

Edgartown Shellfish Committee
Tuesday, December 1, 2015, 4:30PM
Edgartown Town Hall

Present: Chair - Ryan Smith, Les Baines, Christian Thornton,
Coop Gilkes
Shellfish Dept. Paul Bagnall, Warren Gaines, Rob Morrison,
Others: Jason Bennett, Scott Castro, Daniel Donnelly, Skip Mayhew,
Jeremy Scheffer, Roy Scheffer, Tracy Sharples,
Recorder - Marni Lipke

The meeting was called to order at 4:35PM.

DEPUTIES' & CONSTABLE'S REPORT
OLD BUSINESS

- Bay Scallop Season Update
- Staff closed off the Gut from the Glass House to the Windmill House. Today there were 9 boats (down from 20) with 10 to 11 limits taking not less than 5 hours (a couple citations for coming in after dark were given out). The remaining scallops were among normal sized seed.
- The Committee and staff noted further eelgrass die back across the Cape and Islands.
- Staff talked up today's opening of the Major's Cove oyster season but there were few takers since scallop prices were still high.

MINUTES

- **CHRISTIAN THORNTON MOVED TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 17, 2015 MINUTES: LES BAYNES SECONDED: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

NEW BUSINESS

- Vibrio Update / Oyster Growers Meeting (See 9/1/15 Minutes p. 2-4.)

Shellfish Biologist and Constable Paul Bagnall attended a Conference on Advancing Tools for Modeling, Forecasting and Managing for Vibrio spp. in the North East Region at the University of Connecticut. The Conference was organized by the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Sea Grant, Mid-Atlantic Regional Association of Coastal Ocean Observing Systems (MARACOOA), and Regional Shellfish Control Authorities from the New England and Mid-Atlantic states. It included presentations on vibrio occurrence in New England, Washington State, and the Carolinas, testing status, and science.

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- Previous issues and statistics were reviewed.
- Risk analysis was set at 13 oysters per serving—twice the normal amount, and were predicated on the 30 unreported cases for every one reported.
- Statewide there were 57 illnesses from the consumption of 35,000,000 oysters, of which 14 illnesses were from the 3,000,000 Katama Bay oysters.

It was clear that the scientific results on the testing and life cycle of vibrio were still ambiguous, presenting substantial unknowns and making current regulation somewhat haphazard. For example, at one point Wellfleet had 17 confirmed cases and now had only one, but no one knew why. Did icing work? Did the microbe run its course and die? It was important to apply science to the problem. The State dedicated some funds to develop vibrio testing. Some possibilities emerged from the Conference.

- As bio-accumulators oysters transmitted about 60 different diseases including Vc (cholera) and Vv (Vibrio vulnificus) the more virulent strain, and Vp (Vibrio parahaemolyticus) the strain present in Katama Bay.
- Vibrio was present in the water and could be picked up swimming so water column testing could be developed.
- Side by side oysters seemed to have random vibrio counts of anywhere from hundreds to tens of thousands, but testing averaged results from 12 to 15 oysters rather than from single samples—tests were expensive at \$400 per time.
- Cold seemed to effect vibrio by reducing either activity or virulence. Possible indicators were:
 - winter retreat in colder water and regeneration in the warmer spring;
 - less illness from off-island wholesalers—possibly due to traveling iced deliveries.
- Vibrio counts also fell off after 4 days of air-drying.

Moving forward growers were discouraged by the possibility of losing summer harvesting time, but were not ready to give up and discussed a number of solutions. It was important that they unite and speak with a collective voice, to emphasize they were doing everything possible with the ever-changing science, rules and regulations.

- DMF/Dept. of Public Health (DPH) was seriously considering requiring oysters be shifted to Eel Pond for two weeks before harvesting. Problems with this process included:
 - There were no aquaculture permits for Eel Pond—Paul Bagnall spoke to the Selectmen about the possibility.
 - Eel Pond was 15°F cooler than Katama only on rainy, breezy days at tide.
 - Logistics and finances of moving multiple heavy cages regularly was daunting.
- There was a suggestion that fresh oysters be held iced for 48 hours, although this might involve some tricky publicity, especially with local consumption.
- Growers might band together and purchase a refrigerated box truck.
- Different harvesting schedule patterns could be tried to minimize outbreaks.
- Everyone was urged to attend this Friday's meeting with Chris Scallachi of DMF (see below: Meeting/Events).

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Meetings/Events

- DOH/DMF Vibrio Workshop - 10:30AM, Friday December 4, 2015 at Town Hall
- Edg. Shellfish - 4:30PM Tuesdays, December 15 & January 5, 2015 at Town Hall

ADJOURNMENT

• **COOP GILKES MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 5:20PM; CHRISTIAN THORNTON SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Actions To Be Done :

- All - attend Friday 12/4/15 meeting with DMF

Documents on File:

- Agenda 12/1/15
- Sign In Sheet 12/1/15