

The laboratories analyze water samples from sampling stations across coastal Louisiana and compare them to NSSP guidelines. Based on analysis results, a reclassification line is drawn on a map showing which areas are presumed safe. Areas classified as "conditionally managed" are managed under different orders, which are not related to seasonal classification periods. As in all oyster-growing waters, it is the harvester's responsibility to know and obey the classification status of the area before harvesting. The harvester must check the current classification for the area he plans to work every day. Oysters may not be harvested for any reason in prohibited areas.

How are harvest waters sampled?

LDH/OPH has designated sampling stations in Louisiana harvest waters. These stations are sampled every month, and further checking is done as needed. State technicians analyze the sample in the department's Certified Laboratory. The department checks for fecal coliform (F.C.) bacteria. If F.C. bacteria are found, it means that waste materials, like human feces, may have been dumped into the water. State inspectors also analyze shell stock meat samples as needed.

Dangers of improper dumping

As previously mentioned, improper dumping of human waste by recreational boaters and commercial fishermen pose a real threat to consumers of raw oysters. The Louisiana Administrative Code (LAC), Title 51, Part 9, Chapter 3, Section 305, as a minimum safeguard, requires vessels handling shellfish to be equipped with a covered container which must have at least a two gallon capacity per person on board. This container must be properly worded "FOR HUMAN WASTE ONLY" with the letter size being no less than 1 1/2 inches. Section 307 of the same chapter forbids disposing of human waste out of any boat into or next to oyster growing waters.

Did you know?

Eating raw oysters, clams, or mussels can make people very sick. This happens when oysters are not processed properly or when oysters are taken from contaminated waters.

Diseases caused by tainted raw oysters

Diseases known to come from eating contaminated shellfish include typhoid fever, infectious hepatitis, gastroenteritis and cholera. These illnesses are caused by viruses and bacteria, which enter oysters and other mollusks through contaminated water in harvest areas. Gastroenteritis is a disease of the intestinal tract that is transmitted by people. Its symptoms include diarrhea, cramps, vomiting, and headaches which begin 52 hours after eating contaminated oysters. The disease lasts average of 36 hours, but can linger up to nine days. Safe harvesting, handling and processing of seafood is vital to good health, which is why Louisiana belongs to the National Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP) of the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference (ISSC). [www.ISSC.org]

The role of the NSSP

The NSSP sets the minimum health standards for regulating shellfish growing, harvesting, and processing to reduce the possibility of people getting sick from eating raw oysters. A major part of the NSSP's work involves setting standards for classifying and reclassifying oyster growing waters.

The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries' (LDWF) Enforcement Division makes sure these classifications are followed. LDH provides classification maps at posting sites, so harvesters may be familiar with the various classifications. LDH/OPH uses a two-season, four-period program for classifying or reclassifying oyster growing areas that have not been classified as conditionally managed. Prior to the effective date of the reclassification period, a public viewing of the reclassification maps is held. The announcement stating the meeting time and place is announced on LDH's website (www.ldh.la.gov)

The LDWF enforces the current reclassification lines. Permits for relaying oysters from a closed area are granted only if the area of concern meets or exceeds restricted area criteria as specified in the NSSP Model Ordinance and the applicant meets all the LDH criteria for receiving the permit.

1. Approved
2. Restricted
3. Conditionally approved
4. Conditionally restricted
5. Closed
6. Prohibited

How are harvest waters classified?

LDH/OPH determines the classification and reclassification of oyster growing waters. These waters may be classified as:

Dealer Oyster Education

This Oyster Harvest Program is managed by the Louisiana Department of Health Office of Public Health. The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is the state enforcement agency. If you have any questions about the Oyster Harvest Program, you may contact one of the following agencies.

For questions concerning water classifications call:

**Louisiana Department of Health
Office of Public Health**
Molluscan Shellfish Program
628 North 4th Street, P.O. Box 4489 Bin 10
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-4489
Ph: 225-342-7653
Fx: 225-342-7607
1-800-256-2775
www.ldh.la.gov

