

Patrick-Murray Administration Announces Reopening of Hull Shellfish Bed

Bed reopens after three-year project, part of a Boston Harbor shellfish restoration effort

[Map of Casey's Beach.](#)

[Map of Boston Harbor Shellfish Restoration program sites.](#)

BOSTON - Wednesday, October 13, 2010 - Building on the Patrick-Murray Administration's commitment to coastal water restoration, Department of Fish and Game (DFG) Commissioner Mary Griffin today announced the reopening of Casey's Beach in Hull to commercial shellfishing after the completion of a three-year restoration project.

Casey's Beach, located on the Hull side of the Weir River estuary, is one of many Boston Harbor tidal flats seeded with hatchery-reared juvenile soft shell clams, also known as steamers, under a restoration project headed up by the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF), a division of DFG.

The beach will be open to specially licensed commercial clambers. The bed was first closed in June 2007 for the restoration project, which was intended to restore the clam population at the site.

Since 2006 under its Boston Harbor Shellfish Restoration Program, DMF has collaborated with local shellfish constables, clam diggers and shellfish hatchery representatives to restore and replenish Boston Harbor clam beds decimated by poor recruitment, habitat degradation and overfishing. The main goal of the project is to restore and enhance existing populations of soft shell clams in five Boston Harbor communities: Hingham, Hull, Quincy, Weymouth and Winthrop. To date, approximately 5.6 million clams have been planted at 28 restoration sites throughout Boston Harbor.

"We are happy to announce the reopening of these productive clam flats in Hull," said Commissioner Griffin. "The restoration of the soft shell clam resource in this area will help support many commercial clam diggers who work in the Boston Harbor region."

Funding for the shellfish restoration program came from required mitigation associated with installation of the 29-mile HubLine natural gas pipeline, which was constructed by Algonquin Gas Transmission Company in Massachusetts Bay from Beverly to Weymouth during 2002 and 2003.

Casey's Beach, along with the other 27 restoration sites, are classified as Conditionally Restricted Areas and the clams may only be harvested by DMF licensed master and subordinate diggers. When Conditionally Restricted Areas are open, only soft shell clams may be harvested by these specially licensed commercial harvesters and clams must be transported to DMF's Shellfish Purification Plant in Newburyport for depuration (purification) prior to sale to a seafood dealer and public consumption.

"This opening serves as testimony to the dedicated efforts of the restoration teams and to the success of the Boston Harbor Shellfish Restoration Program," said DMF Director Paul Diodati.

The Boston Harbor Shellfish Restoration Program partners include municipal officials in Hingham, Hull, Quincy, Weymouth, and Winthrop; commercial shellfishermen; and Salem State University's Northeast Massachusetts Aquaculture Center (NEMAC).

DMF will work closely with Hull Shellfish Constable Kurt Bornheim to ensure reasonable harvest methods are practiced

within the restoration site, so as to maintain the integrity of the restored clam resources on Casey's Beach.

"I would like to thank the Patrick Administration for their commitment to coastal issues," said Rep. Garrett Bradley. "I am confident that the work done to restore and replenish Boston Harbor clam beds will undoubtedly make a difference in boosting the local economy and protecting environment."

In June 2006, DMF and its partners began the Boston Harbor project on a pilot scale. Along with planting juvenile clams, DMF and its partners have been monitoring clam growth and survival within the restoration sites to assess and improve aquaculture methods utilized.

Municipal or public shellfish propagation programs are new to the Boston Harbor region, but are more common on Cape Cod and the Islands. For municipal shellfish propagation programs within Massachusetts, DMF requires that introduced shellfish be held as parent stock to replenish local shellfish populations for at least one spawning season.

DFG is responsible for promoting the enjoyment and conservation of the Commonwealth's natural resources. DFG carries out this mission through land preservation and wildlife habitat management, management of inland and marine fish and game species, and enforcement of the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act. DFG promotes enjoyment of the Massachusetts environment through outdoor skills workshops, fishing festivals and other educational programs, and by enhancing access to the Commonwealth's lakes and ponds.