By MLA Staff

On November 19, Maine’s Legislative Council voted to allow LR 2423 An Act To Improve Maine’s Lobster Licensing and Limited-entry System, sponsored by Rep. Walter Kumiega, to be considered during the Second Regular Session of the 127th Legislature which convenes in January. The bill had previously been rejected for consideration during this session. Pressure to consider changes to Maine’s lobster licensing system has been building for about ten years, with concern growing in tandem with the amount of time apprentices spend waiting to obtain a commercial lobster license. There are now seven apprentices in Zone B and three in Zone D who have been on the waiting list for ten years. An additional 43 apprentices, spread across Zones B, D and G, have been waiting to obtain a lobster license for nine years.

Over the past decade, there have been many failed attempts within the Maine Legislature to find solutions to the issues of latent effort and long waiting times. Over these years, bills have sought to allow various forms of license transfer or to create exemptions to the lobster limited-entry program. One change did result a few years ago when the Legislature gave the zones authority to base exit ratios on the number of licenses or tags leaving that zone, rather than using just tags retired in the exit ratio. In response, zones A and B have changed their exit ratios from tags to licenses and Zone E is considering a similar change.

Interest in reforming Maine’s lobster licensing system has gathered momentum since the release of “An Independent Evaluation of the Maine Limited-Entry System for Lobster and Crab,” a report prepared by the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI) in December, 2012. Since then, apprentices, state legislators, Department of Marine Resources (DMR) staff and some lobstermen have stepped up efforts to wrestle with how to improve the current licensing system.

Continued on page 18

By Susan Waddy

Emeritus Scientist, Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans

Lobsters are very complex and interesting animals, and one of the most important aspects of their life is reproduction: without eggs there would be no lobsters!

Pumpkin, a female orange lobster, was hatched in St. Andrews in 1973 from an egg-bearing red female caught in the Bay of Fundy. Pumpkin is now 42 years old and has a carapace length of slightly more than 8.1 inches. S. Waddy photo.

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Pumpkin, a female orange lobster, was hatched in St. Andrews in 1973 from an egg-bearing red female caught in the Bay of Fundy. Pumpkin is now 42 years old and has a carapace length of slightly more than 8.1 inches. S. Waddy photo.
The month of January takes its name from the Roman god Janus. Janus was a weird character: he had two faces. He was the god of doorways, gates and passageways, always looking both forward and backward at the same time.

And that’s what January is, isn’t it: a time of looking back at the year past and gazing forward to a blank calendar full of possibilities. Maine’s fishing communities can look back at 2015 with a sense of pleasure. The lobster catch remained robust and the price paid to lobstermen was up significantly. That increase per pound matters a great deal to many families along the coast. As we note in this issue of Landings, the Maine Department of Marine Resources’ statistics show that an additional tens of millions of dollars worth of lobster passed through Stonington between 2010 and 2014 as the price slowly inched up. That money translates into new trucks, homes, and college educations for local residents.

The good news continues in terms of growing demand for Maine lobster. As Matt Jacobson, executive director of the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative, writes this month, 2015 saw a strong surge of interest in Maine’s signature seafood, new-shell lobsters. Jacobson credits the Collaborative’s emphasis on social media and direct interactions with chefs and food industry leaders with stimulating this interest which, he adds, will only expand in the coming year.

We also hear from Annie Tsellikis, executive director of the Maine Lobster Dealers’ Association, about her organization’s plans in the upcoming year. The MLDA will be tackling the perplexing question of how much economic impact the lobster fishery has in the state. While it is relatively easy to calculate the amount of money paid directly to lobstermen, it is a lot more complicated to identify the indirect impact of that money on the state’s economy, as the lobstermen’s dollars spread out to local businesses and services. Tsellikis and her members hope a research study being conducted this winter will be able to answer that question more fully in 2016.