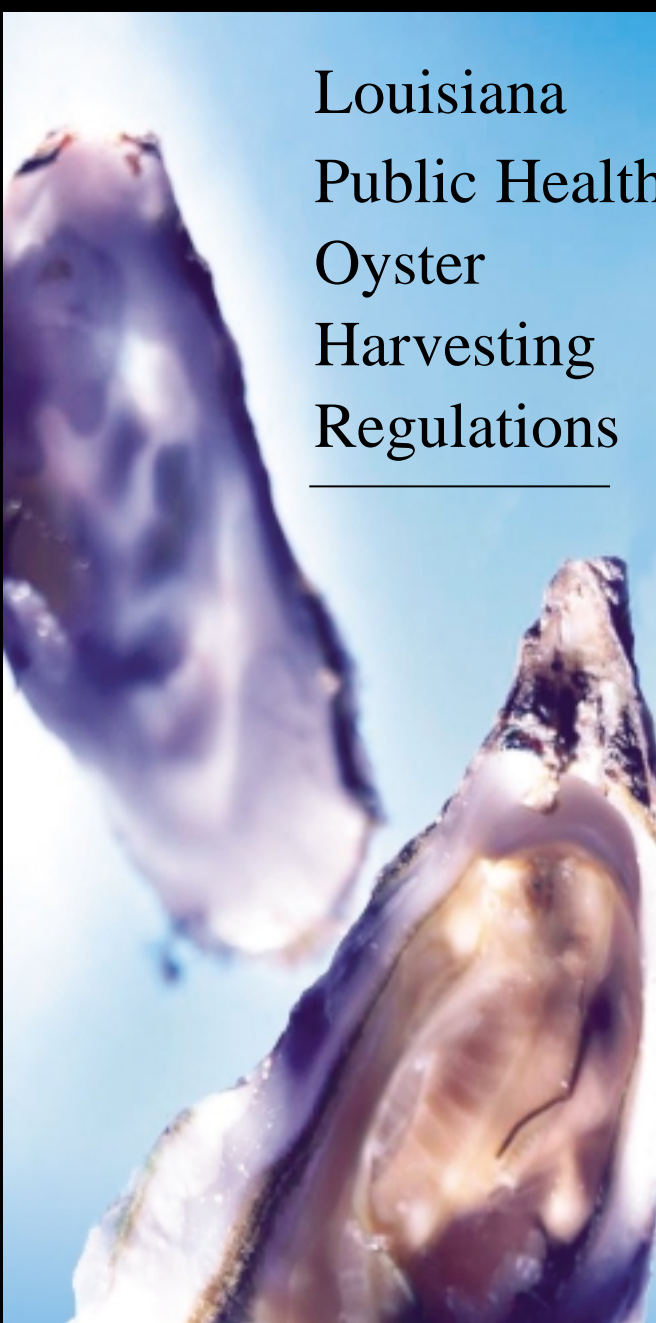
For useful information on becoming certified to process and distribute oysters, or to obtain a permit to transplant oysters call:

**Louisiana Department of Health
Office of Public Health**
Commercial Seafood Inspection Program
628 North 4th Street, P.O. Box 4489 Bin 10
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-4489
Ph: 225-342-7653

For information about enforcement contact:

**Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Enforcement Division**
2000 Quail Dr.
Baton Rouge, LA 70808
Ph: 225-765-2989
Fx: 225-765-2832
1-800-442-2832
www.wlf.state.la.us

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This brochure was developed by the Department of Health (NFH) to give you information about harvesting oysters in Louisiana, to let you know how you can help the Shellfish Harvest Program to make harvesting and consumption safer for everyone. For the purposes of this brochure, oysters are officially included under the general term "molluscan shellfish".

General Harvesting Rules

Because regulations for harvesting oysters can change, this document is intended for use as a guide only. It does not have the effect of law.

The following general harvest rules apply to all classified or reclassified harvest areas.

1. All shell stock harvested for either commercial or recreational purposes must come from waters classified or reclassified as approved or conditionally approved by the State Health Officer.
2. Unless otherwise specified, a 50-yard radius (150ft.) closure, as measured from the point of waste discharge, exists for all manmade habitable structures. It is illegal to harvest shellfish within this designated area.
3. The State Health Officer can order immediate closures to protect public health

or upon request of the DWF Secretary. When harvesting close to a classification/reclassification line, the harvester is responsible for knowing if he is in approved waters.

4. Sometimes buoys or other field markers are used to show the boundaries of classified or reclassified areas. They follow the approximate positions shown on the official classified/reclassified area maps.

5. Boundaries, for enforcement purposes, are as identified by the buoys or field markers. Removing or relocating buoys or markers by unauthorized personnel will result in immediate closure of the area until such time as the proper boundary can be determined.

6. It is the harvester's responsibility to know the classification of the growing area before conducting any harvest activity. If the area is conditionally managed, it is the harvester's duty to know if the area is approved for harvesting before performing any type of harvest activity.

7. All oysters on a harvest vessel in Louisiana waters shall be considered to be oysters taken from state waters.

8. Vessel captains are required to possess valid oyster harvesting licenses.

9. Oysters harvested from state-owned shellfish growing areas for sale or consumption must be landed in Louisiana.

10. It is illegal to harvest oysters from a prohibited area.

11. It is illegal to harvest oysters 1/2 hour after sunset to 1/2 hour before sunrise.

12. An official DWF harvester's tag must be applied to each container of oysters. It is imperative that the required information entered on tags be accurate and legible.

