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Lobster Bulletin

Lobster Institute

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Winter 2013

## The Lobster Bulletin, Winter 2013

Lobster Institute, University of Maine

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Winter 2013

*“News, research updates, and information on lobsters and the lobster industry.”*

**Published by the Lobster Institute**

*“Protecting and conserving the lobster resource, and enhancing lobstering as an industry...and a way of life.”*

## Unprecedented Lobster Landings in Maine in 2012

According to early reports from the Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR), preliminary statistics indicate more than 123 million pounds of lobsters were caught in Maine in 2012, an increase of approximately 18 million pounds over 2011. Concurrently, the total value of landings at almost \$331 million represents a decrease of \$3.7 million compared to 2011.

“This unprecedented preliminary landings report provides us with both an opportunity and a challenge,” said Commissioner Patrick Keliher. “We need to look closely at this abundant resource and address the challenges presented when supply exceeds demand, as it did this past year, resulting in a decreased overall value which affects the entire industry. To put this into perspective, in 2005, the industry landed 70 million pounds for \$320 million.”

In January 2008, DMR began collecting detailed trip level records from dealers. According to the information reported to date, there were 4,345 active commercial lobster harvesters out of the 5,961 commercial license holders in 2011.

Preliminary 2012 landing statistics are broken down by county, month and zone, on DMR’s website: <http://www.maine.gov/dmr/commercialfishing/recentlandings.htm>.

In light of 2012 statistics, and as a follow up to a report by the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI) to the DMR entitled “An Independent Evaluation of the Maine Limited Entry System for Lobster and Crab,” Commissioner Keliher and staff conducted a series of public forums to seek input into the state of the industry and recommendations for the future. A report is due out in late February. The GMRI report was requested by the 125th Legislature which directed the DMR to contract for the analysis. A copy of this report can be accessed at [www.maine.gov/dmr/GMRIReportRelease.htm](http://www.maine.gov/dmr/GMRIReportRelease.htm). ☞

## Endowment Funds Support the Work of the Lobster Institute

A collection of endowed funds established by a variety of donors, and managed by the University of Maine Foundation (UMF), plays a significant role in the support of Lobster Institute activities and operations. The UMF 2012 annual report noted endowed fund returns in FY10-12 were 8.9%. The value of endowed giving is that funds are invested for the future and produce ongoing financial assistance for the Institute.

Endowed funds that currently assist the Lobster Institute are: The Kenneth Allen Brown Memorial Lobster Research Fund and the Herbert O. Hodgkins Lobster Research Fund, which both helped fund the new Lobster Health Coalition Website; the Basil and Harriett Heansler Lobster Institute Fund (funded by gifts of land) and the Long Island Sound Lobster Fund, which together with the Institute’s general endowment fund help with operational needs of the Institute; and the Frank and Helene Crohn Lobster Institute Fund, which allows for the publication of all *Lobster Bulletins*.

The Institute thanks all contributors to these funds. Any donor may make gifts to these funds, or establish a new fund in honor/memory of family, businesses, or others. Endowed funds are often established through bequests, or with gifts of stock, property, or cash. ☞

The **Lobster Bulletin**  
published by the



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A unit of the Maine Agricultural & Forest Experiment Station



Made possible through an endowed gift by Helene & Frank Crohn.

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## Note:

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*We sincerely thank the over  
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Lobster Institute in calendar year 2012.*

*We look forward to your continued support in 2013.*

*(List does not include donors to the C.O.R.E. Campaign.)*

**Check out the Lobster Institute website  
at [www.lobsterinstitute.org](http://www.lobsterinstitute.org),  
providing the definitive site for lobster  
information ..... with nearly 200 links.**





Contact us at 207-581-2751 if you would like to sponsor our “Research Report” and see your logo here!

# RESEARCH REPORT

*Readers may contact the Lobster Institute for more detailed information on any of these projects.*

*The following are snapshots of information provided at several sessions held during the Fishermen & Scientists Research Society and Gulf of Maine Lobster Foundation’s Lobster Science Workshop held February 19, 2013 in Truro, Nova Scotia*

- **Size at Maturity Study Reviewed** – Dr. Angelica Silva of Fisheries and Oceans in Canada provided attendees with an update on the Size at Maturity Study conducted in Nova Scotia from 2008 – 2011. She noted that over 11,000 female lobsters were sampled during the study. Clipped pleopods were analyzed as were the maturity levels of cement glands to help determine the maturity level of the lobsters. Notable findings included the fact that 98% of the sublegal lobsters sampled in LFA31 were immature. Further, the maturity level of lobsters of legal size was greatest in LFA31A. It was also noted that LFA31A saw an increase in the number of mature sub-legals, along with the proportion of advanced egg development.
- **Temperature Changes** – Dr. Yongsheng Wu of Fisheries and Oceans in Canada reported that the temperature in all of Canada was 1.4 degrees C higher than the average of the past 60 years. He noted that a 1°C change in air temperature leads to a 0.8° to 0.9° change in ocean temperature. He also reported that tests indicated a decrease in the amount of oxygen in the waters near Nova Scotia, due in part to large scale ocean circulation patterns.

- **Atlantic Lobster Molt & Quality** – Dr. Jean Lavallee of Aquatic Science & Health Services in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island shared information on results of an ongoing study on lobster molt and quality. In 2004, a project designed to better document and understand the annual changes in molt-timing and lobster quality in LFAs 33 and 34 was started. Sampling spread in June 2008 in LFAs 25 and 26A and continued to October 2011, and in LFA 24 in August 2009 through June 2010. Sampling included recording hemolymph or blood protein levels using a digital refractometer as a physiological indicator of quality; a microscopic read of pleopod samples to determine molt stage; and a manual squeeze test of shell hardness over three different areas of the carapace. Results to-date indicate that molting is occurring earlier in the year and that near-shore sites molt before offshore sites. Additionally, males tend to molt earlier than females.

It was also suggested that water temperature is likely the primary factor in molt timing, though correlating data is needed, and that forecasting models may become possible if we can predict water temperature. This, in turn, could lead to lower post-harvest discards; and management applications such as dynamic fishing seasons, sub- or smaller scale management areas; at sea management procedures, and establishing grading and quality standards.

This project can be tracked at its new Web site: <http://www.lobstermoult.ca> ☼

## Fishermen & Scientist Research Society Celebrates 20 Years

This year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fishermen & Scientists Research Society, which celebrated this February with its 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference and a special lobster science workshop. The workshop featured over a dozen sessions covering everything from Derelict Fishing Gear to Age Determination in Lobsters to Age at Maturity to Lobster Molt & Quality. Just some of the information shared can be found above in the Research Report.

The Lobster Institute was pleased to present FSRs president John Levy with a framed certificate recognizing the Society’s years of collaborative research and, in particular, its service to the lobster fishery.



*Cathy Billings (l) of the Lobster Institute presents FSRs President John Levy (r) with a certificate recognizing the Society’s 20 years of service to the lobster fishery.*

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Orono, ME 04469



**LOBSTER INSTITUTE**

*Lobster Bulletin, Winter 2013*

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- \* Changes in the Ecosystem \* Affecting Future Prices \* Quality & Effort
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Friday – March 22, 9:00 - 4:00 & Saturday – March 23, 8:00 - 11:30

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A limited number of rooms are available at the Delta Brunswick Hotel for March 21 and 22 at the special rate of \$119. Call the Delta at 1-800-335-8233 to make your room reservation – be sure to mention the Lobster Institute Town Meeting. Reserve rooms early.

**Call 207.581.1443 for information and to register.**

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