

**PACIFIC REGION  
COUNCIL OF THE HAIDA  
NATION / FISHERIES AND  
OCEANS CANADA  
JOINT MANAGEMENT  
PLAN  
RAZOR CLAM  
JANUARY 1 TO  
DECEMBER 31, 2009**



**Canada**

*This Joint Management Plan for Razor Clams is intended for general purposes only. Where there is a discrepancy between the Plan and the Regulations, the Regulations are the final authority. A description of the Areas and Subareas referenced in this Plan can be found in the Pacific Fishery Management Regulations.*



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## 1. CONTACTS

Observe, Record and Report (Enforcement Line) (800) 465-4336  
Fisheries Information and Shellfish Contamination Closure Update (24 Hours) (866) 431-3474  
or (for Greater Vancouver) (604) 666-2828  
Invertebrate Internet Page [www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/ops/fm/shellfish/default\\_e.htm](http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/ops/fm/shellfish/default_e.htm)

### **Haida Fisheries Program**

Council of the Haida Nation	Sharon Jeffery	(250) 626-3302
PO Box 589	Brad Setso	Fax: (250) 626-3309
Masset, B.C. V0T 1M0	Pat Fairweather	

### **Fisheries and Oceans Canada**

Regional Resource Manager - Invertebrates	Russell Mylchreest	(604) 666-3869
200 - 401 Burrard Street		Fax: (604) 666-9136
Vancouver, B.C. V6C 3S4		

Stock Assessment	Graham Gillespie	(250) 756-7215
3190 Hammond Bay Road		Fax: (250) 756-7138
Nanaimo, B.C. V9T 6N7		

Resource Management	Sandra Davies	(250) 627-3007
417 2nd Avenue West		Fax: (250) 627-3427
Prince Rupert, B.C. V8J 1G8		

Conservation and Protection	Scott Keehn	(250) 559-8580
137 Bay Street, Box 99		Fax: (250) 559-4678
Queen Charlotte, B.C. V0T 1S0		

Pacific Fishery Licensing Unit	William Leung	(250) 754-0400
60 Front Street		Fax: (250) 754-0403
Nanaimo, B.C. V9R 5H7		

### **Canadian Food Inspection Agency**

Fish Inspection Directorate	Michael Langlet	(604) 666-3737
4321 Still Creek Drive		
Burnaby, B.C. V5C 6S7		

### **Environment Canada**

North Coast Water Quality Co-ordinator	Megan Sterling	(604) 666-8041
201-401 Burrard Street		
Vancouver, B.C. V6C 3S5		

## 2. OVERVIEW OF THE FISHERY

This management plan has been jointly developed by the Council of the Haida Nation (CHN) and Fisheries and Oceans Canada and applies to the commercial, recreational, and Haida non-commercial razor clam fisheries. Many of the elements of the management plan and commercial licensing practices for 2009 are outlined in the Razor Clam Sub-agreement between the CHN and Fisheries and Oceans Canada, first signed in August 1994 and recently renewed as part of a Comprehensive Fisheries Agreement in April 2008. In 2009, the CHN will continue to designate Haida participants in the commercial fishery under a Communal Licence issued to the CHN. Fisheries and Oceans Canada will continue to licence individual commercial harvesters (licensees). The number of commercial licenses issued by Fisheries and Oceans Canada was limited in 1995.

In recent decades, most commercially harvested razor clams were used primarily as bait in the crab fishery. In recent years, there has been a growing demand for razor clams as a food product. This demand along with recent clam abundances resulted in historic high landings. The fishery experienced record catches in 2000 (since 1941) and 2008 that coincided with peaks in razor clam biomass. After 2000 recruitment returned to normal levels for several years and catch ceilings were adjusted to reflect the available stock. Stocks are forecast to decline slightly in 2009 and catch levels have been adjusted accordingly.

## 3. STOCK STATUS AND CURRENT MANAGEMENT ISSUES

The Haida Fisheries Program has conducted standardized surveys of the beach since 1994. The catch ceiling is estimated based on a best estimate of exploitable biomass that accounts for recruitment, unsurveyed beaches, and a sustainable harvest rate of 12.3 percent. The sustainable harvest rate (2/3 of MSY or 12.3 percent) is based on a 1994 study that estimated the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) to be 118 tonnes which was 19 percent of the harvestable biomass. For more information see, *Report on the results of surveys of intertidal razor clams (*Siliqua patula*) on beaches near Massett, Haida Gwaii and recommendations on fishery management* (Jones et al., Research Document 2001-152). This document is available from the contacts listed in Section 1 or from the Pacific Science Advice Review Committee (PSARC) Internet site at:

[www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/sci/psarc/ResDocs/Invertebrate\\_2001\\_e.htm](http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/sci/psarc/ResDocs/Invertebrate_2001_e.htm)

The length of beach surveyed has increased slightly over time. From 1994 to 2000, surveys were conducted on three sections of beach totalling 24.35 km in length. In 2001, surveys were expanded to include a further 6.75 km section of beach at the east end of North Beach where there was significant fishing effort in 2000. Also, beginning in 2001, diggers began to report landings on fish slips by beach section. Since 2001 approximately five percent of razor clam landings have been from Agate Beach, an unsurveyed beach section. Transects of this section of beach were included in the survey for the first time in 2007.