2016 also brings with it a topic many lobstermen are concerned about. The Maine Legislature and the Joint Committee on Marine Resources will discuss a bill this winter aimed at revamping the state’s lobster licensing system. As we note in our lead article, the bill’s goal is to balance the need to limit effort, i.e., the number of new lobstermen licensed to fish, with fairness and the need to increase the number of years prospective lobstermen must spend on a waiting list for their zone. The bill is the result of the Department of Marine Resources’ many meetings with lobstermen along the coast. Nevertheless, it is anticipated that lobstermen will turn out in large numbers to present their thoughts to the Committee when it meets later this winter.
COD BYCATCH STUDY COULD YIELD VALUABLE DATA

By Melissa Waterman

In November, 2014, lobstermen throughout New England reacted in alarm when the New England Fisheries Management Council instituted emergency closures of the commercial and recreational cod fisheries in specific spawning areas in the Gulf of Maine. Groundfishermen operating in other areas were limited to 200 pounds of cod per trip. Some groundfishermen alleged that lobster traps were catching large numbers of cod, thus they too should be banned from fishing. The notion that significant numbers of codfish were dying in lobster traps was vehemently denied by lobstermen and by the Maine Department of Marine Resources. Yet comprehensive data were not available to put the idea completely to rest. Without such data, the possibility still remained that lobstermen could be excluded from setting traps offshore in order to protect cod stocks.

James Sulikowski, professor of marine science at the University of New England, wants to know exactly what happens to codfish released from lobster traps. Sulikowski, working with colleagues from the New England Aquarium and the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, received a $249,000 grant in October from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Bycatch Division of Marine Fisheries, received to study cod mortality in lobster traps. Sulikowski and his colleagues have previously studied the mortality rate of cod caught in the recreational hook-and-line fishery.

"This is a very industry-based project. We are working with a lobsterman in Zone G and will start in April. We want to get good data to give to NOAA so that they don’t do anything crazy," Sulikowski said.

The study relies on an array of acoustic receivers set underwater in an area of federal water off Portland. Researchers will go on the lobsterman’s boat once a week to haul traps in that area, then record characteristics of any cod found in a trap. "We’ll look at any injury to the fish, its vitality level, the depth of water it was caught in, temperature, things like that," Sulikowski explained. An acoustic tag will then be implanted in the fish and it will be released. The 35 acoustic receivers in the water will record the fish’s subsequent movements. "This will give us a good idea of the cod’s behavior. There are certain models that judge health, such as whether it is moving up and down in the water column," Sulikowski said.

Should the cod leave Sulikowski’s study area, additional data can still be gained through the Atlantic Cooperative Telemetry Network. The Network, begun in 2006, keeps track of data derived from the acoustic systems now operating more than 11,000 receivers from Nova Scotia to Florida. If a cod tagged by Sulikowski’s team wanders off to another region of the ocean, its signal could be picked up by a neighboring acoustic array. "We can detect the fish in other areas using their receivers," Sulikowski said.

Sulikowski noted that earlier studies of cod mortality due to capture in the hook-and-line fishery indicated about a 15% mortality rate. "This study is the start of a better understanding of the interaction between groundfish and lobster gear, with the overall goal of ensuring the lobster industry remains a cornerstone of our economy."
There have been a lot of new safety rules promulgated by the U.S. Coast Guard in recent years. Beginning on January 1, 2010, vessel construction standards came into effect. Then on July 1, 2013, additional vessel construction standards came into effect. These new standards mandate:

- All commercial fishing vessels 50 or more feet in length and operating beyond three nautical miles of the baseline of the United States territorial seas must be classified by a recognized Classification Society.
- All commercial fishing vessels 79 or more feet in length and operating beyond the boundary line must be assigned a Loadline. Loadlines are signed by recognized Classification Societies.

Jump to 2015. This fall mandatory dockside examinations for all commercial fishing vessels operating beyond three nautical miles of the baseline of the United States territorial seas took effect on October 16, 2015. Those vessels operating with a current and valid commercial fishing vessel safety decal will meet the requirements of having satisfactorily completed the mandatory dockside examination.

