

Birch Bay

Annual Shellfish Growing Area Review



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Area: Birch Bay

Year Ending: December 31, 2023

Classification: Approved, Prohibited

Activities in the Growing Area in 2023

The growing area was sampled five times in accordance with the National Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP) Systematic Random Sampling criteria. A sampling event in October was cancelled due to boat and equipment issues. The growing area will be sampled seven times in 2024 to compensate.

The Whatcom Clean Water Program received National Estuary Program (NEP) funding for coordinating a pollution identification and control (PIC) program in Whatcom County including the Birch Bay watershed. Whatcom County Public Works and Whatcom Conservation District received NEP funds for PIC activities, agricultural technical assistance, and education and outreach in the watershed. Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) and Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) received NEP funding for enhanced water compliance monitoring and referral and technical assistance, with WSDA focusing on dairies and Ecology addressing nonpoint pollution stemming from nondairy agriculture.

Analytical Results of Water Samples

Table 1 summarizes the results of the last 30 samples collected from the area. This summary shows that all stations pass the NSSP water quality standard.

Change in Actual Pollution Sources that Impact the Growing Area

We currently have no information indicating that the area has new sources of pollution.

Classification Status

- Well within the classification standards
- Meets standards, but threatened with downgrade in classification
- Fails to meet current classification standards

Remarks and Recommendations

Table 1 shows that all stations meet the NSSP water quality standard for an Approved classification and the area is correctly classified.

TABLE 1. Summary of Marine Water Data (SRS) for the Birch Bay Growing Area

Sampling Event Type: Regulatory

Maximum Number of Samples: 30

Tides Included: All

Station Number	Classification	Date Range	Range (FC/100mL)	Geomean (FC/100mL)	Est. 90 th Percentile (FC/100mL)	Meets Standard
21	Approved	9/19/2018 - 12/12/2023	1.7 - 33.0	2.2	5.1	Y
22	Approved	9/19/2018 - 12/12/2023	1.7 - 79.0	3.3	12.4	Y
24	Approved	9/19/2018 - 12/12/2023	1.7 - 33.0	2.5	6.6	Y
26	Approved	9/19/2018 - 12/12/2023	1.7 - 12.0	2.2	4.2	Y
30	Approved	9/19/2018 - 12/12/2023	1.7 - 7.8	1.9	2.8	Y
365	Approved	9/19/2018 - 12/12/2023	1.7 - 4.5	1.8	2.3	Y
17	Unclassified	9/19/2018 - 12/12/2023	1.7 - 22.0	2.6	7.0	Y
20	Unclassified	9/19/2018 - 12/12/2023	1.7 - 79.0	3.2	13.7	Y
29	Unclassified	9/19/2018 - 12/12/2023	1.7 - 23.0	2.0	4.2	Y

The standard for approved shellfish growing waters is fecal coliform geometric mean not greater than 14 organisms/ 100 mL with an estimated 90th percentile not greater than 43 organisms/ 100 mL. The above table shows bacteriological results in relation to program standards.

MAP 1. Birch Bay Growing Area

