

# A 'prolific harvest' as razor clam season comes to end



Along the 18 miles of Clatsop County coastline, the 2019 razor clam season has been extremely productive. Licensed recreational harvesters have been able to quickly fill the allotted limit of 15 clams per day during low tides.

This year's prolific seasonal harvest is taking place after an extended conservation closure. After last year's stock assessments found that the 2018 clam population was undersized, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife held a public meeting in October 2018 to invite input on potential management actions.

"We had great feedback from those who attended the meeting and those who could not," stated Matt Hunter, ODFW shellfish project leader. The consensus was to give the small clams a chance to grow and delay until the spring to provide a quality razor clamming experience."

The annual conservation closure was enacted in 1967 to relieve harvest pressure on the local razor clam populations and takes place from July 15 through Sept. 30 every year.

The closure prohibits any harvest of razor clams along all Clatsop beaches. These closures are to protect undersized young clams and to improve commercial and recreational harvests. "What we saw last year was an anomaly, we had a late spawn, but limited food supply so clams grew more slowly. By delaying the razor clam season through April it allowed the clams to grow sufficiently to meet what both commercial and recreational harvesters find desirable," said Hunter of ODFW.

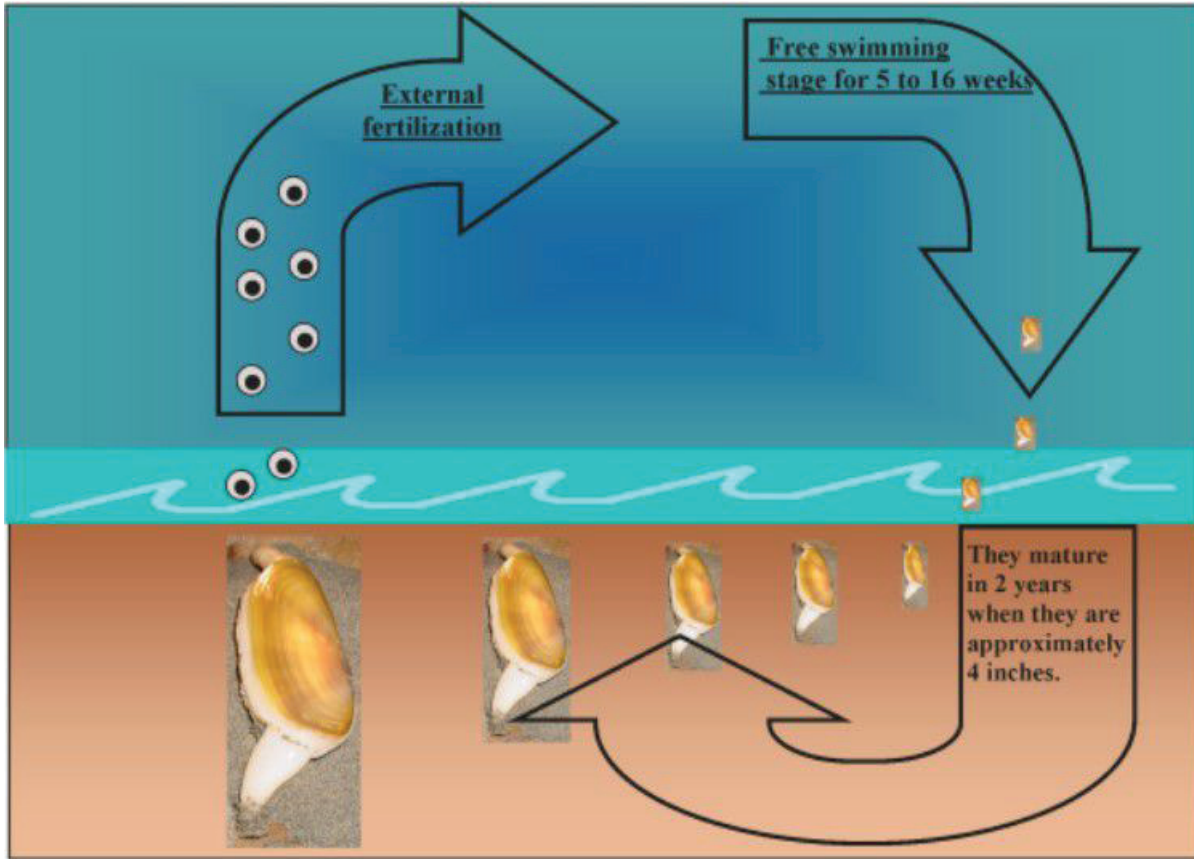
"A razor clam is at the surface for one of two reasons, to feed or to spawn," explained Hunter. "The timing of the closure is an attempt



## ANNUAL CLOSURE

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Tiffany Boothe/Seaside Aquarium



Seaside Aquarium

to encapsulate the timing of spawning recovery."

Razor clam spawning can take place May through July along the Oregon Coast and it can take several weeks for the clams to recover from a spawning event. During late summer, smaller clams are at the surface to eat while larger clams that spawned are deeper in the sand.

