

## **PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**

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### **APIA warns Sand Point residents about dangers of paralytic shellfish poison**

#### **Harvesters should avoid eating shellfish from uncertified beaches**

The Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association (APIA) advises sport and subsistence harvesters to be aware of the dangers of paralytic shellfish poison (PSP).

PSP is a potentially lethal toxin and can lead to fatal respiratory paralysis. The toxin comes from algae, a food source for clams, mussels, crabs and other shellfish found across Alaska. Sand Point was last tested in 2006 for PSP and the levels were very high. King Cove butter clams have been above approved levels so APIA issues this warning because Sand Point clams may also be high in PSP.

"Don't eat shellfish from uncertified beaches," says Bruce Wright, APIA Senior Scientist. "Anyone who eats PSP contaminated shellfish is at risk for illness or death."

PSP occurs widely in Alaska, and the only beaches DEC can "certify" as safe for shellfish collecting are those where state certified testing of clams and mussels is done regularly. Certified beaches in the Cook Inlet and Kachemak Bay area include: Halibut Cove Lagoon, Jakolof Bay, Kasitsna Bay (McDonald Spit), Tutka Bay, Chugachik Island, Sadie Cove, Polly Creek and Crescent River. Sand Point does **not** have a certified beach.

There are no certified beaches in Kodiak, the Aleutian Islands or populated areas of Southeast Alaska.

This warning does not apply to commercially grown and harvested shellfish available in grocery stores and restaurants. They are tested regularly before going to the market.

All harvesters are cautioned that small butterclams, which are more likely to contain PSP, can be misidentified as littleneck clams. Butterclams have prominent concentric growth rings while littlenecks have rings, which are concentric and intersect at right angles. Examples of each online:

<http://www.dec.state.ak.us/eh/fss/seafood/psp/shellfish.htm>.