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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES
BUREAU OF PUBLIC HEALTH
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PATRICK C. KELIHER
COMMISSIONER

January 4, 2024

Dear Shellfish Committees, Town Clerks, and Town Officials:

This letter is a reminder to submit your **2023 Municipal Shellfish Management Review Report before April 1, 2024**. We have also included some news highlights and important information.

The Annual Municipal Shellfish Management Review Report identifies the key management components within municipal shellfish programs that must be completed for your program to meet statutory and regulatory requirements under Title 12 M.R. S. Chapter 623 §6671 and DMR Regulation Chapter 7.30(4).

The completed Annual Municipal Shellfish Management Review Report for the year 2023 must be submitted to the DMR Bureau of Public Health by mail email (DMRPublicHealthDiv@maine.gov). Incomplete reports will be returned for corrections so please take the time to fill it out correctly and completely, reaching out to your Marine Resource Scientist (formerly Area Biologist) for assistance as needed. Enclosed is an **updated** list of towns covered by each Marine Resource Scientist, as well as contact information. Any municipality that has not submitted their completed annual review by the April 1 due date will receive a letter from the Commissioner giving notice of failure to meet Title 12, Chapter 623 §6671 and DMR Regulation Chapter 7 requirements. Failure to submit the required information within an additional 30 days may result in the Commissioner rescinding the town's shellfish ordinance.

All forms for the Annual Review can be found as fillable pdfs at <https://www.maine.gov/dmr/fisheries/shellfish/municipal-shellfish-management-program/dmr-municipal-shellfish-management-forms>. The newest versions of the municipal shellfish management forms must be used, old versions are not accepted and will be returned. Required forms include:

- Annual Review Form
- Budget Worksheet
- Enforcement Worksheet

As a reminder, any town considering license allocation changes in 2024 should include supporting information such as survey data, classification changes resulting in increased or decreased resource availability, and/or landings data. License allocation changes without supporting data are unlikely to be approved. Think ahead to 2025 and plan the necessary data collection in 2024!

News and Updates:

- We continue to work to improve **communication** between the Nearshore Program and Municipal and Regional Shellfish Programs, as well ensure an efficient use of time. In 2023, Marine Resource Scientists began reaching out to Shellfish Programs each month to ask if their presence, or that of a representative from Water Quality, was requested for a specific agenda item at that month's Shellfish Committee Meeting. This will continue into 2024 and represents an effort to ensure that DMR staff are attending meetings where they will be most useful.
- Last year, DMR began conducting internal evaluations of the municipal shellfish management program. A gap was identified, as it appears we lack **Shellfish Management Plans** for some municipalities, as required by DMR Chapter 7.20, which outlines that municipalities must have a Shellfish Management Plan accepted

by the Department prior to the Department's approval of a Municipal Shellfish Conservation Ordinance. We are pleased that 20 of the 57 Municipal and Regional Shellfish Programs now have DMR-approved Shellfish Management Plans. **By the end of 2024, all remaining Municipal and Regional Shellfish Programs must have a new or original Shellfish Management Plan accepted by the Department.** You can find a list of towns' Shellfish Management Plans on our [website](#), as well as a [template](#) to draft your plan.

- The 2024 **Municipal Shellfish Mini-Grant** Application Period is currently open, with applications due on March 3, 2024. Municipal or Regional Shellfish Committees may apply for up to \$7000 to support a shellfish management projects with a two-year project period starting May 1, 2024. The full Request for Proposals and Proposal Application Form are available on our [website](#).
- The 2023 **Municipal Shellfish Warden training** will be conducted at the DMR Marquadt Building in Augusta on March 27 and 28 from 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM. (recertification only is March 27 from 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM). This training is only offered once per year, please save the date.
 - **New Wardens** - The deadline for [new warden applications](#) will be Feb 1, 2024. You may submit your training applications to DMRpublichealthdiv@Maine.gov.
 - **Active Wardens** - Please check your certification status to see if you need to be recertified.
 - For more information regarding the Municipal Shellfish Warden program and how to apply, please visit our [website](#).

If there are questions concerning these updates or the requirements of the Annual Review, please contact myself, your Marine Resource Scientist, or the Shellfish Program Coordinator (DMRPublicHealthDiv@maine.gov).

Sincerely,



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