

Shellfish Harvesting Area Classification and Status

Harvesting wild and aquaculture shellfish, including oysters, clams and mussels, in Florida is regulated to ensure public health. Shellfish harvesting areas are monitored for water quality and potential pollution sources.

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Aquaculture conducts routine testing to determine whether an area is Approved, Conditionally Approved, Restricted, Conditionally Restricted or Prohibited for harvesting to ensure shellfish are safe for human consumption.

Classifications of shellfish harvesting areas are reviewed at least once every twelve years. Status is monitored daily and denotes whether the area is currently open or closed for shellfish harvesting.

Shellfish Harvesting Area Status Explained

Temporary closures of shellfish harvesting areas are most commonly caused by rainfall events or increased river levels. These events create stormwater runoff, which is known to transport pollutants and pathogens into surface waters. Such events trigger temporary closures, based upon each shellfish harvesting area's management plan.

Shellfish harvesting areas are reopened following a temporary closure when sampling demonstrates the standards are met. Public health is protected by allowing shellfish to be harvested only from waters that meet a high quality classification standard (i.e., Approved and Conditionally Approved). Temporary closures appear as **RED HATCH MARKS** on maps.

Shellfish Harvesting Area Classifications

Approved: An Approved area is normally open to shellfish harvesting. It may be temporarily closed under extraordinary circumstances such as harmful algal blooms, hurricanes or sewage spills.
Appears **BLUE** on maps.

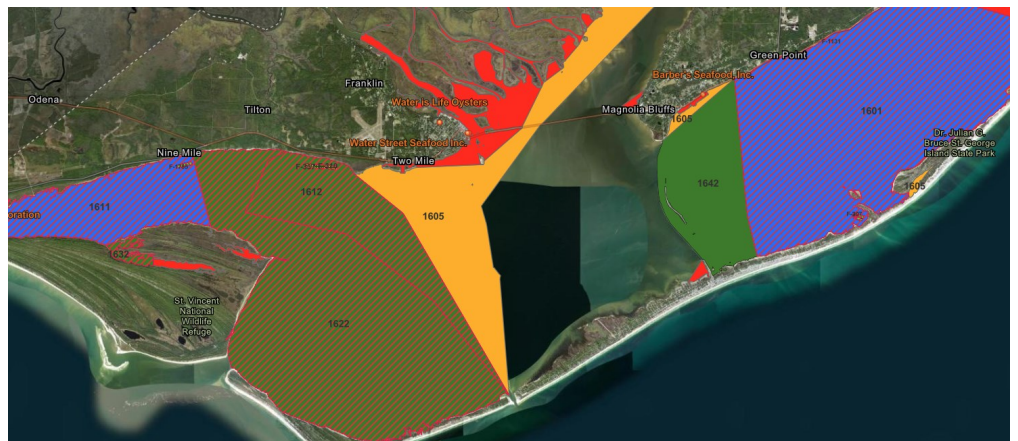
Conditionally Approved: A Conditionally Approved area is periodically closed to shellfish harvesting based on pollution events, such as rainfall or increased river levels. These areas may be temporarily closed under extreme circumstances such as harmful algal blooms, hurricanes or sewage spills.
Appears **GREEN** on maps.

Restricted/Conditionally Restricted:

Both Restricted and Conditionally Restricted areas are closed to harvesting except in specifically authorized situations.
Appears **ORANGE** on maps.

Prohibited: Shellfish harvesting is not permitted in Prohibited areas due to pollution sources or water quality exceeding required standards.
Appears **RED** on maps.

Unclassified: Shellfish harvesting is not permitted in Unclassified waters as they have not had a sanitary shellfish harvesting area survey completed and are not monitored by FDACS.
Not designated on shellfish harvesting area maps.



Apalachicola shellfish harvesting area showing all classifications and a temporary closure status due to extraordinary events.

To determine shellfish harvesting area classification and status:

- ♦ Visit the [Florida Aquaculture Interactive Atlas](http://FloridaAquacultureInteractiveAtlas.com) and shellfish.FDACS.gov.

To be notified on changes of status to shellfish harvesting areas, join the listserv by emailing Aqua_Status@FDACS.gov.

