

# Ebb Interval

*A clamshell low-tide marsh stitched in autumn color*



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## 1. Finished size

- Finished quilt size: **54 in x 72 in** (135 cm x 180 cm)
- Finished block size (clamshell): **4 in** wide x **4 in** tall
- Block layout: **11 blocks across x 16 blocks down**
- Sashing: none (blocks sit edge-to-edge). Border adds framing.

## 2. Materials and yardage

### Fabrics used (all cotton quilting weight recommended)

- **Clamshell fabrics (4–6 main tones):** oxidized-copper teal, spartina olive, marsh-clay taupe, oyster-cream, coral-orange glasswort accents.
- **Diagonal-pool split accent:** use two coordinating fabrics (two-fabric clamshells are cut to create diagonal seams).

- **Eelgrass channel thread rows (optional decorative stitching):** narrow rows of teal thread across the shell pattern (see quilting notes).

| Item                                               | Amount                                 | Notes                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Fabric for clamshells (fat quarter / 1/2-yard mix) | Approx. <b>3 3/4 yd</b> total combined | Choose multiple fabrics so no two neighboring blocks look identical.      |
| Outer border fabric (teal or marsh-mist tone)      | <b>1 1/4 yd</b>                        | Cut border strips as directed below.                                      |
| Backing (solid or lightly mottled)                 | <b>4 1/2 yd</b>                        | Make at least 2–3 in (5–7 cm) extra on all sides.                         |
| Batting                                            | <b>72 in x 56 in</b> (or larger)       | Quilt-thru medium loft or thin-to-medium loft.                            |
| Binding                                            | <b>3/4 yd</b> (maker's estimate)       | Cut 2 1/4 in strips for double-fold binding. Yield ~240 in total length.  |
| Thread                                             | 2 spools                               | Neutral top thread (for piecing). Teal thread for optional eelgrass rows. |
| Freezer paper                                      | 1–2 sheets                             | For clamshell templates.                                                  |

**Yardage tip:** Because each block uses small curved sections, yardage will vary by your fabric choices and how tightly you cut. The totals above assume a mix of fat quarters plus a few additional cuts.

### 3. Cutting

You will make **176 clamshell blocks** total (11 x 16).

#### 3A. Determine block fabric plan

- Plan at least **110 different fabrics** or use a repeat cycle that keeps neighboring blocks varied.
- For the “pooled water” look: choose **16 blocks** to be two-fabric diagonal clamshells.
- Place 8–12 coral-orange accent blocks scattered through the layout (especially toward the quilt center and lower half).

#### 3B. Templates

- Use freezer paper to create a clamshell pattern piece that finishes to a **4 in** wide x **4 in** tall block.
- **Template seam allowance:** Cut pieces with **1/4 in** seam allowance around the curved edge. (Straight edges should align to create the 4 in finished block.)

- Recommended template size: **4 1/4 in** wide x **4 1/4 in** tall outer footprint including seam allowance. (Trim to fit after first test block.)

### 3C. Cut quantities (per clamshell block)

Each block is made from **two mirrored halves** that meet at the straight center line.

- For a single-fabric block:
  - **2 freezer-paper shapes** from the same fabric (mirror one before cutting), plus seam allowance.
- For a diagonal-pool (two-fabric) block:
  - Cut the two halves from two fabrics, each piece split diagonally so the seam line runs down through the center. Use freezer paper to position the diagonal split.

#### Practical cutting math:

- Total blocks: 176
- Total clamshell halves:  $176 \times 2 = \mathbf{352 \text{ halves}}$
- For single-fabric blocks (160 blocks):  $160 \times 2 = \mathbf{320 \text{ halves}}$  cut from their assigned fabrics.
- For diagonal-pool blocks (16 blocks):  $16 \times 2 = \mathbf{32 \text{ halves}}$  but each half comes from one of two fabrics—so you'll cut **32 halves per diagonal-side** across your chosen pairings.

If you prefer, you can standardize by making more (or fewer) diagonal-pool blocks—adjust fabric pairings accordingly.

### 3D. Border and binding cuts

- Border layout: frame the quilt with **1 1/2 in finished** borders.
- Because quilt top size before borders is: **44 in x 64 in** (11 x 4, 16 x 4), your after-border size will be 48 x 68 plus outer border? To keep the stated finished size (54 x 72), use two-stage border widths below.

#### Cut the following border strips from the border fabric:

- Inner border: **1 in finished** (cut strips **1 1/2 in** wide). Use enough to make an inner frame around the quilt.
- Outer border: **2 1/2 in finished** (cut strips **3 in** wide).

If you'd like a single border only, you can scale widths proportionally, but follow the two-stage method for the most balanced drape.

- Binding: cut **6** strips from fabric at **2 1/4 in** wide, then join to make a continuous binding long enough for the quilt perimeter.

