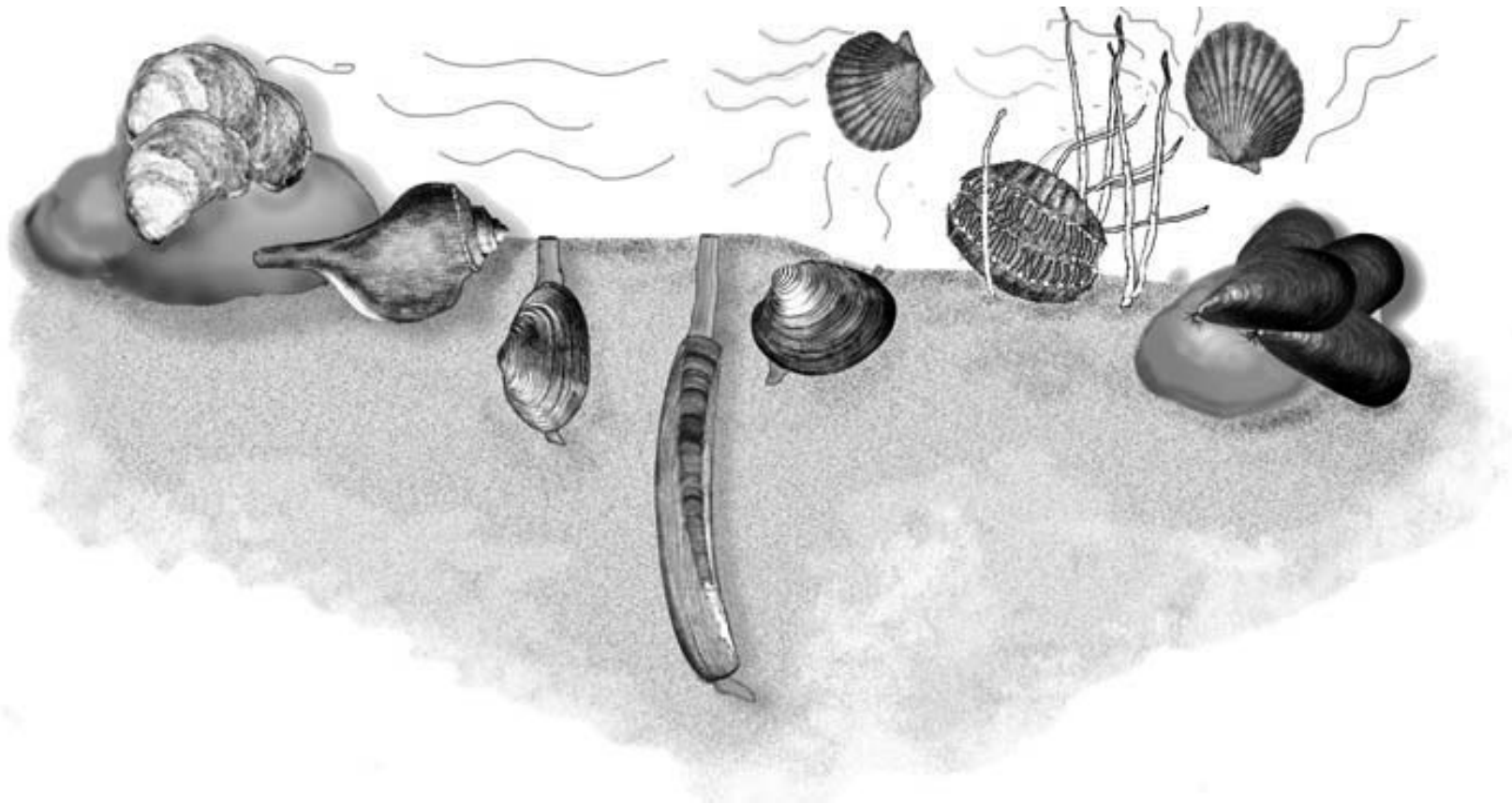


# Guide to Shellfishing Along the Coast of Connecticut

**Connecticut Sea Grant Extension**  
**Department of Extension**  
University of Connecticut  
Groton, CT 06340-6048

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**Bureau of Aquaculture**  
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## **Rules and Regulations**

Before shellfishing in Connecticut, it is important to review the local rules and regulations. Shellfishing regulations are established and enforced to protect human health and also to preserve the living marine resources and ecosystem within which they exist. Each municipality within the State sets its own shellfisheries regulations including shellfishing species, size restrictions, harvest limits, and closures. The State allows shellfishing between sunrise and sunset and recreational seasons are year round with a few exceptions.

