

# Notification Alert & Informational Request from the Maine Clammer's Association

Clammers in the Freeport area (Freeport, Harpswell, and other towns in Casco Bay) have reported seeing very few sublegal clams this spring and summer. Along with these observations, we are witnessing what appears to be an explosion in populations of green crabs.

We see their signs on flats – pockmarks all over the surface of the flats in areas that have not been dug. These shallow pits are areas where the crabs are digging down to prey on clams of virtually any size. Once they have finished, they leave these marks on the mudflat surface that show they have been there with a vengeance. We have put crab traps on flats baited with clams and have seen them fill up overnight.



We have put traps in the river near and in channels and it seems that many of the larger crabs are lurking in those areas. We are finding that the ratio of males to female crabs in those areas is about 7:3. Some clammers who are fishing five traps that soak for three days are pulling up over 60 lbs.



We have also noticed that

crabs

are

causing erosion of the upper shore in areas where *Spartina* grass grows. This species of marsh grass helps to stabilize the upper intertidal and serves as a protective barrier to help keep dirt, sand, and mud from the land coming into the intertidal zone. We have made observations similar to the photos below in Freeport, Harpswell, and Scarborough.



We are seeking your help!

If you have seen pockmarking on flats, if you have seen green crabs in channels or on mudflats, if you have seen green crabs causing similar erosion in areas where you clam, please contact:

Chad Coffin – Maine Clammer’s Association: [friendsoftheclammers@comcast.net](mailto:friendsoftheclammers@comcast.net)

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We are trying to extend the observations we’ve made in our area to other areas along the Maine coast to determine if similar events are happening in your area.

Thanks for your help!