

North and central coast beaches closed to mussel harvesting due to marine toxins

June 26, 2009... The Oregon Department of Agriculture announces the closure of recreational mussel harvesting from the south jetty of the Columbia River to Neptune State Park, south of Yachats, due to elevated levels of paralytic shellfish poisoning or PSP toxins. The closure includes mussels found on the beaches, rocks, jetties, and bay entrances in this section of the Oregon Coast.

Coastal scallops are not affected by this closure when only the adductor muscle is eaten. The consumption of recreationally caught whole scallops is not recommended. Crab are not affected by this level of toxin and are safe to eat.

All areas on the Oregon Coast south of Neptune State Park remain open to all recreational shellfish harvesting.

Shellfish contaminated with PSP toxins can cause minor to severe illness or even death. The symptoms usually begin with tingling of the mouth and tongue. Severe poisoning can result in dizziness, numbness and tingling in the arms and legs, paralysis of the arms and legs, and paralysis of the muscles used for breathing. Shellfish toxins are produced by algae and usually originate in the ocean.

ODA will continue to test for shellfish toxins weekly. Reopening of an area requires two consecutive tests in the safe range.

For more information, call ODA's shellfish safety information hotline at (800) 448-2474, the Food Safety Division at (503) 986-4720 or visit the ODA shellfish closures Web page at http://oregon.gov/ODA/FSD/shellfish_status.shtml.

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