

**2013**  
**CLAM DENSITY SURVEY STUDY**  
**OVERVIEW**  
*for*  
**HEMPSTEAD HARBOR**

*Prepared for:*

**Town of Oyster Bay**  
Department of Environmental Resources  
150 Miller Place  
Syosset, New York 11791

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**JULY 9, 2014**

TOWN OF OYSTER BAY

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STUDY OVERVIEW**

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Prepared For:

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2013 Clam Data Tables
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## **Study Overview**

A shellfish density survey of Hempstead Harbor was conducted in October 2013 by Cashin Associates, P.C. at the request of the Town of Oyster Bay. The survey was done in accordance with the scope and methodology utilized for a shellfish survey of the harbor performed in 2008 for the Town of Oyster Bay and the Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee. The survey involved the collection of 120 bottom grab samples at 61 stations throughout the harbor utilizing a barge mounted crane and bucket dredge. Grab samples were washed through graduated grates and sieves to recover clams and other shellfish over one quarter inch in size. The methodology and sample locations were the same as those utilized in the 2008 survey. The study area and sampling locations for this survey are shown in Figures 4 and 5. The findings of the inventory are presented in Tables 1 to 5, and are summarized below.

## **Study Findings**

1. A map indicating the general distribution and abundance of clams in the study area as found during the 2013 survey is shown on Figure 3. The highest densities of clams were found at stations along the shore on the west side of the harbor, and in the portions of the harbor south of Bar Beach. As is typical for populations of clams and other benthic invertebrates, clam populations were found to be very patchy, often with wide variation in clam abundance between adjacent stations and between samples taken at the same location.

Generally, central portions of the harbor, with depths over 25 feet, had low densities of clams, or no clams present. These areas had muddy sediments characterized with high percentage (over 90%) of silt and clay fractions.

2. Clams were found at 28 of the 61 stations in 2013, representing 45.9% of the total stations sampled. In 2008, clams were found at 34 of the 61 stations or 55.7%.
3. The highest density of clams was 23.6 clams/sqm found at station 54, located in uncertified waters in the portions of the harbor south of the Beach Bar peninsula.
4. The overall average density of clams found in the harbor was 1.7 clams/sqm. The average density in 2008 was 1.6 clams/sqm. Based on a statistical analysis, this is not a statistically significant change in overall density.
5. Although the overall density in clams in the bay did not change significantly from 2008 to 2017, the density of seed clams in the harbor decreased, and the seed clam population represented a smaller percentage of the overall clam population in 2013. The decline in the seed clam population indicates a potential weakening of the resource, especially if it continues for several consecutive years and more than one year class of clams is affected.
6. Since the 2008 study, a portion of the outer harbor (Figure 6) has been certified and opened for harvesting of shellfish because of improvements in water quality. The density of clams in the portion of the harbor that has been certified is less than it was in 2008,

possibly reflecting harvesting pressure on the resource. The mean density of clams in the harvest area in 2008 was 1.98 clams/sqm and in 2013 was 1.22 clam/sqm in 2013. This difference in density is not statistically significant (based on a two-tailed t-test of the difference between the means at 5% significance level,  $P=0.67$ ).

7. The overall average size of clams sampled was 67.2 mm, compared to 58.1 mm in 2008. This increase in size may be attributed to the fact that commercial harvesting tends to focus on areas with smaller size clams (littlenecks) which are much more commercially desirable than the larger size (chowders). Selective harvesting of littlenecks would tend to increase the average size of the remaining stock. The decline in the seed stock as noted above would also tend to increase the mean size of the population.
  
8. The presence of the *notata* variant clams was noted in the 2013 survey. *Notata* is a hard clam variant that occurs naturally at very low levels, but that is commonly used for hatchery stocks and seeding programs. There were 6 *notata* clams found out of a total of 445 clams collected, representing 1.3%. This is higher than that which would be expected in a natural clam population (less than half a percent would be expected to occur naturally). This may be due to the clam seeding conducted by the Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee in the harbor over past years, which included clams of the *notata* variant.

