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**2026-27 Scallop Season 2.5" (63.5mm) minimum length size
requirement for bay scallops harvested from within the area off Kalmus
Beach as defined under §407-9(F)(1) and §407-30 of the Town of
Barnstable Shellfish, Eel, Herring and Aquaculture Regulations Memo**

In an effort to enhance the population of bay scallops, the Natural Resources Division has purchased and planted seed bay scallops for the second year off Kalmus Beach. This year, the effort was increased planting 50,000 ½ inch bay scallops with plans for a nursery system in the future to purchase them smaller and release them larger with a higher survival rate.

This initial stocking over the last two years was an effort to see if the habitat can support animals of different sizes. As the Division has taken a closer look at the area through eel grass monitoring, we have seen that the population of wild scallops this year is relatively poor in the eel grass. A good portion scallops that are present are what scientists call "nubs".

On Nantucket, Dr. Valerie Hall has been doing extensive work on these nubs. These are bay scallops that come from a late summer spawn so they have a nice, raised growth ring of potentially more than 10mm if conditions are right, but they were born late in the season and can get another spawn out next year because they are young and are not going to die (unlike the bay scallops that we harvest typically right before the end of their live expectancy). Since they were born late and have a growth ring, they may be confused with animals in their second year that are all done, but they have another winter in them because they were born so late and should be harvested the following year.

"Through field and lab work in Nantucket Harbor, Dr. Hall proved that these nubs can act as a "bet-hedging" strategy, surviving to spawn during their second summer to protect the stock if the primary early spawn fails". These "nubs" are important to the population's success and because they have been harvested in previous years because they have the annual growth ring, this may be why we are seeing declining populations.

You can find out more about Dr. Hall's work here relative to the science of nubs:
<https://www.mariamitchell.org/nantucket-bay-scallops>

The current minimum size limit for harvestable bay scallops under §407-27 reads: "Only scallops with a well-defined raised annual growth ring may be taken; all other scallops will be considered seed scallops and must be returned to the water immediately with one exception provided in 322 CMR 6.11. This exception states that bay scallops that have a well-defined raised annual growth

line located less than 10 mm from the hinge of the shell, shall be lawful to harvest and possess if the shell height is at least 2.5 inches...”

Because there are so many bay scallops out there with at least one annual growth ring that is from being moved from one place to another (stocked) or spawned later in the year, but has a growth line located over 10mm from the hinge, but the animal is still under 2.5” and will most likely be able to spawn again and keep growing next summer, it would be appropriate to test a minimum size length requirement of 2.5” off of Kalmus Beach to prevent stocked bay scallops and “nubs” from being harvested. This is Natural Resources’ 2026 solution to be able to keep Kalmus open to recreational and commercial harvest but keep a sustainable fishery and the next generation of scallops alive for the 2027 season.

For these reasons, the Natural Resources Division requested the Town Manager, under his authority as defined in §188-5 of the Town of Barnstable Code, implement a 2.5” minimum length size limit of any bay scallops harvested from within the area off Kalmus Beach as defined under §407-9(F)(1) and §407-30 of the Town of Barnstable Shellfish, Eel, Herring and Aquaculture Regulations: north of a line marked by buoys, running from the way to water at the end of Estey Avenue, to the southerly end of East jetty. This area is formally known to the recreational and commercial shellfish permit holders as the “no dragging, no boats zone”.

The restriction begins Thursday October 1, 2026 and will continue through the 2026-27 bay scallop season.

This rationale was presented to and vetted through the Shellfish Committee and was unanimously well received at the August 12, 2026 meeting.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Shellfish Constable Amy Croteau via email: amy.croteau@barnstable.gov or by phone: 508-790-6272.