



Shellfish Closure Areas

Description

Shellfish closure areas are waters where the harvesting of shellfish is prohibited or restricted because of unacceptable water quality. Classification of coastal waters is made by state shellfish sanitation officials in conjunction with the National Shellfish Sanitation Program of the Food and Drug Administration, US Public Health Service. Monitoring is conducted only of bivalve molluscs - oysters, clams, and mussels. Other shellfish species are not included in the monitoring program.

According to Federal guidelines, *approved* shellfish harvesting areas have a median coliform MPN (most probable number) of less than 70/100 ml, indicating thai these areas are believed to be free of hazardous pathogens. *Conditionally approved* or *seasonal* areas meet approved criteria, but are subject to periodic closure due to seasonal changes in shellfish populations or in water quality conditions. *Restricted* waters (between 70 and 700 MPN/100 ml) are regulated by state agencies for specific purposes. Such waters may be harvested for controlled purification or restocking. Waters in which the median coliform MPN exceeds 700 MPN/100 ml are *closed* to the harvesting of shellfish. The terms "prohibited or condemned" are also used. *No shellfish-no production* waters include areas that are inaccessible or that do not produce shellfish in commercial quantities (DHEW, PHS, 1971, 1965). *No restricted* areas were found in the Guff region in 1981.

Closure areas provide an indication of the impact of human activities on living marine resources. Comparison of this map with maps of pollutant discharges (such as Map 5.19) clearly illustrates that areas with restrictions on shellfish harvesting coincide with areas of agricultural and industrial activity or areas of high population (Maps 4.01-03) and therefore with high levels of pollutant discharges.

Shellfish Closure Areas in 1981

- Closed
- Conditional
- Approved or Conditionally Approved
- Temporarily Opened or Temporarily Closed
- Unclassified

In Louisiana, an unclassified category relates to economic considerations, i.e., no current market or species not present in commercial concentration, and is equivalent to the Federal No Shellfish / No Production status. The categories conditional and approved or conditionally approved are state designations equivalent to the Federal *conditionally approved* or *seasonal* status.

References

Brewer, J.A., pers. comm.; Florida Department of Natural Resources, 1979; Morris, W., pers. comm.; Schneider, J., pers. comm.; Taconi, A., pers. comm.; Texas Department of Health, 1981; Travis, N., pers. comm.; Verber, Capt. J., pers. comm.

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