



NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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NOAA OPENS PORTION OF FEDERAL WATERS CLOSED BY HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM

Bivalve Shellfish South of Cape Cod Safe for Consumption

NOAA Fisheries Service has reopened federal waters south of Cape Cod to the harvest of most bivalve mollusks. The waters were closed on June 14 owing to a large harmful algal bloom. The northern portion of the area remains closed to the harvesting of Atlantic surfclams, ocean quahogs, and mussels. The entire area will remain closed to the harvest of whole and/or roe-on Atlantic sea scallops.

Recent testing by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration shows that toxin levels caused by the algal bloom have decreased in the southern portion of the area closed by federal authorities, and that most of the affected shellfish there are now safe for human consumption.

"NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to ensuring the public health and the safety of the seafood they eat," said Dr. Bill Hogarth, NOAA Fisheries Service Director. "We'll continue to assist with monitoring the toxin levels, and re-open the remaining area when authorities believe it is safe to do so."

The massive harmful algal bloom that started in May resulted in closures of both inshore and offshore waters to harvest of most shellfish that filter feed including most clam species, oysters, and mussels. Other shellfish such as lobster and crabs were not affected. The algae creating the bloom produce a toxin that is concentrated by some shellfish, and can induce life-threatening paralysis in humans that consume affected seafood.

In June, the U.S. Department of Commerce declared fishery failures in portions of the Maine and Massachusetts shellfish industry because of the red tide event. In July, NOAA provided \$540,000 in emergency funding to Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute to support ongoing regional efforts to monitor and better understand outbreaks of harmful algal blooms.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners and nearly 60 countries to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes.

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On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

NOAA Fisheries Service: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>

NOAA Fisheries Service Northeast Region (chart of current federal red tide closure area):
<http://www.nero.noaa.gov/nero/hotnews/index.html>