There are a variety of implements to take shellfish, such as rakes or tongs. These tools must have openings or spacing between the teeth or prongs of one inch or greater. Some towns may restrict specific types. To measure your shellfish, be sure to carry a shellfish ring, slot or gauge.

## **Public Health and Seafood Safety**

Harvesting is limited to “Approved” or “Conditionally Approved - Open” areas. Periodically, shellfishing areas may be closed due to rainfall or pollution events. Status of these areas can be obtained by calling the local shellfish information line or by checking with status signs. Status signs are posted at these areas for your convenience. These classifications have been established by the State to minimize health risks, and shellfishing in closed areas (Conditionally Approved-Closed, Restricted, and Prohibited areas) whether for bait or personal consumption is illegal.

Recreational shellfish are intended to be consumed by the harvester and family members. Recreational harvesters cannot offer their shellfish for sale or barter. Harvesters must take care to properly handle their catch. Shellfish should be promptly refrigerated in a self-draining container. They should never be stored in water or hung overboard from a dock or boat since they are filter feeders and may concentrate contaminants from that new environment.

## **A Healthy Environment**

In the interest of preventing growth of non-native species, disease and parasites, no shellfish taken from or originating from areas outside of Long Island Sound may be placed, planted, or disposed of in Long Island Sound and its tributaries without written approval of the Connecticut Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Aquaculture. The introduction of non-native organisms can be damaging to our environment.

The following guide summarizes recreational shellfishing information for individual municipalities. The Connecticut Sea Grant Extension Program has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of this information. Contact your local shellfish commission to find out where to purchase shellfishing licenses, and to receive notification about shellfish ground closures in your area. Enjoy the season!

Copies of this publication may be ordered through the Connecticut Sea Grant Communications Office, University of Connecticut, 1080 Shennecossett Road, Groton, CT 06340-6048.  
Tel. (860) 405-9127 / Fax (860) 405-9109  
<http://www.seagrants.uconn.edu>  
Order CTSG-04-06.

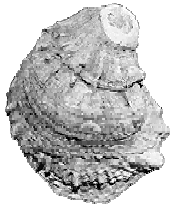
For additional information on shellfisheries regulations, contact:  
Connecticut Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Aquaculture, P.O. Box 97, Milford, CT 06460.  
Tel. (203) 874-0696 / Fax (203) 783-9979  
Email: [dept.agric@snet.net](mailto:dept.agric@snet.net)  
[www.ct.gov/doag](http://www.ct.gov/doag)

For detailed information on access to shellfishing areas in Connecticut, visit the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's Coastal Access Guide Web Site:  
<http://www.lisrc.uconn.edu/coastalaccess/index.asp>

**This document should be referenced as:**  
Getchis, T.S. and Connecticut Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Aquaculture. 2004. A Guide to Recreational Shellfishing in Connecticut. Connecticut Sea Grant College Program. Groton, CT. CTSG-04-06. 7 pp.

Sea Grant is a unique partnership between the nation's universities and its primary ocean agency, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Connecticut Sea Grant, based at the University of Connecticut, collaborates with maritime industries and coastal communities to identify needs, and fund research, outreach, and educational activities that have special relevance to Connecticut and Long Island Sound. Its mission is to foster the wise use and conservation of our nation's coastal and marine resources.





**Eastern Oyster**

*Crassostrea virginica*

The eastern oyster grows in intertidal and subtidal waters attached to rocks, pilings and shells. Oysters can attain a length of up to 6 inches.



**Surf clam**

*Spisula solidissima*

Surf clams are common in subtidal sandy areas. These clams can attain a length of up to 8 inches.



**Hard, Round, or Quahog Clam**

*Mercenaria mercenaria*

Quahogs are very common in Long Island Sound. This clam may grow to 5 inches and to greater than 30 years of age



**Blue Mussel**

*Mytilus edulis*

The edible blue mussel is found throughout Long Island Sound. It attaches to most hard surfaces with its byssal threads.



