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DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
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**THIS IS NOT AN OFFICIAL COPY OF THE LAWS OR REGULATIONS. THIS EXPLANATION OF THE LAWS AND REGULATIONS IS CORRECT AS OF THE DATE SPECIFIED, BEFORE TAKING PART IN THIS FISHERY PLEASE CALL 251-861-2882 OR 251-968-7576 OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE [WWW.OUTDOORALABAMA.COM](http://WWW.OUTDOORALABAMA.COM) FOR UPDATED INFORMATION. IT IS THE FISHERMAN'S RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW THE LAWS AND REGULATIONS IN EFFECT AN ANY GIVEN TIME.**

## **ALABAMA COMMERCIAL/RECREATIONAL OYSTER HARVEST INFORMATION**

### **HARVEST AREAS**

- The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Department of Public Health are authorized to open and close harvest areas for management or public health purposes. Before taking oysters from any area for any reason, it is advisable to check with the Marine Resources Division (MRD) at Dauphin Island (251-861-2882) or Gulf Shores (251-968-7576).
- Taking oysters from a closed area for any reason is prohibited.
- Transporting oysters at night through closed areas is prohibited.

### **LICENSE REQUIREMENTS**

- COMMERCIAL OYSTER CATCHER'S LICENSE (\$31.00)
- All persons must attend an approved harvester education program prior to purchasing a catcher license.
- Persons are allowed to take up to but no more than 100 oysters per day for personal consumption without any form of license in areas and times that are open to commercial harvest.
- Recreational and commercial oysters may not be possessed onboard a vessel in the same trip.
- Nonresidents shall pay the same fee as that charged Alabama residents to conduct the same activity in the applicant's state of residence, but not less than twice the cost that Alabama residents pay.
- All persons taking oysters for commercial purposes must have, in their possession, a Commercial Oyster Catcher's License and the oysters must be sold to a licensed and certified Alabama Seafood Dealer.
- OYSTER DREDGE LICENSE (\$31.00)

Required, in addition to a Commercial Oyster Catcher's License, to possess or operate a dredge.

- Use of oyster dredges is strictly regulated. Specific laws and regulations apply and all dredges must be inspected and certified by AMRD.

### **HARVEST INFORMATION**

- Oysters may be taken from the public reefs and water bottoms by hand, oyster tongs, or dredges.
- Dredges must not exceed 125 pounds, include a self dumping basket, have no more than 16 teeth spaced no more than 3 inches apart, must have a minimum of 15 feet of rope with a buoy no less than 6 inches wide attached with the permit number affixed, and the dredge must have the permit tag attached.
- The taking of oysters is permitted Monday through Friday, 7:00a.m. until 2:00p.m.
- The specific dates and location of areas open for harvest are announced via news release. Catchers are encouraged to contact an AMRD office or visit [www.outdooralabama.com](http://www.outdooralabama.com).
- The public reefs will be closed May 1st through September 30th of each year.
- Reefs may also be closed by the Alabama Department of Public Health.
- All oysters harvested must be a minimum of 3 inches in length, with an allowance of not more than 5% for undersized oysters and cultch per load or 10% of any one sack or container.
- All oysters taken for commercial purposes from the public or private harvest areas of the State of Alabama shall be placed in approved containers or sacks that allow for drainage and can be cleaned, containing not more than a one-quarter Alabama barrel of oysters.
- Sack/container limits are per person AND per vessel per day.

- All oysters taken from the public oyster bottoms must be culled and sacked (placed in a container) by the time of public water bottom closure each day.
- Any uncultured or unsacked (not in a container) oysters on board a boat at the time of public water bottom closure must be immediately replaced and scattered on the reef from which they were taken and the boat must then immediately leave the public reefs and proceed to the landing.
- All oysters shall be culled on the reef from which they were taken.
- No oysters shall be culled or sacked on board a boat in waters closed to the harvesting of oysters.
- No oysters taken from a public reef shall be culled on a private reef. It shall be unlawful to possess oysters taken from a public reef and private reef on board at the same time.
- It is unlawful to transfer oysters from one boat to another for purposes of avoiding the requirements set forth in any laws or regulations, or to transfer any oysters to any unlicensed oyster boat or unlicensed oyster catcher. Any person cited for exceeding the limit (as provided by law or regulation) must immediately transport and redistribute any said excess oysters on the nearest public reef.