## 4. Piecing / block construction

### 4A. Set up freezer-paper curved piecing

1. Trace freezer paper template pieces onto freezer paper (shiny side down) so the curves print clearly.
2. For each block, you need a left-curved half and a right-curved half (mirror one).
3. Press template to fabric, then cut around the template edges.
4. Do a test block on scrap first: confirm the straight edges yield a **4 in finished** block after assembly.

### 4B. Build one clamshell block

Goal: curved scallop edge creates the “overlapping ripple” impression, with a neat straight center and clean corners.

1. **Lay out pieces:** Place the two halves right sides together, matching straight edges. The curves will form the shell profile.
2. **Fuse/position if using template as backing:** Keep templates attached during the first seams if desired for crisp curves.
3. **Stitch the seam:** Stitch along the straight center line with **1/4 in** seam allowance.
4. **Press:** Press seam allowances to one side (or open if that feels smoother). Steam to shape the curve.
5. **Square the block:** Trim to a **4 1/2 in x 4 1/2 in** unfinished size (should finish to 4 x 4 after border). If your seam allowance differs, adjust to your test block.

### 4C. Two-fabric diagonal “pooled water” clamshells

1. Choose two coordinating fabrics for each pooled block pair.
2. Create a diagonal guide on the freezer paper template: draw a line from top-left to bottom-right (or consistently across your set).
3. Cut along that diagonal so each half is split into two fabric triangles.
4. Assemble the diagonals first so the diagonal seam is centered within the clamshell “shell.” Stitch, press, then assemble the two curved halves as in 4B.

### 4D. Repeat

- Make **176** blocks total.
- Before joining into rows, lay blocks out and rotate individual blocks so the ripples don’t all curve the same direction at the same locations.

## 5. Quilt top assembly

1. **Arrange rows:** Make **16 rows** with **11 blocks** per row.
2. **Dry fit:** Check that your accent blocks (coral-orange glasswort and diagonal pooled water) move across the quilt and don’t form big repeats.
3. **Sew blocks into rows:**

- Sew blocks together with 1/4 in seams.
  - Press seams consistently (all up/down on alternating seams) to reduce bulk.
4. **Join rows:** Sew rows together, matching seam intersections carefully.
5. **Attach inner border** (cut strips **1 1/2 in** wide):
- Measure the quilt top center length and cut borders to match each side with accurate miters or straight joins.
  - Stitch, press toward border.
6. **Attach outer border** (cut strips **3 in** wide):
- Square the quilt before final border if needed.
7. **Final check:** Quilt top should measure approximately **54 in x 72 in**.

## 6. Basting, quilting and binding

### 6A. Layering and basting

1. Press quilt top lightly (do not stretch curved piecing).
2. Layer backing (right side down), batting, then quilt top.
3. Baste with safety pins or spray basting.
4. Mark quilting lines:
  - Optional eelgrass channels: 3–5 narrow rows across the shell field where teal thread will “cut” visually. Choose rows roughly at 1/4, 1/2, and 3/4 of the quilt height.
  - Mark lightly with a removable fabric pencil.

### 6B. Quilting plan

Quilting choices:

- **Option 1 (recommended):** **Stitch-in-the-ditch** along the scallop curves plus short cross-stitches to keep the ripples crisp.
- **Option 2:** **do continuous quilting waves that echo the scallops; keep them subtle so fabric overlap remains the star.**

**Eelgrass channels (decorative teal thread rows):**

1. Thread the machine with a teal thread (slightly different shade than the teal clamshells if desired).
2. Quilt along your marked narrow rows using a straight stitch or very small zigzag (about 1.5–2.0 mm stitch length).
3. To create a “ribbon row” effect, quilt 3–5 passes in parallel lines, spaced about 1/8 in apart.
4. At a few points, add a tiny offset so the eelgrass feels wind-tossed but still controlled.

## **6C. Binding**

- 1. Join binding strips into a continuous length.**
- 2. Attach binding to quilt with right sides together, matching raw edges.**
- 3. Miter corners.**
- 4. Turn binding to the back and hand-stitch or machine-stitch in the binding groove.**

**Stitching spacing:** Use about a 1/4 in seam when attaching binding. Press carefully before final stitching.

## **7. Finishing notes**

- Pressing rhythm:** Press curved seams gently with steam; avoid aggressive pressing that flattens the scallop dimension.
- Consistency check:** If your blocks drift, stop and re-square before you stitch an entire row.
- Color placement:** Place darker teal and olive tones around the edges; keep oyster-cream and taupe nearer the center to brighten the “low-tide” depth.
- Diagonal pool accents:** Use diagonal seams sparingly and vary their diagonal direction slightly so the pooled-water light doesn’t look patterned.
- Washing:** Pre-wash if your fabrics do, otherwise test a small scrap. Press flat after washing.

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**Optional add-on:** If you want extra texture like the marsh surface, add a few tiny hand stitches at select scallop peaks after quilting—just enough to hold the layers and give subtle dimension.