

# Town of Brunswick, Maine

## COASTAL RESOURCE OFFICE

### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Shellfish Committee

**CC:** Fran Smith, Town Clerk

**FROM:** Dan Devereaux, Coastal Resource Manager

**DATE:** February 3, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Coastal Resource Manager's Report

Coastal Resource Office update on shellfish committee projects, initiatives, environmental issues, and shellfish industry news.

#### 2026/27 Annual Shellfish License Allocations:

In early 2025, the Shellfish Committee amended Chapter 11, Marine Activities, Structures and Ways, Article III, Section 11-112, *Annual Shellfish License Establishment*. Under the revised ordinance, annual shellfish license allocations are now determined using a standardized, data-driven methodology. License numbers are based on the estimated harvestable standing crop identified through annual shellfish surveys, together with the average daily harvest per harvester and the average number of tides harvested each year.

Prior to this amendment, the ordinance allowed the Shellfish Committee discretion to issue more or fewer licenses than indicated by survey and inventory data. That flexibility was removed during the spring 2025 ordinance rewrite. While well-intentioned, the former approach frequently placed Committee members in difficult positions. In many cases, licensed harvesters opposed issuing additional licenses even when surveys demonstrated increases in the harvestable standing crop. As a result, license allocation decisions were often prolonged and subject to political pressure to adjust license numbers based on anecdotal or non-scientific information rather than survey results.

The revised ordinance eliminates this ambiguity by directly linking license allocations to objective, scientific metrics. This change provides greater transparency, consistency, and defensibility in the annual licensing process.

As illustrated in the graph below, the only license increase for 2026 will be the addition of one resident commercial license, bringing the total to 61 resident commercial licenses, 7 Non-resident commercial licenses, 10 student licenses, and unlimited recreational licenses.

Chapter 11 Marine Activities Structures and Ways Article III Section 11-112 *Annual Shellfish License Establishment*

2026 License Allocation			
Softshell Licenses		Quahog Licenses	
Efficiency	0.64	Efficiency	0.7
Standing Crop	61116	Standing Crop	8,616bu (7.700.000)

Harvestable days	265
Average Bushels	3

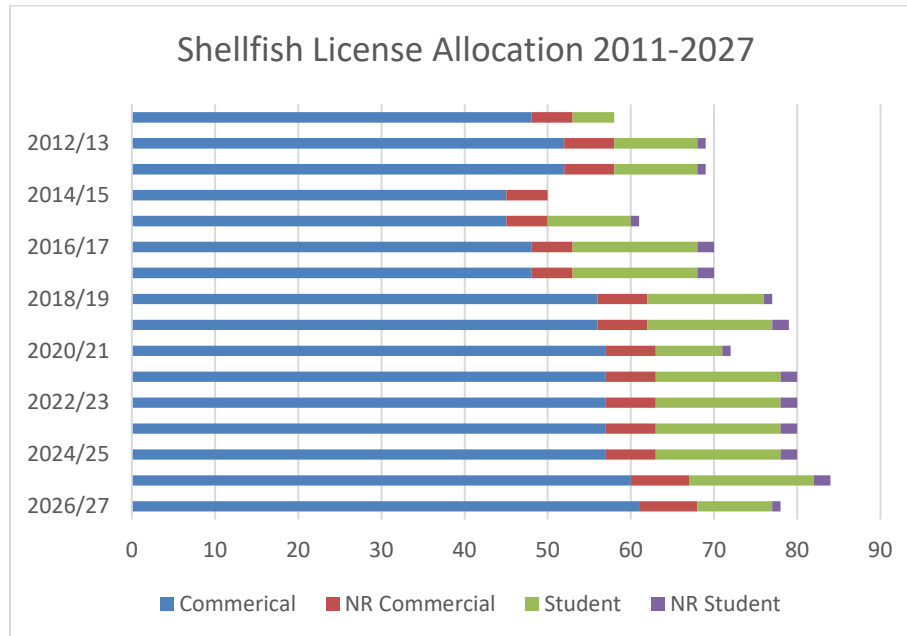
Harvestable days	209
Average Bushels	1.5