\*\*Note-oysters may not be taken by swimming, diving, or wading on public bottoms of Heron Bay or its tributaries.

1/4 Alabama barrel = tub or other container measuring 1.23 cubic feet in volume.

**MRD Enforcement Tub Dimensions:**

Diameter inside at the top	= 17"
Diameter inside at the bottom	= 13"
Inside height from the top to bottom	= 12"



For current commercial catch limits and daily harvest hours contact any AMRD office:  
Dauphin Island (251-689-5895) or Gulf Shores (251-968-7576)

**OYSTER MANAGEMENT INFORMATION**

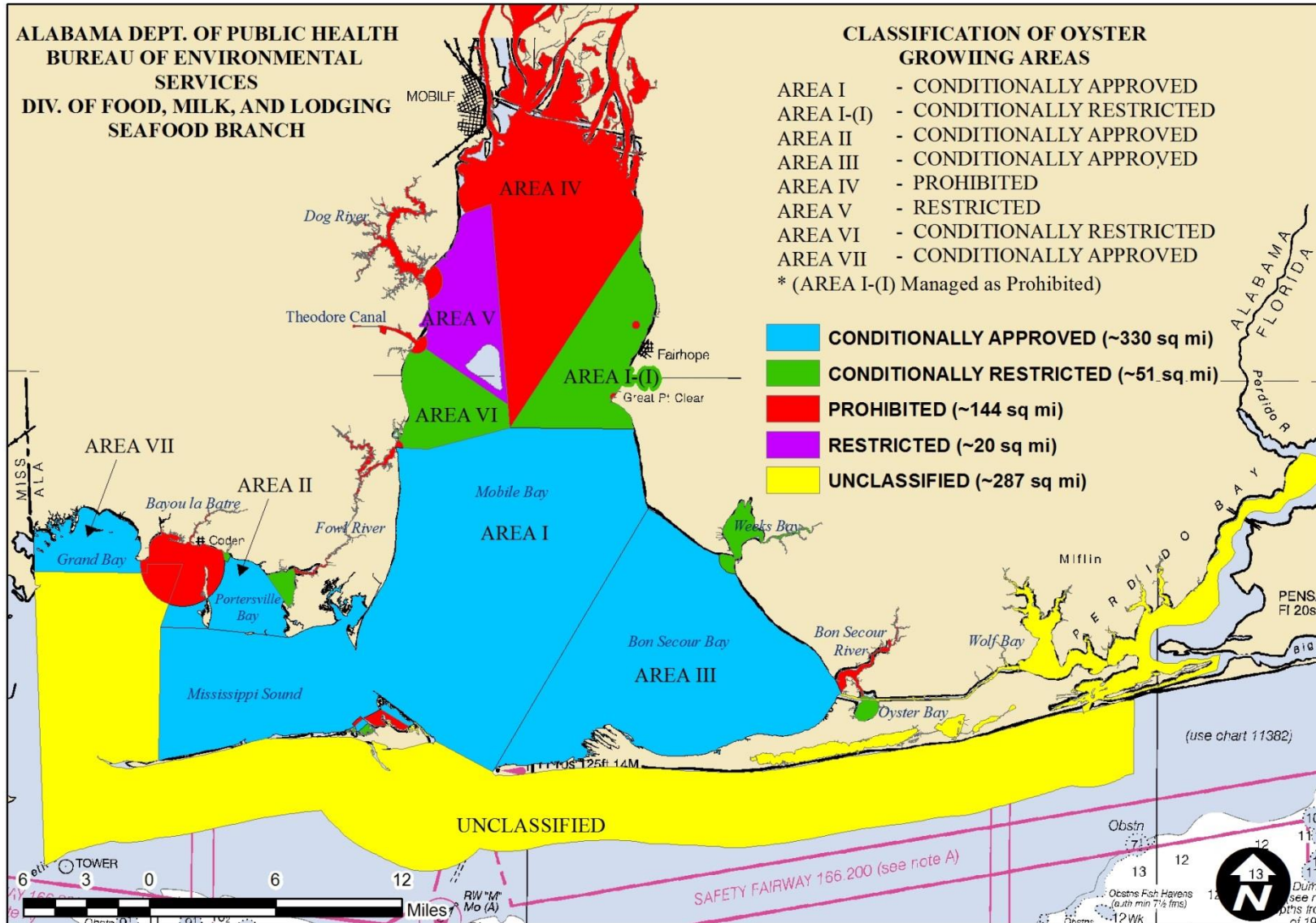
- Each licensed catcher that intends to land and report catch must first drop their oyster management card (OMS) in the designated drop box at the AMRD management station prior to going onto the reef.
- Any catcher that dropped an OMS card but fails to catch for the day must retrieve their card or notify AMRD.
- All oysters taken for commercial purposes (more than 100 oysters) from public bottoms must be landed within one hour of bottom closure at the designated AMRD oyster management station for reporting and the purchase of tags.
- Each licensed catcher landing oysters must designate a licensed certified dealer as the recipient of their catch.
- If catch is taken to another dealer the catcher must notify AMRD immediately.
- Each sack, private and public, must be tagged and harvest information legibly completed using indelible ink.
- All oysters harvested from public reefs must be landed at the Oyster Management Station where tags shall be purchased and the information shall be completed or supplied (as required by the Marine Resources Division) by the harvester and the tag shall be immediately attached to each sack or container of oysters before leaving the Oyster Management Station.
- Harvesters operating on private or aquaculture areas must have purchased appropriate harvest tags prior to harvesting oysters. Each sack or container must be tagged immediately and have the time of harvest written on the tag.