## **Conclusions**

The overall density of clams in the harbor has not changed significantly since the 2008 survey. Although the number of stations with clams declined, the mean density of clams has stayed approximately the same. Hard clams in the harbor were widespread and fairly abundant, although the clam population is less than that of other Long Island embayments with productive clam fisheries.

One change noted in the Harbor's clam population is that the density of seed sized clams was less in 2013 as when compared to 2008. A decline in seed abundance is an indication of potential weakening of the population in terms of its ability to sustain itself. Clam populations generally consist of many year classes of clams, so a decline in one year class of seeds may not have a significant long-term effect on the resource. However, decline in several consecutive year classes of seeds could result in an overall decline of the resource. Further research and inventory work would be required to assess whether the decline in seeds is an ongoing condition, or whether it was a statistical anomaly in the 2013 sampling.

## TABLES



**TABLE 1**  
**Station Locations and Depth**

STATION NO.	LAT.	LONG.	DEPTH (ft.)
1	73.64763603	40.88634495	18
2	73.65541748	40.88383378	34
3	73.66437993	40.88100424	34
4	73.67324204	40.87839427	30
5	73.68294009	40.87514785	30
6	73.69179963	40.87235432	30
7	73.70324120	40.86867417	22
8	73.69754593	40.86648455	21
9	73.69146840	40.86851827	36
10	73.68167412	40.87131856	30
11	73.67158167	40.87471746	42
12	73.66059048	40.87816950	36
13	73.65147374	40.88121576	22
14	73.65735444	40.87495476	32
15	73.66569320	40.87217896	34
16	73.67340544	40.86985771	30
17	73.68204296	40.86695258	31
18	73.69079805	40.86421293	23
19	73.68403099	40.86249449	21
20	73.67596881	40.86482564	29
21	73.66889419	40.86715406	30
22	73.66263842	40.86925438	30
23	73.65756089	40.87112940	18
24	73.65753284	40.86678690	20
25	73.65742088	40.86526797	20
26	73.65742721	40.86368007	22
27	73.66441157	40.86440980	29
28	73.67215382	40.86216863	31
29	73.67845145	40.86004935	23

**TABLE 1**  
**Station Locations and Depth**

STATION NO.	LAT.	LONG.	DEPTH (ft.)
30	73.67100493	40.85853200	32
31	73.66056716	40.86157085	26
32	73.65542958	40.85925248	15
33	73.66077990	40.85747102	20
34	73.66627985	40.85585589	29
35	73.67216290	40.85385603	11
36	73.65381776	40.85588424	13
37	73.65845617	40.85430596	20
38	73.66409384	40.85249614	21
39	73.66961713	40.85053541	18
40	73.66742828	40.84685102	20
41	73.66249789	40.84854296	20
42	73.65736830	40.85009782	18
43	73.65247866	40.85183190	15
44	73.65512359	40.84650612	15
45	73.65914697	40.84509121	18
46	73.66510192	40.84333314	17
47	73.66276855	40.83977870	6
48	73.65881636	40.841044830	17
49	73.65479946	40.84045864	9
50	73.65674090	40.83735517	13
51	73.65223548	40.83238343	7
52	73.65710012	40.83324180	12
53	73.64859314	40.82424656	3
54	73.65351966	40.82600066	9
55	73.65135546	40.82462968	6
56	73.65027965	40.82182178	9
57	73.65158309	40.81834789	10
58	73.64830720	40.81923315	12

**TABLE 2**  
**Mean Clam Density at Each Station**  
 (density in clams/sqm)

STATION NO.	CLAM DENSITY 2008	CLAM DENSITY 2013
1	2.3	0.0
2	0.0	0.0
3	0.3	0.0
4	0.0	0.2
5	0.0	0.0
6	0.0	0.0
7	0.7	0.7
8	0.0	14.8
9	0.3	0.0
10	0.0	0.0
11	0.0	0.0
12	0.0	0.2
13	29.3	0.0
14	0.0	0.0
15	0.3	0.0
16	0.0	0.2
17	0.0	0.0
18	0.7	0.0
19	3.7	7.1
20	0.0	0.2
21	0.3	0.2
22	0.3	0.0
23	4.3	0.0
24	9.7	0.0
25	1.0	0.0
26	2.3	0.0
27	0.0	0.7
28	0.0	0.2
29	0.7	3.2
30	0.0	2.5
31	0.0	0.0
32	0.0	0.0