Beginning in 2002, biotoxin monitoring was extended to a new section of beach in Hecate Strait between Rose Spit and Cape Fife (East Beach 1, Subarea 102-1). This beach section was opened to the commercial fishery in 2003 but few if any landings have been recorded since then.

Recent surveys have shown that biomass approximately doubled from 1994 to 2000, but then declined and remained relatively stable at levels near the long term average from 2004 to 2006.

In 2007 biomass increased due to several years of good recruitment and then decreased slightly in 2008.

Catches in 2005 and 2006 were 137 and 151 tonnes respectively. Due to poor market demands, a rising Canadian dollar, and a downturn in the commercial crab fishery, catch in 2007 was only 20 tonnes despite a catch ceiling of 142.9 tonnes. In 2008 market conditions improved somewhat and 205 tonnes of the 207 tonne catch ceiling was harvested although the price per pound received by harvesters was lower than previous years.

The catch ceiling for 2009 has been set at 134.7 tonnes (297,000 pounds). Market demands will greatly influence the actual amount of product that is harvested during the 2009 season. Methods for determining the current harvest rate and MSY are to be evaluated through PSARC in 2009 using more current data to facilitate greater confidence in the determination of future harvest quotas.

Razor clam populations in Subarea 1-5 have been assessed on a beach-by-beach basis since 1995 and catches have been monitored by individual beaches since 2001 (see Appendix 3). However, the commercial fishery is currently not managed in-season on a beach-by-beach basis. The commercial fishery annual catch ceiling is established pre-season as a sum of the individual beach catch ceilings; harvesters are requested to report landings by beach section, but to date, beach sections have not been closed in-season when individual catch ceilings are reached. It is a goal of the Haida Joint Shellfish Technical Committee and the Razor Clam Diggers Association to continue to assess and monitor the commercial fishery on a beach-by-beach basis.

Haida food, social and ceremonial and commercial razor clam diggers have expressed concern over the effort by recreational diggers on clam stocks on North Beach. Creel surveys were performed during June to August 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008 to assess the effects of this fishery on clam stocks, and preliminary data indicates that the recreational effort accounts for approximately 3% of total clam landings. A second goal of the Haida Joint Shellfish Technical Committee and the Razor Clam Diggers Association is to begin discussions with the Queen Charlotte Island Sport Fishery Advisory Board on further monitoring and managing of the recreational fishing effort in Subarea 1-5.

In 2005, an in-season management committee was created to allow for a more transparent and collaborative process between all parties involved in the commercial fishery. The Razor Clam In-Season Management Committee has membership from the Razor Clam Diggers Association, Council of the Haida Nation, Old Massett Village Council, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (Resource Management, Conservation and Protection), and Massett razor clam processors, and will continue to meet throughout the 2009 commercial fishing season to deal with in-season management issues.

#### **4. COMMERCIAL FISHERY**

##### **4.1. Management Changes for 2009**

- 1) The anticipated opening is March 26, 2009 (see section 4.8).
- 2) The catch ceiling for 2009 is 134.7 tonnes (297,000 pounds) (see section 4.7).

- 3) East Beach will be open only if PSP sampling is completed and levels are acceptable to CFIA. East Beach will not have a separate quota allocation (see section 4.7).

#### **4.2. Definition of Terms**

“Area A” means Fisheries and Oceans Canada Pacific Fishery Management Subarea 1-5 and a portion of Subarea 102-1 (as described in the *Pacific Fishery Management Area Regulations*) which includes McIntyre Bay from Rose Point to Wiah Point and Rose Point south to Fife Point.

“Communal licence” means the communal licence issued to the CHN, through the Haida Tribal Society, for the commercial harvesting of razor clams by Participants.

“CHN Fisheries Guardian” means a person hired by the CHN and designated by the Minister pursuant to *Section 5* of the *Fisheries Act* and by the CHN.

“Islands” means the land area and adjacent water known variously as Haida Gwaii and the Queen Charlotte Islands.

