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DEC RE-OPENS ADDITIONAL SHELLFISHING AREAS IN EAST END TOWNS OF SUFFOLK COUNTY

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) today announced it has partially rescinded temporary emergency shellfish closures that were implemented in Nassau and Suffolk Counties in response to the coastal flooding and power outages caused by Hurricane Sandy. DEC had initially implemented the shellfishing closures on Monday, October 29 to protect public health. Some areas were reopened on November 7, November 8 and November 14 based on examination of water samples.

DEC collected additional water samples in many areas around Long Island earlier this week. Testing of those samples showed that water quality in more areas was suitable for harvesting shellfish. **Effective on Friday, November 16 the harvest of shellfish, including bay scallops, is permitted in the following areas:**

Town of Southold: All the normally certified shellfish lands in Orient Harbor lying southerly of a line extending easterly from the landward end of the jetty on the east side of Spring Pond to the western end of the long dock at the Orient Yacht Club, including all the normally certified shellfish lands in Hallock and Little Bay; and, all the normally certified shellfish lands in Pipes Cove, Southold Bay and Shelter Island Sound, lying northerly and easterly of Paradise Point on Great Hog Neck; and, all of the normally certified shellfish lands in the creeks, harbors, bays that are tributaries of Great Peconic Bay and Little Peconic Bay.

Town of East Hampton: All the normally certified shellfish lands in Three Mile Harbor, Hog Creek, Napeague Harbor and Lake Montauk. **Town of Shelter Island:** All the normally certified shellfish lands in Shelter Island Sound lying northerly and easterly of Crab Creek Point.

Town of Southampton: All of the normally certified shellfish lands in Shinnecock Bay, Sag Harbor, Cold Spring Pond and North Sea Harbor, including all of the normally certified creeks, harbors, bays, ponds and tributaries along the north shore of the Town of Southampton.

However, several areas remain closed to the harvest of shellfish, through November 21, including: The northern portion of Orient Harbor in the Town of Southold; all of Accabonac Harbor in the Town of East Hampton; outer Hempstead Harbor adjacent to the Towns of North Hempstead and Oyster Bay; southern Cold Spring Harbor in the Towns of Oyster Bay and Huntington. Additionally, the following enclosed bays along the southern shore of Long Island remain closed: Hempstead Bay, South Oyster Bay, Great South Bay, Nicoll Bay, Patchogue Bay and Bellport Bay.

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The closures were implemented and extended to protect the public health. The prolonged strong easterly winds, full moon and storm surge caused by Hurricane Sandy caused significant coastal flooding that inundated septic systems and wastewater treatment systems in some low lying areas. Sewage treatment plants experienced temporary bypasses causing less than fully treated sewage to be discharged into certain shellfishing areas. When water quality in the enclosed creeks, coves, harbors and bays is adversely affected by such discharges, shellfish in those areas have an increased potential to be hazardous for use as food.

DEC will continue to collect water samples for bacteriological testing over the next few days. Additional areas will be re-opened as soon as possible based on the results of the laboratory analyses of those samples.

A recorded message advising harvesters of the status of these shellfish areas may be heard at **(631) 444-0480**. The message will be updated during the course of the temporary closures. If you would like a more detailed description of the closed areas please call the office during normal business hours at **(631) 444-0475**. Additionally, information about temporary closures is available on DEC's website at: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7765.html>

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