STATION NO.	CLAM DENSITY 2008	CLAM DENSITY 2013
33	0.7	0.0
34	0.0	1.1
35	0.3	0.0
36	1.3	0.7
37	5.0	0.0
38	0.3	0.9
39	0.0	0.0
40	0.0	2.3
41	1.0	0.0
42	0.3	0.0
43	0.7	2.5
44	0.3	0.0
45	0.0	0.0
46	0.0	0.0
47	1.3	9.1
48	0.0	0.0
49	0.3	0.0
50	0.0	0.2
51	3.0	1.4
52	0.0	0.0
53	2.0	0.5
54	0.0	23.6*
55	2.7	9.5
56	4.0	5.7
57	0.3	7.5
58	0.0	6.4
59	3.3	3.6
60	7.7	0*
61	1.0	7.7

*\*Note: These densities were calculated with only one sample taken at the site*

**TABLE 3**  
**Mean Clam Density by Size Class**  
 (density in clams/sq/m)

	Seeds	Little Necks	Cherry Stones	Chowder	Total
<b>2008 Harbor-Wide Mean Density</b>	0.51	0.36	0.26	0.48	1.6
<b>2013 Harbor-Wide Mean Density</b>	0.20	0.46	0.40	0.62	1.7

**TABLE 4**  
**2008 Hard Clam *Notata* Variant**  
 Percent of Total Hard Clam Population by Size Class

	Seeds	Little Necks	Cherry Stones	Chowders	Total
<b><i>Notata</i> Variant</b>	5	0	0	0	5
<b>Total Hard Clams</b>	94	66	48	87	295
<b>Percent of <i>Notatas</i> in Total Hard Clam Population</b>	5.32	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.69
	3.13		0.00		

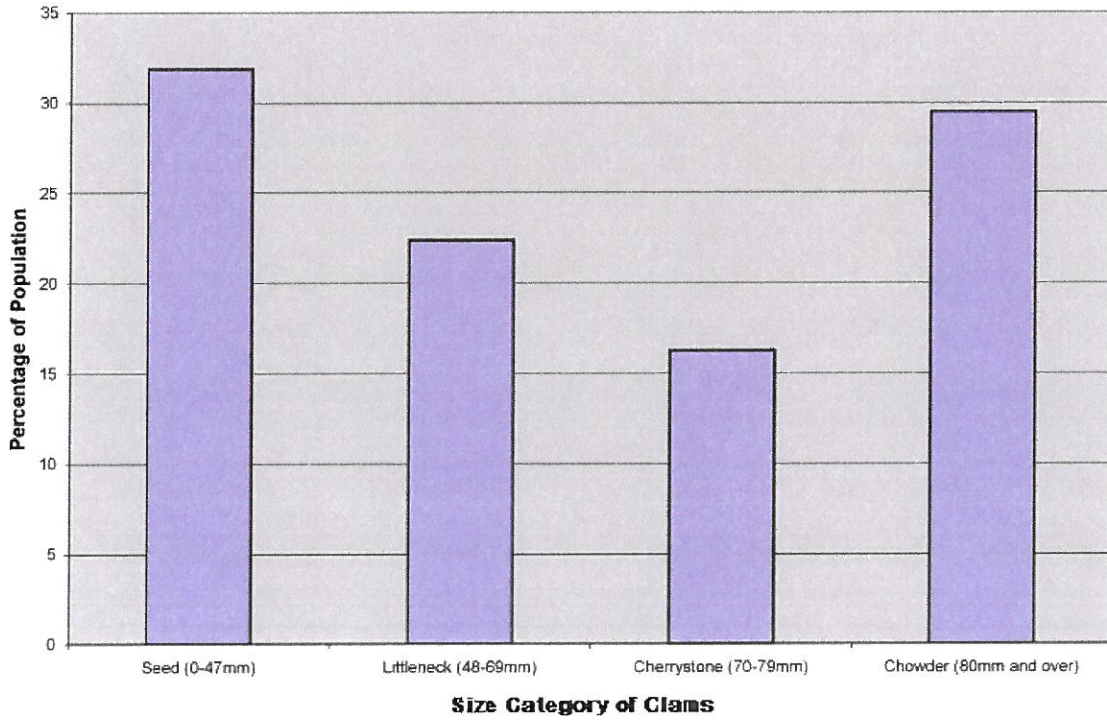
**Table 5**  
**2013 Hard Clam *Notata* Variant**  
 Percent of Total Hard Clam Population by Size Class

