

Shellfish Harvesting Information

It is very important before you collect any shellfish that you ensure the area is not closed. A check is as simple as using the local telephone directory to find the federal fisheries office nearest you or call one of the central offices listed below.

New Brunswick

St. Andrews
Box 210
E0G 2X0
(506) 529-8847

Moncton
P.O. Box 5030
E1C 9B6
(506) 758-9044

Tracadie
P.O. Box 1670
E0C 2B0
(506) 395-6321

Nova Scotia

Sydney
P.O. Box 1085
B1P 6J7
(902) 564-7276

Yarmouth
215 Main Street
B5A 1C6
(902) 742-9122

Liverpool
P.O. Box 190
B0T 1K0
(902) 354-3459

Prince Edward Island

Charlottetown
P.O. Box 1236
C1A 7M8
(902) 566-7800

Halifax
P.O. Box 550
B3J 2S7
(902) 426-2473

Antigonish
P.O. Box 1183
B2G 2M5
(902) 863-5670

Fisheries and Oceans

Environment Canada
Environmental Protection Service

Maritime Shellfisheries Guide

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Canada

Introduction

One of the great attractions of Canada's Maritime provinces is the selection of seafood delicacies to be enjoyed here. Among the favourites are the many varieties of shellfish harvested from the miles of beaches and rocky coastline.

Fresh shellfish can be purchased at any of hundreds of fish markets, and are served at restaurants and snack bars throughout the Maritimes.

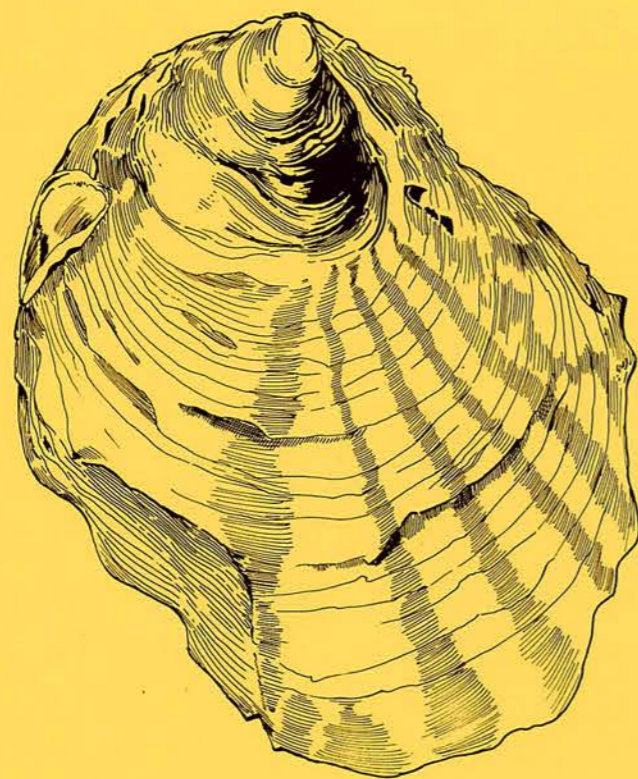
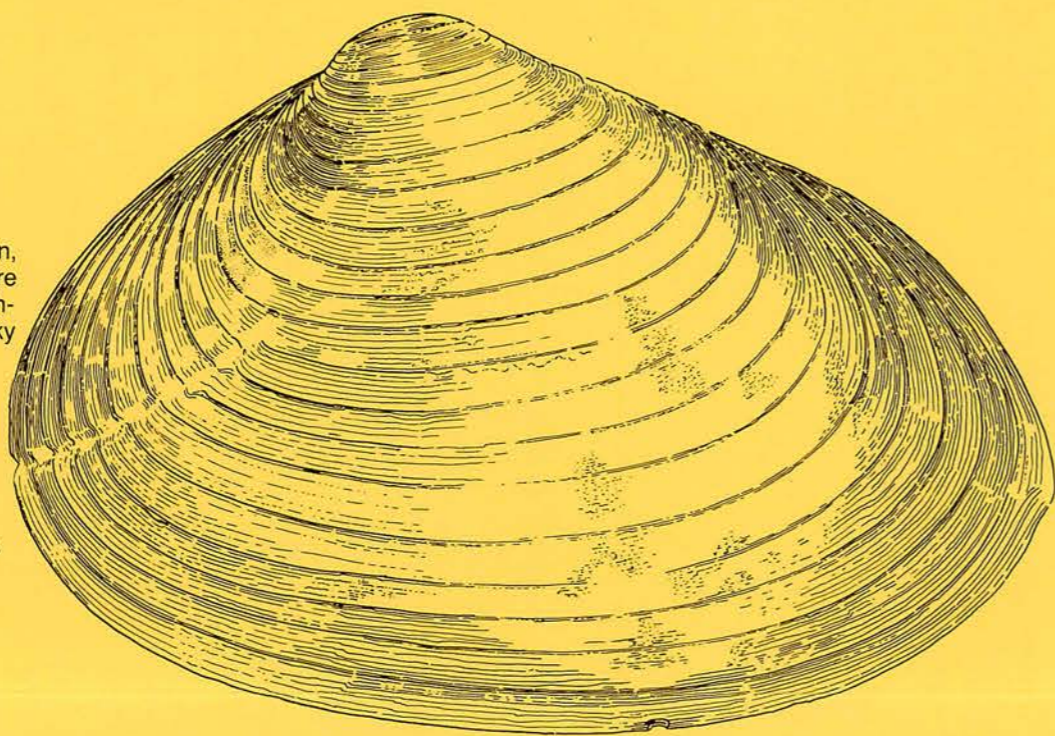
In search of a recreational outing? Shellfish provide the tourist or camper with the additional benefit of preparing and eating his own "catch". With soft-shelled clams, for example, a person armed with only a shovel or clam fork and pail can usually gather quantities sufficient to serve several people.

