Chapter 12
Shellfish Aquaculture

Shellfish aquaculture is an important industry in many coastal areas of Canada. It is important that the leasing and licensing authorities in each jurisdiction consult Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Environment Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency during the site approval and lease and licence granting processes to ensure that all considerations relating to CSSP are captured.

12.1 Aquaculture Sites

The aquaculture of shellfish may be conducted in areas where:

a) the shellfish area complies with the requirements of Chapter 2 for approved or conditionally approved area classification, and only when chemical or toxin levels do not reach or exceed the tolerances and/or action levels outlined in Appendix II;

b) the shellfish area complies with the requirements of Chapter 2 for restricted or conditionally restricted areas and only when chemical or toxin levels do not reach or exceed the tolerances and/or action levels outlined in Appendix II. Shellfish harvested from a restricted or conditionally restricted area requires a licence issued under the Management of Contaminated Fisheries Regulations (DFO, 1990) and are subject to a depuration or relay protocol prior to marketing as outlined in Chapter 10.

Holders of leases within restricted or conditionally restricted areas may be required at the discretion of CSSP Shellfish Control Authorities, to have bacteriological analyses of overlay waters and/or chemical analysis of shellstock performed by ISO 17025:2005 - accredited third party laboratories. The analyses will be per the requirements under Chapter 2 in order to demonstrate that the bacteriological quality of the lease site overlay water has not deteriorated and the shellstock have not been subjected to significant sources of chemical contamination.

c) the shellfish area is not within any prohibited area as described in Chapter 2; however as described in Section 2.3.6 Seed and Spat Collection, seed and spat collection is allowed in prohibited areas with appropriate licences.

12.2 Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture

For the purposes of the CSSP, integrated multi-trophic aquaculture refers to the raising of shellfish and finfish within a 125 metre radius of one another in the marine environment.
Special measures are required to ensure that the shellfish cultivated and harvested from such systems are not adversely affected by potential sources of pollution stemming from the culture operation and structures (see Chapter 2).

The aquaculture proponent who plans to cultivate and harvest shellfish within the 125 meter distance of a finfish net pen must:

- have a documented agreement with the authority responsible for land tenure and/or licensing aquaculture activities for the exploitation of the species grown on the site, as well as confirmation from Environment Canada that it has surveyed and classified the surrounding waters, and;
- submit an Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture Management Plan (IMTAMP) to the Regional Interdepartmental Shellfish Committee (RISC).

The IMTAMP will be developed as described in Appendix XII, "Procedures for Development, Approval and Review of an Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture Management Plan" and shall detail the operating measures which ensure that cultivation and harvesting takes place only where sanitary conditions can be maintained (see Chapter 2, Appendix II, and Appendix III).

Failure to meet the conditions of the IMTAMP must be immediately reported to the Chair of the RISC.

12.3 Aquaculture Methods

Consideration must be given to culture shellfish in a manner that will ensure it is safe for consumption prior to harvesting for sale. When, in the opinion of a shellfish control authority, the technology used to grow shellfish could potentially create or attract significant sources of contamination, failure to develop adequate control measures could lead to the closure of an aquaculture site. Any shellstock cultured using this type of technology must be subject to QMP controls in a federally registered establishment, or the leaseholder must submit a harvest plan with appropriate control measures acceptable to the regional shellfish control authority.