

Shellfish Water Quality Monitoring Program

Shellfish harvesting is only allowed from waters that are monitored and designated safe for human consumption. Shellfish that live in areas with degraded water quality have a higher chance of possessing bacteria and toxins that can make people sick. To protect consumer health, NYSDEC monitors the marine waters around Long Island on a year-round basis for fecal coliform bacteria.

Sampling crews collect water samples from over 1200 sampling sites in Nassau and Suffolk Counties four days per week in all weather conditions, including winter weather, for testing in the State's only FDA-certified on-site shellfish lab.

The samples are then brought back and processed in the lab for the most probable number of fecal coliform bacteria in the samples. The testing process takes approximately 24 hours until test results are available. After lab results become available biologists examine the data and enter into a water quality database for assessment. The biologists then analyze the data and determine if the water quality at the sampling stations meet stringent national standards to approve or certify the harvest of shellfish in designated marine waters around Long Island.

For more information, visit [Shellfishing](#) or contact 631-444-0492.

