Landings, vol. 22, no. 5

Maine Lobstermen's Community Alliance
The Maritime lobster industry came together at a two-day Lobster Value Recovery Summit held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, in March. The focus of the summit was the recommendations of a report on the New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia lobster industry released last November by the Maritime Lobster Panel. In May, 2013, lobstermen in those provinces tied up their boats and refused to fish due to the low price offered by processors for their lobsters. Processors closed their facilities and laid off workers. The economic repercussions of the tie-up drew the attention of fisheries officials in all three provinces who set up the three-person panel and called for a report.

The panel members issued a total of 33 recommendations focused on making changes to the structure of the Maritime lobster industry. It recommended three major initiatives: establishment of an Independent Maritime Lobster Market Intelligence Institute; development of a Comprehensive Generic Marketing and Promotion Campaign for Canadian lobster to be paid for by a levy on harvesters and processors; and development of a price-setting mechanism within the provinces for determining pre-season lobster prices.

"The meeting was designed to review the recommendations from the report, specifically those applying to generic marketing, the levy, marketing intelligence and the price setting mechanism," explained Geoff Irvine, executive director of the Lobster Council of Canada. "There was consensus at the meeting on one and two."

Continued on page 17

Lobster landings may have taken a great leap upward in recent years but the financial benefits of that leap have not been felt equally along the coast, according to data released by the Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR). The 125.9 million of pounds landed in 2013 brought more than 364 million dollars in to the state, but those dollars came to rest in different amounts in different lobster zones. "Where you are in the state gives you a very different impression of how the stock is doing," DMR lobster biologist Carl Wilson told lobstermen at the series of meetings DMR held this winter.

Continued on page 19

Whether you fish to the east or the west makes a difference. Photo by Jason Barter.

Penobscot Bay Lobster Cooperatives
Maine co-ops working for Maine lobstermen. Proud sponsors of the MLCA newsletter.

DMR CONCLUDES WINTER MEETINGS
by MLA staff

In early April the marathon series of meetings held by the Department of Marine Resources (DMR) with the state’s lobstermen came to an end. DMR commissioner Patrick Keliher and staff held 11 meetings from Machias to York in order to convey information about the status of the lobster stock and to learn from lobstermen the specific issues they anticipate facing this year. Patrice McCarron, executive director of the Maine Lobstermen’s Association, attended all the meetings. “I want to commend Commissioner Keliher for holding them. The Department put a lot of thought into framing the discussions,” she said. “The Commissioner also made a point at the beginning of each meeting to review what he heard last year and explain what action the department did and did not take as a result. He's..."
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COASTAL OUTLOOK
Thoughts from MLCA President Patrice McCarron

Spring is here and many fishermen along Maine’s coast are finishing repairs to their gear and have their boats in the water. While the spring has remained fairly cool, all indications are that the summer is looking prosperous for lobstermen and the businesses that depend on them.

Although initially it might seem a bit of a reach, this month in Landings we feature an article on the complex world of international trade agreements. Why? Because within those agreements are provisions that may influence the import and export of seafood in this country and abroad and, more importantly, affect the way Maine promotes its signature marine species.

We also look at the steps Canada has underway to move its own marketing effort forward, by implementing the recommendations of a recent study panel on the Canadian lobster fishery. The move is a result of discussions among a cross-section of 160 industry members which took place in March at the Lobster Value Recovery Summit. The Canadian industry is seeking to have in place later this year an industry levy that would raise $2.5 million to market and brand Canadian lobster.

Lobster landings remained robust in 2013, showing that Maine’s strong conservation program continues to benefit the industry. However, the benefits of the fishery vary significantly in different areas of the coast. Landings looks at the data which show the disparity in lobster landings and value across Maine’s lobster zones. Lobstermen and their communities in eastern Maine have gained the greatest financial value from the recent bounce in the harvest.

We also review the series of meetings held by the Department of Marine Resources (DMR) Commissioner with lobstermen along the coast this winter. Those meetings highlighted the changes that are occurring in the Gulf of Maine and its lobster populations, changes that the Department is poised to address through development of a lobster management plan. DMR’s scientific surveys now indicate that the growth in landings may be coming to an end in a few years, and is pushing the industry to talk about how it can best prepare for this change. But perhaps more importantly, the meetings highlighted the Commissioner’s commitment to continue his dialogue with lobstermen over how they view the future of the industry, rather than dictate what that will be.

Managing the multiple fisheries that take place in Maine—from evers and seaweed to lobsters and blood worms—takes a certain degree of fortitude. In this issue, Landings features some of the remarkable women who make things happen at DMR, ably leading the state’s fisheries policy and management, science and industry communications.

As the North Atlantic Ocean grows warmer, Maine’s fishermen continue to face changes. A guest column by Michelle Loquine from the Gulf of Maine Research Institute explores new opportunities for Maine’s fishing industry, as warming water drives different fish species in to the Gulf of Maine. As these warmer water species become more abundant locally, can the management system adapt to ensure that Maine fishermen are able to benefit? And Landings reports on a recent meeting organized by Maine DMR to help coastal communities develop strategies to cope with the growing green crab invasion.

MLCAlliance is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization, established in 2010, which achieves its charitable mission through programs in education, research and charity.

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Changing ocean temperatures have led to some innovative modelling by researchers at GMRI. Scientists are using ocean temperature data from the NERACOOS buoy array to predict the timing of the lobster shed, signaling the official start of the season and the large influx of Maine lobster landings. The model predicts that the 2014 shed will begin in late June, similar to conditions experienced in 2008. Landings also explores some practical ways to keep lobstermen healthy and successful. As Ann Backus, director of outreach at the Harvard School of Public Health, writes, lobstermen must ensure that they properly maintain hoses and clamps aboard their vessels, since failing to do so could lead to significant health and safety issues. Landings also examines ways that lobstermen can manage their day-to-day business operations in order to ensure that each lobsterman knows more about his own business than anyone else.

In this issue we talk with Carl Schwab of Port Clyde, a lifelong fisherman and leader in the lobster industry. In addition to being one of the early supporters of MLA, Carl was one of the founders of the Port Clyde Co-op. And finally, Landings brings you an interview with a Swans Island lobsterman, recorded five years ago when he was 92 years old. Johnny Wheaton speaks in his own words about how the life of a fisherman has changed.

I hope you enjoy this issue of Landings. I welcome your feedback!
Sightings of new and unusual warm water fish species are bringing the impacts of climate change closer to home for many New England fishermen. As ocean temperatures continue to rise, the Gulf of Maine has become more suitable to new species, opening up new fishing opportunities for fishermen — if they and the regulatory system can adapt.

Among the early indicators of long-term climate change, distributions of fish populations along the Atlantic coast are shifting northward. Since the 1990s, Mid-Atlantic species like black sea bass, butterfish, and summer flounder have been sporadically appearing in the Gulf of Maine. More recently however, these species and several others are appearing with increasing frequency. If the 2012 record-breaking ocean heat wave is any indication, these shifts should only continue to accelerate.

But fully realizing these new fishing opportunities may be complicated. While these new fisheries signal opportunities may be complicated.

Another fundamental regulatory obstacle remains access to permits, in particular black sea bass and summer flounder. Both of these species have significant economic potential in New England if population densities continue to shift northward (as they are highly marketable and show strong ex-vessel prices). However, because of how resource access is apportioned, New England fishermen are constrained by how much they can harvest and where they are allowed to land their catch.

In the black sea bass and summer flounder fisheries, the current permitting structure allocates Atlantic states from North Carolina to Maine a proportion of quota based on historical landings. But because these fisheries have never previously existed in New England, these states are allocated small proportions of the annual quota. On top of these restrictions, both fisheries are currently closed to new entrants, thereby leaving just 13 black sea bass and 30 summer flounder permits collectively associated with vessels home-ported in Maine. A critical next step for managers will be to reexamine how state-by-state quotas are determined and how they may be adjusted to better reflect the current species migrations.

As populations shift north and cross management boundaries, they force regional management councils to reevaluate each council’s management responsibilities. Joint fishery management across councils may become more common — and necessary. Other potential options include splitting or transitioning management responsibilities between councils. Findings from a recent study suggest that the development of new fisheries may already be lagging as a result of economic and regulatory constraints.

