

# State of Classification Report

The attached report illustrates the status of the commercial shellfish growing areas in your county. It includes a breakdown of shellfish harvest acreage and impacts on marine water that result in Prohibited classifications. We are providing this information to continue conversations about the current marine water quality in your county.

Our program collected and analyzed the data within this report following the stringent pollution source and marine water quality requirements set forth in the National Shellfish Sanitation Program Guide for the Control of Molluscan Shellfish (NSSP). Marine water quality in commercial shellfish growing areas must meet stringent requirements including a geometric mean of no greater than 14 fecal coliform/100 ml and an estimated 90<sup>th</sup> percentile of no greater than 43 fecal coliform/100 ml. These numbers are based on ongoing, long-term sampling at permanent marine water stations. The water quality statistics include the evaluation of a minimum of the last 30 marine water samples collected over a 2.5 to 5-year period. In addition, all potential pollution sources in the watershed are evaluated for their impact to the growing area. Commercial shellfish harvesting will be restricted if marine water stations fail to meet the marine water standards or if pollution sources are identified within the watershed that impact the area.

Common terms used in the report include:

**Classification** – A specific term that defines the conditions under which commercial shellfish harvesting can occur. It is determined by the evaluation of marine water quality, shoreline pollution sources, and meteorological/hydrographic factors.

**Approved** – Areas that meet very stringent marine water quality standards and have no pollution impacts. Commercial shellfish companies can harvest directly from Approved areas and take the product directly to market.

**Conditionally Approved** – Areas that meet very stringent marine water quality standards and have no pollution impacts most of the time. Periodic poor water quality, based on predictable conditions, results in the temporary closure of the harvest area.

**Restricted** – Areas that show a limited degree of pollution or areas where active marine water quality evaluations are not available. Shellfish must be relayed to Approved or Conditionally Approved areas and allowed to purge before harvest.

**Prohibited** – Areas that have known marine water quality impacts. Commercial shellfish harvesting is not allowed in Prohibited areas.

**Upgrade** – Reclassifying a growing area or portion of a growing area from a more restrictive classification to a less restrictive classification. *Example: Upgrade from Prohibited to Approved.*

**Downgrade** – Reclassifying a growing area or portion of a growing area from a less restrictive classification to a more restrictive classification. *Example: Downgrade from Approved to Conditionally Approved.*

**Failing** – Marine water sampling stations that exceed the water quality standard, based on data collected through December. The classification of the shellfish harvesting area will be reevaluated.

**Threatened** – Marine water stations currently meeting the standards but are near exceeding the water quality standard or existing shoreline pollution sources have been identified that may impact public health if not appropriately managed. Marine water sampling stations with estimated 90th percentiles between 30 and 43 fc/100 ml are considered Threatened.

Short descriptions of each section of the report follow:

## CLASSIFICATION

Classified commercial shellfish growing areas vary in size from under 500 acres to over 46,000 acres. The total classified acres in a county account for all Approved, Conditionally Approved, Restricted, and Prohibited acres. The number of marine water stations in a county denotes how many permanent stations are routinely sampled each year. The Threatened/Failing stations includes the marine water station number and growing area name.

## CLASSIFICATION BREAKDOWN & REASONS FOR PROHIBITED CLASSIFICATIONS

This figure shows a breakdown of the classifications and reasons for the Prohibited classifications. While the Nonpoint denotation in the Prohibited classification chart is based on poor water quality; the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and Marina portions are based on these sources potential to pollute. Potential upset conditions at a WWTP and discharges from boats in a marina are used to calculate these Prohibited areas.

## UPGRADES & DOWNGRADES

A list will be included of classification upgrades and downgrades that occurred during the last three years.

## COMMERCIAL SHELLFISH GROWING AREA MAPS

The second page includes a map of all shellfish growing areas in the county.

## FECAL COLIFORM ROLLING ESTIMATED 90<sup>th</sup> PERCENTILES and GROWING AREA MAPS

Additional pages include maps of all shellfish growing areas with Threatened or Failing stations. Stations symbolized in orange are threatened and in danger of failing – these areas should be, or should continue to be, the focus of water quality restoration work to prevent future downgrades. Stations symbolized in red are failing and the classification of the shellfish harvesting area will be reevaluated which may result in a more restrictive classification. The area around these stations will require improvements in marine water quality and activities completed to remediate pollution sources.

