



Coastal Crime- Shellfish Law

Dear residents of Birchington,

I have had several reports of people collecting shellfish along the coastline of Birchington, particularly around Epple Bay. This typically occurs early in the morning and will consist of small groups of people walking along the coast at low tide. Certain shellfish are protected and cannot be removed, whilst others can be removed with any restrictions. Please see the guidance below about what regulations are in place. If you witness anything that you believe is a concern, then please contact Kent Police.

Cockles- Cannot be removed from the shoreline in any quantity.

Periwinkles (sea snails)- There is no restriction on the amount that can be removed from the shoreline, but they cannot be removed from the beach by any mechanical means. They must be collected by hand.

Native Oysters- Regulated species, minimum harvesting size 7cm shell width. Native Oyster is rounded in shape, with smooth and brittle shells that include a shallow cupped bottom shell and a flat top shell.

Pacific Oyster- Is elongated in shape, with rough and fluted shells that include a deep cupped bottom shell and a flat top shell – invasive species. Small amounts may be retained for personal consumption, excessive amounts must be returned above high tide to die.

Mussels- Can only be removed from the shoreline when they are larger than 18mm in diameter.

Green Shore Crabs- Are the most common crab on the Kent coastline. There are no restrictions on the removal of this crab.

Clams- Must have matured to a minimum diameter of 35mm before they can be harvested from the shoreline

With kind regards

PC Steve England