	Seeds	Little Necks	Cherry Stones	Chowders	Total
<b><i>Notata</i> Variant</b>	3	3	0	0	5
<b>Total Hard Clams</b>	53	121	106	164	445
<b>Percent of <i>Notatas</i> in Total Hard Clam Population</b>	5.66	2.48	0.00	0.00	1.12
	3.45		0.00		

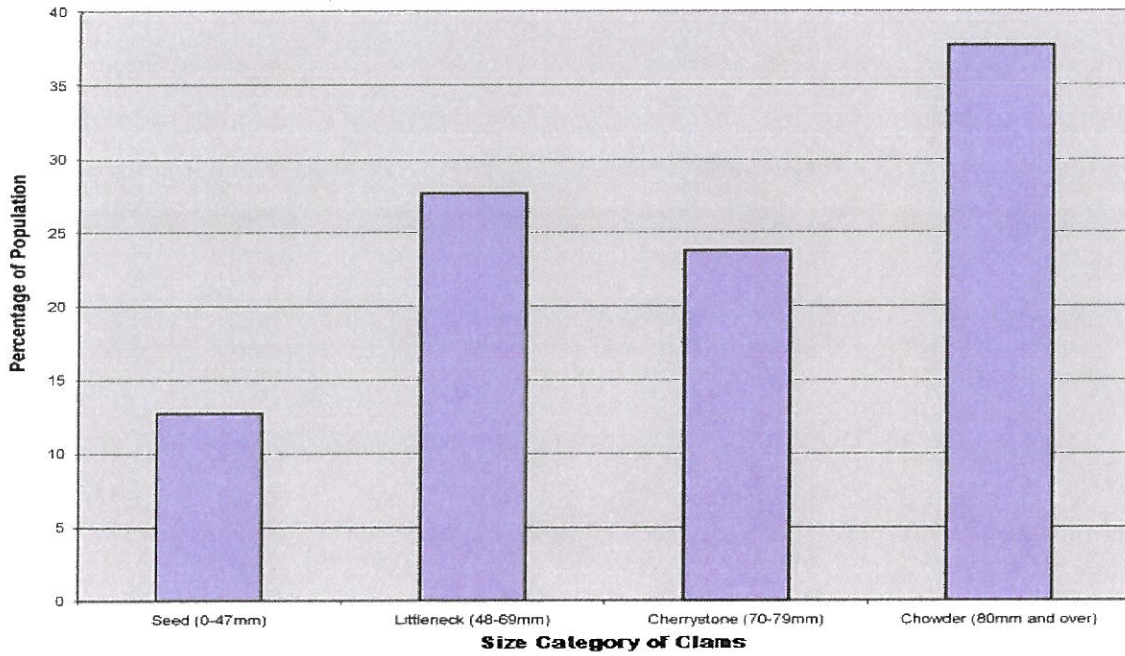
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**FIGURES**

