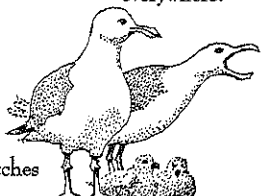




Osprey, or "fish hawk," catches fish with its sharp talons.

Herring Gulls are the most common "seagulls"—they're everywhere!



Great Black-Backed Gull—larger and more aggressive than herring gulls.



Cormorants spread their wings to dry after underwater fishing forays.



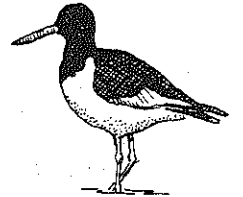
Terns will dive-bomb nest area intruders.



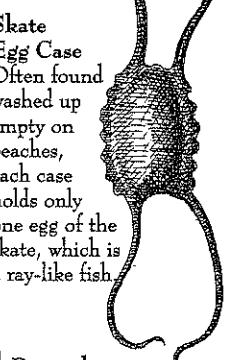
Great Blue Heron can stand over four feet tall.



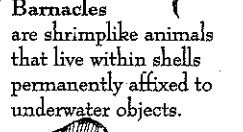
Mute Swan Beware — may attack if provoked.



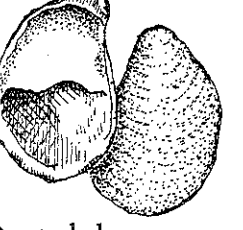
Oystercatcher Easily recognized by its bright red bill.



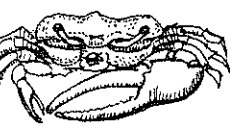
Skate Egg Case Often found washed up empty on beaches, each case holds only one egg of the skate, which is a ray-like fish.



Barnacles are shrimp-like animals that live within shells permanently affixed to underwater objects.



Quarterdecks, also known as slipper or boat shells, are found attached to rocks or other shellfish.



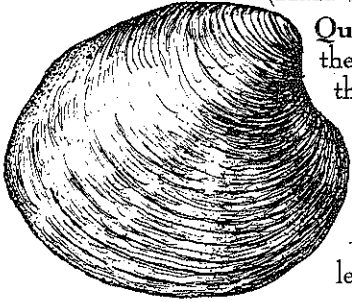
Fiddler Crabs live in small burrows along the edges of salt marshes, and are distinguished by the large "fiddler" claw of the male.

MARTHA'S VINEYARD SHELLFISH REGULATIONS

A Shellfish Permit is required for the catch or removal of any shellfish. Permits are available at the town halls. A family permit allows for the catch of one-half bushel of shellfish per week from waters of the town in which it is issued. Check with town shellfish departments regarding seeded or closed areas. The minimum sizes for the popular shellfish below are set by the state of Massachusetts. Shellfish smaller than the legal size, called "seed," and must be returned to the waters from which they were taken.

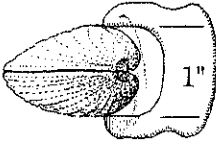
QUAHOG

(Hard-Shell Clam)



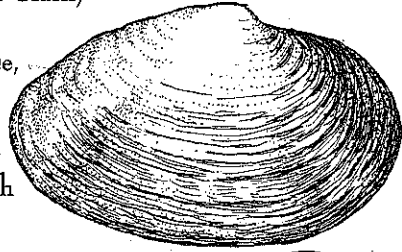
Quahogs are found buried in the sand or mud 1-2" below the surface. They are usually harvested with hand rakes. A quahog must be at least one inch thick to be legal, and is classified by type based on overall length.