For fishermen seeking to offset recent losses in the New England groundfish fishery, access to emergent fisheries could be an invaluable opportunity. The management system will do well to objectively review how the harvest rights are apportioned under such a shifting regime, as a way to help ease current constraints on New England fishermen and create a more flexible management system for the future.
By Eric Jermyn

The Affordable Care Act (ACA, health care reform law) reformed the way Americans can buy health insurance. Now, you can shop for affordable plans offered by different insurance carriers on one Web site, referred to as the exchange. Maine participates in the Health Insurance Marketplace, which is the public exchange run by the federal government at healthcare.gov. You can buy on the federal exchange, or get a health plan directly from an insurance company, off the exchange. You can also consult an insurance agent or broker to help you shop and choose.

When can you buy health insurance?

You can enroll in a health plan only during certain times of the year, called open enrollment periods. The first of these just ended on March 31. The next one will start on November 15. But you can still get insurance before then if you experience certain life-changing events, such as a marriage, divorce, a new baby, or if you lose your health coverage. Such events qualify you to enroll during a special enrollment period, which can be any time outside a regular open enrollment period.

What is a subsidy?

If you buy a plan on the exchange, you may be eligible for a subsidy. That means the government helps pay part of your premium, or you can take a tax credit. Your eligibility for financial assistance is determined by your household income and family size when you apply online at healthcare.gov. You generally qualify for a subsidy if your estimated 2014 income is below $45,960 for an individual or $94,200 for a family of four.

What if you currently have an Anthem Individual Plan?

If you’ve had your current individual health plan since March 23, 2010 or longer, it’s probably a grandfathered plan. Grandfathered plans are exempt from many changes required under the health care reform law. Both grandfathered and non-grandfathered plans may have some, but not all, of the benefits required by the new law. And if you have one of these plans, it’s because you were able to stay on it in 2014.

And there’s good news for next year: newly shared ACA guidance from the federal government now gives individual members not yet on ACA-compatible plans the option to keep their current health plan for at least another 12 months. Known as grand-mothering, this gives our members more time to understand how health care reform will work for them before changing to an ACA-compatible plan.

What you need to do now

If you have an Anthem plan now, be sure to register online at anthem.com. This will give you access to many online tools that help you manage your plan and your health. For example, you can check on the status of a claim, or even compare costs of various health care services to find the most cost-effective options in your area. You can also complete an online health assessment that can help identify your health risks and then learn what steps you can take to make the biggest improvements in your lifestyle and your health.

If you’d like to know more about the Anthem plans available to buy starting on November 15, or think you may experience a life-changing event this year, you can get help from an experienced Anthem representative at 866-906-1406.

ALL ABOUT CORMORANTS

Richard King, senior lecturer in Literature of the Sea at the Williams-Mystic Maritime Studies Program in Connecticut, has just published a new book called *The Devil’s Cormorant, A Natural History.*

King’s interest in cormorants began in 1998 when he read an article about the slaughter of 2,000 cormorants off Henderson Harbor, New York. He decided to get a better understanding of the historic relationship between people and these birds, choosing the double-crested cormorant as his subject.

Historically, cormorants have been viewed as a symbol of bad luck and evil, especially in the Bible. Shakespeare often linked the birds with the human emotions of greed and gluttony. The birds, however, have remarkable features. Cormorants can dive and hunt deep underwater, perch comfortably on a branch or a wire, walk on land, climb up cliff faces, feed on thousands of different species, and live beside both fresh and salt water in a vast range of temperatures and altitudes. King starts his story first in Japan, where he explores the practice of cormorant fishing. Like a dog or a falcon, cormorants are trainable.

Japanese fishermen train their birds to bring edible fish to the surface where a trained fisherman, called an usho, takes the fish from the cormorant’s gullet.

King followed the path of the cormorant to Antarctica, Bering Island, Peru, Cape Town, Inishmore Island off Ireland, the Columbia River, the Mississippi Delta, Lake Ontario, and the Mystic River in Connecticut. He concludes that the bird’s negative characterization might be due to the fact that its incredible adaptability and success reflects that of *Homo sapiens.* King is also the author of *Lobster,* published in 2011.
Let’s talk trade. We all know what it means to sell something. I have a widget, you want a widget, I sell you my widget for an agreed upon price. What happens, though, when I want to sell you my widget and you live in another country?

That’s when things get complicated. Nations use a tax called a tariff to protect those native industries they consider important. For example, the Japanese eat rice and rice cultivation is a part of the country’s cultural heritage. So Japan has long had in place tariffs on imported rice to protect local growers from foreign competition. Those tariffs make rice produced in other countries, such as the United States, much more expensive for Japanese people to buy.

Countries also have different health, safety, and environmental standards for their products. They want to make sure that their imports meet these standards. For example, if a shrimp is caught sustainably or that the shrimp meet certain safety standards. Creating and then enforcing those standards adds to the cost of the final product.

So what happens among countries when they want to sell things to each other but which may have tariffs and different standards for their products? They make trade agreements.

Trade agreements
One trade agreement with which most Americans are familiar is the North American Free Trade Agreement, an international treaty agreed to by Canada, the United States, and Mexico in 1994. That agreement basically eliminated tariffs on products traded among the three countries. Its major focus was on agricultural products but it also affected other sectors such as textiles, electronics, and automobiles.

Twenty years after the agreement went into force, the question of whether NAFTA has been a boon to the United States is much debated. In a paper published by the Council on Foreign Relations earlier this year, Mohammed Aly Sergie noted that after NAFTA came in, trade flows among the three countries increased greatly, from roughly $290 billion in 1993 to more than $1.1 trillion in 2012. Today the United States trades more in goods and services with Mexico and Canada than it does with Japan, South Korea, Brazil, Russia, India, and China combined. Most of that growth comes from increased trade between the United States and Mexico. In 1993, the trade balance was a $1.7 billion U.S. surplus; in 2012, the U.S. ran a $61.4 billion deficit (we bought more from Mexico than Mexico bought from us).

Currently the United States is in talks with the countries around the Pacific to enter into a trade agreement. Australia, Brunei, Chile, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Canada, Peru, Singapore, Vietnam, Japan, and the United States are in the fourth year of negotiating the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement. But this trade agreement includes numerous provisions that go beyond NAFTA. The treaty has 29 chapters, dealing with everything from financial services and telecommunications to standards for food products. The United States has also begun negotiations with the European Union for a separate trade agreement, called the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). This agreement would remove trade barriers in a range of sectors in order to make it easier to buy and sell goods and services. In addition to removing tariffs, the TTIP will address other issues, called non-tariff barriers, such as protection of intellectual property, technical regulations, and environmental and health standards.

Asia: Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)
Maine House representative Sharon Treat knows a lot about the pros and cons of U.S. trade agreements. Formerly a state senator, Treat is co-chair (with Sen. Troy Jackson) on the Maine Citizen Trade Policy Commission. The commission was created in 2003 expressly “to assess the impact of international trade policies and agreements on Maine’s state and local laws, business environment and working conditions.” Maine is one of only three states in the country with such a commission.

Treat also is an official Advisor to the U.S. Trade Representative, Michael Froman. There are about 700 such advisors across the country, organized in 28 committees, who offer input to the Representative on everything from agriculture to the environment. Many of those individuals come from large corporations and firms.

Foreign policy analysts generally concur that if it agreed to, the TPP would provide a strong economic bulwark for the United States against China. But, argues Treat, that agreement will primarily benefit large multinational corporations while it may prove costly to smaller businesses.

“When you talk to [the negotiators] and read the text that has leaked you realize that they very much see themselves as standing in the shoes of very big corporations, the big pharmaceutical, insurance, and banking corporations,” Treat said. “Those corporations want to reduce the level of regulations applied to them. They are very clear about that.”

The TPP alarms people for a number of reasons. First, the elements of its 29 chapters are secret. The details are not made public until the negotiations are concluded. Second, it’s a really big agreement that addresses many non-tariff barriers, such as copyright law, drug standards, and investor-state relations. In fact, of its 29 chapters, only five deal with traditional trade issues such as tariffs.

