

Last razor-clam dig of the season starts Saturday at four ocean beaches

Local News

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OLYMPIA - Clam diggers have received the go-ahead to proceed with the last razor-clam dig of the season, starting Saturday, May 9 at four ocean beaches. Beaches open for razor-clam digging Saturday morning include Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis and Mocrocks. Two beaches - Long Beach and Twin Harbors - will also be open for digging Sunday, May 10. Digging on all beaches must be completed by noon both days. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) authorized the digs after a series of marine toxin tests conducted by the Washington Department of Health confirmed the clams are safe to eat.

The department is able to offer one more dig this season, because there are sufficient clams remaining in the total allowable harvest for the four ocean beaches, said Dan Ayres, WDFW coastal shellfish manager. Low tides this weekend are as follows: Saturday, May 9 (7:23 a.m. -1.2 ft.) - Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis and Mocrocks Sunday, May 10 (8:02 a.m. -1.2 ft.) - Long Beach, Twin Harbors Ayres reminds diggers they will need an applicable 2009-10 fishing license to join in this weekend's dig, noting that April 1 marked the beginning of a new license year. A license is required for anyone age 15 or older. Descriptions of the various licensing options are available on the WDFW website at fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov. A list of state license vendors is available at wdfw.wa.gov/lic/vendors/vendors.htm. "We strongly advise diggers to make their purchases before heading to the beach," Ayres said. "Morning digs are very popular, and no one wants to be standing in line to buy a license at low tide." Under WDFW 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. Ayres noted that clam diggers are allowed to drive on beaches open to razor-clam digging - even those marked "closed to vehicles" - provided they remove their vehicles from those areas by noon each day. However, portions of the beaches at Long Beach and Twin Harbors are closed to all public access to protect nesting western snowy plovers, which are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. At Long Beach, the closed area is located north of the Oysterville Road from the state park boundary north to Leadbetter Point. At Twin Harbors, the closed area is located from just south of Midway Beach Road to the first beach-access trail at Grayland Beach State Park. The closed portion at each beach includes the area beyond the mean high tide line. "Signs clearly mark the area and instruct people to stay on the hard-packed sand," Ayres said.