As with any food, care must be taken to ensure that the shellfish gathered are not contaminated. This guide has been prepared to provide the recreational digger with information pertaining to the safe harvest of shellfish in the Maritimes. Included is a brief description of the most common edible shellfish which Maritimers and visitors to the Maritimes have been enjoying safely for centuries.

Bar or Surf Clam (*Spisula solidissima*)

Bar clams are commonly found on the southern and western Gulf of St. Lawrence on clean, sandy bottoms at low tide levels. Bar clams are the largest species of clams found in the north-west Atlantic Region. They have a thick, chalky shell which is moderately inflated. The clam shell is smooth with concentric growth lines; color varies from yellow to olive green. Shell size ranges from 8-15 cm (3-6 inches). The clam meat is shucked and minced for use in commercial clam chowders.

A licence is not required to harvest bar clams. Harvesting takes place during the summer months using clam hacks or forks.



Atlantic Oyster (*Crassostrea virginica*)

Oyster beds are found in the river mouths and inlets along the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence and Northumberland Strait, to Cape Breton Island. Oyster shells are unequal in size, the upper being flattened and the lower cup-shaped.

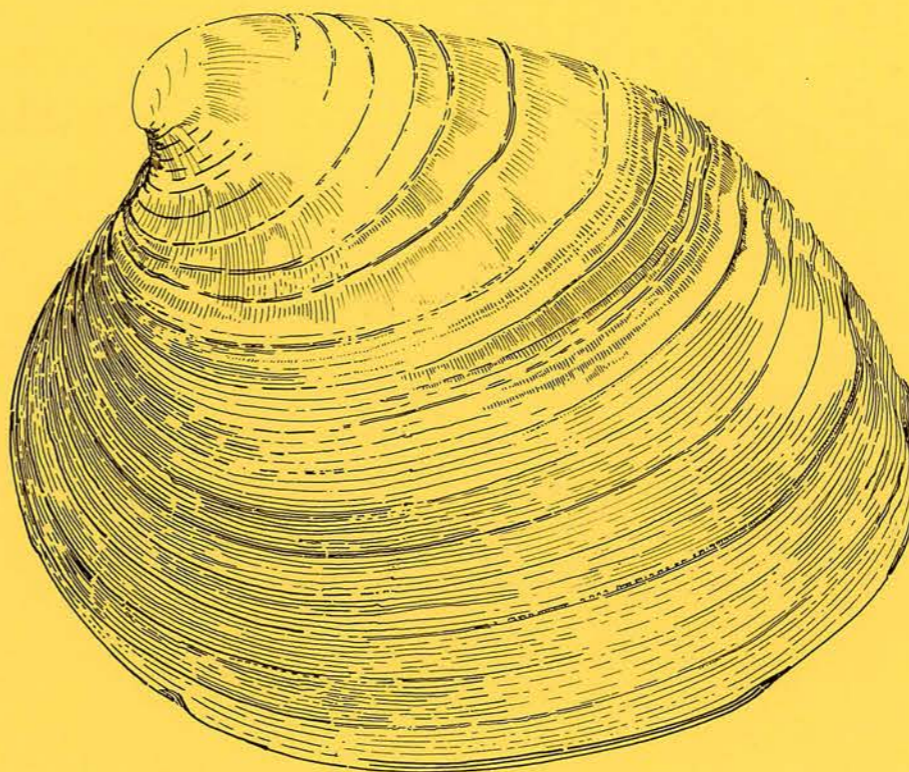
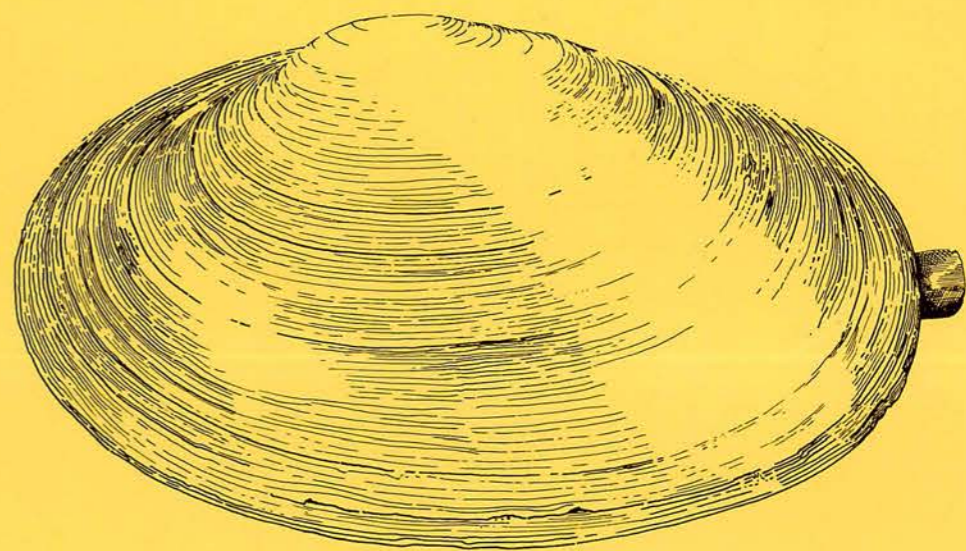
On the outside, the shells have a rough sculptured appearance. Their color is a mixture of brown, grey, green or white. On the inside, they are smooth and dull white. Oysters range in length from 8-25 cm (3-10 inches) and are usually sold fresh in the shell.

Spring and fall are the recommended seasons for harvesting. Minimum size limit is 7.6 cm (3 inches). Both commercial and recreational harvesters require a license to obtain oysters in the Maritime provinces. Tongs and rakes operated by hand are the only devices allowed for harvesting oysters in public beds. Contact any of the fisheries protection offices listed above for details on obtaining an oyster harvesting licence and information on regulations.

Soft-Shell Clam (*Mya arenaria*)

Clams are common to the river mouths, inlets, and beaches of all the Maritime provinces and are found in the sand or mud around midtide level. Soft-shell clams have oval shaped, long, thin, brittle shells which are chalky-white in colour. The clams cannot close their shells tightly because their long neck extends beyond the edges. Most of the soft-shell clam harvest is sold fresh in the shell with some amounts sold as fresh and frozen shucked meat and in canned goods.