Now, for 2016:

On January 20, all commercial fishing vessels 300 gross tons and over are required to carry Digital Selective Calling (DSC) radios. The Coast Guard provided guidance on the survival craft requirements due to go into effect on February 26. Commercial fishing vessels that operate in warm water (inside 20 nautical miles from the coastline from July 1 through September 30) can continue to use unapproved survival craft temporarily if that device remains in serviceable condition. However, replacement out-of-water survival craft must be installed no later than January 1, 2017. Commercial fishing vessels operating in cold water areas (inside 20 nautical miles from the coastline from January 1 through June 30) may continue to use unapproved survival craft equipment if it remains in serviceable condition. However, replacement out-of-water survival craft must be installed before November 1, 2016. Vessels operating in cold water outside of 12 miles are already required to carry a life raft. As of February 26, there will no longer be any exemptions for vessels less than 36 feet with three or fewer on board which operate beyond three nautical miles.

On March 1, commercial fishing vessels 65 or more feet in length will be required to carry an Automated Identification System (AIS). Commercial fishing vessels may install a Class B AIS device versus a Class A device if the vessel operates at a speed of less than 14 knots.

Keep in mind that the effective date of the new safety regulations required by the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010 and 2012 is unknown at this time. A Notice of Proposed Rule-Making has been resubmitted as a Notice of Proposed Rule-Making (NPRM) so the public will have an opportunity to comment. The new regulations will treat Federally Documented and State Registered vessels the same. All commercial fishing vessels will need to meet these additional safety requirements if they operate beyond 3 nautical miles of the United States territorial seas. If you have question or would like to schedule a free dockside safety examination for your vessel please call me at 207-780-3256 office, 207-899-6278 cell, or email Kevin.F.plowman@uscg.mil.

### GUEST COLUMN: New safety regulations in effect this year

By Kevin Plowman, U.S. Coast Guard

Guest Column:

New safety regulations in effect this year

1. For commercial fishing vessels that operate exclusively in warm water (from our here in Maine and New Hampshire warm water is basically inside 20 NM from the coastline from 1 July through 30 September. Everything else is cold water) these vessels can continue to use the life floats and buoyant apparatus until February 1, 2017 as long as the device continues to be in good and serviceable condition.

2. For commercial fishing vessels operating in cold water these vessels can continue to use the life floats and buoyant apparatus until November 1, 2016 as long as the device continues to be in good and serviceable condition.

3. On February 26, 2016 there will no longer be any exemptions for vessels less than 36 feet with 3 or less on board which operate beyond 3 nautical miles.

### Summary of Coast Guard Survival Craft Regulations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applicable Waters/Vessel Registration</th>
<th>Survival craft required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inside 3 miles (warm water) State Registered or Federally Documented</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inside 3 miles (cold water) (includes lakes, bays, sounds, and rivers) State Registered</td>
<td>If vessel is 36 feet or more in length, a buoyant apparatus can be used until November 1, 2016 as long as the device continues to be in good and serviceable condition if the vessel is less than 36 feet in length and meets the flotation provisions of 33 CFR Part 183, a survival craft is not required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inside 3 miles (cold water) (includes lakes, bays, sounds, and rivers) Federally Documented</td>
<td>Inflatable buoyant apparatus if vessel is 36 feet or more in length and meets the flotation provisions of 33 CFR Part 183, a survival craft is not required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beyond 3 miles State Registered</td>
<td>Inflatable buoyant apparatus until November 1, 2016 as long as the device continues to be in good and serviceable condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 3 and 12 miles (cold water) Federally Documented</td>
<td>Inflatable buoyant apparatus until November 1, 2016 as long as the device continues to be in good and serviceable condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 12 and 20 miles (cold water) Federally Documented</td>
<td>Inflatable life raft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 3 and 20 miles (warm water) Federally Documented</td>
<td>Inflatable buoyant apparatus until February 1, 2017 as long as the device continues to be in good and serviceable condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 20 and 30 miles (cold water) Federally Documented</td>
<td>Inflatable life raft with a SOLAS B pack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beyond 30 miles of the coastline Federally Documented</td>
<td>Inflatable life raft with a SOLAS A pack</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. warm water: inside 20 NM from the coastline from 1 July through 30 September
2. cold water: 1 October through 30 June inside 20 nm and year round beyond 20 nm
I nominated Tim as president and he said 'I'll do it as long as you serve as the vice president'” Resch joked. The transition took a lot of work and required new organizational changes. "Officers cannot conduct all of the duties of the organization at this level. We needed an employee to do that. Hiring an executive director creates consistency and speeds up the process," explained Harkins.

