



MUNICIPAL OFFICE TOWN OF WELLS
ALL OPEN FLATS BEGIN DECEMBER 13, 2025

**RECREATIONAL SHELLFISH LICENSE
RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Town of Wells has participated with the Wells Reserve and the Department of Marine Resources (DMR) to undertake the proper studies and water quality testing to have a partial area of the Wells clam flats reopen for recreational clamming. Once the clam capital of Maine, the community of Wells has seen its shellfish areas deteriorate over the years. The Wells Clam Commission has worked, with the support of the town, to raise and plant clam seedlings.

Currently there is no active crab program.

The Town has invested heavily in the reopening of the clam flats for recreational clamming for the enjoyment of its citizens. License holders are asked to assist the town and its Clam Commission by following the guidelines and rules listed below to protect this natural resource:

1. The shellfish licenses are issued on the **fourth Tuesday in November**, for the season *when* DMR authorizes shell fishing in Wells. 90 recreational \$30.00 licenses are available for Wells residents (for a limited number of 65 years of age or older, the fees will be waived). 15 recreational \$60.00 licenses are available to non-residents (for a limited number of 65 years of age or older, the fees will be waived). The license fees are **non-refundable** and go towards supporting the Town's shellfish management efforts. If, on the **ninetieth (90) day**, following the opening day of sales all the licenses established and allocated pursuant to sub section 190-9(A) have not been issued, any remaining licenses, regardless of category, shall be issued on a first - come – first - served basis.
One Day Pass Recreational – Resident/Nonresident 10/day passes, combined \$15/20.
2. The Town's Clam Commission limits shell fishing. This year's season starts December 13th and includes **every other weekend and all holidays** ending on March 21st. This is the **only** time shell fishing is permitted. DMR and the Clam Commission can close the recreational shellfish areas at any time for conservation and pollution purposes.
3. The Board of Selectmen have appointed one Shellfish Warden who, with the DMR Marine Wardens, will enforce shell fishing laws and patrol the shellfish areas. License holders are the only people to be clamming. Licensee must use approved equipment only (one rake maximum per holder). People may accompany license holders but may not participate in the act of clamming. License holders over 65 years of age may have a second person assist in the act of clamming but only one person may actually dig. Shellfish licenses must be carried by the holder when shell fishing.

4. **One peck** (8 quarts) of clams is allowed to be dug in a 24-hour period. It is unlawful for any person to possess soft-shell clams which are less than two inches in diameter unless they total less than 10% of any lot. The tolerance shall be determined by numerical count of not less than one peck or by the count of the entire bulk pile if it contains less than one peck. License holders are reminded that local, state, and federal wardens will be monitoring and enforcing shellfish laws. Penalties of up to \$5,000 can and will be levied to violators.
5. Shellfish license holders shall only be allowed to dig clams in the areas designated by red tipped stakes. Please park vehicles where designated and enter the open shellfish areas by walking within the mean high and low water line area. In most areas, license holders will be crossing the Federally owned marsh and great care is requested not to harm or destroy the marsh. Federal Wardens will be inspecting the marsh during this period and may ask license holders to move to a different area if the marsh shows signs of being harmed by the presence of license holders. Clamming should occur between the mean high and low water line area only and away from residential homes that are located on the marsh side of Atlantic Avenue.
6. Shellfish license holders are reminded of a *carry-in/carry-out* policy for all items brought with them while shell fishing. Please respect the environment. The following rules have been recently adopted by Town ordinance:
 - Actual digging is limited to daylight hours. It will be unlawful to dig from sunset to one half hour before sunrise.
 - Licensee must be 12 years or older.
 - Digger must use ‘clam digger’s fork’ or a tined fork with a 2” separation of tines and with a handle no longer than 2’.
7. Safety precautions, such as wearing proper winter clothing, footwear and knowledge of the tides should be considered prior to going out to the shellfish areas. Weather conditions should be of first concern to shellfish license holders when clamming. License holders are also reminded to watch out for hunters during waterfowl hunting season (January) and should wear fluorescent orange when shell fishing during this time.
8. The Town of Wells makes no claims as to the quality or quantity of clams in the areas open for recreational shell fishing. Remember to always cook your shellfish properly. It is recommended **not** to eat *raw* clams from this shellfish area.
9. Always check any possible STATE closures by calling **DMR RED TIDE AND SHELLFISH SANITATION HOT LINE at 1-800-232-4733 and 207-624-7727** or visit <http://www.maine.gov/dmr> (click on the Health & Safety Button then Bacterial or Red Tide Closures).
10. Wells Clam Warden: James Black **207-229-1018** (call or text)
Jim Black jimhblack@gmail.com