



Shellfish Collection Protocol

Sample Collection Basics

- Shellfish samples should be collected at least as frequently as every other week. If phytoplankton observations indicate a bloom of a HAB species, shellfish samples should be collected as soon as possible, regardless of the date of the last testing.
- Blue mussels are the preferred species for routine monitoring. Unless establishing a new site or testing during a HAB event, only blue mussel samples are required.
- Shellfish must be in the shell and fresh. Putrid samples will not be processed.
- Shellfish must be collected from the same beach. Test results are only valid for shellfish collected in the vicinity of the submitted samples.

Amount Necessary

Each shellfish sample must yield at least 100 grams of meat after shucking for analysis (3.5 ounces). We also require shellfish samples to include at least 6 individuals from the same species, regardless of shellfish size. Refer to the following table for the average number of organisms required:

Number of organisms to submit per sample	
Oysters	10 - 12
Butter Clams	6 - 10
Littleneck Clams	15 - 25
Cockles	8-12
Horse Clams	6
Blue Mussels	60 - 110
California Mussels	6 - 8
Rock Scallops	6
Geoduck	6

Handling and Packaging

- Do not hold shellfish in seawater or freshwater at any time after collection. Rinsing the shellfish with seawater or freshwater to remove sediment before shipping is recommended, however.
- If samples must be held prior to shipment, keep refrigerated and covered with a wet cloth or paper towel until ready to ship.
- When submitting multiple species or shellfish from multiple sites, bag each separately and make sure to label clearly.
- Pack shellfish in waterproof plastic bags and package securely to avoid leaks.

Sample Submission

- Include one Shellfish Biotoxin Sample Form for each sample submitted. Place form(s) in a separate waterproof plastic bag.
- Refrigerate samples using ice packs. Samples must be in a sealable box or other container for shipping. Insulated containers are recommended.
- Ship samples on a commercial airline such as Alaska Airlines, Ace Air Cargo, or Seaplanes.
- Email seator@sitkatribe-nns.gov or call 907-966-9650 when planning to ship samples to alert lab staff.
- The preferred shipping address for the lab is:

ATTN: Kari Lanphier
STAERL
429 Katlian Street
Sitka, AK 99835
907-966-9650

Test Results

- Each toxin (PSP/ASP) requires its own test.
- Test results will be available from one to several days, depending upon laboratory workload.

Additional Resources

For aid in identification of shellfish species see the Shellfish ID Chart available at www.seator.org/resources.

For additional information on paralytic shellfish poisoning, amnesic shellfish poisoning, and harmful algal blooms see our information sheets, also available at www.seator.org/resources.