

INTERSTATE TRANSPORT OF SHELLFISH (FOR GROWOUT)

Protect Virginia from the unwanted spread of shellfish disease by following the rules!

Bringing in shellfish from out of state

Importing shellfish to Virginia waters from outside the state is regulated by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC). These regulations are in place to protect the industry from the spread of shellfish diseases. You are responsible for obtaining **(1) an importation permit** from VMRC which, in most cases, requires **(2) a pathology evaluation** by an approved laboratory indicating that the shellfish does not pose an unacceptable disease risk.

Importation permit details

You will need to advise VMRC on the shellfish species, size, and number you want to import into Virginia and when you want the importation to happen. You'll also need to provide specifics about the source location and the local destination. Not every transfer makes biological sense and there are specific geographic and genetic stock restrictions included in the importation regulation.

Link to the VMRC import regulation:

<http://mrc.virginia.gov/regulations/fr754.shtm>

Pathology evaluations – resources & considerations

A pathology evaluation is a thorough health examination of a sample from the same batch that you are looking to transfer. Where to get the certification is the easy part – services are offered at the [VIMS Shellfish Pathology Laboratory](#) under the direction of Dr. Ryan Carnegie.

The harder part is the clean bill of health that is required. Shellfish out in the natural environment are going to accumulate what's out there – and in Virginia's case, that's mainly dermo disease. The advice – stick to products coming directly out of the hatchery. These have the best chance of being “clean” because they've spent the least amount of time in unfiltered water. Otherwise, choosing environments with similar disease profile and avoiding areas with pathogens we don't have in Virginia is the better route. For advice – give Ryan a call.

Considerations:

- Pathology certifications are not free – growers are asked to cover a small portion of the total cost (supplies).
- Check whether or not your transfer makes good biological sense before moving ahead
- Check with the laboratory in advance to confirm cost & schedule
- Larger animals are more expensive, larvae and small seed (<10 mm) are most economical to screen
- Sample size for testing is 60 animals, but for small seed, samples of 200 are requested
- Certification process takes ~10 days from the receipt of the samples. If the transfer is approved – the window for the transfer is 30 days.

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Hatchery products (larvae & small seed) are the best choice – they're the most biosecure & economical