“Licensee” means a holder of a category Z-2 license eligibility issued by Fisheries and Oceans Canada authorizing commercial harvest of razor clams in the Islands.

“Participants” mean members of CHN who are designated by CHN to commercially harvest razor clams under the Communal Licence.

#### **4.3. Licensing and Designation of Harvesters**

When harvesting razor clams (*Siliqua patula*) for sale, each participant must be in possession of a non-transferable designation card from the CHN and each Licensee must be in possession of a current year Area A clam “Z-2” licence from Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Identification and designation cards or licences must be carried at all times when harvesting clams and must be produced upon request of a CHN fisheries guardian, Fisheries and Oceans Canada Fishery Officer, or Fisheries and Oceans Canada fishery guardian.

Since 1995, Area A clam “Z-2” licences eligibilities are non-transferable and subject to limited entry. Licence eligibilities were allocated to individuals who held a Fisheries and Oceans Canada category “Z-2” clam licence for the Islands, personally fished the licence, and provided records of razor clam landings during at least three years from 1990 to 1994. Category “Z-2” clam licence issuance is available from the Nanaimo Pacific Fishery Licence Unit only. Both a category “Z-2” clam licence and a Fisher’s Registration Card (FRC) are required to participate in commercially harvesting razor clams.

**For complete information in regards to category “Z-2” licence eligibilities please contact the Pacific Fishery Licence Unit in Nanaimo at (250) 754-0400.**

#### **4.4. Size Limit**

No person shall commercially harvest razor clams that measure less than ninety (90) millimetres through the greatest breadth of the shell (see Appendix 1).

#### 4.5. Harvest Area

Participants and licensees will harvest only in Clam Licence Area A (Pacific Fishery Management Subarea 1-5 and a portion of Subarea 102-1).

Harvesters are asked to report effort using the following definitions (a map is shown in Appendix 3 and is available from the Haida Fisheries Program):

Subarea 1-5:

- a) **North 1:** the beach between Tow Hill and a point 7.2 km east of Tow Hill.
- b) **North 2:** the beach between points 7.2 km and 13.0 km east of Tow Hill.
- c) **South 1:** the beach between Yakan Point and Kliki River.
- d) **South 2:** the beach between Kliki River and a point on the beach 400 m (1/4 mile) east of the Sangan River/Chown Brook estuary.
- e) **Agate Beach:** the beach between Tow Hill and Yakan Point.

Subarea 102-1:

- a) **East 1:** the beach north of Fife Point

#### 4.6. Fishing Gear

All harvesters will be restricted to digging for razor clams by hand.

#### 4.7. Catch Ceiling

The annual catch ceiling for 2009 is 134.7 tonnes (297,000 pounds). This catch ceiling will encompass landings for both Subarea 1-5 and Subarea 102-1.

East Beach will be open only if PSP sampling is completed and levels are acceptable to CFIA. East Beach will not have a separate quota allocation.

#### 4.8. Open Times

To promote harvest efficiency and avoid impact on juvenile clams that appear to be more prevalent in the higher areas of the beach, the Razor Clam Diggers Association has recommended that the fishery be managed in-season to the following opening dates: these are the days when the tide level is four foot or less, based on the Prince Rupert tide tables. The Razor Clam In-season Management Committee may make recommendation to change these dates; **all openings and closures will be announced by Fisheries and Oceans Canada Fishery Notice in 2009**. Diggers are reminded to check these notices on a regular basis. Fishery Notices are available on the Internet at:

[www-ops2.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/xnet/content/fns/index.cfm?pg=search\\_options&lang=en&id=commercial](http://www-ops2.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/xnet/content/fns/index.cfm?pg=search_options&lang=en&id=commercial)

The Fishery Notices will also be posted at the DFO Masset office, the Haida Fisheries Program office, and the Old Massett Village Council office.

Month	Recommended opening dates
January	Closed

<b>Month</b>	<b>Recommended opening dates</b>
February	Closed
March	26-31
April	7-13, 23-30
May	7-12, 22-29
June	5-11, 20-27
July	Closed
August	Closed
September	3-7, 16-22
October	3-8, 16-21
November	1-7, 14-19, 30
December	1-6, 13-31

For 2009, the In-Season Management Committee has recommended delaying the opening of the fishery until March as recommended by local processors.

It is anticipated that the fishery will open no earlier than March 26, 2009 and will close when the annual catch ceiling has been reached.

The Haida Fisheries Program will monitor the catch and effort each month and in collaboration with Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Razor Clam In-Season Management Committee, will make recommendation for openings and closures (see Section 4.7).