One chapter is the Phytosanitary chapter. Phytosanitary regulations refer to health and safety standards for food items. The United States has a strong seafood inspection program through the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. “One goal of this chapter is to make it easier to sell foreign-caught seafood in the U.S. without requiring strict compliance with U.S. food safety standards. If a Vietnamese company shipping to the United States is in the fourth year of negotiating the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), they make trade agreements.
"We pulled away from the dock on Monhegan ferry. The cowboy dream ended on the of becoming a rancher in Montana. New York summer camp to hang out to do was return to his usual upstate was 11. At the time, all Carl wanted was Elsie, a piano teacher, dragged her age 39. After his death Carl's mother, Sadly, Irving Schwab died young, at white women in Alabama in 1931. charged with the rape of two young, the Scottsboro Boys. This infamous case a liberal lawyer who defended the and before I hauled them, we were in tie-up, " he recalled. The MLA was out a few traps. "A friend had a 13-foot skiff for sale for $12. I still have the receipt. Another friend sold me a 5hp Johnson outboard for $100. I bought 50 junk (wooden) traps for 50 cents apiece another $25. The license cost $10. So, for about $160, I was a lobsterman," Carl laughed. He set the 50 traps, joined the Maine Lobstermen's Association (MLA) and that was that. Eventually Carl bought a previously-owned 34-foot Jonesport lobster boat, the Diana and Don, and fished her for 13 years. Then he had the 33-foot Nancy S built by Lash Brothers in Friendship, launched in 1972. "I ran into Winnie Lash a few years ago at Dorman's [ice cream stand in Thomaston]:" said Carl. "He asked if I had a new, fast fiberglass boat. I said "Remember what I told you when we launched her? I told him then it was my first new boat and it would be my last." Carl had only been a member of the MLA for a short time when the first tie-up happened. "I set the 50 traps and before I hauled them, we were in a tie-up," he recalled. The MLA was taken to court by the federal gob-
### MLA DIRECTORS MEETING SUMMARY

The MLA Board of Directors met on April 9 in Belfast. The Directors approved the financials and discussed other MLA business. Patrice presented an update on the status of legislation affecting the lobster industry, and on efforts to reach out to the Department of Marine Resources (DMR) and the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC) to coordinate media strategy for the lobster industry. She stressed the need to keep the message positive and cited much reason for optimism this year following the Boston Seafood Show, reports of improved demand from buyers at Maine coops and the formation of the MLMC. The MLMC met in early April and has selected a small group of candidates to interview for the Executive Director position.

The Commissioner’s series of 11 meetings with the lobster industry concluded on April 7. The meetings demonstrated his continued commitment to bring information to the lobster industry and to have a dialogue about potential changes. The 2014 round of meetings included an overview of lobster science programs, the need to develop a fishery management plan for the lobster industry and a discussion on latent effort. The meetings attracted over 500 participants statewide, and generated a lot of constructive discussion. MLA staff attended all of the meetings, and noted that strong regional differences and priorities remain apparent along the coast. Lobstermen throughout the coast, however, expressed their gratitude to the Commissioner and DMR for continuing the conversation with the industry, and for not trying to force a specific agenda down people’s throats. The DMR has stated that this summer it will begin the process to get a lobster management plan in place, and will draft ideas to deal with latent effort based on feedback from the industry meetings. Regardless of DMR’s actions, the MLA must prepare for issues relating to entry into the lobster fishery which will likely be brought before the Legislature during the next session.

A second public information meeting on proposed improvement dredging of Searsport Harbor was held in Belfast on April 8 by the Army Corps of Engineers at which strong organized opposition to the proposed dredge project was present. The Board affirmed the MLA’s strategy to hold an informational meeting, for lobstermen only, to ensure that lobstermen understand the proposed dredge project. The MLA is inviting experts to explain what is known about the Searsport Dredge proposal and how it might impact the local fishing community. The meeting will offer a non-political, non-activist environment for lobstermen to learn more about the project and have questions answered. The MLA believes it is critical to hold a meeting exclusively for lobstermen so that it may better understand the industry’s concerns (the meeting took place on May 2 in Belfast). It was also noted that the start date for the Royal River dredge project has been moved to October. MLA Directors in the local area will continue to monitor that project. The MLA will participate in a meeting on North Haven in April to discuss the Penobscot River lobster closure and the Searsport Dredge proposal.

The Board engaged in a lengthy discussion expressing strong concern over the University of Maine wind project. They raised questions and concerns over how the project will benefit Maine, and what it could cost the fishing industry. At this point, the University is still waiting to learn if it has received federal funding to move forward. The MLA will again discuss this issue after we learn if the University receives funding.

The MLA has been working with Maine’s Congressional delegation to request funding for safety training in the Coast Guard bill. MLA will once again reach out to the delegation on the excessive requirement to require life rafts to be repacked each year. MLA also continues to engage the delegation about exempting lobster boats from discharge permit requirements slated to begin later this year.

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**TOTAL** 19 302 847 125,951,877 $346,518,516

Source: Maine DMR (April 2014)

### MAINE LOBSTERMEN’S ASSOCIATION UPDATE

The MLA is collaborating with the Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance to conduct a pilot Lobster Leadership Program in May, culminating with an exchange trip to Prince Edward Island to view the provincial lobster fishery and processing plants. The next MLA meeting will be held on May 7 in Belfast at 3 p.m.

#### 2014 ZONE ENTRANTS

DMR announced in February that 19 commercial lobster licenses will be awarded in Maine’s 6 limited entry lobster zones. More than half of these licenses were issued in Zone A, which changed its exit ratio from tags retired to licenses retired, with a 3-to-1 exit ratio. Zone B also made this change to licenses, but issued only 2 new licenses as a result of their 5-to-1 ratio. See chart above.

#### LEGISLATIVE ROUNDPUP

Lobster and Pesticides (LD 1678)

The Legislature killed a bill that would have banned the use of two pesticides used to control mosquitoes. Instead, the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee sent a letter to the Board of Pesticides Control in support of the plan to convene an Environmental Risk Advisory Committee (ERAC) to look at all pesticides and assess po-

*Continued on page 8*
plan to convene an Environmental Risk Advisory Committee (ERAC) to look at all pesticides and assess potential adverse impacts of pesticide use on the state’s lobster resource. The MLA testified in support of this plan. The ERAC held its first meeting in April, and field work will begin later this spring. The DMR is closely involved in this work to identify high priority areas for sampling. Next, the MLA is participating in the ERAC and strongly supports this work. This research should serve as the basis of future regulations to reduce the risk of pesticides to commercial fisheries.

Lobster Licensing Reform (LD 1544) The Marine Resources Committee will not take action on licensing reform in the lobster industry during this session, but has requested feedback from the DMR Commissioner following his 11 meetings with the lobster industry this winter and spring. The MLA urged this Committee to hold off on taking action on changes to the lobster licensing system, citing the need to get broad based input from the lobster industry. The Marine Resources Committee identified three major issues of concern: 1) latent effort; 2) long waiting lists; and 3) the need to minimize the impact of potential landings decline based on decline in the lobster settlement index.

Ocean Acidification (LD 1602) The Legislature established a committee to study the effects of ocean acidification on Maine’s marine resources. The 16-member committee will work “to identify the scientific data and knowledge gaps that hinder Maine’s ability to craft policy and other responses to coastal and ocean acidification and prioritize the strategies for filling those gaps and to provide policies and tools to respond to the adverse effects of coastal and ocean acidification on commercial- ly important fisheries and Maine’s shellfish aquaculture industry,” and to seek funding to complete this work. The committee will provide a report, including suggested legislation, by December 5. The MLA supports this effort.

Rockweed Fishery Management Plan (LD 1830) The Marine Resources Committee considered a bill which would have required DMR fisheries managers to consider the impact of rockweed harvesting on “conserved lands” when determining no harvest zones. The MLA spoke in opposition to this bill, citing grave concern over the precedent this would set for the state as DMR readiness to prepare management plans for other fisheries. The MLA argued that management should consider the sustainability of the resource and ecological impacts, not land use designation or impacts to privately held land. The Marine Resources Committee removed this language and passed an amended bill which requires the DMR to report back on the rockweed management plan during the next session.

Green Crabs (LD 1604) The Legislature changed the laws on green crab licensing, moving the renewal date to April 30 and lowering the cost of a commercial green crab only license to $10. It authorizes Maine commercial lobster license holders to fish for and sell green crabs without a commercial green crab only license. It also allows the holder of a marine worm dealer’s and wholesale seafood dealer’s license to purchase and sell green crabs without a green crab only license. These changes became law on March 22, 2014.

