
Fishermen accused of illegally harvesting horseshoe crabs

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Two Suffolk commercial fishermen face criminal charges after they were caught with hundreds of illegally harvested horseshoe crabs - 347 more than their permit allowed, the state Department of Environmental Conservation said Tuesday.

The bust followed tips late last month about illegal harvest of horseshoe crabs and a "suspicious" boat launched at night from a ramp on Bayview Avenue in Amityville.

On June 30, two DEC officers responded to a call about the boat from Amityville police and found a pickup and a trailer parked down the street from the ramp.

The DEC limits commercial fisherman to a daily harvest of 30. Recreational anglers may take five daily for personal use.

Some baymen use the prehistoric-looking arthropods for bait, but they are also sold for biomedical use. Horseshoe crabs spawn on [Long Island's](#) shores in May and June, often during nights when the moon is full.

On the night in question, the officers hid in the bushes for nearly three hours until the fishermen returned with 377 horseshoe crabs in tow.

The DEC identified the men as Gary Lockel of 193 N. [Delaware Ave.](#), Lindenhurst, and John McCallen of 18 Mayfair Dr., Huntington.

Lockel said Tuesday that the crabs were harvested over the season but were being kept alive in a pen in waters near Amityville Island until he was ready to sell them.

Lockel and McCallen were both charged with illegal commercialization of horseshoe crabs, a misdemeanor that could result in a \$30,000 fine, said DEC spokesman Bill Fonda. They are scheduled to be arraigned on Aug. 10 in First District Court in Central Islip.