

Gathering Safe Shellfish

IN WASHINGTON



Tips to stay safe and harvest responsibly — a guide for the season.

Shellfishing is one of the great joys of living in Washington and is a great way of connecting with our local outdoor spaces. Shellfish harvesting has been practiced for thousands of years in the region's marine waters.

To ensure shellfishing can be practiced for generations to come, here are some important resources and tips to stay safe and harvest sustainably.

What to know before you go:

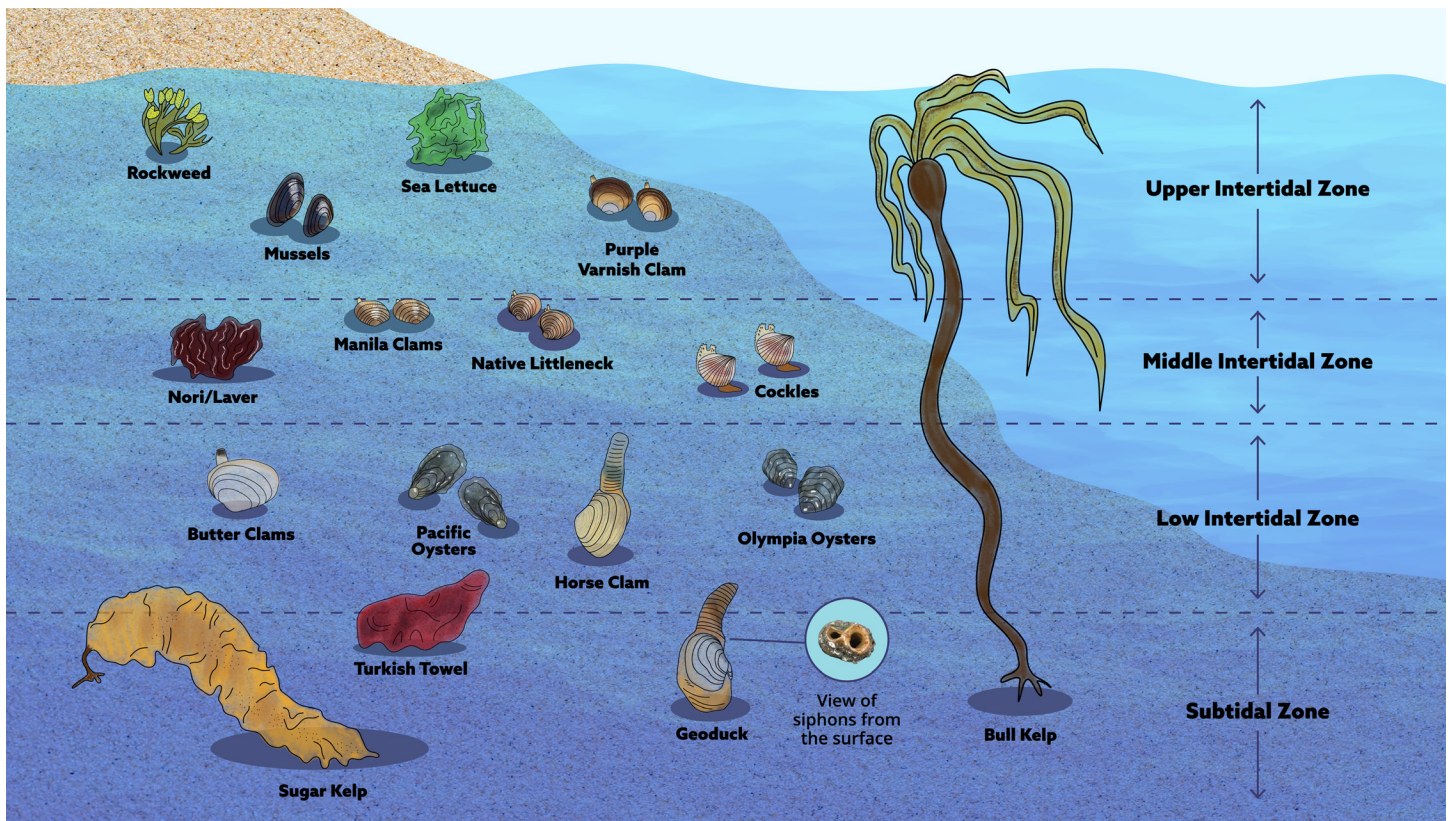
Shellfish
Safety Map



Shellfish Rules
and Regulations



Purchase a
permit from
WDFW
(360-902-2464)



To stay safe and avoid illness, always check the shellfish safety map BEFORE you harvest!

Best harvesting practices

Discarding shells	Oysters must be shucked on the beach that they were harvested on, and the shells should be left on the tideland. Throw clam shells in the trash — or well away from the beach if you plan to use them for another purpose, such as a landscaping material. Putting them back on the beach may not be allowed and could cause harm.
Keep shellfish cool	Once harvested, keep your shellfish cool. Make sure to bring a cooler and ice with you when harvesting. It is best to get shellfish cooled within two hours of harvest, ideally immediately. This will help prevent the bacteria that naturally occur in shellfish and water from growing and causing foodborne illness.
Harvest with the tides	It is best to time harvest when shellfish have most recently been in water. This means avoiding harvesting during low tides when shellfish have been out of the water for more than two hours.
Be a steward	Take care of the areas where you visit. Don't take more than you can use. Harvest within the limits. After harvesting, refill the holes you dig.
Prevent the spread of invasive species	Make sure to rinse your equipment and footwear after you go to the beach. It is important to ensure that species are not moved from one beach to another.

Protecting water quality

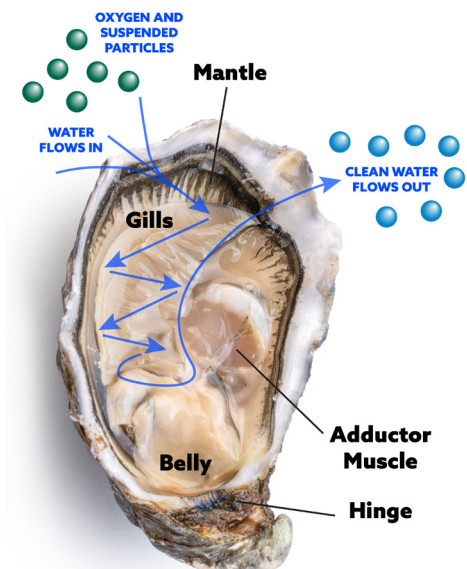
Shellfish are filter feeders, meaning that they pull water into their bodies, strain out suspended food particles, microscopic organisms, and organic matter, and then expel water and waste.

Shellfish, just by eating, help improve water quality. Given how they eat, they are also extremely susceptible to pollution and poor water quality.

Whether you live and play on the shoreline or up in the watershed, to help shellfish and protect water quality you can:

- Ensure your septic system is operating correctly
- Pick up and dispose of pet waste
- Practice green gardening
- Dispose of hazardous household products properly

Have fun, be safe, know the rules, and eat well!



Take care of yourself!

Remember to dress for the weather, wear sunscreen and mud-friendly footwear, and take care around sharp shells and tools.