The MLA hired me in July, 2014. I come to the job with ten years of experience in Maine’s marine industry and coastal communities, most recently with the Maine Lobstermen’s Association (MLA) where I focused on lobster quality and handling programs as part of my responsibilities as program manager. While developing those programs, in addition to the work I was doing with lobstermen, I had the great opportunity to learn from dealers and processors in Maine. I made a lot of connections then with businesses that are currently MLA members. Understanding the needs and challenges of businesses that operate in the supply chain was really important to shaping those programs through the MLA.

The MLA provides a weekly e-newsletter service to its members, which includes meeting summaries, updates from various industry groups and agencies, upcoming meetings and events, and relevant industry news articles. MLDA’s major project initiative for 2016 will include an economic impact study of the value of various lobster businesses in the state. Beyond ex-vessel value and volume and the number of participants at the harvester level, there really is no real economic data to back up the critical importance of this industry to the State of Maine. MLA seeks to quantify revenue generated by the dealers' and processors' sector from the first point of sale at the dock to the final sale to customers. The study will explore the direct impact made by co-ops, independent wharves, truckers, dealers, wholesalers, processors, shippers and retailers.

Additionally, the organization would like to determine the indirect impact that is created through fuel and bait distributors; professional services such as legal, accounting and banking; and other ancillary businesses ranging from plumbing and heating to construction. Any resident of coastal Maine knows that this industry is the backbone of the economy, but we want to back it up with facts that can be useful for everyone from the MLA to the Department of Marine Resources and Department of Economic and Community Development or any other group that may need this information.

The association’s board meets quarterly. I offer research and regular support to MLDA members as requested and shares resources that may help their individual business development.

“Our meetings are focused and relevant to the concerns we have as an industry” explained Resch. “The weekly email provides quality information in a timely manner.” MLDA’s primary goal is to represent the dealers and processors across the seafood industry and business community in Maine.

“It’s important for us to have a voice. Issues pop up regularly and decisions are being made. We need to be a part of that,” Resch explained. I and members of the MLDA represent our industry on the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative board, Lobster Advisory Board, Maine Fishermen’s Forum board of directors, the Research Education and Development Fund Advisory Board and additionally attend policy meetings, participate in programs sponsored by the Maine International Trade Center, and collaborate with other industry groups and agencies. This part of the industry – the dealers and processors – really needed a seat at the table and a united voice.

To the MLA:
Thank you and the MLA for dinner and the welcoming atmosphere at the meeting [the MLA board meeting in December] last night.
I enjoyed my first MLA meeting. Listening to fishermen from other zones and ports who have well thought out ideas and are interested in our resource and industry as a whole was refreshing. I often attend our zone meetings where attendance is slim and skepticism is heavy. Involvement is key to influencing the future of our fishery and like in any endeavor, good partnerships can make the difference in protecting the way of life we work so hard for.

I would like to become more involved with the MLA to help our industry. Today it seems everyone’s time is so stretched and valuable but I think the MLA is a worthwhile use of the time I can spare. I think we all have some ideas which if shared and collaborated could offer a bright future.

Thanks again,
Brian Tripp, Sedgwick

Looking for a lender that understands your business?
For generations, Farm Credit East has helped commercial fishing operations plan for and finance the equipment they need to harvest our sea bounty. Today, we continue to provide flexible financing and solid advice for aquatic businesses of every type and size.

How can we help you net more profit for your business? Call today to review our wide range of options.

