

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

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APIA **WARNS Akutan, Sand Point, King Cove and Unalaska residents about
dangers of paralytic shellfish poison**

Harvesters should avoid eating untested shellfish

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, scallops, and crabs found across Alaska. Sand Point was tested in 2006 for PSP and the levels were very high; the July 2010 PSP levels for Sand Point are even higher, King Cove butter clams have been above approved levels for months, Unalaska PSP level have also exceeded safe levels, and Akutan mussels are again high for the second month in a row. APIA issues this warning because clams may also be high in PSP throughout the region.

“DON’T EAT CLAMS, MUSSELS, SCALLOPS, and DUNGENESS CRAB VISCERA (GUTS) FROM ALASKA BEACHES UNLESS THEY HAVE BEEN TESTED,” 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 there are no certified safe beaches in the State of Alaska.

There are no certified beaches in Kodiak, the Aleutian Islands, or populated areas of Southeast Alaska. Akutan, Sandpoint, King Cove, and Unalaska **do not** have certified beaches.

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 butter clams, which are more likely to contain PSP, can be miss-identified as littleneck clams. Butter clams have prominent concentric growth rings while littlenecks have rings which are concentric and intersect at right angles. Example of each online:

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

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