**Soft-shell, or Steamer clam**

*Mya arenaria*

The soft-shell clam is common in sandy and muddy bottoms. This clam digs a deep burrow and extends its long siphon to the surface to feed.



**Bay Scallop**

*Argopectin irradians irradians*

The bay scallop lives in estuaries and is commonly found in eelgrass beds. This scallop lives only two seasons, but its small meat (adductor muscle) is prized.



**Razor clam, or Jackknife clam**

*Ensis directus*

Razor clams commonly inhabit the same sediment types as soft-shell clams. These clams can grow up to 10 inches in length.



**Whelks, Conch, Winkles or Scungilli**

*Busycon* species

Several species of large edible snails are common in Long Island Sound. They are usually found on sandy bottoms.

Recreational limit is one half bushel per day

**RECREATIONAL SHELLFISH PERMIT FEES**

TOWN	YEARLY						MONTHLY			BIWEEKLY		WEEKLY		DAILY	
	resident adult	resident senior	resident child	non-resident adult	non-resident senior	non-resident taxpayer	resident adult	resident senior	non-resident adult	resident adult	non-resident Adult	resident adult	non-resident adult	resident adult	non-resident adult
<b>Branford</b>	5.00	free	-	50.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10.00
<b>East Lyme</b>	30.00	18.00	-	42.00	-	-	12.00	18.00	-	-	-	-	-	6.00	9.60
<b>Fairfield</b>	15.00	10.00	-	25.00	-	20.00	-	-	-	5.00	10.00	-	-	-	-
<b>Greenwich</b>	15.00	10.00	1.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Groton</b>	25.00	10.00	-	35.00	20.00	-	12.00	-	20.00	-	-	10.00	15.00	5.00	8.00
<b>Guilford</b>	20.00	10.00	-	75.00	75.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20.00
<b>Madison</b>	10.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Milford</b>	free	free	free	free	free	free	free	free	free	free	free	free	free	free	free
<b>Norwalk</b>	7.00	1.00	1.00	25.00	25.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20.00 *
<b>Stamford</b>	10.00	3.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Stonington</b>	10.00	free	-	15.00	free	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Waterford</b>	25.00	10.00	-	35.00	20.00	20.00	15.00	-	-	-	-	10.00	15.00	-	-
<b>Waterford / East Lyme (Niantic River)</b>	30.00	12.00	-	42.00	18.00	18.00	12.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Westport (Saugatuck Shores)</b>	free	free	free	free	free	free	free	free	free	free	free	free	free	free	free

\* Out-of-State Resident

**RECREATIONAL SHELLFISH SIZE AND LIMIT RESTRICTIONS**

TOWN	HARD CLAM		SOFT SHELL		RAZOR CLAM		EASTERN OYSTER		BLUE MUSSEL		BAY SCALLOP	
	size restriction (thickness)	harvest limit	size restriction (length)	harvest limit	size restriction (length)	harvest limit	size restriction (length)	harvest limit	size restriction (length)	harvest limit	size restriction	harvest limit
<b>Branford</b>	*	1/2 bushel	2 inches	1/4 bushel	3 inches	1/8 bushel	3 inches	1/2 bushel	2 inches	1/4 bushel	-	-
<b>East Lyme</b>	*	1/2 bushel	1.5 inches	1/2 bushel	4 inches	1/2 bushel	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Fairfield</b>	*	1/2 bushel	1.5 inches	1/2 bushel	4 inches	1/2 bushel	3 inches	1/2 bushel	2 inches	1/2 bushel	-	-
<b>Greenwich</b>	*	1/4 bushel	1.5 inches	1/4 bushel	4 inches	1/4 bushel	no harvest	no harvest	1.5 inches	1/4 bushel	-	-
<b>Groton</b>	2 inches	1/2 bushel	2 inches	1/2 bushel	-	-	-	-	NR	1/2 bushel	-	-
<b>Guilford</b>	*	1/2 bushel	2 inches	1/4 bushel	3 inches	1/8 bushel	3 inches	1/2 bushel	2 inches	1/4 bushel	-	-
<b>Madison</b>	*	1/2 bushel	***	***	4 inches	1/2 bushel	***	***	2 inches	1/2 bushel	-	-
<b>Milford</b>	*	1/2 bushel	1.5 inches	1/2 bushel	1.5 inches	1/2 bushel	3 inches	1/2 bushel	NR	1/2 bushel	-	-
<b>Norwalk</b>	*	1/2 bushel	1.5 inches	n/a	n/a	1/2 bushel	3 inches	1/2 bushel	NR	1/2 bushel	**	1/2 bushel
<b>Stamford</b>	*	1/2 bushel	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Stonington</b>	*	1/2 bushel	1.5 inches	1/2 bushel	NR	1/2 bushel	3 inches	1/2 bushel	NR	1/2 bushel	**, ***	1 bushel
<b>Waterford</b>	*	1/2 bushel	1.5 inches	1/2 bushel	4 inches	1/2 bushel	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Waterford/ East Lyme Niantic River</b>	*	1/2 bushel	1.5 inches	1/2 bushel	4 inches	1/2 bushel	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Westport Saugatuck Shores</b>	*	1/2 bushel	1.5 inches	1/2 bushel	1.5 inches	1/2 bushel	3 inches	1/2 bushel	NR	1/2 bushel	**, **	1/2 bushel