A licence is not required to harvest clams. Hand tools are the only permitted devices for clam harvesting. Contact any of the regional fisheries offices listed for details on size limit.



Bay Quahog (*Mercenaria mercenaria*)

Bay Quahogs are common to warm shallow bays and estuaries from Miramichi Bay, New Brunswick to Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia and from Passamaquoddy Bay, New Brunswick to St. Mary's Bay, Nova Scotia.

This species has a thick, heavy, moderately inflated shell with numerous concentric growth lines. The color is dull white and size ranges from 3.5-11 cm (1½-4½ inches). Small quahogs are sold fresh in the shell. The larger ones are sold as shucked meats which are then minced and canned.

Quahogs are harvested from mud bottoms at low tide by hand or clam fork. A licence is not required to harvest quahogs.

Warning: Contaminated

The danger of contaminated shellfish to public health was the impetus for Canada's establishment of the National Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP) in 1948. The Environmental Protection Service of Environment Canada and the Conservation and Protection Division of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans have joint responsibility to administer the program. The Environmental Protection Service assesses and classifies the sanitary quality of shellfish growing areas while the Department of Fisheries and Oceans implements and enforces closure regulations with local fishery officers patrolling the closed areas.

These signs are posted at all shellfish areas which are closed due to contamination from paralytic shellfish poison or disease-carrying bacteria. Quite often these signs are torn down, leaving a contaminated area unmarked. Once an area is closed it is illegal to harvest shellfish, whether for recreational or commercial purposes. **For your own protection, both for health and legal reasons, phone or visit a fisheries office to make sure the area you want to use is not contaminated.**

Fisheries and Oceans Pêches et Océans

DANGER

<p>Area Closed</p> <p>Shellfish (oysters, clams, mussels and other bivalve molluscs) in the area described below contain paralytic toxins and are not safe for use as food.</p> <p>Area Description</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Fishing for or possessing shellfish in this area is prohibited by law and persons doing so are subject to prosecution under the Fisheries Act and Regulations.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">BY ORDER</p>	<p>Secteur fermé</p> <p>Les mollusques (huîtres, clams, moules et autres mollusques bivalves) provenant du secteur décrit ci-après contiennent des toxines paralytiques et sont donc impropres à la consommation.</p> <p>Description du secteur</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Il est interdit à toute personne de pêcher ou d'avoir en sa possession des mollusques provenant de ce secteur. Les contrevenants seront passibles de poursuites en vertu de la Loi sur les pêcheries et des Règlements y afférents.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">PAR ORDRE</p>
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Fisheries and Oceans Pêches et Océans

DANGER

<p>Area Closed</p> <p>The area described below is a contaminated area and shellfish (oysters, clams, mussels and other bivalve molluscs) found therein may not be safe for use as food.</p> <p>Area Description</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Fishing for or possessing shellfish in this area is prohibited by law and persons doing so are subject to prosecution under the Fisheries Act and Regulations.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">BY ORDER</p>	<p>Secteur fermé</p> <p>Le secteur décrit ci-après est contaminé. Il se peut donc que les mollusques que l'on y trouve (huîtres, clams, moules et autres mollusques bivalves) soient impropres à la consommation.</p> <p>Description du secteur</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Il est interdit à toute personne de pêcher ou d'avoir en sa possession des mollusques provenant de ce secteur. Les contrevenants seront passibles de poursuites en vertu de la Loi sur les pêcheries et des Règlements y afférents.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">PAR ORDRE</p>
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Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP)

Sometimes, during the summer and fall, a minute and poisonous marine organism called Gonyaulax multiplies in large quantities. Bivalves, which are filter feeders, concentrate the toxin in their digestive tracts but are immune to the effects of the poison. Humans who eat these contaminated shellfish, however, run the risk of becoming seriously ill. Once the Gonyaulax expire, shellfish clean themselves of PSP contamination in several weeks or several months, depending on the organism, the amount of toxin stored and the time of year.