Illegal harvest activity may be reported day or night to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
800-442-2511

Posting Sites For Seasonal Reclassification Map Updates

**Division of Environmental Health Services
Molluscan Shellfish Program**
628 North 4th Street P.O. Box 4489 Box 16
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-4489
Telephone: (225) 342-7617
Toll Free: 1-800-275-2776

***Louisiana Dept of Wildlife and Fisheries**
2000 Quail Drive
Baton Rouge, LA 70810
Telephone: (225) 765-2989
Toll Free: 1-800-442-2511

St. Tammany Parish

**La. Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries Marine
Fisheries Division**
61384 Fish Hatchery Road
Lacombe, LA 70445
Telephone: (985) 882-0027

Orleans Parish

PJ McIntyre
4501 Murano
New Orleans, LA 70129
All Maps

Bernard Parish

St. Bernard Parish Health Unit
2712 Palmisano Blvd.
Chalmette, LA 70043
Telephone: (504) 278-7410

Campo's Marina
1301 Yscloskey Hwy
St. Bernard, LA 70085
Telephone: (504) 676-1379

Plaquemines Parish

Plaquemines Parish Health Dept.
3706 Main Street
Belle Chasse, LA 70037
Telephone: (504) 394-3510

Delta Marina

P. O. Box 445
317 Rosemarie Drive
Empire, LA 70050

Joshua's Marina

P. O. Box 773
154 Buras Boat Harbor Road
Buras, LA 70041
Telephone: (985) 657-7632

Beshel's Marina

Box 100
212 Marina Road
Point a la Hache, LA 70082

Plaquemines Parish Sheriff's Dept.

201 Freeport Road
Port Sulphur, LA
Telephone: (985) 564-2525

Jefferson Parish

Jefferson Parish Health Unit

111 North Causeway Blvd.
Metairie, LA 70001
Telephone: (504) 838-5100

Lafitte Seaway Marina

P. O. 178
5057 Kenal Road
Lafitte, LA
Telephone: (504) 689-3148

Lafitte Harbor Marina

4932 Kenal Road
Lafitte, LA
Telephone: (504) 689-2013

Lafourche Parish

Lafourche Parish Health Unit

2535 Veterans Blvd.
Thibodaux, LA 70301
Telephone: (985) 447-0921
Fax: (985) 447-0897

Louisiana Marine Extension Service

South Lafourche Port Commission

P. O. Box 490
16819 East Main Street
Galliano, LA 70354
Telephone: (985) 632-6701

Louisiana Dept. Of Environmental Quality

Bayou Lafourche Regional Office

104 Lococo Drive Ste. 2
Raceland, LA 70394
Telephone: (985) 532-6206

***Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries**

P.O. Box 189
468 Texas Gulf Road
Bourg, LA 70343
Telephone: (985) 594-4139

Terrebonne Parish

Terrebonne Parish Health Unit

600 Polk Street
Houma, LA 70360
Telephone: (985) 857-3601

Wilson's Oysters, Inc.

P.O. Box 3715
1981 South Van Avenue
Houma, LA 70361
Telephone: (985) 857-8855

Motivatit Seafood

P.O. Box 3916
412 Palm Ave.
Houma, LA 70361
Telephone: (985) 868-7191

Point Au Chein Supermarket

1482 Hwy 665
Montegut, LA 70377
Telephone: (985) 594-4474

Tommy's Stop-N-Go

633 Bayou Dularge Road
Houma, LA 70360
Telephone: (985) 872-6517

Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service

P.O. Box 672
511 Rousell
Houma, LA 70361
Telephone: (985) 873-6495

St. Mary Parish

St. Mary Parish Health Unit

1200 David Drive
Morgan City, LA 70380
Telephone: (985) 380-2441

St. Mary Seafood

155 Intracoastal Road
Franklin, LA 70538
Telephone: (337) 923-7607

Iberia Parish

Iberia Parish Health Unit

Court House Annex
121 West Pershing St.
New Iberia, LA 70586
Telephone: (337) 373-0021

Vermilion Parish

Vermilion Parish Health Unit

401 South St. Charles Street
Abbeville, LA 70510
Telephone: (337) 893-1443

Calcasieu Parish

***La. Department of
Wildlife and Fisheries**

1213 North Lakeshore Drive
Lake Charles, LA 70601
Telephone: (337) 491-2579

Calcasieu Parish Health Unit

3236 Kirkman St.
P.O. Box 3170
Lake Charles, LA 70602
Telephone: (337) 478-6020

Cameron Parish

Cameron Parish Health Unit

107 Recreation Center Lane
P.O. Box 1430
Cameron, LA 70631
Telephone: (337) 775-5368

* Oyster tags are available for purchase from those Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries offices prefixed with an (*). Payments for all tags must be made by check or money order only.