Marine Bonds (LD 1709 and LD 1756) Two marine bond proposals were considered by the Appropriations Committee: a $10 million bond to develop lobster processing capacity and a $15 million bond, to be matched by $15 million in other funds, to establish a state center for marine economy. Both bonds were significantly amended and approved by the Legislature and will go before voters on the November ballot. The lobster processing bond (LD 1709) became a $7 million bond, requiring a one-to-one match. The bond would allow organizations to compete for funds to promote growth in traditional commercial fishing interests, aquaculture, value-added seafood processing, and market development for Maine-based products. The second bond, “To Support Biomedical Research in Maine” was amended to $10 million and also requires one-to-one match. Funds would be awarded through a competitive process to expand research capabilities in the areas of mammalian genetics and marine (relating to mice) biometric analytics.

MAINE LOBSTER MARKETING COLLABORATIVE The MLMC Board meets the first Tuesday of every month in Rockland. The MLMC’s April meeting focused on screening candidates for the position of executive director. The Board narrowed a large pool of candidates and voted to begin interviewing the top contenders. The MLMC is working to have a new Executive Director in place as soon as possible.

PESTICIDE RESEARCH

The Maine Board of Pesticides Control held its first Environmental Risk Advisory Committee (ERAC) to discuss a research plan to examine the risk of pesticides to marine organisms. The ERAC membership includes: Curtis C. Bohlen, Ph.D., director of the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership; John Wise, Ph.D, an environmental toxicologist at the University of Southern Maine; James Dill, Ph.D, a terrestrial entomologist at the University of Maine; Carl Wilson, DMR’s lead lobster biologist; Michael N. Horst, Ph.D, an expert on lobster development and mosquito insecticides from Mercer University; Kohl Kanwit, DMR Public Health Bureau director; and Lawrence LeBlanc, Ph.D, an expert on prey residues, development and py- rrethroid analytical chemistry at the University of Maine. During its April meeting, the ERAC reviewed lobster biology, pesticide use data for Maine, water monitoring data, scientific literature and sampling design and protocols for this project.

FINAL TAA PAYMENT

The MLA continues to check in with the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) regarding the amount and timing of the final payment for TAA participants who completed the full program. To date, there is still no news on the amount of the payment or when it will be made. The MLA will notify all TAA participants via email as soon as we receive any updates from FAS.

LOBSTER STOCK ASSESSMENT IN SEPTEMBER

The ASMFC’s American Lobster Stock Assessment Workshop will be conducted September 23-25, 2014 at the National Marine Fisheries Service Northeast Fisheries Science Center in Woods Hole, MA. The Assessment Workshop, originally scheduled for May 6-8, was moved to September to allow additional time to finalize the datasets for input into the assessment model. The assessment will be conducted in May and June. The assessment will evaluate the health of American lobster and inform management of this species. The Commission’s stock assessment process and meetings are open to the public, with the exception of discussions and confidential data, when the public will be asked to leave the room. The benchmark stock assessment will be peer reviewed through the Commission’s external peer review process in early 2015.

HERRING UPDATES

The ASMFC Herring Section met in April and set a “days out” effort control measure to allow five landing days in a week in Area 1A during the 2014 herring season from June 1 through September 30 (Trimester 2). Trimester 2 has a total allowable catch (TAC) of 21,793 metric tons (mt). This amount is 72.8% of the 31,200 mt annual catch limit sub-component for Area 1A after adjusting for a 10% rollover of 2012’s quota, 295 mt fixed gear set-aside, 3% research set-aside, and 8% bycatch allowed. Fishermen are prohibited from landing more than 2,000 pounds of Atlantic herring per trip from Area 1A until June 1, 2014. The entire TAC is projected to be caught close to the end of the trimester. Landings will be monitored close to the end of the season to be closed when the trimester’s adjusted quota is projected to be reached. The Atlantic Herring Section members from Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts are scheduled to reconvene on Wednesday, July 2, and Wednesday, July 23, to review the fishing effort and adjust landing days as necessary. The meeting will take place via conference call.

Management Council met in late April and approved measures to promote accountability in the herring fishery. The Council weighed the practical concerns of fishing vessel operations with resource conservation needs as it approved measures that would further regulate the Atlantic herring fleet in the New England and Mid-Atlantic region. If the Council’s proposals receive final approval by NOAA, the new regulations would call for weighing and reporting procedures to better ensure accurate and verified catch weights. As a disincentive for vessels in the directed herring fishery to slip catch, a 1.5 nautical mile “move along” measure (to relocate to another area) was adopted. The move-along rule would apply to slippery due to safety issues, mechanical failures, and encounters with dogfish schools. An additional requirement for trip termination would apply to other slippery events. The Herring Plan defines net slipping as catch that is discarded prior to being observed, sorted, sampled, and/or brought on board the fishing vessel.

Both sets of rules were supported by the Council to improve catch monitoring, enhance accountability, and reduce bycatch in the fishery. Atlantic herring is not overfished, but as a forage species, it is an important component in the marine ecosystem in the Northeast.

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REMARKABLE PEOPLE: The women of the Department of Marine Resources

by Nancy Griffin

Once upon a time, fishing was an all-male bastion and that included fishery science and management. As with many other fields, all that has now changed. In Maine several young women currently are working hard to keep programs at the Department of Marine Resources (DMR) running smoothly for the lobster industry and other states.

Meredith Mendelson, 35, is the Deputy Commissioner of the DMR. She describes her job as “a little bit of everything.” “It’s supposed to be federal issues—regulatory, legislative issues—anything that affects state fisheries,” said Mendelson. “But I also pitch in on any policy issues as needed.”

A Pittsburgh native, she came to Maine to study at Bates College and “I pretty much stayed.” At first, her interest was in general environmental policy, specifically scientific and management issues. “Originally, I was interested in ballast water,” she explained. Ballast water carried within large ships can transport invasive species throughout the coast. After a few years of community work for the Gulf of Maine Research Institute in Portland and managing a marine resources educational program, she went to work for a groundfish fishery in Rhode Island. She later joined Sen. Olympia Snowe’s office in Washington, D.C., working for the Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries and Coast Guard, part of the Commerce Committee. Sen. Snowe was then the ranking member.

“When she announced her retirement, I started looking around,” Mendelson explained. “I love my job. There’s never a dull moment, because the issues we work on are really central to people’s identities.”

Deirdre Gilbert, 41, is the director of state marine policy for DMR. Her job title before the DMR completed its reorganization a few years ago was Special Assistant to the Commissioner. She started at DMR in February of 2002.

“The reorganization clearly separat- ed science and management components,” said Gilbert, and marine policy is her bailiwick. Her responsibilities include state waters fisheries policies, fishery management plans and liaison with the legislature’s Marine Resources Committee on bills that impact state fisheries.

A biology major at Bowdoin, she stayed on at the college after graduation to work for a professor of ecology, then attended graduate school at the University of Maine for a Master’s degree in marine policy. “It was a new degree there at the time,” she recalled. After graduation, Gilbert worked through a Sea Grant College Fellows Program for former Congressman Tom Allen in Washington, D.C.

“I wanted to come back to Maine. The assistant job came open, and I got it,” said Gilbert. “Originally I got interested because of a sense that the coast of Maine is a really special place. Fisheries are a huge component of it. I studied fisheries management as a way to keep the coast the way it is.”

“I’m operating less from a science point of view than from a community structure and economic opportunity perspective,” she added. Gilbert has been involved for the past six years in DMR’s working waterfront access protection program. That program, funded through state bond funds, provides money to protect waterfront properties involved in commercial fishing activities, such as lobster wharves. “It has a concrete-ness, a tangible way to preserve the coast,” she said.

Kathleen Reardon, 36, works out of the DMR’s lab in Boothbay, where she has been coordinating the Lobster Sea Sampling program since 2005. She gathers biological information about all the lobsters, including discard rates—short, v-notched, egged and oversized lobsters—that come up in the traps of Maine harvesters.

“There is no other way to collect data,” Reardon explained, except by being on the boat. So she and other sea samplers go out on lobster boats for three trips in each zone, May through November, and occasionally in the winter. Data from this program, in which lobster harvesters participate voluntarily, is used in the lobster stock assessment models of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC).

“The program is basically giving credit to the lobstermen who throw back more than 50 percent on average of their catch every day (and a much higher percentage at certain times of the year),” said Reardon.