The fishery could be closed for other reasons including shellfish contamination, unacceptable levels of marine biotoxins (PSP or ASP), and/or conservation. In addition, the Razor Clam Diggers Association has recommended that the commercial fishery be closed during the summer spawning period; the fishery will be closed from July 1 to August 31, 2009.

The Razor Clam In-season Management Committee, on behalf of participants and licensees, will co-ordinate area openings with Fisheries and Oceans Canada. The Department requires a minimum of 48 hours notice from the committee (not including weekends and holidays), to open a new area.

#### **4.9. Closures**

Intertidal clam fisheries are limited by programs for monitoring PSP, sanitary growing water surveys, and DFO capability to enforce closures. These requirements are defined under the Canadian Sanitary Shellfish Program (CSSP) which has been put in place to ensure public health and safety.

##### **4.9.1. Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning or Domoic Acid**

**Shellfish harvesters must “check before they harvest” to ensure that an area is not closed for PSP (red tide).**

**For information on the location of current marine biotoxin closures either:**

- **call the toll free number 1-866-431-3474**

- check the Shellfish Contamination Closures page on the Department website at:

[www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/ops/fm/shellfish/biotoxins/closures/default\\_e.htm](http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/ops/fm/shellfish/biotoxins/closures/default_e.htm)

- check with the nearest DFO office

#### **4.9.2. Sewage Contaminated Closures**

Participants and licensees will not harvest razor clams in areas which are closed due to risk of sewage contamination. **For information on the location of current sanitary shellfish closures please check with the nearest Fisheries and Oceans Canada office or refer to the Shellfish Contamination page on the Fisheries and Oceans Canada Internet site at:**

[www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/ops/fm/shellfish/biotoxins/closures/default\\_e.htm](http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/ops/fm/shellfish/biotoxins/closures/default_e.htm).

Permanent bivalve harvesting closures are in place for Canadian fisheries waters of the Pacific Ocean within:

- a) 300 m radius around industrial, municipal and sewage treatment plant outfall discharges;
- b) 125 m radius of any marina, ferry wharf, finfish net pen, and, subject to subsection (c), any floating living accommodation facility; and
- c) 25 m of any floating living accommodation facility located within a shellfish aquaculture tenure where a zero-discharge waste management plan is a condition of the Provincial aquaculture licence and is approved by the Regional Interdepartmental Committee.

#### **4.9.3. Biotoxin / Water Quality Assessment**

4.9.3.1. Biotoxin Monitoring: Area openings are dependent upon regular submission and analysis of samples for PSP/ASP analysis, as set out in a biotoxin monitoring protocol administered by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). Areas will be closed to fishing if unacceptable levels of marine biotoxins (PSP or ASP) are detected. Closed areas will be opened to fishing according to protocols required by the Biotoxin Monitoring Program, approved by CFIA, and overseen by the Haida Fisheries Program.

Three consecutive samples containing acceptable levels of biotoxin must be received in order for CFIA to lift a harvest restriction in an area. CFIA will lift the PSP prohibition and a harvest site can then be considered by Fisheries and Oceans Canada for fisheries openings. The process for opening the area following a closure is the Regional Director General approves the opening; the Department resource manager prepares the documentation necessary for an area opening; and then the resource manager issues a Fishery Notice.

4.9.3.2. Water Quality Assessment: Environment Canada conducts water quality surveys to assess the sanitary conditions in shellfish growing waters. These surveys are a requirement under the Canadian Shellfish Sanitation Program to establish and/or maintain approved growing area classification.

## **4.10. Catch Reporting**

### **4.10.1. Fish Slip Requirements**

Participants and licensees must record all landings on a Clam Fish Slip or Clam Slip Aboriginal (in the case of First Nations harvested clams). A report must be completed even if the clams landed are used for bait, personal consumption, or otherwise disposed. The true return shall be mailed not later than seven days after the offloading and sent to:

Regional Data Unit  
Fisheries and Oceans Canada  
200 - 401 Burrard Street  
Vancouver, B.C. V6C 3S4

(604) 666-3784

Fish slip books may be purchased at the above address.

Fish slips will be collected by the Haida Fisheries Program to compile catch and effort in the fishery (see Appendix 2).