<b>Licenses</b>	49.2004
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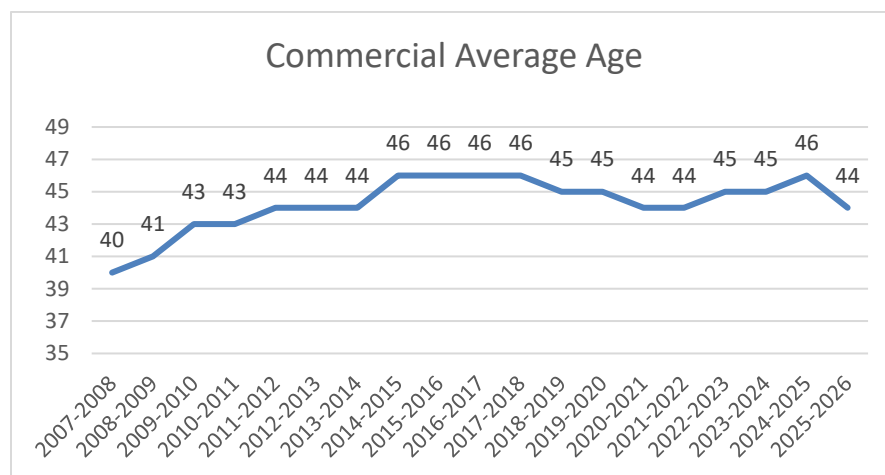
<b>Licenses</b>	19.23781913
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<b>Total Commercial Licenses:</b>	68.4382
Student Licenses (15% of CL)	10.2657
<b>TOTAL LICENSES</b>	78.704

### Historical Brunswick Shellfish License Allocation



### Commercial Shellfish Harvester Avg. Age



### Chapter 11 Ordinance Updates:

The Brunswick Town Council held a public hearing on the Chapter 11 ordinance updates recommended by the Shellfish Committee and subsequently adopted amendments establishing a student apprentice license. The Council also codified

enforcement provisions outlining the consequences and implications for harvesters who fail to submit required monthly shellfish landing reports.

### **Shellfish Focus Day Fishermen's Forum:**

The Maine Fishermen's Forum has been scheduled for March 5<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup>. The Coastal Resource Office will have two different posters on display during shellfish focus day on Thursday March 5<sup>th</sup>. We invite all committee members and area harvesters to attend. Shellfish focus day is free to anyone interested in attending and there is no need to pre-register to attend.

### **Simpson Point Boat Launch Construction:**

Simpson and Wyman Construction has been awarded the contract and anticipate starting construction on the ramp and trails sometime from the first to middle of February. It will take 4-6 weeks to complete. The end of the road will be closed during the construction period. Public Works is communicating with the contractors on start dates in effort to ensure the public is kept informed.

### **DMR Elver License Lottery:**

The Department of Marine Resources holds a lottery, starting at noon today, January 26, 2026, for the right to apply for an elver license. The lottery will be available through 4:30 p.m. February 20, 2026, providing lottery winners with the chance to apply for a license prior to the upcoming season, which starts at noon on March 22, 2026, and runs through noon on June 7, 2026.

### **Brunswick Comprehensive Plan:**

The Plan was adopted by the Town Council on December 15 and has entered the State's statutory review process under Chapter 208, with public and state agency comments due by February 11, 2026. The plan is posted on the [State's website](#) for review, and the State's consistency determination is expected by March 5, 2026.

### **Casco Bay Regional Shellfish Working Group (CBRSWG) Meeting – January 20, 2026**

The Casco Bay Regional Shellfish Working Group (CBRSWG) is comprised of 14 shellfishing communities from around Casco Bay that collaborate to address key issues facing the wild-harvest shellfish sector. The group facilitates the exchange of expertise and best practices related to shellfish management, conservation, research, and monitoring among municipalities and other stakeholders throughout the region.

Shellfish Committee Member Max Burtis and I attended the January 20, 2026, CBRSWG meeting and provided an update on the Town of Brunswick's Shellfishing Program. Going forward, CBRSWG will be facilitated by Manomet Fisheries. Over the past six years, the group has developed several guidance documents to assist municipalities in addressing a wide range of shellfish management challenges.