The figures show the water quality trend over the last eight years for all Threatened or Failing stations and includes demarcations of the minimum Threatened threshold (30 FC/100mL) and minimum Failing threshold (43 FC/100mL). The trend lines illustrate the change in bacterial marine water quality (estimated 90<sup>th</sup> percentile) at those stations over time. Each point on the estimated 90<sup>th</sup> percentile trend line is calculated using the previous 30 marine water samples.

## SHELLFISH PROGRAMS CONTACT

For the 2023 Growing Area Annual Reports, please visit

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/Shellfish/GrowingAreas/AnnualReports>

For current Growing Area classifications and water quality, please visit

[www.doh.wa.gov/commercialshellfishmap](http://www.doh.wa.gov/commercialshellfishmap)

For further information, please contact:

**Scott Chernoff** at [scott.chernoff@doh.wa.gov](mailto:scott.chernoff@doh.wa.gov) or (360) 236-3329

Pierce, Island, Snohomish, Thurston, and Whatcom counties

**Trevor Swanson** at [trevor.swanson@doh.wa.gov](mailto:trevor.swanson@doh.wa.gov) or (360) 236-3313

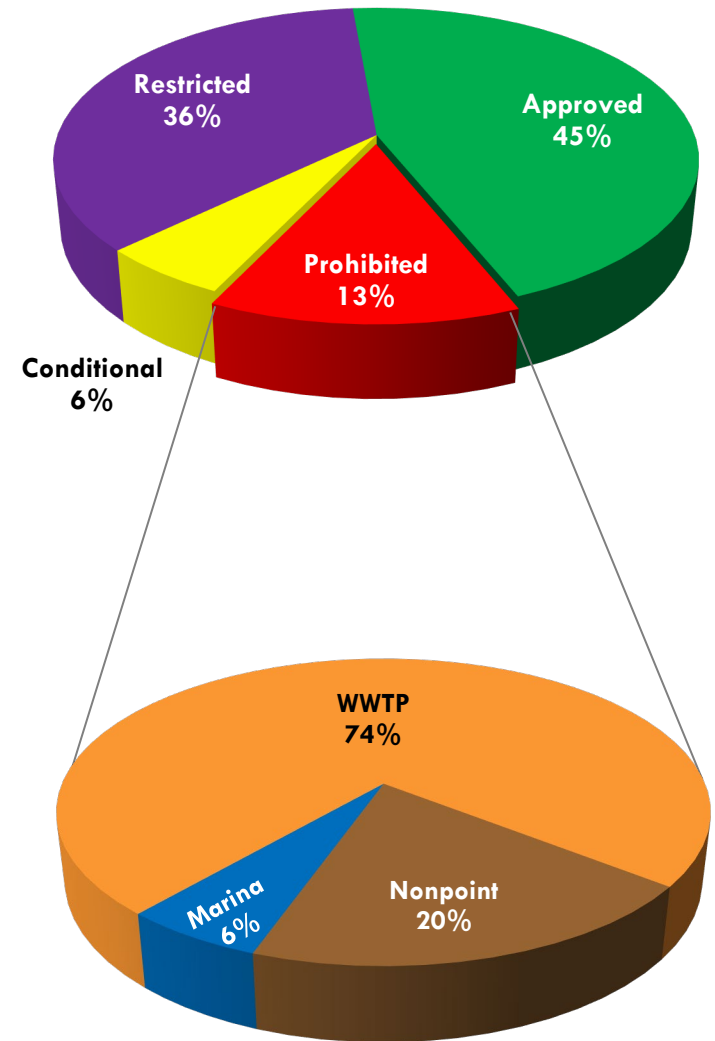
Clallam, Grays Harbor, Kitsap, Jefferson, Mason, Pacific, and Skagit counties

**Jean Frost** at [jean.frost@doh.wa.gov](mailto:jean.frost@doh.wa.gov) or (360) 489-2384

King and San Juan counties

## Shellfish Classification Information

Total Classified Acres	27,221 acres
Approved	12,318 acres
Conditionally Approved	1,544 acres
Restricted	9,745 acres
Prohibited	3,614 acres
Marine Water Stations Monitored	61 Stations
Classified Commercial Shellfish Growing Areas	9 Areas
Threatened/Failing Stations	None



Reasons for Prohibited Classifications

