



Town of Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts

**Shellfish Department**

P.O. Box 1327

Oak Bluffs, MA 02557-1327

Telephone: (508) 693-0072

Fax: (508) 696-6472

Charles Fisher  
Shellfish Constable  
Herring Warden

**April 2020 Report**

Even with the shutdowns caused by the covid pandemic it has been a busy month for the Department. Gear preparation continues to be a focus. Almost all quahog rafts have been repaired and scraped for paint. The Sengekontacket boat is also ready for paint as is the tidal upweller. Outside painting will commence as soon as the weather warms up a bit.

The mechanic did a great job on the Sengekontacket boat and it is running better than ever. When it was picked up it was noted that the trailer was in need of repair. The boat was immediately launched and Garrett repaired the trailer. While the boat was in the water we were able to coordinate with DMF to take water samples and collect meat samples from last year's relay stock. The meat samples were tested and came up clean enabling the relay areas to be opened.

Also in working with DMF, sections 8, 9, and 10 of Sengekontacket (V16.30) are now able to be open to shellfishing for all months except May and June. This has taken years of sampling and collaboration with DMF. For the months of July and August these sections will be subject to the same rainfall closures as the rest of the pond.

For the rest of this month all sections of the Oak Bluffs portion of Sengekontacket is open, along with the Oak Bluffs Harbor, the northern section of Farm Pond, and all of Lagoon Pond. Starting in May, sections 1-7 of Sengekontacket and all of Lagoon Pond will be open for shellfishing. As always, postings will be updated on the ponds and the Department's web page.

The Select board has agreed to extend recreational shellfishing licenses until June 1. There has been a slight increase in recreational shellfishing over the past few weeks. I have been instructing people to follow the social distancing guidelines that we have all been directed to follow.

Marissa has been assigned work from home projects that she has completed. We plan for her to return to her regular duties on May 5.

Progress continues on the Farm Pond restoration project. The Town continues to mark it as top priority. We are currently working on funding for the design and permitting phase.

The Conservation Commission has voted in favor of the installation of a power pole and other work to be done at the R.M. Herring Run. This is in preparation for the installation of a camera that will record anything passing through the herring run. Associated software will be able to count the number of herring and other animals passing through the run. This project has been led by the Oak Bluffs Water District and supported by the Shellfish Departments of Tisbury and Oak Bluffs.

I have discussed summer interns with the other down-island constables and my deputies. My cautious optimism has changed to conservative risk management. I intend to talk with FOS and LPA next week about possibly suspending the program for this season and/or instituting extreme precautions to ensure the wellbeing of staff, interns, and the general public.

Respectfully submitted,