People eating shellfish should be aware of the symptoms of PSP. The first indication of poisoning is a numbness or tingling of the lips and tongue, which spreads to the fingers and toes. These symptoms are followed by a loss of muscular coordination, ending in paralysis and inability to breathe.

At the first sign of symptoms induce vomiting, take a laxative and drink a solution of baking powder or baking soda and water. Get medical attention as quickly as possible.

PSP has been found only in those areas of the Bay of Fundy indicated on the map on the reverse side.

Bacteriological Contamination

Bacteriological contamination is generally caused by human and animal waste discharges. Sources of this contamination include:

1. untreated and treated municipal and industrial wastes
2. drainage from agricultural pastures and feedlots
3. excrement from wild animals and birds
4. discharges from pleasure crafts and fishing boats.

The Environmental Protection Service conducts sanitary and bacteriological water quality surveys of shellfish growing areas in the Maritimes to determine whether the conditions of the areas are suitable for shellfish harvesting. The Maritime shellfish growing areas which are closed to harvesting are shown on the map on the reverse side.

Advice for Consumers

There are a few rules the consumer should follow when catching and buying shellfish:

1. Check with a local fishery officer (see this page for phone number) for an update on the safety of the shellfish harvesting areas.
2. Do not harvest shellfish from:
 - (i) PSP closed areas in the Bay of Fundy during certain periods of the year (check with fishery officer)
 - (ii) bacteriological contaminated areas
 - (iii) any areas within 125 meters of any wharf.
3. Oysters and clams purchased in the shell should be refrigerated but not frozen. If they gap and do not close when tapped, they are dead and should not be eaten.
4. Shucked shellfish should be refrigerated at all times and eaten within a few days. Bacteria are destroyed if the shellfish are well cooked.
5. Should you experience any food illness linked to eating shellfish, report the problem to a local health authority.

Areas Closed to Shellfish Harvesting due to Contamination



Prepared by the Maritime Standing Committee on Shellfish

Environmental Protection Service
Environment Canada
5th Floor, Queen Square
45 Alderney Drive
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia
B2Y 2N6

Fisheries and Oceans
P.O. Box 550
1649 Hollis Street
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 2S7

New Brunswick

- 1-1 Chaleur Bay and Restigouche River.
- 1-2 Belledune Harbour.
- 2-1 Millstream Gully and tributaries.
- 2-2 Bathurst Harbour and Bathurst Basin.
- 2-3 Nigadoo River.
- 2-4 Petit Rocher.
- 2-5 Nash Creek.
- 2-6 Jacquet River.
- 3-1 Caraquet Bay - south side of bay.
- 3- Mouth of Northwest Caraquet River.
- 3-2 Mouth of Southwest Caraquet River.
- 3- West end of Caraquet Bay (Conditional).
- 3-3 Shippegan Harbour.
- 3-4 Lameque Bay.
- 3-5 Tracadie Bay.
- 4-1 Miramichi River.
- 4-2 Eel River.
- 4-3 Bay du Vin River.
- 4-4 Burnt Church River.
- 5-1 Kouchibouguacis (St. Louis) River.
- 5- Richibucto River and St. Nicholas River above Chapel Point.
- 5-2 Richibucto River at Rexton.
- 5- Mooneys Creek, tributary to Richibucto River.
- 5-3 Little Aldouane River or Daigles Creek.
- 5-4 Adlouane River.
- 5-5 French Creek near Richibucto Village.
- 6-1 Chockpish River.
- 6-2 Little Buctouche River, in the vicinity of the Highway Bridge at St. Francois de Kent.
- 6-3 Little Buctouche River.
- 6-4 Buctouche River, including Black River.
- 6- Buctouche Bay (Conditional).
- 6-5 Cocagne Harbour and Cocagne River.
- 7-2 Shediac Bay.
- 7-3 Baie Verte, including Gaspereau River and Timber River.
- 7-4 Shediac Bay and tributaries near Cap Brule.
- 7-5 Western Barachois.
- 7- Robichaud, Kouchibouguac River.
- 8-1 Cumberland Basin.
- 8-2 Pettitcodiac River and Shepody Bay.
- 9-1 Saint John Harbour.
- 9-2 Little Lepreau Basin.
- 10-1 Lepreau Harbour.
- 11-1 New River Harbour.
- 12-1 Pocologan River and Harbour.
- 13- Crow Harbour, Charlotte County.
- 13-1 Beaver Harbour.
- 13-2 Black's Harbour.
- 13-3 Knights Mill Brook.
- 13-4 Waters northeast of Deadman Head.
- 14-1 L'Etang River.
- 14-2 Back Bay and Basin.
- 14-3 Magaguadavic River.
- 16- Digequash Harbour (Conditional).
- 16- Hog Island.
- 16- Bocabec River (Conditional).
- 16- Mill Cove.
- 16- Bocabec Cove, Passamaquoddy Bay (Conditional).
- 16- Birch Cove (Conditional).
- 15-4 Sam Orr Pond.
- 16- McCann Cove (Conditional).
- 16- McCann Cove, inner portion.
- 16- Chamcook Harbour, north portion (Conditional).
- 16- Chamcook Harbour, south portion (Conditional).
- 15-5 St. Andrews Harbour.
- 15-6 St. Croix River.
- 18-2 Flagg Cove, Long Island Bay on Grand Manan Island.