Let’s talk.

farmlDHV}
GUEST COLUMN: More education, more storytelling in 2016

by Matt Jacobson

"New England is one of the few teams in the NFL capable of changing its identity on a week-to-week basis without straying too far from the strength of the personnel. This chameleon-like approach requires players to constantly grasp and execute new schemes, which places the onus on the coaching staff to effectively teach new material each week and implement it on game day. With few coaches willing to radically overhaul their tactical approach to get a W, Belichick deserves kudos for his adaptability and versatility as a coach." – Bucky Brooks, NFL analyst

This approach is why the Patriots win every year – they are better at seeing what is happening on the field and adapting their tactics to take advantage and win.

In the same way, the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC) constantly evaluates its programs and tactics. We learn from every engagement with media and chefs, then take those lessons back and adjust our game plan to take advantage and win.

2015 was a pivotal year for marketing Maine lobster, and your MLMC accomplished everything we set out to do. We spent a lot of time getting our message to media outlets. Over 470 million people had an opportunity to see stories we placed across the country. Remember, our whole budget for the year was $1.5 million. Had we just bought advertising in those publications, it would have cost us $1.7 million. Our media outreach plan returned more than the investment in the whole Collaborative!

Not only did we focus on media outreach, but the MLMC also re-launched six social media channels and grew our following by 140%! We attended five industry events and reached more than 1,000 consumers and food industry influencers, educating them about Maine New-Shell Lobster. We also met and interacted more frequently with chefs, then take those lessons back and adjust our game plan to take advantage and win.

Maine Fishermen’s Forum Board of Directors offers a scholarship fund to benefit immediate family members (son/daughter, or a grandson/granddaughter) or legal dependent of someone actively involved in Maine’s seafood industry, regardless of financial need or academic achievement. Undergraduates attending a two or four year college who are in at least the second year of their program or students who are in at least the second semester of their Certificate Program will be eligible. Applications will be accepted through March 1, 2016. Scholarships will be awarded by a random drawing to be held during the 41st annual Maine Fishermen's Forum. Please note that previous winners are not eligible.

Do you qualify? (Check all that apply)

1. __ Are you a sophomore, junior, or senior right now? You must be at least a sophomore to apply.
2. __ Do you have an immediate family member actively participating in Maine’s seafood industry?
3. __ Complete this application & send to the address at the top.
4. __ Provide an official transcript or Registrar’s letter of current standing along with application.

MAINE SEAFOOD INDUSTRY FAMILY MEMBER INFORMATION

Name ____________________________ Relationship ____________________________
Street/Mailing Address ____________________________ Home Phone ____________________________
City, State Zip ____________________________ Email ____________________________
Vessel Name or Commercial License Number ____________________________

Describe Participation in the Maine seafood industry ____________________________
DO YOUR RESEARCH BEFORE YOU PICK YOUR HEALTH INSURANCE COMPANY

By Alisha Keezer

With open enrollment underway, many individuals and small businesses in Maine are finding options for affordable, high quality health insurance through the Marketplace at healthcare.gov. Open enrollment for 2016 plans started November 1st and continues until January 31, 2016. The MLA has been busy offering free assistance to fishermen and their families to aid their understanding of health insurance plans and coverage.

The 2016 Marketplace offers plans from three health insurance carriers, all of which cover care at hospitals and health care providers across the state. Maimers are able to select from 33 plans for the 2016 coverage year. As in recent years, consumers will be able to browse plans within the Marketplace and compare levels of coverage; plans are categorized as bronze, silver, and gold, and there are catastrophic plans for those under 30. The insurance carriers offering plans through the Marketplace in Maine are: Anthem BlueCross BlueShield, Community Health Options (CHO), and Harvard Pilgrim. As of mid-December, however, Community Health Options closed its enrollment for new members.

While shopping for insurance through the Marketplace, make sure the insurance company and the plan you select are specific to the needs of yourself or your family. Each insurance company is different and offers different incentives.