One current initiative, the net-planted quahog project conducted in collaboration with the Brunswick Coastal Resource Office, is showing promising results, with high quahog survival observed in the nets at the end of the season.

Members of the Shellfish Committee are encouraged to visit the CBRSWG website for additional information and access to these resources. Committee members are also encouraged to review the Casco Bay Intertidal Data Portal, which displays information on municipal shellfish programs throughout Casco Bay in an interactive format.

[Casco Bay Intertidal Data Portal](#) - [Website Link](#)

**Inside Climate New – Article Link → Maine Shellfish Harvesters Caught up in Climate Related Closures**

In Brunswick, a Midcoast town of approximately 22,000 residents with 61 miles of coastline, a section of Maquoit Bay that has been harvested for generations—and once sustained the Wabanaki and Mi'kmaq tribes—was recently reclassified to close for two weeks following any rainfall event of one inch or more, according to Dan Devereaux, the town's Coastal Resource Manager. Based on last year's unusually wet weather patterns, Devereaux calculated that this area could now be closed for up to half the year, removing approximately 400 productive acres—nearly 25 percent of the town's total shellfish flats—from harvest.

“You close down these areas, you better make damn sure you've done everything you can to keep them open,” Devereaux said. “And I don't think that's necessarily happening here.”

“The most conservative approach for public health is simply to keep everything closed,” Devereaux added. “But because of our heritage and rich history, we can't sit back and let that happen to our community. We have 100 years of people making a living off the clam flats in this region and across the state, and municipalities have a responsibility as part of the management partnership with DMR.”

**Westport Island Hard Shell Clam Collaboration:**

The Coastal Resource Office has been working with members of the Westport Island Shellfish Committee, specifically Jesse Roche, to share information and provide technical insight into the quahog propagation techniques used by the Town of Brunswick to enhance public shellfish harvest areas.

As part of this collaboration, Westport Island will deploy seed quahogs in lantern nets beneath existing oyster farms to grow them to a plantable size. Once the quahogs reach appropriate size, they will be planted in designated public harvest areas

**DEI Research Project:**

A DEI research project was proposed for installation in April 2026 in Barnes Cove, off the end of Pennville Road. During fall 2026 surveys, staff observed a significant softshell clam seed set in this area. In response to this natural recruitment, as well as the quahog seed planting conducted in summer 2025, the Shellfish Committee closed the area for conservation purposes.

Due to concerns that the proposed research activities could disrupt the newly established seed clams, the Committee recommended that the project be relocated. Following reconsideration by DEI, the proposed project location has been changed to Harpswell Cove. This revised proposal location will be discussed as an agenda item at the meeting.

**35<sup>th</sup> Annual edition of Zosterapalooza:**

Join seagrass scientists and experts from around the country as they provide presentations about the different states of seagrasses. Everything from carbon burial rates to classifying eelgrass habitat with AI. March 25 & 26 EPA Offices 5 Post Office Square Boston Massachusetts. Pre-registration required with [colarusso.phil@epa.gov](mailto:colarusso.phil@epa.gov)

**Climate Resilient Fisheries Co-Management Learning Network:**

As part of the United Nations Ocean Decade Program, the Climate Resilient Fisheries Co-Management Learning Network launched last year. One of the Network's primary objectives is to compile 16 fisheries co-management case studies from around the world into an online publication.

The Town of Brunswick has been invited to work with Manomet Fisheries and the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI) to co-author a Maine-based case study highlighting local fisheries co-management efforts.

**2026 Coastal Resource Draft Work Plan:**

- **Shellfish Propagation Efforts:** May – November
- **Shellfish Seeding:** Target East Brunswick (New Meadows River)
- **Spring Shellfish Seed Survey:** April - June
- **Miller Creek Sanitary Survey:** June – September
- **Summer Shellfish Inventory Survey:** June - October

**Brunswick Conservation Closures:** Barnes Cove & Portions of Catlin Shore