Nova Scotia

- 1-1 River Philip and tributaries.
- 1-2 Pugwash Harbour and Basin.
- 1-3 Wallace Harbour and Wallace River (south branch).
- 1-4 Wallace Harbour around Livingstone Bridge.
- 2-1 Tatamagouche Bay and River.
- 2- Toney River.
- 2-2 John Bay and River John.
- 2- Brule Shore.
- 3-1 Caribou Harbour.
- 3-2 Pictou Harbour and tributaries.
- 3-3 Portion of Merigomish Harbour, including Sutherland River.
- 3-4 Barneys River - Smiths Gut.
- 3-5 French River, tributary to Merigomish Harbour.
- 3- Hardwood Point, shore of Merigomish Harbour.
- 4-1 Antigonish Harbour, including Antigonish River, South River and tributaries.
- 4- Pomquet Harbour.
- 5-1 Grand Etang Cove east of Highway Bridge.
- 5-2 Margaree Harbour.
- 5-3 Cheticamp Harbour.
- 5- Pleasant Bay - Grand Anse.
- 6-1 North Harbour (Pond).
- 6-2 Hungry Cove.
- 6-3 Dingwall Harbour.
- 6-4 Portion of North Bay (south side).
- 6-5 Portion of Ingonish Harbour.
- 6-6 Neil Harbour.
- 7-1 Nyanza Bay (Indian Bay).
- 7-2 St. Patrick's Channel.
- 7-3 Barra Strait at Grand Narrows.
- 7-4 Little Bras d'Or Channel.
- 7-5 East Bay at Eskasoni.
- 7-6 West Bay (Head Bay Cove.).
- 7-7 St. Patrick's Channel at Little Narrows.
- 7-8 River Denys.
- 7-9 Seal Cove.
- 7-10 Barraman Cove.
- 7-11 North Basin.
- 7-12 Whycocomagh Bay.
- 7-13 Black River, tributary to West Bay.
- 7-14 Hay Cove.
- 8-1 Coast of Cape Breton Island, including Sydney Harbour and Glace Bay.
- 8-2 Morien (Cow) Bay, west side.
- 8-3 Mira River.
- 8-4 Louisbourg Harbour.
- 8-5 Gabarus Harbour.
- 9-1 Fourchu Harbour.