- "Littlenecks"; up to 2 1/2" in length
- "Cherrystones"; up to 2 1/2- 3" in length
- "Chowders"; longer than 3"

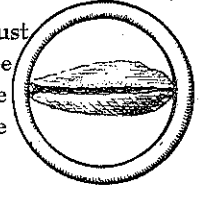


STEAMER

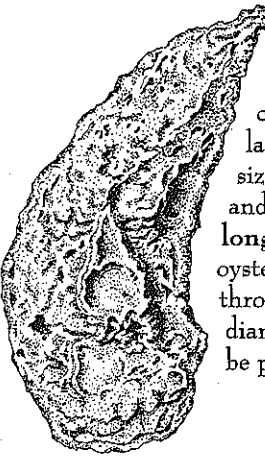
(Soft-Shell Clam)



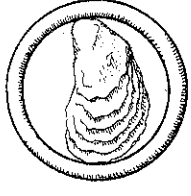
Steamers live about 6" beneath the sand surface, usually in the intertidal zone. They are most commonly harvested by hand or shovel, although commercial fishermen sometimes use pumps. Steamers are measured lengthwise and must have a shell length of at least 2" to be "keepers"—any steamer which can be passed through a 2" diameter ring must be put back.



OYSTER

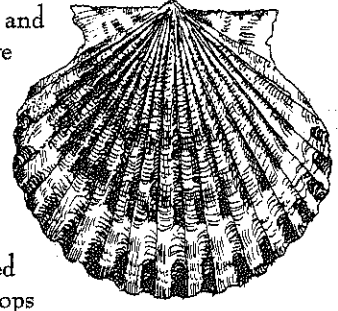


Oysters inhabit the brackish waters of the Vineyard's Great Ponds. In the markets they may be classified as cocktails, selects, or large depending on shell shape or size. Oysters are measured lengthwise and must be at least 3" long to be legal—an oyster which passes through a 3" diameter ring must be put back.

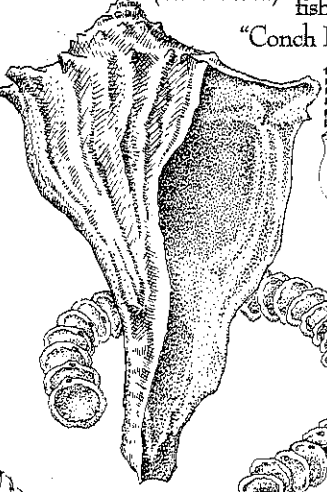


SCALLOP

Bay Scallops may only be harvested between October 1 and March 31. A scallop must live through two summers to reach maturity, and a legal adult is identifiable by the raised "growth line" visible on its shell. Most scallops live in eelgrass beds and are harvested with drags or nets. Seed scallops must be thrown back in deep water. The limit for scallops is one bushel per week.



CONCH (or Whelk)



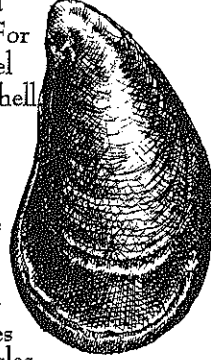
Conchs are a vital species for the Vineyard's commercial fishing fleet. They are caught in "Conch Pots" which are usually baited with crabs. Conchs must have a minimum body width of 2 3/4" to be legal.



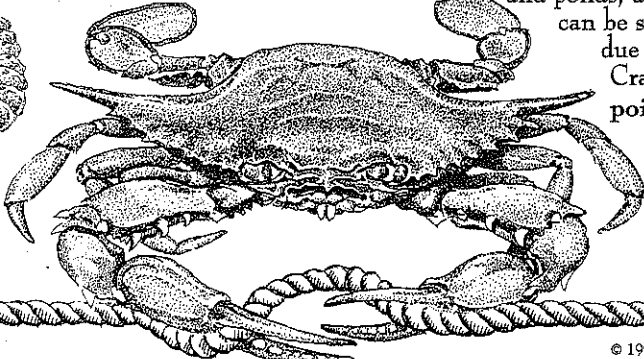
Conch egg case

MUSSEL

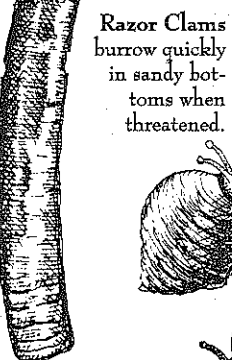
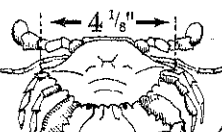
Blue Mussels attach themselves to rocks or pilings, while Ribbed Mussels are found along the banks of marshes and creeks. For eating, most people prefer the blue mussel which has a smooth, dark blue or black shell. There is no minimum size for mussels.