Larger sized clams also are an indicator of reproductive ability. Razor clams are able to reproduce at two years of age which correlates to clams measuring approximately four inches in length. Razor Clam reproduction is achieved through broadcast spawning where sperm and eggs are released into the water. Female clams are able to release 6-10 million eggs at once, of which only 5% are expected to become juvenile clams. Larvae (called veligers) that develop from fertilized eggs free-float with the ocean current, slowly develop a shell and eventually settle onto the ocean floor as juvenile clams.

The juveniles live closer to the surface and bury themselves deeper into the sand as they grow. Within one year most clams are considered a harvestable size at 3.5 inches and will reach 4.5 inches within two years. Clams are either male or female and will reach maturity at two years. In California, Oregon, and Washington the current life span of razor clams ranges from 5-7 years, but historically they were reported to live up to 11 years. In Alaska, razor clams have been reported to live up to 18 years.

Clatsop County beaches account for 95% of Oregon's razor clam harvest due to the high density of the local razor clam population. To dig clams, shellfish licenses are required and can be purchased at local sporting goods stores or online at <https://dfw.state.or.us>. Razor clam shells are thin and easily damaged, thus State law requires that harvesters keep the first 15 clams dug regardless of size or condition. ODFW will conduct the annual razor clam population assessments mid-July through early September during the annual conservation closure.

## An Independence Day party for our great country

The last firework exploded sometime around 10:30 p.m. Following a hearty and much deserved round of applause, the great exodus began. Thousands of guests and residents alike trooped away to their cars or residences after a long day of celebrations pointed toward patriotism for our great country.

I too paraded my family to our car — blankets, lawn chairs and exhaustion be damned. But after loading them up, I returned to the beach. I had agreed to help my friends from the Seaside Chamber of Commerce clean up after all the festivities had concluded.

The chamber of commerce in Seaside carries the same functions as that organization might have in other communities: furthering interests of local business interests and advocating for those businesses.

Chambers of commerce exist in 80 Oregon cities but it's my perspective and experience that the Seaside Chamber of Commerce has some extremely unique responsibilities. Our local chamber not only furthers business interests and connects those businesses and business owners with each other and local/regional government, it also manages and produces some of the biggest events in our community each year.

Those events include Pouring at the Coast, significant assistance with Hood to Coast and the annual Beach Volleyball Tournament. These events bring thousands of individuals to our community, giving them a small sample of what our amazing region has to offer.

I've heard from many people that their first experience in Seaside was for one of these events and, as a result of being here, they likely discovered a great restaurant, hotel, trail or other feature of coastal living. And because of that exposure those individuals come back and frequent our business establishments again and again, with some even choosing to relocate here!

I would offer that few of our guests on the

Fourth of July know the collaboration and undertaking of producing a wonderful experience. I'm not even sure that most of our residents know how much work it is either!

The Chamber, partnering with local agencies and the City of Seaside, hosts the Fourth of July parade as well as the fireworks show. Both events are wonderfully managed and are some of the best in our region. Managing those events takes a great deal of coordination, preparation and execution on the day of.

But after the fireworks end, what was already a long day only continues. The crew — consisting of chamber staff, volunteers and City of Seaside employees — breaks down the fencing, scaffolding and pyrotechnic equipment that was necessary to hold a firework show safely.

There are always challenges to work through, unexpected hiccups that can make things a bit bumpy during that process. There's also the potential challenges of embarrassing behavior demonstrated by some that have partaken perhaps too heavily in the festivities of the Fourth.

As I trudged along the beach that night, I looked up at one point towards the turnaround. There was smoke still rising from the haze of literally hundreds of fires along the beach as well as that firework-sulfur smell that I personally love.

The other volunteers and staff worked around me, communicating on their radios and cell phones at a pace that was dizzying. Up on the prom, City of Seaside employees worked to empty trash and clean up the heaps of trash that had amassed.

In that moment I found great satisfaction in looking at the American Flag that was waving in the light and smoke of our city. I felt profoundly grateful for the country in which I live and this wonderful community, where so many people work hard to help our community and guests celebrate an amazing holiday.

**SKY BOX**  
SKYLER ARCHIBALD



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Save Our Seaside

Remember when Seaside was quaint — idealistic — caring?

Do you agree that our town is no longer that way due to the excessive vacation rental dwellings plaguing each street? Do you agree there are too many VRDs currently?

Should there be a cap? Should the City Council/Planning Commission put some clout in policing those VRDs that run amok with too many people, too many cars, blocking streets/driveways, loud noises after 10 p.m., no respect to your property or you, dogs unleashed, children not controlled, yards unkempt?

The city does not have a compliance offi-

cer to enforce the rules and regulations. There is no clout to penalize the owners of the VRDs. Please, if you have something to say regarding the abuse you have had where your VRD complaints are ignored contact me.

I need your support to make those who are in power listen to our pleas to allow Seaside to be the comfortable town we all choose to reside in and we are the ones who continually support the local merchants ... not the weekend wonders who come from the Big City and trash us and our town.

Speak up, please, ASAP.  
Contact Bonnie Woodman PO Box 1085, Seaside, OR 97138

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