- Tag is considered void and sack or container improperly tagged if information on tag is incomplete, illegible, or altered in the any manner. Untagged or improperly tagged sacks or containers of oysters may be confiscated and disposed of as provided by law.
- The tag shall remain attached to the sack or container until a certified dealer empties or retags the sack or container of oysters, or until emptied by a restaurant, other establishment, or by the final consumer.
- It is unlawful to possess empty sacks or containers with oyster tags attached thereto.
- All vessels engaged in taking, possessing, or transporting oysters from public or private reefs must have an approved marine sanitation device (MSD) or other sewage disposal receptacle. The receptacle must be made of impervious and cleanable material and must include a tight fitting lid. The receptacle may only be used for that purpose and labeled with "Human Waste" in indelible ink in 3-inch block lettering. The MSD or receptacle must be emptied in a sewage disposal system and must be cleaned before returning it to the vessel.

**ALABAMA DEPT. OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL  
SERVICES  
DIV. OF FOOD, MILK, AND LODGING  
SEAFOOD BRANCH**

**CLASSIFICATION OF OYSTER  
GROWING AREAS**

- AREA I - CONDITIONALLY APPROVED
- AREA I-(I) - CONDITIONALLY RESTRICTED
- AREA II - CONDITIONALLY APPROVED
- AREA III - CONDITIONALLY APPROVED
- AREA IV - PROHIBITED
- AREA V - RESTRICTED
- AREA VI - CONDITIONALLY RESTRICTED
- AREA VII - CONDITIONALLY APPROVED
- \* (AREA I-(I) Managed as Prohibited)

- **CONDITIONALLY APPROVED (~330 sq mi)**
- **CONDITIONALLY RESTRICTED (~51 sq mi)**
- **PROHIBITED (~144 sq mi)**
- **RESTRICTED (~20 sq mi)**
- **UNCLASSIFIED (~287 sq mi)**



Base Map: NOAA Navigational Chart 11360