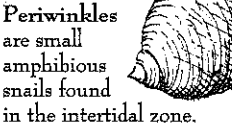
BLUE CLAW CRAB



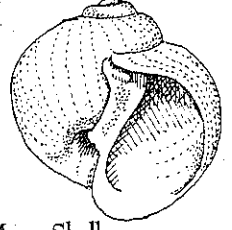
Blue Claws are found in virtually all of the Vineyard's creeks and ponds, although they can be scarce at times due to natural cycles. Crabs must measure at least 4 1/8" point-to-point. Daily limit: 50.



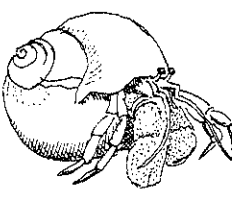
Razor Clams burrow quickly in sandy bottoms when threatened.



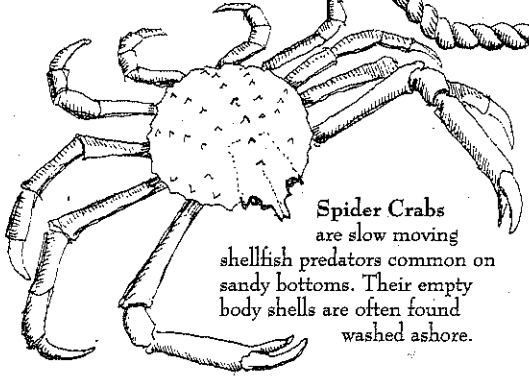
Periwinkles are small amphibious snails found in the intertidal zone.



Moon Shells are produced by large snails which have a healthy appetite for other shellfish.

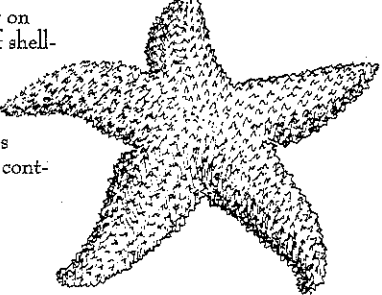


Hermit Crabs are soft-bodied and inhabit empty shells of other animals, often snails or conchs.

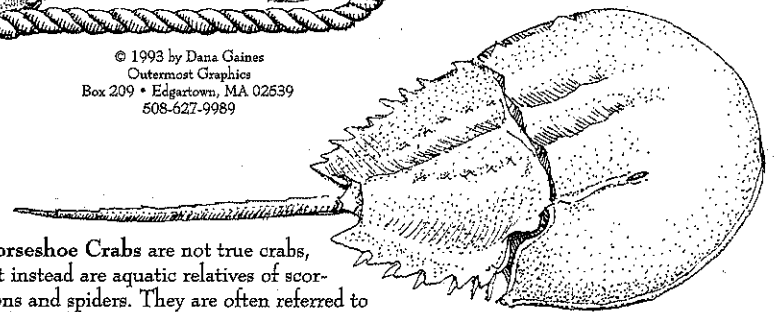


Spider Crabs are slow moving shellfish predators common on sandy bottoms. Their empty body shells are often found washed ashore.

Starfish prey on many types of shellfish by prying shells open and inserting their stomachs to devour the contents.



Horseshoe Crabs are not true crabs, but instead are aquatic relatives of scorpions and spiders. They are often referred to as "living fossils" as they have been in existence for over 300 million years!



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