

Nantuxent Harvest Area Closure Summary – New Jersey

The State of New Jersey's Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and Department of Health (NJDOH) hereby notify the ISSC of the temporary closure to shellfish harvest of the Nantuxent harvest area on the Delaware Bay. This closure is the result of traceback performed subsequent to a suspected Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP) incident out of the State of Wisconsin that included harvest tags from the Nantuxent harvest area with a harvest date of 6/10/24. It should be noted that there were also oysters harvested from other states on the invoice and tags, states that have had recent recalls for PSP, unlike New Jersey that has never had a single PSP case. While the State of New Jersey doubts the likelihood that the oyster/s in question came from New Jersey waters, out of an abundance of caution, the State closed the harvest area on 6/24/24 pending sampling and testing results to confirm that shellfish harvested from this area are not potentially dangerous to human health.

On 6/25/24, PSP analysis was conducted at the NJDEP's Bureau of Marine Water Monitoring (BMWM) Leeds Point Lab on two oyster samples (6242401 and 6252401) from the Nantuxent harvest area using an Abraxis test kit. Both samples returned results below the reporting limit and very consistent with the laboratory method blank. The same two samples were sent on 6/25/24 to Bigelow Laboratory to be analyzed by an NSSP approved method for PSP in shellfish meats, and we should have those results by 6/26/24 or 6/27/24 at the latest, depending on what time the samples are delivered to the lab today. If the samples sent to Bigelow Laboratory come back consistent with the Abraxis test results, the harvest area will reopen immediately.

Recent routine monitoring samples for biotoxins in the area of the Nantuxent harvest area have not shown any levels of concern. It should also be noted that 916 bushels of oysters were harvested from the area during the time period in question, which is equivalent to roughly 237,900 oysters or 19,285 meals, without a single other illness reported. Only one grower was harvesting from the area in question on 6/10/24. This grower/certified shellfish dealer initiated a voluntary recall of all oysters associated with the 6/10/24 harvest date from the Nantuxent harvest area. During the course of the recall, it was determined that all oysters have already been consumed. No additional PSP illnesses associated with these oysters have been reported.

Again, this closure is out of an extreme abundance of caution despite the fact that it remains unlikely that the illness in question resulted from the consumption of oysters harvested from New Jersey. As stated, the State of New Jersey has never had a PSP case, nor has the State ever detected any marine biotoxins anywhere near levels of concern, let alone those that would warrant a closure.

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