First Razor Clam Dig For April Approved

Local News

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OLYMPIA - State shellfish managers today announced that the first of two razor-clam digs scheduled in April will proceed as planned, after marine toxin tests confirmed the clams are safe to eat. Two ocean beaches - Long Beach and Twin Harbors - will be open for clam digging on morning low tides April 7-9. No digging will be allowed after noon. Final word on the second round of clam digs - tentatively scheduled April 19-23 - will be announced after a separate set of toxin tests have been completed, said Dan Ayres, coastal shellfish manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). Ayres reminds diggers age 15 or older that they must purchase a 2011-12 license to participate in the April openings, since 2010-11 state fishing licenses expire March 31. "It’s always best to have a current license in hand before you head for the beach," Ayres said. "Nobody wants to be waiting in line at the license counter at low tide."

Various licenses, ranging from a three-day razor-clam license to a multi-species combination license, are available online (https://fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov/), by phone (1-866-246-9453) and from sporting goods stores and other retail license dealers around the state. Ayres also reminds diggers that portions of the beach at Long Beach and Twin Harbors are closed to the public to protect nesting western snowy plovers, which are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. The closed portion at each beach includes the area above the mean high tide line. At Long Beach, the closed areas are located north of the Oysterville Road from the state park boundary north to Leadbetter Point. At Twin Harbors, the closed areas are located from just south of Midway Beach Road to the first beach-access trail at Grayland Beach State Park. "The birds are particularly vulnerable this time of year," said Ayres said. "Signs clearly mark the area and instruct people to stay on the hard-packed sand." Morning low tides for digging days approved in April are: April 7 (Thursday), 9:37 a.m. (0.1 feet); Long Beach, Twin Harbors April 8 (Friday), 10:19 a.m. (0.2 feet); Long Beach, Twin Harbors April 9 (Saturday), 11:07 a.m. (0.4 feet); Long Beach, Twin Harbors At Long Beach, the area open for razor-clam digging extends from the Columbia River to Leadbetter Point. At Twin Harbors Beach, digging is allowed from Cape Shoalwater to the south jetty at the mouth of Grays Harbor. Under state rules, harvesters may take no more than 15 razor clams and must keep the first 15 taken, regardless of size or condition. Each digger's limit must be kept in a separate container.