Anthem BlueCross BlueShield offers quality care in 16 Maine counties with over 3,000 specialists and 1,000 primary-care physicians. Anthem's network is called "Pathway X" which includes but is not limited to doctors, hospitals, outpatient facilities, pharmacies, ERs/urgent care centers, labs, radiology centers, and medical equipment. Anthem BlueCross BlueShield splits the state into two different service areas. The southern service area network includes Androscoggin, Cumberland, Franklin, Knox, Kennebec, Lincoln, Oxford, Sagadahoc, Waldo, and York Counties, and the northern service area includes Aroostook, Hancock, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Somerset, Washington Counties. Anthem offers a variety of programs, discounts, and tools. The 24/7 nurse line has been a popular feature because you can call, day or night, and talk to a registered nurse about your health concerns. The nurse line is available to members 24/7 for assistance in making important healthcare decisions. In addition, Anthem offers an online wellness portal with over 6000 health topics plus tools and videos to enable informed choices about treatment options. Select plans also include pediatric dental benefits.

Harvard Pilgrim is a nonprofit health-care company founded by doctors providing health insurance to the private health insurance market in Maine since 1994. Harvard Pilgrim’s Individual Maine Plans have a multi-state provider network which includes all of the hospitals in Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts. The regional network offers over 30,000 providers (doctors, hospitals, and ancillary providers). However, they offer discounted premiums this year to patients who select a more restricted network of doctors and hospitals. The discounts range from 10% to 15% for those who choose the insurer’s narrower network, “Maine’s Choice.” This plan is available in Androscoggin, Cumberland, Franklin, Kennebec, Knox, Lincoln, Oxford, York, and Waldo Counties. Specific hospitals in the “Maine’s Choice” network are Maine Medical Center, Southern Maine Health Care, Maine General Medical Center, York Hospital, and several others. Within this network there are approximately 700 primary care providers and 3,000 specialists.

Harvard Pilgrim, much like CHO and Anthem, offers a “Condition Management Program” for members who are living with conditions such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, heart disease, and hypertension. Its offerings include programs for healthy eating, personal health coaches, a member savings discount program, eat right rewards, “Nowiknow,” a cost/quality comparison tool, and $150 fitness reimbursement program. Additional benefits include worldwide emergency care covered at the “in-network” level, acupuncture or chiropractic services without referrals, and discounts for alternative medicine services.

If you are interested in getting a quote for coverage, visit the Marketplace’s window shopping tool at https://www.healthcare.gov/see-plans or call Alisha at the MLA at 977-4535. Remember, the deadline to enroll in a 2016 health insurance plan is January 31.
Maine Lobstermen’s Association

Advocating for a sustainable lobster resource and the fishermen and communities that depend on it since 1954.

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MLA DIRECTORS DECEMBER MEETING SUMMARY

The MLA Directors met on December 2 in Belfast. Patrice updated the MLA Board on membership renewals. Staff is working to try to get all members renewed by the end of the year. The Board voted to offer MLA members a trip to the Boston Seafood Show (on Monday, March 7) and will look at creating other opportunities for members. The Board discussed ideas to include on MLA’s agenda for 2016, in addition to the policy issues. The Board supported continuing to push Congress for funding of new safety mandates, expand safety training opportunities in Maine, and to extend the life raft repacking requirement. MLA supported identifying solutions to the chronic Marine Patrol Officer vacancies. The Board also discussed creating community service opportunities for MLA members. The lobster fishery has been good to Maine lobstersmen and it would be good to look at ways for the industry to give back such as through beach and coastal cleanups.

The Board discussed plans for the MLA Annual meeting to be held Friday, March 4 at 9 a.m. at the start of the Maine Fishermen’s Forum held at the Samoset Resort. The Board voted to mail all MLA voting members a postcard solicitating nominations for open board seats. The Annual Meeting notice and board nominator form will run in the December and January issues of Landings. Bob Baines and David Cousins will attend ASMFC Lobster Advisory Panel in December. Research has suggested that ghost panels do not release lobsters in a timely manner, so ASMFC is looking for ways to make ghost panels more effective. MLA Directors do not support any changes to using biodegradable hog rings to attach panels; this should be left alone. The board was open to discussions about making the opening larger if scientists determine this is necessary for oversized lobsters to escape, especially in the offshore fishery.