She moved to Maine in the fall, 2000, after graduating college to work as an Island Fellow on Islesboro for the Island Institute in Rockland. A Rhode Island native, Reardon hadsummered on Deer Isle. “I spent many days digging in mud and tide pools and learning to row and run an outboard as a kid,” she recalled.

After two years, she began graduate school at University of Maine and worked on a dual Master’s degree in Marine Biology and Marine Policy.

“I was involved in a DMR experimental Jonah crab project (initiated by lobstermen in Stonington) as my research project for both degrees,” Reardon said. Before she complet- ed her thesis, her current position opened. “I jumped at the opportunity to continue working with industry and do lobster sampling,” she said.

Four years ago, Reardon also took over DMR’s Ventless Trap Survey Program (VTS). This survey fishes ventless traps at random sites stratified by depth in May, June and July. Nine commercial lobster boats haul 836 traps to survey juvenile lobsters and send data to the ASMFC stock assessment to help assess juvenile abundance.

“My position at DMR is extremely rewarding,” said Reardon. “I have a chance to interact with many mem- bers of the lobster industry, one-on-one while I am sampling on their boats.”

Heidi Bray, 38, is a scientist responsi- ble for developing the environmental...
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LATE JUNE PREDICTED FOR START OF SHEDDER SEASON

By Kathy Mills, Gulf of Maine Research Institute

Last month, the lead story in Landings provided an overview of efforts underway to predict future characteristics of the Maine lobster population and fishery. Through one of these initiatives, Andy Pershing and I have been developing simple forecasts for the timing of the ramp-up of lobster landings based on coastal water temperatures. We have just released a forecast for 2014 and are eager to share it with you. I’ll provide an overview of the current forecast (as of April 17) in this article.

Lobster landings in Maine (averaged over the entire state) increase rapidly as summer begins, and our goal is to predict when this increase will occur — essentially, whether the year is running early or late. The forecast we are currently providing uses the water temperature measured at 20-meters (65 feet) by NERACOOS Buoy E (located on the central Maine shelf).

The top diamond in the figure below represents our current forecast, which predicts that state-wide lobster landings will start ramping up around June 30. The vertical lines at the top indicate the past start dates, so you can see that this year is expected to look a lot like 2008. The width of the diamond represents the 95% confidence interval around the forecast. So the current prediction for 2014 encompasses the long-term average start date of the high landings period (June 29, heavy vertical line).

While the top diamond represents the current prediction, the diamonds below it tell an interesting story of how the winter has gone. These diamonds show the date we would have predicted the high landings period to begin if we had issued a forecast earlier in the season, on the date indicated on the left side of the figure.

Many of you probably shared my perception that this winter felt bitterly cold, at least relative to our past few winters. Like air temperatures over the land, the near-shore water temperatures were also much colder this winter than they have been in the past two years. The average January-March air temperature and the water temperatures at 1-meter (3 feet) and 20-meters (65 feet) at Buoy E were all much colder in 2014 than in 2012 and 2013. At the end of March, we had very cold water at the buoy, and the diamonds for these dates are way to the right, indicating a late start for heavy lobster landings.

Our waters normally begin to warm up at the end of March, but this year, waters have warmed faster than normal. This drives the sharp shift in the diamonds towards the left over the last few weeks. Our water temperatures are now close to the 2001-2013 average. It is not out of the question that we’ll see continued warming over the next two weeks and that the inshore migration and molt that ultimately determine the ramp-up in landings will happen a little ahead of schedule.

To track the predictions for the start of the heavy landings period, visit GMRI’s blog, www.gmri.org/lobster-forecast.

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For questions or to donate items, contact Chris Hall, Curator of Exhibits, at 207-443-1316 x 326 or hall@maritime.org
Keliher opened each meeting by reviewing the results of last winter’s series of 16 meetings with lobstermen. The department took action on one measure lobstermen at those meetings said was important: improved marketing of Maine lobster. The Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative was created by the state Legislature in direct response to lobstermen’s suggestions. On two other items – a tiered system of lobster licenses and a solution to seasonal overabundance – the department took no action.

Keliher emphasized to those in attendance that there is no calamity forecast for this year, no immediate crisis facing lobstermen. Lobster landings in 2013 remained strong, 125.9 million pounds versus the 127.2 million pounds landed in 2012. “The sky is not falling,” he said at the Rockland meeting, “but changes in the data do add to the urgency of the conversation right now.”

The data Keliher referred to was presented by DMR lobster biologist Carl Wilson. Wilson explained at each meeting the various lobster monitoring programs undertaken by DMR and the data produced recently.

“You are where you are in the state gives you very different impressions of how the stock is doing,” he said. Zone A, for example, has seen a four-fold increase in landings. That increase in volume has muffled the effect of lower prices. In Zone E, however, landings have not increased at nearly the same rate. So profits for lobstermen in that zone that have not rebounded as vigorously as they have to the eastward. “The resource is different and the bottom line is different in different zones,” Wilson said.

The American Lobster Settlement Index has shown a decline in the density of young-of-the-year lobster for the past three years. Divers sampled young lobsters in October and November at 50 sites along the Maine coast to determine the strength of that year’s class of new lobsters. “Most zones saw a peak in settlement in 2004 to 2006,” Wilson said. “By 2013, generally speaking, most zones have seen a three-year decline.”

The settlement data are supported by bi-annual travel surveys which monitor the next phase in a lobster’s life cycle. DMR does a coast-wide travel in the spring and fall each year. “There has not been much increase or decline [in lobsters] up to Port Clyde,” Wilson explained. “Above Port Clyde to Schoodic the numbers [of lobster] are way up. From Schoodic to Lubec the numbers are flat.”

Furthermore, shell disease is on the rise, at least in southern Maine. DMR uses at-sea samplers during the summer months to keep track of lobsters by sex, weight, and V-notch status. The samplers also note the presence of shell disease rates were 1% of sampled lobsters or lower, in 2013 just over 4% of the lobsters sampled in Zone G showed evidence of shell disease. In Zone P that rate was 3%; in Zone E 1.75%. The rate of increase is worrying, Wilson said.

The other factor worrying DMR is that lobstermen are not V-notching lobsters as much as they once did. Based on sea sampling data, lobstermen hit a peak of V-notching in 2008, when 82% of lobsters sampled were notched. Since then the percentage has slipped, down to 61% in 2013. The decline matters because the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) uses the V-notching rate as a factor in its stock assessment of lobsters. In addition, V-notching is a way to ensure the strength of the stock in the future, which is particularly important when the environment or other factors are changing, Wilson argued. “It’s money in the bank,” he said.

Change is coming to the Maine lobster industry and, according to DMR Commissioner Pat Keliher, it is something that the state should start planning for now. Photo by Melissa Waterman.
In lobstering, as with any business, keeping finances straight is critical for success. "No one should know more about your business than you," advised David Hill, Coastal Enterprises Inc. business counselor and director of the Small Business Development Center of Maine. "It's good to have someone to help you, like an accountant or CPA, but you should keep track of the day-to-day operations."

So what's the best way to do that? Hill said there are a number of computer programs available to keep track of income and expenses, but that QuickBooks is probably the most widely accepted tool. "QuickBooks is a pretty user-friendly, but it's helpful to have an accountant set it up for you. Then you can just enter your expenses and income and see where you are," said Hill. While working with the Maine Lobstermen's Association (MLA) on the Trade Adjustment Assistance program (TAA), Hill found that the majority of lobstermen he talked to kept track of their finances with a computer program. "If people aren't computer users, they can always use a double column ledger to track expenses and income," he said. "But that's not a [common] practice anymore. I've found that usually it's a family member or wife of the lobstermen that keeps the books."

That's how Dwight Carver from Beals takes care of his finances—his wife Patty is in charge. "I have the most old-fashioned way of tracking my income and expenses," he laughed. "I bring everything home and give it to my wife." Carver said Patty is the one to pay all the bills, although he does keep track of his income during the week so he can figure out what to pay his crew. "I get paid by the co-op every day and at the end of the week, I take the sum of checks and then pay my crew based on that." This process has worked for Carver for 41 years, but he realizes it's an outdated way to do things. "I really just go by what I feel and what I see while I'm fishing. I always stay ahead enough so that I don't have to worry about making purchases," he explained.