- 9-3 Grand Goulet Cove.
- 9-4 St. Peters Bay.
- 9-5 Cabbage Cove and Petite Anse.
- 9-6 Petit-de-Grat Inlet.
- 9-7 Port Royal Harbour.
- 9-8 Lennox Passage.
- 9-9 West Arichat Harbour.
- 9-10 Bourgeois Inlet.
- 9-11 Louisdale Harbour.
- 9-12 Arichat Harbour.
- 9-13 Strait of Canso, east of Canso Causeway.
- 10-1 Portion of Guysborough Harbour.
- 10-2 Canso Harbour.
- 10-3 Portion of Dover Harbour.
- 10-4 Tor Bay.
- 11-1 Port Bickerton Harbour.
- 11-2 St. Mary's River.
- 11-3 Portion of Necum Teuch Harbour, including Moser River.
- 11-4 Sheet Harbour and tributaries.
- 11-5 Eastern and Western Arms of Jeddore Harbour.
- 11-6 Jeddore Harbour.
- 12-1 Chezzetcook Inlet.
- 12-2 Musquodoboit Harbour and River.
- 12-3 Cole Harbour, north of CNR Causeway.
- 12-4 Cow Bay Pond.
- 12-5 Halifax Harbour and Bedford Basin.
- 13-1 St. Margaret's Bay, in the vicinity of Upper Tantallon.
- 13-2 East Shore of St. Margaret's Bay between Peggy's Cove and Upper Tantallon.
- 13-3 Hubbard's Cove.
- 13-4 Mill Cove.
- 13-5 New Harbour.
- 13-6 Portion of Mahone Bay at Blandford.
- 13-7 Portion of Mahone Bay, including Chester Basin and Gold River.
- 13-8 Portion of Mahone Bay, including Chester Harbour, Back Harbour and Marriott's Cove.
- 13-9 Mahone Harbour.
- 13-10 Portion of Mahone Bay, including Little East River.
- 13-11 Lunenburg Upper or Back Harbour.
- 13-12 Portion of Lunenburg Bay, including Lunenburg Harbour and Puffeycup Cove.
- 13-13 Rose Bay.
- 14-1 La Have Harbour and La Have River.
- 14-2 Conrad's (Vogler) Cove.
- 14-3 Medway River, upstream from CNR Bridge.

- 14-4 Liverpool Bay and Mersey River.
- 14-5 Broad River, including Summerville Beach.
- 14-6 Port Hebert Harbour.
- 14-7 Sable River.
- 14-8 Lockeport Harbour.
- 15-1 Crows Neck at Port La Tour.
- 15-2 Shelburne Harbour.
- 15-3 Barrington Bay.
- 15-4 Clark's Harbour.
- 15- Southside, Cape Sable Island.
- 15-5 Cheboque River.
- 15-6 Lower East Pubnico.
- 15-7 Pubnico Harbour.
- 15-8 Tusket River.
- 16-1 Yarmouth Harbour, north of a line between East Cape and Sand Bay.
- 16-2 Yarmouth Harbour, north of a line between East Cape and West Cape.
- 16-3 Yarmouth Harbour, south of a line between Sand Bay and East Cape and Sunday Point.
- 16-4 Ticken Cove.
- 16-5 Sissaboo River.
- 16-6 East Sandy Cove.
- 16-7 Little River and Little River Cove.
- 16-8 Saunierville.
- 17-1 North Passage.
- 17-2 Portion of Petit Passage.
- 18-1 Portion of Annapolis Basin Estuary from Kennedy Brook to Causeway to Allains Creek.
- 18-2 Portion of Annapolis Basin Estuary from Allains Creek to Ryerson Brook (Conditional).
- 18-3 Portion of Annapolis Basin from Shaws Point to Canadian Forces Base Cornwallis, including Moose River.
- 18-4 Portion of Annapolis Basin from Canadian Forces Base Cornwallis and approximately 1600 m southwesterly (Conditional).
- 18-5 Portion of Bear River, south of line from Chisholm Brook easterly to unnamed brook.
- 18-6 Portion of Annapolis Basin, referred to as the "Joggins" and shoreline adjacent to the Town of Digby.
- 20-1 The Avon, Gaspereau and Cornwallis Rivers and tributaries.
- 20-2 Walton Harbour.
- 20-3 Cobequid Bay.
- 20-4 Harrington River, Five Islands.
- 20- Five Islands Inlet at Provincial Park.
- 20-4 Parrsboro Harbour.
- 20-5 Cumberland Basin.

Legend

Areas closed due to bacteriological contamination



Areas subjected to periodic closure due to risk of paralytic shellfish poisoning.



