

SHELLFISH DEPARTMENT

To the Tisbury Town residents,

The Tisbury Shellfish Department has had an exciting year, we asked for a full-time Deputy Shellfish Constable at the Annual Town Meeting, with a unanimous vote we were able to hire Aidan Morrison. He has worked part-time with the department for the previous two years and has been instrumental in our ability to manage more shellfish.

This year we were able to increase our public outreach by holding two different events, our 9th annual Family Shellfish Day on June 28th and All About Oysters on October 26th; a new event, where we grew some oysters and seeded them out for this educational experience. We had people harvesting and learning how to shuck oysters.

This summer we spent a good amount of time dedicated to building, filling, and monitoring thirty-two quahog rafts (the most we ever had) filled with anywhere from 25,000-100,000 quahog seed where we looked at population densities/survival. We also had a total of nineteen bay scallop lines with approximately nine hundred bags of scallops and ten spawning cages out. Over the (summer) growing season, we received >4 million bay scallops, over 2 million quahogs, 50,000 oysters and ~2000 surf clam seed from the Martha's Vineyard Shellfish Group. Our quahogs, oysters and bay scallops beautifully grew this year, we were extremely happy with the survival and growth throughout both ponds. We work closely with MVSG and have provided countless numbers of crab and other marine creatures, as well as field knowledge for their educational programs and hatchery tours.

This August we took out Jillian Carr, program manager for habitat restoration at Massachusetts Bays, where we ground truthed area inside and outside our coastal ponds looking at eelgrass habitat. We ground truthed around ninety sites in total, and found eelgrass in the upper Lagoon Pond, which was not on any of their maps.

We are very dedicated to our ponds and aid in the monitoring of the water quality within our waterways by working with the Martha's Vineyard Commission, Buzzards Bay Coalition, and the Division of Marine Fisheries. We make collecting data even easier.

We are also excited to announce that the Division of Marine Fisheries has reclassified the West Arm closure in the Lagoon and it is now open to shellfishing December 1- April 30. The head of Tashmoo has also opened to shellfishing and the dates are congruent with the Eastern mooring field in Tashmoo November 1- May 14, permit holders are able to harvest quahogs and soft-shell clams from these areas.

Scallop season started on November 1 in the Lagoon, and outside the ponds, and November 22 for Tashmoo. It was another slim year, but the scallopers who ventured out were shown of what seed scallops look like.

I want to thank everyone who supports shellfish, clean water and our ponds and I want to keep growing within the department. Looking forward to 2026.

Shellfish by the Numbers:

2025	Quahogs	Soft-shell Clams	Bay Scallops
Recreational Bushels Harvested	131.5	5	27.25
Commercial Bushels Harvested*	270.75	2	20.25
Total bushels harvested	402.25	7	47.5
Total \$/Bushel (approx.)	\$140	\$200	\$240
Total Value	\$56,350	\$1,400	\$11,400
*Total Commercial Value using DMF 3.5 economic multiplier (based off commercial limits, this is use by DMF to show how much money from shellfishing circulated throughout the community)	\$132,667.50	\$1,400	\$17,010

Permits Sold:

Senior Residents/MA Veterans (\$5)	221 = \$1,105
Residents/MA Veterans (\$40)	153 = \$6,120
Commercial (\$350)	8 = \$2,800
Year-round non-resident (\$400)	1 = \$400
Short term non-resident (\$25-75)	132 = \$3,850
Bushel Boxes (\$25)	6 = \$150
Gauges (\$5)	72 = \$360
Total \$:	\$14,785



*A nice harvest "All about Oysters"
October 26, 2025*

Sincerely,

Danielle Ewart
Tisbury Shellfish Constable