For South Thomaston lobsterman Bob Baines, a computer makes tracking his business expenses quick and easy. He has used a software program called Quicken for a number of years and finds it very user-friendly. "I set it up myself and added categories so I can track my expenses that way," he said. "At the end of the year it takes me maybe 20 minutes to get ready to file taxes." Each week Baines receives a summary sheet from his co-op that shows what he was paid each day of the week. He then enters the weekly amount into an Excel spreadsheet to track his income. "The great thing about using a computer is that I can easily look back through my records or make graphs to see what I am spending money on," he said.

"I don't think there is enough forward looking," Hill said, when asked what he saw lacking among the TAA program participants. "And that's important. Lobstermen should know how they can help you. It's key, especially in a seasonal business like lobstering," Baines does his best to look ahead and budget for the year. "I can't budget well if I don't know my income," he said. "I don't know what the price will be all year or what I will catch each day." He said it's easier to get a sense of landings and income partway through the season. "I'm more conservative with my money at the beginning of the year. I'm very careful not to spend what I don't make," he said.

Hill said one of the most important things he wishes any small business owner knew was that there is help around the state for business planning. "There are adult education classes, workshops, and groups like the one I work for that can help people learn how to take care of their businesses," he explained.

CEI's Web site is a resource for people who want to learn more about keeping their businesses organized. CEI has seven locations throughout the state and regularly holds workshops on topics related to business planning. For information, visit www.ceimaine.org.

**THE BUSINESS OF LOBSTERING: Stay organized!**

*by Sarah Paquette*

Do you know how much you spend on rope throughout the year? Keeping track of expenses helps your bottom line. MLA photo.
by Ann Backus
Harvard University
School of Public Health

By the time you read this article in May you will be on the water again after a bitter cold winter. Did your winter maintenance and fix-it chores include checking the hoses and clamps? Rubber hoses are subject to degradation from contact with chemicals and exposure to extreme temperatures such as the cold we had this winter. They are also subject to wear from vibration.

There are a number of health and safety consequences of not paying attention to hoses. Leaks in exhaust hoses can result in acute exposure to carbon monoxide and head space. Leaks in cold storage hoses can lead to frostbite. Leaks in water hoses can lead to frozen water. Leaks in fuel hoses can lead to fire and water damage.

The hose systems on our boats, and they should be checked every few months. Some hoses are quite out of the way and take real effort to access. You can use your sense of smell (not recommended, however) to inspect your hoses. In a pneumatic system you may be able to hear a hiss. For all hoses a visual inspection is recommended — look for cracks, chafing, and fluid leaks. In places where you cannot see the entire circumference of the hose run, your fingers slowly along the underside to feel for cracks and wetness. Wipe down the fuel hoses with a dry rag, then smell the rag to check for gasoline. Use these same techniques on your plumbing hoses.

Because the marine environment is corrosive for metals, clamps that join hose sections must be stainless steel. However, even stainless steel clamps have a finite life and not all clamps are made of high quality stainless. Test all the clamps you can find for tightness and integrity; some may fall apart as you put pressure on them — be glad you discovered them before they failed and resulted in a fire, flood or asphyxiation. Elliot Thomas, a lobsterman from Yarmouth, mentioned recently that he often has to replace the hose when he replaces a clamp because the portion of the hose near the clamp becomes deformed from the pressure of the clamp.

Now you are at the point of replacing some hose. First choose the hose that is rated for the job and at least approved by the USCG as suitable for the marine vessel environment. I say “at least” because the SAE (Society for Automotive Engineers) rates hoses for fuel compatibility and other qualities while the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) rates for permeability and impact on air quality. Exhaust hose should withstand heat, be flexible, and be non-permeable. Fuel line hoses should be strong, inflexible, fire retardant and compatible with the fuel you use: diesel or gasoline, possibly with an alcohol additive such as methanol or ethanol. New gasoline mixes show up from time to time — make sure you choose a gasoline that is compatible with your fuel hoses.

In the March issue of Landings, Maine Lobsterman’s Association executive director Patrice McCarron wrote, “Think about your level of preparedness on the water.” Checking hoses and clamps is just one of those common-sense efforts that contribute to preparedness. Be safe out there.

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**THE HEALTH OF LOBSTERMEN:**

Time to check those hoses

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The Obama administration has asked Congress to pass a bill renewing fast track authority in order to conclude the TPP. That, however, has not happened. “There is a bill in Congress right now to reinstate fast track authority but it will not come to the floor before the November elections,” Treat said. Both Democrats and Republicans in Congress have voiced their unease with reauthorizing such authority.

According to critics, fast track authority is yet another way to keep the public from knowing what is in these trade agreements. “It limits review, speeds up the time frame [for voting], allows no changes, and requires an up or down vote,” Treat explained. With fast track authority, the President would send an international trade agreement to the appropriate Congressional committees for review. Those committees then have 45 days to report the bill out of committee. The House and the Senate then must vote within 15 days after the bill is reported. Once the treaty is up for debate, it can be debated for no more than 20 hours (no filibusters are permitted). The whole process can take no more than 90 days.

“Congress will probably look at authorizing legislation after the November election. If it passes then it is a push for the TPP. If it doesn’t pass, then it will be a rockier road to get that agreement through,” Treat said.

Keeping track of these trade agreements as they are developed is difficult since the text of each agreement is not made public. Those interested can visit the official Web site www.ustr.gov/pp to learn more about the TPP. For information about the TTIP, visit http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/in-focus/ttip/.

The Maine Citizen Trade Commission is drafting a report on the TTIP and Maine food policy. The commission will be holding a hearing on the topic in June. For further information about the commission, visit the Web page, www.maine.gov/legis/opla/citpol.htm.
had grown less than 10% to just 6.1 million pounds; Zone E by contrast had more than doubled to 5.6 million pounds. In 2013, the poundage in Zone A had more than doubled to 13.6 million pounds of lobster.

Drawing on DMR landings data, Wilson pointed out the differences in value among the seven zones. In general, the eastern lobster zones saw a greater increase in landings than those to the west from 2008 to 2013. Zone A, for example, landed 13.6 million pounds in 2008; Zone E landed 4.8 million pounds in 2008, from 2008 to 2013.

Despite continuing soft prices for lobster, the lobstermen in Zone A saw revenue from lobsters grow from $19.6 million in 2008 to $18.9 million in 2013 (58% increase). Zone E actually dropped in value, despite an increase in landings, from $73.4 million in 2008 to $70.5 million in 2013.

The bulk of Maine’s lobster harvest continues to be in the eastern zones. Zones A, B, C, and D comprised 52,063,004 tons in 2008 (75%). In 2013, those four lobster zones comprised 25% of that year’s total. In 2013, the poundage in Zone A increased more than three fold, from 9.5 million in 2000 to 33 million in 2013.

Western Maine hasn’t seen that increase [in eastern Maine] is partially due to warmer water, ” Wilson said. “It gives the lobsters more viable nursery area. Western Maine hasn’t seen that much growth [in landings] because the waters were warm there to start with. That rise in temperature also explains the large number of sub-legal lobsters among the seven zones. In general, the majority of lobster landed in state during the past several years came from just four lobster zones. Photo by Ingrid Gaither.

In 2013, that figure had increased nearly five-fold, to 28 million pounds. Zone B went from 7 million pounds in 2000 to 18 million pounds in 2013, increasing two and a half fold. Zone C, a zone still open to new entrants, saw landings increase more than three fold, from 9.5 million in 2000 to 33 million in 2013. “The increase [in eastern Maine] is partially due to warmer water,” Wilson said. “It gives the lobsters more viable nursery area. Western Maine hasn’t seen that much growth [in landings] because the waters were warm there to start with. That rise in temperature also explains the large number of sub-legal lobsters bearing eggs that lobstermen saw last summer. In general lobsters grow to sexual maturity faster in warmer water. According to Wilson, DMR’s sea samplers bearing eggs that lobstermen saw last summer. In general lobsters grow to sexual maturity faster in warmer water. According to Wilson, DMR’s sea samplers bearing eggs that lobstermen saw last summer.

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THE MAINE LOBSTER MARKETING COLLABORATIVE

Seafood Expo North America & Maine Lobster Pavilion

Maine Lobster had a strong presence at North America’s largest Seafood Expo, which brings in over 18,000 attendees and over 1,000 exhibitors. Fourteen Maine companies exhibited, with four companies under the Maine Lobster Pavilion banner for the three days of the show. The MLMC portion of the Pavilion served as a meeting space for Maine industry members as well as a one-stop information source for buyers. The Pavilion was busy throughout the show.