For further information concerning exact boundary locations of individual closures, contact a local federal fishery officer. See directory on reverse side.

Prince Edward Island

- 1-1 Portion of Tignish Inlet, including Tignish River.
- 1-2 Portion of Tignish River west of Highway Bridge at Tignish Shore.
- 1-3 Kildare River.
- 1-4 Alberton Creek.
- 1-5 Dock Creek.
- 1-6 Portion of Mill River, tributary to Cascumpeque Bay.
- 1-6.1 Portion of Mill River, known as Meggison's Creek.
- 1- Eel Creek at Freeland.
- 1-7 Gordons Creek.
- 1- Oyster River at Foxley.
- 1-8 Portion of Trout River, tributary to Foxley River.
- 1- Mary River.
- 1-9 Foxley River.
- 1- Conway River at Popular Grove.
- 1-10 Portion of Gain's Creek, tributary to Conway Narrows.
- 1-11 Kildare River, northerly of Gillian Bridge.
- 2-1 Portion of Smelt Creek.
- 2-2 Portion of Trout River, tributary to Bideford or Goodwood River.
- 2-3 Portion of Mill Creek, tributary to Grand or Ellis River in Malpeque Bay.
- 2-4 Portion of Grand or Ellis River, including all tributaries.
- 2-5 Portion of Clark's or Rush Creek above Rose Hill Point and Best's Point.
- 2-6 Portion of Bentick Cove in Malpeque Bay, including Shamody River and an unnamed creek.
- 2-7 Compton Creek, tributary to Malpeque Bay, including Platte River.
- 2-8 Portion of Barbara Weit River.
- 2-9 Portion of Baltic River, above Darnley Bridge.
- 2-10 Portion of Darnley Basin at Malpeque Cove.
- 3- Portion of Southwest River.
- 3-1 French River, tributary to New London Bay.
- 3- Harding Creek.
- 3- Durant Creek.
- 3-2 Tupling Creek, tributary to Southwest River.
- 3- Sutherland Creek.
- 3- Hope River.
- 3-3 Stanley River and tributaries.
- 3-4 North Rustico Harbour.

- 3-5 Portion of Hunter River.
- 3-6 Wheatley River, including Crooked Creek.
- 3- Black River - Brackley Bay.
- 3- Mill and Auld Creeks - Covehead Bay.
- 3-8 Portion of Wheatley River.
- 4-2 Portion of southerly half of St. Peter's Bay.
- 4-3 Morell River.
- 4-4 Portion of St. Peter's Bay.
- 4-5 Midgell River - St. Peter's Bay.
- 4-6 North Lake, upstream from Highway Bridge at west end of lake.
- 4-6 Portion of North Lake.
- 5-1 Portion of Colville Bay, including Souris River.
- 5-2 Portion of Fortune River.
- 5-3 Portion of Boughton River, including Mill Creek.
- 5-4 Cardigan River above Highway Bridge at Cardigan.
- 5-5 Portion of Georgetown Harbour.
- 5-6 Montague River.
- 5-7 Portion of Murray Harbour.
- 5-8 Portion of Murray River.
- 5- Flat River.
- 6-1 Wood Island Harbour.
- 6- Cape of Gascoigne Cove at mouth of Flat River.
- 7-1 Vernon River.
- 7- Seal River.
- 7-2 Charlottetown Harbour, North (Yorke) River and Hillsborough Bay and portion of East (Hillsborough) River.
- 7-3 Portion of Hyde Creek, tributary to Eliot (West) River.
- 7-5 Portion of Hillsborough or East River.
- 8-1 Portion of Westmorland River.
- 8- De Sable River.
- 8-2 Tryon River.
- 8-3 Borden Harbour.
- 9-1 Portion of Bedeque Bay and Summerside Harbour.
- 9-2 Haldimand River, tributary to Egmont Bay.
- 9- Ox and Sheep Rivers, tributary of Enmore River.
- 9-3 Miminegash Pond at its tributaries.
- 9-4 Portion of Dunk River.