clam management programs with minimal funds.

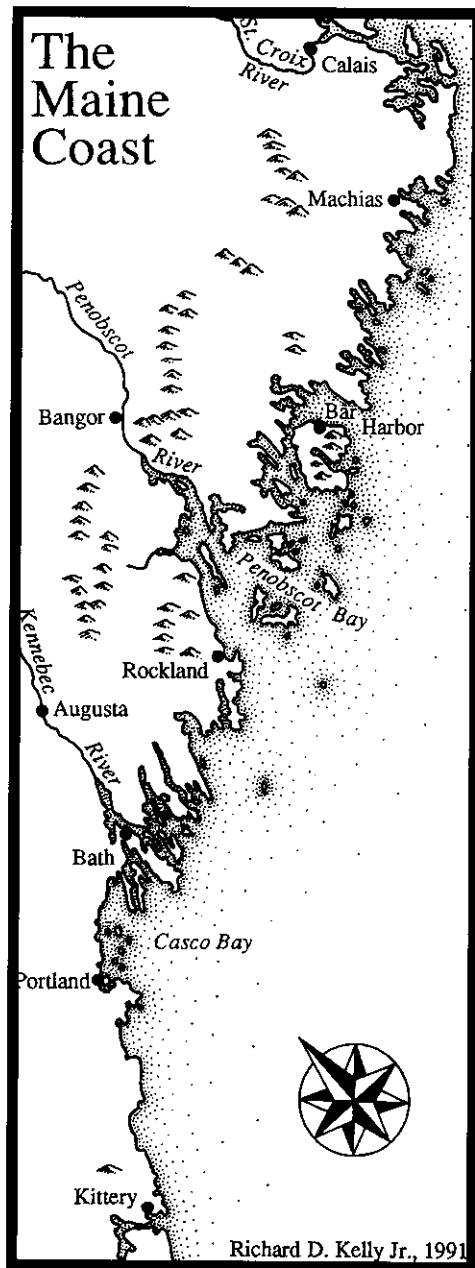
## **Phippsburg**

Phippsburg manages its clam resource with a volunteer Shellfish Committee under the active leadership of one "key" harvester. Phippsburg clammers actively participate in decision making at their monthly shellfish committee meetings. These meetings are regularly attended by most licensed clammers.

The committee focuses most of their management efforts on an aggressive re-seeding program using wild seed. This effort is carried out by commercial harvester volunteers and specific re-seeding time requirements for licensing are written into the Phippsburg shellfish ordinance. Management closures of specific flats are used as management tools. In 1997, 35 five commercial licenses were issued.

### **• Shared Access among Towns with Reciprocal Agreements**

Formal, written interlocal agreements on clam management, describing the details of administration and sharing of tasks, common property ownership, and withdrawal procedures, are usually not attempted by towns and are seldom used to strengthen the reciprocal harvest arrangement.



To maintain the traditional mobility of the clam fishery, clambers often have urged their municipality to arrange reciprocal harvesting agreements with neighboring towns. Under such an agreement, the municipal license from the resident's town is honored by the other town(s) in the agreement. Often this is accomplished by simply writing the reciprocating towns' names into each municipal ordinance to sanction shared harvesting rights.

Traditionally, towns have been able to share harvesting rights, but they have been much less successful sharing resource management responsibilities. Prior to 1996, towns with reciprocal harvesting agreements were required by statute to operate separate Shellfish Management Committees for each town. With separate shellfish management committees, each municipality could run its clam management program differently than its neighbors, while they attempted to equally share a common resource and the responsibilities of management over a multi-town area.

Statute changes in 1996, initiated by the Georges River Clam Project, allow several towns to cooperate in regional management by forming a single regional shellfish management committee with equal representation from each municipality. This allows a single, regional management plan with management practices applied uniformly to the whole regional habitat and clam resource (see section on Georges River on page 21).

### Damariscotta River Regional Management Program

Five municipalities—Boothbay, Boothbay Harbor, Damariscotta, Edgecomb, and Newcastle—share their clam resources on the Damariscotta River estuary through reciprocal harvesting agree-

(Figure: Maine Coastal Program)

ments included in each town's clam management ordinance, adopted independently by each town in 1991.

The clam management program is administered solely by a designated "lead town" which in 1998 was Newcastle. A Newcastle selectman and a Regional Shellfish Committee, with representation from each of the five municipalities, oversee administration of the program, and a shellfish warden is hired on a part-time basis. Population surveys and re-seeding efforts are carried out, while bushel limits and management closures are also used as management tools. Each municipality determines and issues its own number of commercial licenses using a uniform fee schedule for the five towns. A total of 141 commercial licenses were issued in 1997.

## • **Cooperative Management**

### **Georges River Clam Project (formal interlocal agreement)**

In June 1996, the Joint Board and the Shellfish Management Committee created the Georges River Shellfish Management Plan, which defines and describes management actions that can be taken to prevent overfishing.

Five municipalities—Cushing, Warren, Thomaston, South Thomaston, and St. George—share and manage their clam resources on the St. George River estuary with a written interlocal agreement adopted by each town's voters. The interlocal agreement formalizes the administrative procedures and is intended to minimize conflict between towns over management issues. In 1996, a five-member Joint Board of Selectmen was formed to serve as the legal entity administering the interlocal agreement.

One town acts as the "administrative town," handling the funds, keeping the financial records, hiring the shellfish warden, and owning any common property for the purposes of licensing and insurance liability. The program is funded by license sales, grants, fines, and fundraising activities.

Daily clam management decisions are made by the Georges River Shellfish Management Committee, with three commercial harvester representatives from each of the five towns. A full-time shellfish warden is employed to work with the committee on stock assessment and enhancement activities, as well as enforce shellfish laws and regulations. The Georges River Clammers' Association has approximately 50 members, and this informal local harvesters association provides a source of volunteers to serve on the Shellfish Management Committee.

The University of Maine Cooperative Extension (UMCE) provided start-up facilitation for the Georges River regional clam management program and continues to serve in an advisory capacity to the Shellfish Management Committee and the Joint Board. Future changes to the management plan may involve setting specific production goals and modifying the definition of overfishing. In July 1996, 128 commercial clam licenses were issued.

### **Cobscook Bay Clam Restoration Project**

In easternmost Washington County, nine municipalities share the shores of Cobscook Bay: Lubec, Trescott, Whiting, Edmunds, Dennysville, Pembroke, Perry, Pleasant Point, and Eastport. With the facilitation and coordination of The Cobscook Bay Clam Restoration Project, these towns are managing their clam resources. Begun in 1995, the Clam Project addresses the decline in the local clam industry by targeting four broad goals: 1) to improve the health of Cobscook Bay,

2) to increase productivity of the flats, 3) to create a regional approach to clam management, and 4) to increase access to education in resource management.

A regional newsletter, Cobscook Clam News, is produced by the Cobscook Bay Clam Restoration Project for networking and building a regional identity around the clam fishery. All nine communities, including those two without shellfish ordinances or committees, participated in re-seeding efforts in 1995, using both wild and cultured seed. Over 2,000 acres of flats were reclassified "Approved" for open harvesting in 1996. In addition, a clam management plan was written for all Eastport flats.

The Cobscook Regional Clam Association was created to coordinate clam management around the Cobscook Bay and evolved from cooperation between the Clam Project and the UMCE. This community partnership includes municipal officers, shellfish committee members, wardens, shellfish buyers, and harvesters.

A total of 146 commercial licenses were issued in 1996-1997 for the seven Cobscook Bay towns with municipal shellfish ordinances.