\* May not pass through a ring of one and one half inches internal diameter and may not be less than one inch in thickness.

\*\* Must not pass through a 2-inch ID ring & must have growth ring.

\*\*\* Seasonal harvest only; check with town for more information

NR Not restricted

Mixed shellfish limit is 1/2 bushel total daily, per person.

**Conversions =**

1 bushel (U.S., dry) = 8 gallons (U.S., dry)

1 peck (U.S., dry) = 2 gallons (U.S., dry)

**CONTACT INFORMATION FOR RECREATIONAL SHELLFISHING**

<b>TOWN</b>	<b>COMMISSION CONTACT</b>	<b>INFORMATION HOTLINE</b>	<b>PERMIT LOCATIONS</b>
<b>Branford</b>	William Davis	(203) 315-3909	Branford Police Department, Shellfish Commission members
<b>East Lyme</b>	Don Landers	(860) 739-6233	Local bait and tackle shops, East Lyme Town Hall, Shellfish Warden Office at the State Launch Ramp.
<b>Fairfield</b>	Tom Steinke	(203) 256-3074	Conservation Department Office, Poster's Hardware, Village Hardware
<b>Greenwich</b>	Lucy Jinishian	(203) 622-7777	Town Clerk's office, Fishermen's Den Tackle Shop
<b>Groton</b>	Ed Martin	(860) 441-6793	Town Police Station, Town Clerk's office, Ackley's Package Store, Ken's Tackle Shop.
<b>Guilford</b>	Robert Scott	(203) 453-8088	Town Hall, Dockmaster at Guilford Harbor, Captain Morgan's Bait & Tackle at Beebe Marine Center.
<b>Madison</b>	Ted Aub	(203) 245-5600	Town Clerk's office, Beebe Marine
<b>Milford</b>	Dept. of Agriculture	(203) 874-0696	Permit is not required in State waters. No charge for shellfishing. Maps available.
<b>Norwalk</b>	John Frank	(203) 838-9807	Health Department, Fisherman's World (E. Norwalk), Hiller Brothers (S. Norwalk)
<b>Stamford</b>	Art Glowka	(203) 977-5889	Town Clerk's Office. Shellfishing is for Stamford residents only.
<b>Stonington</b>	Don Murphy	(860) 599-7575	Don's Dock, Brewski Taxidermy, Coveside Marina and Wilcox Marine Supply
<b>Waterford</b>	Bill Steinmiller	(860) 444-5812	Local bait and tackle shops, Waterford Town Hall
<b>Waterford / East Lyme</b> (Niantic River)	Rick Kanter / Patrick Kelly	(860) 739-6233 ext. 3	Local bait and tackle shops, Town Halls, the Shellfish Warden Office at the State Launch Ramp.
<b>Westport</b> (Saugatuck Shores)	Alicia Mozian (Conservation Director)	(203) 341-1170	Permit is not required in State waters. No charge for shellfishing.