Maine Lobster Seminar

MLMC took advantage of a new opportunity to present a sponsored educational seminar all about Maine Lobster. Maine Lobster Biologist Carl Wilson, MLMC chair/lobsterman Frank Gotwals and Food Network celebrity chef Michele Ragussis presented an overview of Maine Lobster from trap to table. About 80 people attended the breakfast presentation, including several key buyers. The presentation was so well received that SeafoodSource is turning it into a webinar, givingř us additional reach with key messages. The audience was also treated to delicious lobster quiche donated by Calendar Islands Maine Lobster.

Maine Lobster Reception

MLMC again hosted the Maine Lobster Reception, providing over 120 national and international buyers, dealers, fishermen and industry representatives the opportunity to network in a relaxed space. Governor LePage offered opening remarks, and Food Network celebrity chef Michele Ragussis prepared tasting samples. Several companies supported the reception as sponsors, including Garbo Lobster, Greenhead Lobster, Inland Lobster and The Lobster Company.

Lobster Master Class

About 75 buyers and interested parties attended a Lobster Master Class, co-hosted by MLMC and Lobster Council of Canada. Maine Lobster Biologist Carl Wilson presented background information on lobster and Chef Alain Bossé provided a lobster cooking demonstration, complete with tasty samples.

Chefs Presenting Maine Lobster

Chef Wilfred Beriau presented a seminar and cooking demonstration for Maine Lobster at the American Culinary Federation Northeast Regional Convention in April. It was an ideal place to feature Maine Lobster since the theme was ‘embracing a sustainable future.’ Chef Beriau presented background on Maine Lobster’s long history of sustainability, as provided by MLMC. The conference attracted 500 chefs and foodservice professionals. Chef Nathan Beriau of the Ritz-Carlton San Francisco presented Maine Lobster provided by the MLMC to a group of top chefs at the American Academy of Chefs dinner in March. Chef Michel Boulot provided an introduction and background information about the lobster to the guests.

Maine Food & Lodging Expo

The Maine Food & Lodging Expo, held April 8 at the Cumberland County Civic Center, provided a good opportunity for MLMC representatives to talk with the local chefs and restaurateurs and share information about upcoming promotional programs. Maine restaurants do a great job promoting Maine Lobster, and it’s beneficial to have everyone on the same page with key messages.

Greystone Flavor Summit

MLMC launched its partnership with the Culinary Institute of America by participating in the Greystone Flavor Summit in St. Helena, California in early April. About 50 leading foodservice buyers attended the 3-day event. Key buyers from high-end restaurant chains and hotel, resort, casino and cruise line sectors were invited to attend. They represented companies such as Celebrity Cruises, Four Seasons Hotel & Resorts, Landry’s, Hyatt, Marriott, Treasure Island Hotel & Casino and many more. Frank Gotwals, MLMC chair and a Stonington fisherman, presented information about lobstering in Maine during an educational seminar on Maine Lobster. The buyers were thrilled to get authentic information directly from a fisherman. They asked in-depth questions about the fishery and the product. The seminar also highlighted Maine Lobster’s core brand values including flavor, sustainability, heritage of the Maine lobster fishery and the community of lobstermen. Attendees were interested in the story behind Maine Lobster (the fishermen, the communities, seasonality, etc.). They are looking for something new and different to attract ‘millennial’ customers (21-36 year olds). Dealers should be prepared for inquiries about new shell lobster moving forward.

George Mendes, chef/owner of Michelin-star restaurant Aldea in New York City, demonstrated innovative and inspiring recipes using Maine Lobster. He also provided basic information on cooking and handling. MLMC presented an educational seminar that MLMC will continue to communicate with the chefs through the new digital Maine Lobster Community.

Stay Connected!

MLMC wants to make sure that you know what’s going on with the marketing program. There are several ways to stay informed. In addition to annual presentations at the Fishermen’s Forum, the Lobster Advisory Council and the Marine Resources Committee, MLMC will be providing regular news updates via email and through Landings. Commercial Fisheries News is also running monthly updates on MLMC activities.

Board meetings are open to the public, and industry members are encouraged to attend. They are usually held the second Tuesday of the month in Rockland. Check our website for details – www.lobsterfrommaine.com (About/Meet the Board).

Call MLMC 207-541-9310. Email MLMC info@lobsterfrommaine.com. Join the digital Maine Lobster community – go to www.joinmainelobster.com. The board has been meeting bi-weekly since its inception in December in order to get a marketing plan in place for 2014. The plan was presented at the Fishermen’s Forum as part of an annual update to the industry. MLMC also presented the plan to the Marine Resources Committee.

The board has gone through an extensive search process in order to fill the executive director position, including a review of over 60 resumes and interviews with seven candidates. MLMC will introduce the new ED as soon as the position is filled.
By Sarah Paquette

In late March, the Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) organized a “how-to” workshop for municipalities to learn about ways to deal with invasive green crabs. Presentations covered the history and science of green crabs, local efforts to deal with the invasion, and possible markets for the crabs, as well as a demonstration of methods to convert lobster and shrimp traps to crab traps.

Historically, people have tried to eliminate the European green crab, Carcinus maenas, with poisons and electric fencing. “The poisons killed the green crabs,” noted the workshop’s first presenter, Denis-Marc Nault, a municipal shellfish management supervisor at DMR. “But it wasn’t good for other marine life.” Nault said crabs eventually learned it wasn’t good for other marine life. “We kept crabs in fish totes in 90 degree weather this past summer,” said Dr. Brian Beal, a professor at University of Maine. “When we opened the fish totes three days later, those crabs were still scurrying around!”

The green crab population has flourished thanks to their diverse diet, high mating rate, and ability to survive extreme conditions. “We need to do a project this spring or next with green crabs on Sears Island,” said Staples-Knox said the high school’s science department is working with Garbo, a teacher at Searsport District High School, and hopes to do a project this spring or next with green crabs on Sears Island. “We learn about invasive species in my class and now I have learned we have a big problem right in our own back yard.”

DMR Public Health Bureau director Kohl Kanwit said the intent of the workshop was to provide information and hear from people who have tried various methods to reduce the green crab population. Dawn Staples-Knox, a teacher at Searsport District High School, said she found the workshop very informational, “I learned a ton of stuff and hope to use it in my 9th grade environmental classroom.” Staples-Knox said the high school’s science department is working with Friends of Sears Island and hopes to do a project this spring or next with green crabs on Sears Island. “We learn about invasive species in my class and now I have learned we have a big problem right in our own back yard.”

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DMR WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS CHALLENGES OF BATTLING GREEN CRABS

Green crabs eat everything: worms, mussels, clams, snails, fish, grass, es, and seaweed. “And everything can eat green crabs,” Beal said. “But there is no predator that eats enough of them to keep the population in check.”

How to identify a green crab (Carcinus maenas)

Set of five triangular spines on each side of shell.
Three rounded lobes (bumps) between eyes.

Not always green; color may vary.

a problem, but that fencing needs to be reviewed by the Corps to ensure that endangered species such as sturgeon and salmon are not affected. “The permit is so that nobody has to pay a fine if the endangered species are affected,” he said.

Les White of DMR demonstrated how easy it is to convert a lobster and shrimp trap to catch green crabs. “All you need to do to make a lobster trap into a crab trap is to cut slots in it. You can then clip in vents,” he explained as he clipped vent covers on a lobster trap. “It only takes a few minutes to make this conversion.” White said he has deployed three styles of traps off the DMR pier in Boothbay to test how well they catch green crabs. “We tried a lobster trap with added slots, a lobster trap lined with mesh, and a shrimp trap lined with mesh.” He said the modified shrimp trap has worked the best, so far. “I wanted to show you that there are options and it is cost effective,” said White.

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She hopes the students, as well as other teachers, can play a helpful role in reducing green crabs in Maine.