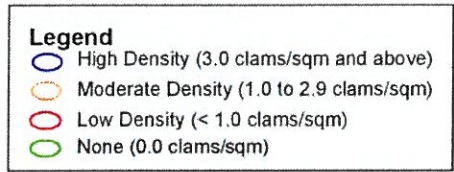
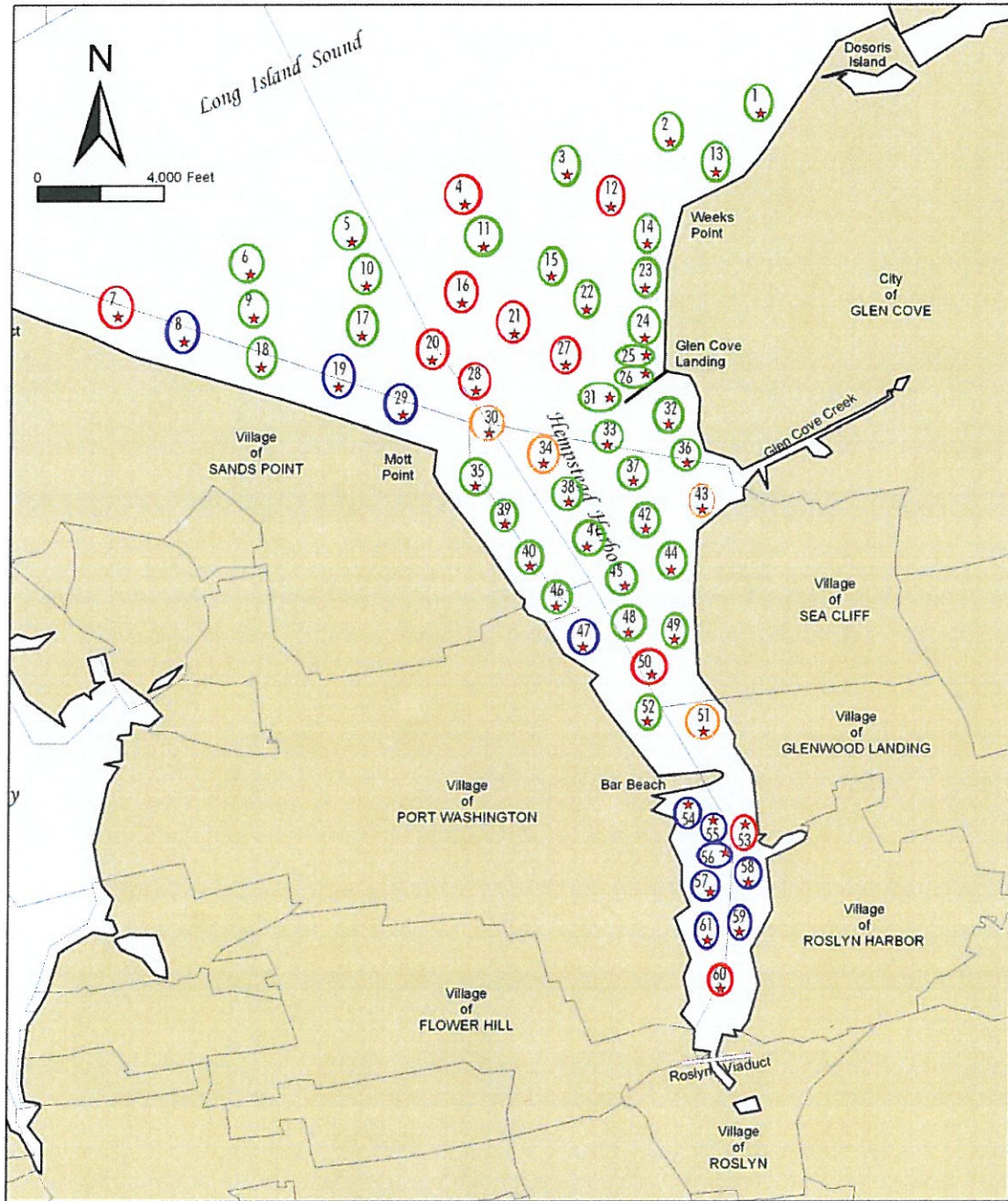
**FIGURE 1**  
**2008 - Size Frequency Distribution of Standing Stock – Harbor-Wide**



