

Edgartown Shellfish Committee
Tuesday, October 17, 2023, 4:30pm
At the Edgartown Library

Present: Nic Turner, Ryan Smith, David Faber, Madeline Fisher, Warren Gaines
Shellfish Dept: Rob Morrison, Julie Pringle (recorder)

The meeting of the Edgartown Shellfish Committee was called to order at 4:39pm.

COMMITTEE CHAIR ELECTION

After a brief discussion, the Committee nominated David Faber to serve as the Committee Chair. *Motion placed on the floor by Ryan to elect David Faber Chair of the Shellfish Committee. Nic seconds the motion, no further discussion, vote taken and passed unanimously, 4-0, with David abstaining.*

MINUTES

The Committee reviewed the draft minutes from 10/3/23.

Motion placed on the floor by Nic to approve the 10/3/23 draft minutes. Madeline seconds the motion, no further discussion, vote taken and passed unanimously, 3-0, with Ryan and Warren abstaining.

SHELLFISH PERMITS & AQUACULTURE LICENSES

The Committee reviewed Warren Gaines' commercial shellfish license application. The Committee unanimously approved the application.

SHELLFISH DEPARTMENT REPORT

Rob updated the Committee on the recreational scallop season. Poor weather on the weekends has been affecting the number of people dip-netting thus far this year. Sengekontacket has a decent seed set, but the adults are less plentiful than last year. In Cape Poge, some people have been utilizing the over-sand vehicle access points on Chappy. North Neck is restricted to people who own boats, which limits the number of people scalloping. Reduced vehicle access has led to fewer people scalloping compared to previous years. Cape Poge has a good number of adult scallops and an extraordinary seed set this year, which will hopefully lead to a great season next year. The Committee discussed how the recreational scallop harvest is estimated and the factors that influence it, such as weather and vehicle access.

Rob reported that he went to Chappy with Jane Varkonda (Edgartown Conservation Dept) and Darci Schofield (Trustees of Reservations) to observe the vehicle access points on the east side of Cape Poge and to advocate for OSV access. The Committee discussed the lack of over-sand vehicle access and the need to resolve this before recreational scallop season next year.

Rob stated that the Department has been doing boat maintenance in preparation for winter.

PROPOGATION PROGRAM UPDATE

Rob reported that all the scallops have been planted in Sengekontacket. Six cages of scallop seed (3 of first set, 3 of second) will be kept over the winter to observe winter mortality. Scallops from both sets appear healthy. All the quahog seed was planted off of Felix Neck and within the family areas in both Sengekontacket and Katama. The oyster seed has been split and will be air-dried one more time before winter. Oyster quality and growth look great.

RECREATIONAL SCALLOP SEASON UPDATE

Covered in Department Report, above.

SHELLFISH LICENSE FEES

Rob reported that the Finance Committee increased the shellfish license fees, which will go into effect April 1, 2024. Resident fees remain the same, while other fees have doubled. This is the first fee increase in at least 12 years.

OTHER BUSINESS

Rob reported that Edgartown Great Pond was opened again on Saturday, October 14th, however the opening closed within 12 hours. Several factors (pond elevation, new moon tides, weather) were favorable, and it is unclear why the cut failed. The Committee discussed what influences cut duration and how to avoid another failed cut. Rob acknowledged Steve Handy and the service he provides to the Town by cutting the pond each time it's needed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

The Committee will meet again on November 7th, 2023.

At 5:18pm, a motion to adjourn was made and seconded. No further discussion, vote taken and passed unanimously, 5-0.

Minutes submitted by Julie Pringle.