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ELVER SEASON STARTS SMOOTHLY

Maine’s annual elver fishing season started slowly with prices much reduced from the 2012 peak of more than $2,000 per pound. The netting, selling and shipping of the translucent baby eels to Asian markets has been made calmer by starting slowly with prices much reduced from the 2012 peak of more than $2,000 per pound. The netting, selling and shipping of the translucent baby eels to Asian markets has been made calmer by

The Department of Marine Resources instituted a new electronic swipe card system to track the season was originally required to be paid by check, not in cash. The season was originally required to be paid by check, not in cash. The season was originally slated to open March 22, but delays in implementing the new regulatory system pushed opening day back to April 6. The season ends on May 31. In addition, the number of pounds of elvers that can be caught this year has been reduced in order to comply with the requirements of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. In 2013, Maine fishermen reported landing more than 18,000 pounds of the tiny eels, worth about $33 million. The quota this year is 11,749 pounds.

The quota this year is 11,749 pounds.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved a new method of testing shellfish toxicity developed by the Bigelow Laboratory in East Boothbay. The method is the first of its kind in the nation. The Bigelow Laboratory tests shellfish samples provided by the Maine Department of Marine Resources for paralytic shellfish toxins. The traditional method involves testing the samples on mice. That process has been used for 40 years. Instead, lab scientists will analyze a slurry made of shellfish. The new method is considered more precise and efficient. Lab officials said Maine’s roll-out of the program will be a model for the rest of the United States. European countries, Australia, and New Zealand use similar methods.

PESTICIDE SAMPLING IN MARINE SEDIMENTS TO BEGIN

The state Board of Pesticides Control will embark on a new program of sediment monitoring to focus on protecting marine life, particularly the state’s valuable lobster fishery. The new initiative to analyze sediment in the near-shore environment will be launched in summer. About 30 samples likely will be taken around Casco Bay and Penobscot Bay, as well as at other sites along the coast.

Research in California and other states has raised concerns about pesticides in sediments and their potential toxicity to invertebrates that dwell there, such as lobsters. The board has monitored and surveyed ground and surface water for pesticide residues in the past. Testing was curtailed in recent years, however, because of the lack of adequate laboratory services. Currently the board has contracted with the Montana State Laboratory for testing on a temporary basis.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA SEES JUVENTILE LOBSTERS UP

An assessment of Western Australia rock lobster larval settlement is the highest since 2000. Below-average recruitment for the rock lobster larvae that settle on the coast was first detected in 2006. In response the federal Department of Fisheries adjusted both commercial and recreational catches. A new report suggests higher water temperatures in recent years may have caused the larval hatching to occur earlier as well as greater intensity of winter storms.

The commercial West Coast Rock Lobster fishery was the first lobster fishery in the world to be accredited by the London-based Marine Stewardship Council as an ecologically sustainable fishery in 2000. Management changes and retaining above-average levels of breeding stock helped maintain accreditation through seven consecutive years of below-average rock lobster settlement. In 2012, the fishery was the first to be certified for a third time.
May 3
42nd Annual Maritime History Symposium, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Maine Maritime Museum, Bath. FMI: 243-1316.

May 6-8
Maine Lobster Leadership Institute workshop, Point Lookout, Northport. FMI: 967-6221
Seafood Expo Global, Brussels, Belgium.

May 7
MLA Directors’ meeting, 5 p.m., Darby’s restaurant, Belfast. FMI: 967-4555.

May 8

May 13
MLMC Board meeting, 1 p.m.-4 p.m., Rockland Ferry Terminal, Rockland. FMI: 541-9310.

May 14
Lobster Zone G Council meeting, 6 p.m., Kennebunk Town Hall, room 300, Kennebunk.

May 16
Eating with the Alewives Dinner, 5-6:30 p.m., Benton Grange Hall. FMI: 453-2292.

May 17
Benton Alewife Festival, all day. FMI: 453-7191.

May 18-23
Maine Lobster Leadership Institute PEI trip. FMI: 967-6221

May 24-26
Damariscotta Mills Fish Ladder Restoration Festival, throughout each day. FMI: deb.wilson@roadrunner.com.


UPCOMING
June 4
MLA Directors’ meeting, 5 p.m., Darby’s restaurant, Belfast. FMI: 967-4555.

June 12
“Portland’s evolving seafood industry,” 7 p.m., Gulf of Maine Research Institute, Portland. FMI: 228-1699.

June 14
Boothbay Lobster Boat Race, 10 a.m.

June 15
Rockland Lobster Boat Race, 10 a.m.

June 29
Bass Harbor Lobster Boat Race, 10 a.m.

July 4
Moosabec Reach Lobster Boat Race, 10 a.m.

July 11
Maine Windjammer Parade, 2 p.m.-4 p.m., Blue Hill. FMI: 374-2993.

July 12
Searsport Lobster Boat Race, 10 a.m.

July 13
Stonington Lobster Boat Race, 10 a.m.

July 20
Maine Lobster Ride, 6:30 a.m.-2 p.m. FMI: 623-4511.

Stonington Fishermen’s Day
July 30 – August 3

August 9
Winter Harbor Lobster Boat Race, 10 a.m.

August 10
Pemaquid Lobster Boat Race, 10 a.m.

August 16
Long Island Lobster Boat Race, afternoon

August 17
Portland Lobster Boat Race, 10 a.m.

EATING WITH THE ALEWIVES IN BENTON

What’s small, silvery and, unlike the black fly, is welcomed when it returns to Maine each spring? Alewives.

The town of Benton holds its annual Alewife Festival each May. This year they are adding a public “Eating With The Alewives” dinner on Friday, May 16 at the Benton Grange Hall. The dinner will feature alewives fresh from the Sebasticook River (smoked, chowder, and fried). After the dinner attendees will have the opportunity to listen to and ask questions of Maine’s alewife experts. Featured speakers will be Nate Gray (Maine Department of Marine Resources), Jeff Pierce (Alewife Harvesters of Maine), Rick Lawrence (Benton Alewife Warden), and Doug Watts (author of Alewife).

Cost is $12, and the dinner will run from 5 to 6:30 p.m. The menu includes a lobster, alewives cooked various ways, a baked potato, a vegetable, and drinks. Tickets for the dinner can be purchased in advance at the Benton Town Office or by contacting Diane Hebert at 453-2292. If you would like to enter your own Alewife Chowder for this dinner as part of the Benton Alewife Festival Chowder Contest, contact Diane Hebert also.

Lobster Facts

Did you know that lobsters are either left-handed or right-handed?

Whichever side the crusher claw is on, that is the lobster’s dominant claw.
Johnny Wheaton was born on Swan's Island in 1917. He served more than four years in the Army during World War II then returned to Swan's Island to work as a stern man for his uncle. In 1947 he bought his own lobster boat which he fished for from 25 years, after which he designed a new boat which he used for more than 32 years. In addition to lobstering, Wheaton built houses on the island with one of his brothers.

Voices: Tales of the Past from Swan's Island

Thank you for your efforts in producing an excellent and informative newsletter for the lobster industry. Keep up the good work!

Johnny: How do they fish? What’s the difference?

Johnny: Well, there’s no fish anymore. There hasn’t been any fish for quite a while. So now it’s all lobstering. When I started lobstering myself, I was back home out of the service, and started to go that way when I was twenty-nine. Twenty-nine years old when I started to go out with my own boat. I had a hundred and fifty traps, which at that time was a pretty good. They were wooden traps that we built ourselves. And over the years, I did get up to the point where I had two hundred and fifty, and I fished ‘em myself. But now, today, they have four-hundred and fifty and they’re wire traps instead of wooden traps, which are easier to handle. Now, the old wooden ones weighed about oh, probably seventy pounds or something like that.

Meghan: Did you ever have trouble while you were lobstering?
Johnny: I never did get scared out on the water at all. I never had a radar. And I never had one of those plotters, or anything like that. I always went by my compass, and run that way like that.

Donna: When you’re out on the water, if your boat breaks down, do they help one another?
Johnny: Oh, yeah, they always do that. I think that lobstermen, the fishermen more or less anyway, watch out for the other fellow, more than you think so. Course, after they got the radios and things then you could call on that. I’ve had to do that myself two or three different times. I’d got a rope in my wheel. I had to get towed home. So they watch out for each other. I know one time I sat down in the back cove, I was eating my lunch. And it was kinda cool. I was setting way up in next to the cabin doorway to get warm like that. Next thing I know there’s a fellow up alongside of me. He didn’t see me. He give me a lesson. “Don’t you ever do that again. Next time you’re gonna do that, you’re gonna get on the phone and say so.” So they won’t have to worry about whether I’m overboard or not, seeing my boat drifting. They do watch out for one another, very much so.