

OUR TOWNS

LONG ISLAND

Shellfishing areas to close due to boating

Three shellfishing areas on Long Island's North Shore will be closed starting tomorrow to protect the public from potentially contaminated shellfish because of increased boating activity during the Fourth of July holiday.

The state Department of Environmental Conservation said Wednesday that the closures are precautionary.

Harvesting of shellfish is prohibited from sunrise Friday until Wednesday in these areas:

- 445 acres in a section of Oyster Bay, Town of Oyster Bay, Nassau County;
- 50 acres in the area known as the Sand Hole in the Town of Huntington, Suffolk County;
- 243 acres in a section of Port Jefferson Harbor in Brookhaven, Suffolk County.

Commissioner Joe Martens said his agency annually closes shellfishing in these waters during Fourth of July weekend because of the heavy increase in recreational boating.

During peak holiday periods, discharges from marine sanitation devices could contaminate nearby shellfish beds with pathogenic bacteria or viruses, rendering the shellfish unsafe for human consumption, the agency said in a news release.

"We strongly encourage boaters to act responsibly and be aware of the no-discharge zones in Port Jefferson Harbor, Oyster Bay Harbor and the Sand Hole, and to use pump-out facilities to prevent impacts to our natural resources and protect public health," Martens said in the release.

A recorded message advising the public about temporary closures is accessible daily by calling 631-444-0480. The recorded message also advises harvesters when such areas have reopened.

— GARY DYMSKI