Patrice provided the board with several updates: The Take Reduction Team Met via webinar in November. NMFS uses a different methodology than the New England Aquarium to estimate the number of right whales. The NMFS esti-
MAINE LOBSTERMEN’S ASSOCIATION UPDATE

Continued on page 10

The Lobster Advisory Council met on November 30 in Augusta. DMR Science Bureau Chief Carl Wilson presented an overview of the results of the ASMFC’s recent lobster stock assessment. The stock assessment results are positive for the Gulf of Maine: the resource is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. The stock assessment uses a computer model developed by the University of Maine which takes into account a wide variety of factors such as recruitment, survival, population, and fishing mortality. The assessment relies on several stock indicators, independent of the model, to look at trends in abundance and mortality and fishery performance. This assessment differs from previous stock assessments in that it combines the Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank stocks into a single biological unit.

DMR science staff reviewed feedback from the lobster zone councils on the draft goals for the Lobster Fishery Management Plan. The LAC will discuss this further at a future meeting.

DMR announced that it is moving forward with a double tagging requirement for all lobsters, regardless of home zone. Any lobstermen fishing traps outside his home zone would need to place a second tag in those traps. The purpose of the double tagging requirement is to assist marine patrol in identifying state and federal law violations. DMR said the LAC that the online licensing portal is not yet operational but that it is planned to be operational before late January.

DO YOU NEED A LIFE RAFT?

If you are shifting new lobster gear, you can cut out trap tags out of traps and hog ring them into the bridge of a different trap. Be sure to cut out your tags in a manner that keeps all of the identifying information intact so it is clear to Marine Patrol that it is a legal 2015 trap tag. Catastrophic losses for replacement tags still need to go through Marine Patrol for reissue. Questions? Call your local Marine Patrol Officer.

FUNDING GROUNDFISH OBSERVERS

NMFS announced that industry has facilitated an initial agreement among the three at-sea monitoring contract providers that will allow federal funding to continue to pay for at-sea monitors in 2016. Approximately $200K is remains available to fund an additional $250 to 300 days of at-sea monitoring in 2016. Following the use of the remaining 250-300 days of at-sea monitoring, the industry will be required to begin paying for all at-sea monitoring, which NMFS anticipates will happen in early 2016. This arrangement is still under negotiation.

GROUNDFISHERMEN Sue NMFS

David Goethel, owner and operator of F/V Ellen Diane, a 44-foot fishing trawler based in Hampton, N.H., and Northeast Fishery Sector 13, a non-profit entity comprised of over 20 groundfishermen, are suing the U.S. Department of Commerce over the legality of a federal mandate requiring groundfishermen in the Northeast United States to not only carry federal ‘at-sea monitors’ on their vessels during fishing trips, but to soon begin paying out-of-pocket for them.
Sarah Cotnoir updated the LAC on two DMR rulemakings. The Kittery area wants to amend their triples area to allow trawls to be fished from January 1 through April 10. Chebeague Island is seeking to end its Island Limited Entry Program. She also reminded lobstermen that Jeffreys Ledge and Jordan Basin have additional gear marking requirements in place, as part of the whale rules.

Matt Jacobson provided an update on the MLMC’s work to date and plans for 2016. Their marketing efforts to promote Maine new shell lobster are focused on social media and chefs. The MLMC is also implementing a program to track the success of its initiatives. The final promotion surcharge will be in place for the 2016 licensing year and will remain in place through 2018 when the MLMC authorization goes back to the Legislature for renewal.

**DMR SUMMARY OF PROPOSED LOBSTER LICENSING CHANGES**

Prepared by DMR for discussion at zone council meetings in December, 2015

**Proposed Changes to entry**

Return to using licenses to calculate the entry/exit ratios (eliminate option to use tags)

- The ratio number would continue to be developed through the Zone Council process – 5:1, 3:1, 1:1, etc.

