



Greater Atlantic Region Bulletin

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Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Fishery

Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning Closure Lifted

Effective Date: October 1, 2014

Effective immediately, the closure referred to as the Northern Temporary Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning Closed Area is lifted for bivalve harvesting. Vessels may now harvest Atlantic surfclams, ocean quahogs, as well as mussels and other bivalves from this area (see map below). However, the area remains closed to the harvest of whole or roe-on scallops and gastropods (whelks, conchs, snails) and the overlapping Essential Fish Habitat Areas will remain closed to all bottom-tending mobile gear.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries will be coordinating regular testing of the area. If test results yield samples that exceed the threshold for public safety, they will inform us to that effect, and we would work to reinstate the closure if necessary.

Frequently Asked Questions

Am I responsible for testing harvested bivalves?	No. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries will be coordinating testing.
Why is the area still closed to whole or roe-on scallops and gastropod (whelk) harvesting?	Only bivalve samples were initially tested to determine if the area was safe for bivalve harvesting. However, samples of gastropods and whole or roe-on scallops have since been taken, and testing is currently being conducted. If the results show that the area is safe, we will begin working to change the regulations to lift that part of the closure as well.
What is the timeline for reopening for gastropods and whole and roe-on scallops?	It is hard to predict. If test results come back at safe levels and no other issues are raised, we may be able to lift the closure entirely as early as this fall.
How will I be notified if the closure is reinstated?	We will publish a notice in the <u>Federal Register</u> and we will send letters to permit holders. There will also be emails sent out to our email constituent list and the Councils will be made aware as well.

For small entity compliance guides, this bulletin complies with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement and Fairness Act of 1996. This notice is authorized by the Regional Administrator of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Greater Atlantic Region.