### **4.10.2. Landings Reports**

On a regular basis, as agreed to in the Razor Clam Sub-agreement, the Haida Fisheries Program will forward catch and effort data on a regular basis to the Department on behalf of all participants and licensees. This information will be sent to:

Fisheries and Oceans Canada  
North Coast Resource Management - Shellfish Unit  
417 2nd Avenue West  
Prince Rupert, BC V8J 1G8

Phone: (250) 627-3007

Fax: (250) 627-3427

Email: Sandra.Davies@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

## **4.11. Other Restrictions and General Information**

### **4.11.1. Tagging of Clam Product Containers or Sacks**

Prior to placing clams in a sack or container participants and licensees will label the sack or container with tags showing:

- a) Name of the clam harvester.
- b) Clam harvester's licence or designation card number.
- c) Beach location (e.g. Area A).
- d) Pacific Fishery Management Area and Subarea (e.g. Subarea 1-5).
- e) Beach section (e.g. North 1, North 2, South 1, South 2, Agate (Horseshoe), East 1).
- f) Date of harvest.

According to Provincial requirements, the tag must be affixed and remain attached to the sack or container and may only be removed after the clams have entered the federally registered processing plant.

#### **4.11.2. Harvester Responsibility**

All clams shall be inspected and processed at an approved shellfish processing plant. Participants and licensees shall not sell clams directly to the public, restaurants, retail outlets, or distributors. Under Provincial and Federal Regulations, all shellfish harvested must be processed through a federally registered plant whether it is for domestic or international consumption. As well, product destined for a bait market must be processed through a federally registered plant.

For further information regarding processing requirements please contact the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), see Section 1 Contacts.

#### **4.11.3. Product Handling and Transportation**

To ensure product quality, care must be exercised to protect the bivalves from contamination and exposure to the sun, weather, temperature, etc. Shellfish may be rinsed at the harvest site to remove excess mud or sand, but shall not be rinsed elsewhere before delivery because of risk of contamination.

#### **4.11.4. Wet Storage**

Wet storage of shellstock on the beach, alongside a boat, in unapproved live tanks, or any body of water is illegal. Such practices may expose the shellfish to contamination.

#### **4.11.5. Beach Traffic**

Harvesters are reminded that traffic on the beach can damage shellfish stocks and degrade the local habitat. Vehicles, including ATVs, should not be driven on the beach below the 1.5 m (5.0 foot) tide level. This is approximately 100 m above a 0 foot tide.

In addition, the Razor Clam Diggers Association recommends that vehicles not be driven between the five foot and eight foot tide level as juvenile razor clams can be prevalent in this area and may be impacted by vehicle traffic. The eight foot tide level is approximately 160 m above a 0 foot tide.

## **5. RECREATIONAL FISHERY**

Recreational harvesters are required to hold a valid British Columbia Tidal Waters Sport Fishing Licence to harvest razor clams. The recreational harvest of razor clams is restricted to a daily limit and a possession limit. There is no size limit for razor clams harvested recreationally. These regulations are outlined in the British Columbia Tidal Waters Sport Fishing Guide, available on the Internet at:

[www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/recfish/Species/shelltable\\_e.htm](http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/recfish/Species/shelltable_e.htm)

The daily recreation limit is 50 razor clams. The Razor Clam Diggers Association, Old Massett Village Council, and Haida Fisheries Program intend to meet with the Sport Fishery Advisory Board to discuss the catch limit, fishery monitoring, and effort controls. In addition, all groups

will be working together to produce educational material for local and visiting harvesters on the appropriate use of the North Beach area.

**6. HAIDA NON-COMMERCIAL FISHERY**

There is no daily, possession, or size limit for razor clams harvested in the Haida non-commercial (food, social and ceremonial) fishery.

**7. RESEARCH AND CONSULTATION**

CHN and Fisheries and Oceans Canada will continue with co-operative programs to monitor the fishery and assess sustainable harvest levels in 2009.

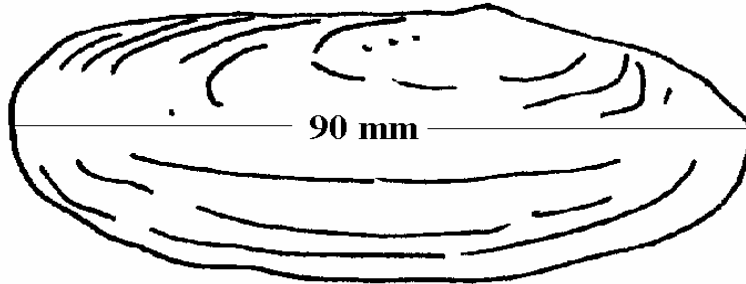
**8. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: Minimum Size Limit – Razor Clam

Appendix 2: Clam Slip and Clam Slip – Aboriginal

Appendix 3: Map of Clam Management Areas, North Beach

**Appendix 1: Minimum Size Limit - Razor Clam**



No person shall commercially harvest razor clams that measure less than ninety (90) millimetres through the greatest breadth of the shell.



Appendix 3: Clam Management Areas, North Beach