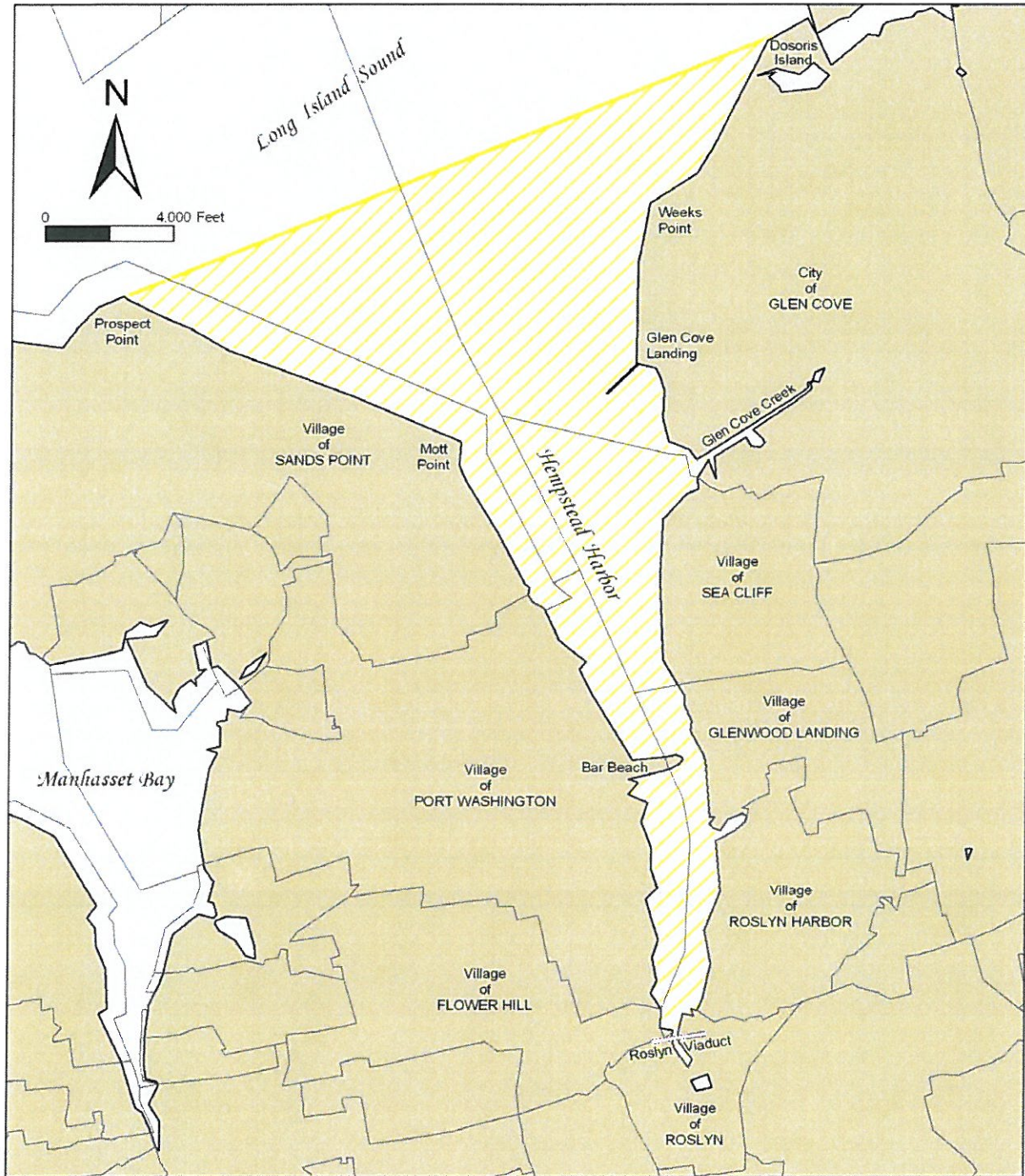
**FIGURE 2**  
**2013 - Size Frequency Distribution of Standing Stock – Harbor-Wide**



