

POSSIBLE CHANGES TO REGULATIONS FOR CLAMS HARVESTING IN THE CHESTER RIVER

Current regulations conflict on whether clamming is allowed or prohibited in a certain area of the Chester River. The department would like to clarify that clamming is allowed.

Oyster Recovery Areas are areas in the Chesapeake Bay that have been designated in regulation for specific management actions. Each Oyster Recovery Area has been split into zones for the specific management actions that occur in that area. Regulations promulgated in 1996 allow clam harvesting in Zone A of the Chester River Oyster Recovery Area. Regulations promulgated in 2010 for oysters that incorporated the document titled “Oyster Sanctuaries of the Chesapeake Bay and Its Tidal Tributaries September 2010” prohibit clamming in Zone A of the Chester River Oyster Recovery Area. Prohibiting clamming in that area of the sanctuary was not the department’s intention, but that was not reflected in final regulations that were adopted in 2010. The area should have been included with the other sanctuaries that allow clam harvest. This action would reflect the previous intent and allow clamming in the Chester River Oyster Recovery Area Zone A, but not within 150 feet of any natural oyster bar.