**FIGURE 3**  
**Distribution and Abundance of Clams**

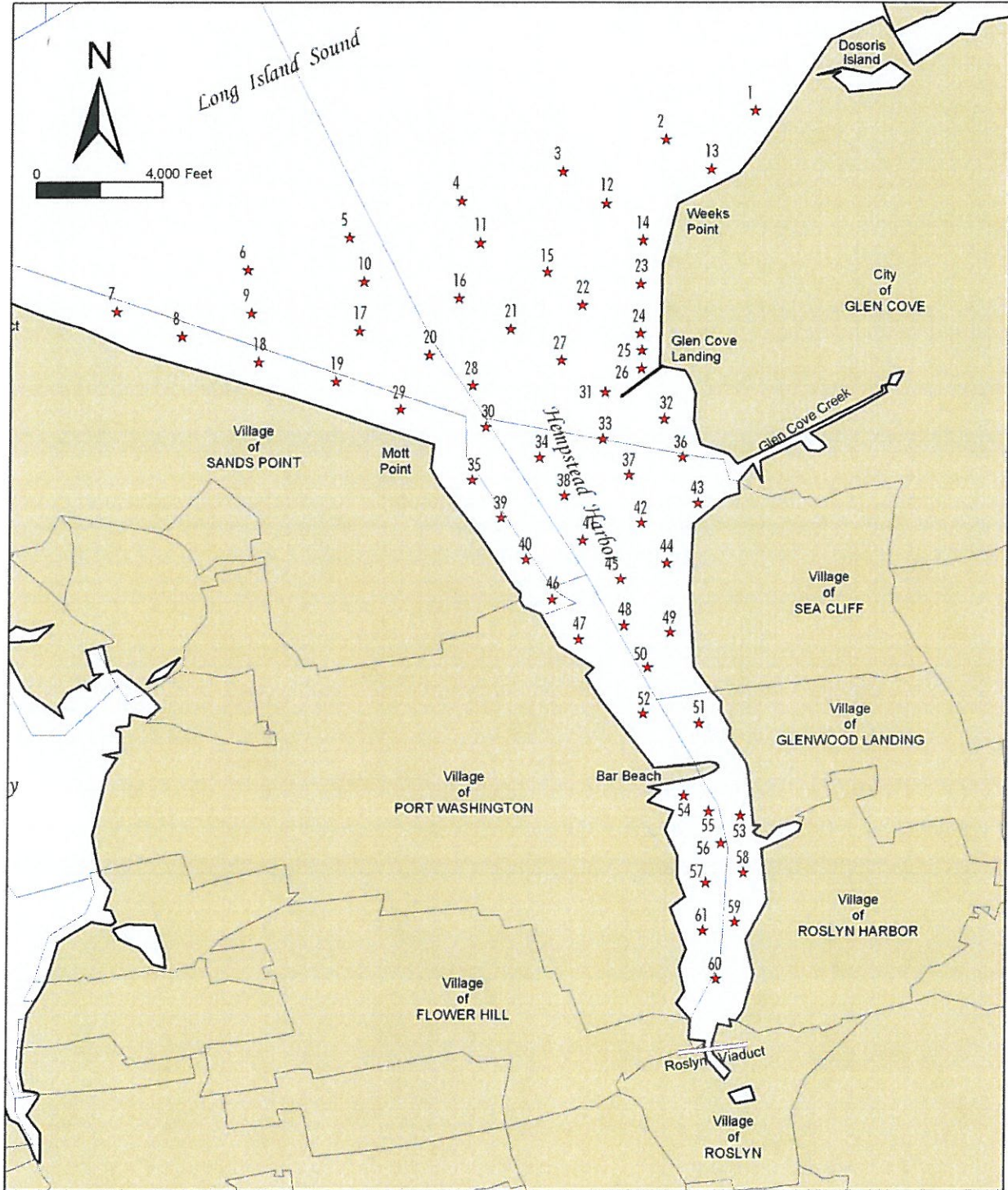


**FIGURE 4**  
**Harbor Study Area**

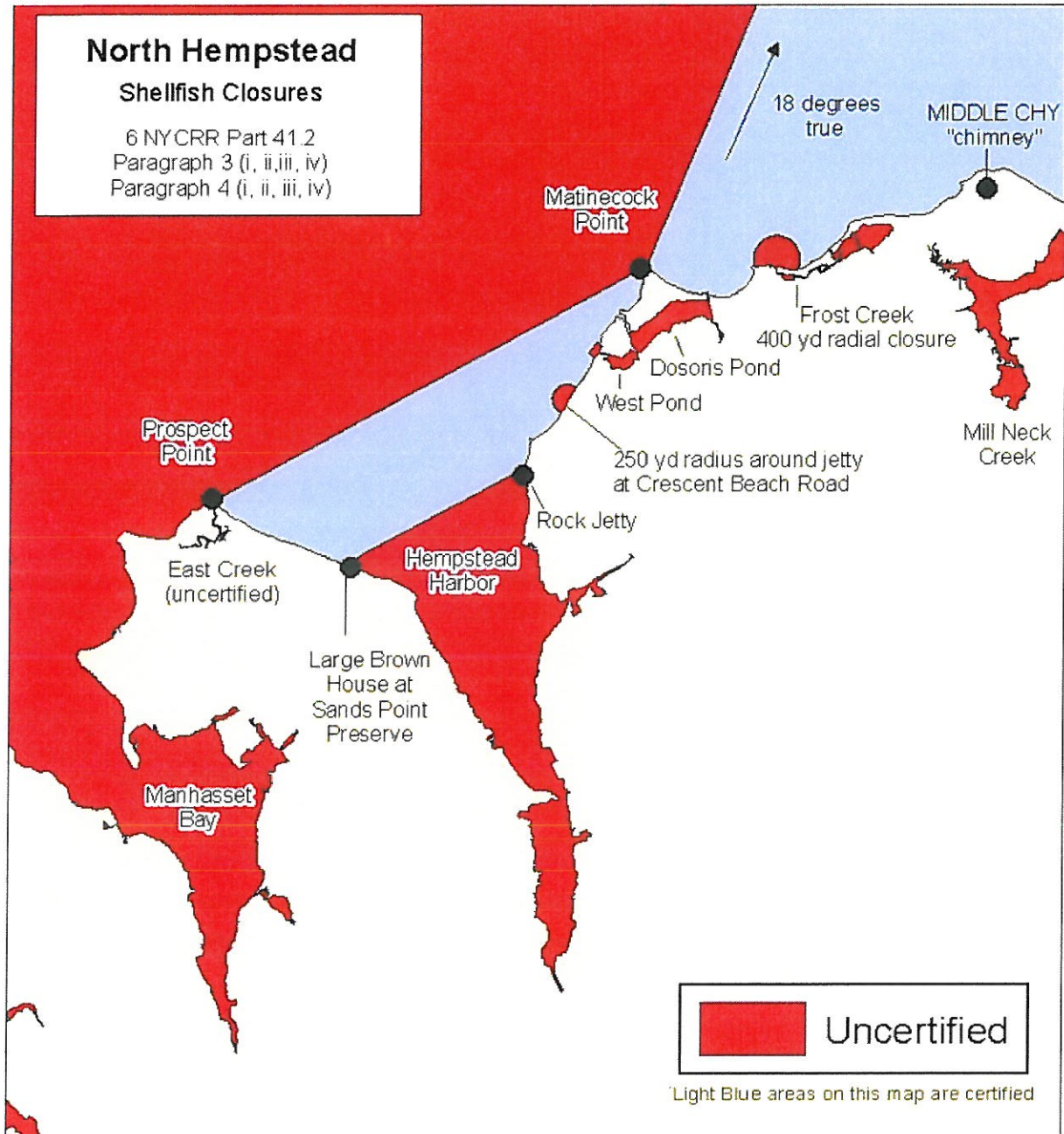




**FIGURE 5**  
**Clam Sampling Locations**



**FIGURE 6**  
**2013 NYSDEC North Hempstead Harbor Shellfish Closures**



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**ATTACHMENT**