Raise the age by which a student must have completed the apprenticeship program from “before the age 18” to “before the age of 23” in order to get a license without going on the waiting list.

- This will only apply to individuals who begin the apprenticeship program before they turn 18.

- Individuals who are currently on the waiting list, but who met the above criteria would be eligible to get a license (it would be retroactive).

- The extra time (after age 18 and before age 23) is only available if you have your high school diploma or GED.

- The requirement to be a student after the age of 18 would be waived if you have your diploma or GED (people would not be required to continue on to college if they did not want to).

For islands participating in the Island Limited Entry Program (currently Monhegan, Cliff, Frenchboro and the Cranberry Isles – Chebeague is withdrawing) would waive the requirement that a license holder have apprenticed in that Zone to obtain an island license.

**Proposed actions to address latency**

Create a “Limited Commercial” license that is eligible for fewer tags (300 instead of 800) but is less expensive (half price).

- Existing ½ price license for over 70 would be eliminated

- Voluntary – no one will be required to buy, personal choice only

- No age requirement to be able to buy the license

- Once you “drop down” to the Limited Commercial, can’t go back up to the full Commercial – that license is always limited to the lower tag amount

- License will be counted toward the exit/entry ratio when it exits the fishery.

Eliminate the limitation on increasing tags by 100 per year for all license holder who have already reached 800 tags – once you have purchased 800, could drop down to a lower number and then back to 800 without going up 100 tags per year.

**LOBSTER ZONE COUNCIL MEETINGS**

DMR completed a round of zone council meetings during November and December. The meeting agenda covered the lobster stock assessment, marine patrol news, double tagging, Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative activities and whale rules as described in the LAC summary above.

In addition, zone councils signed their bylaws and gave brief district updates. In addition, zone councils signed their bylaws and gave brief district updates. Most districts reported that many lobstermen have taken up gear and it has been a good season. A smaller number continued to fish with gear off shore.

Each lobster zone, except Zone C, discussed the DMR’s proposal for changes to the licensing system. The proposal was not available in November when Zone C met. Feedback was mixed, with little to no support for the proposal as a whole. There was some support for individual pieces, but most support was offered for improvements. The Zone D Council does not want the Legislature to take power away from the zones and did not support DMR’s proposal. Zone G was concerned that the proposal does not deal with zone transfers who are on the waiting list. Zone E saw merit in increasing the age that student license holders can obtain a commercial license to age 23 and did not oppose changing the exit ratio currency from tags to licenses. They also supported creating a requirement for those on the waiting list to renew annually. Some Zone F Council members expressed concern that this proposal would take power away from the zones; others supported increasing the age of the student license but only if the state required those in the program to be enrolled as students. Other Zone F Council members supported the creation of a Limited Commercial license, but only with a trap limit of 500 and only if the retired tags are used to help those on the waiting list.

Zone C reviewed the results of a recent questionnaire on whether or not to close the zone. The questionnaire received a 38% response rate, with 66% in favor of closing the zone and 34% opposed. Only two districts (District 6, North Haven and District 9, Matinicus and Criehaven) supported keeping the zone open. The Zone C Council tabled action until a future meeting.

Zone E also reviewed the results of a recent survey that was conducted on changing the zone’s currency from tags to licenses and possibly changing the ratio. The question on what exit ratio should be used to control entry received a 37% response rate. Of those who responded, 38% chose 5:1 using tags, 25% chose 3:1 using licenses, 13% chose 5:1 using licenses, and 9.5% chose 2:1 using tags. Some Zone E lobstermen have signed a petition asking the Zone E Council to consider increasing the trap limit from 600 to 700. Action on both of these items was tabled to the next meeting due to lack of quorum.

**DMR RULEMAKING**

Chapter 25.04 Lobster Trawl Limits

This proposed rule provides a seasonal exemption to the existing three-trap-per-trawl limit for a specified area within and around the Piscataqua River, allowing up to 10 traps per trawl from January 1 to April 10. This change is requested by Zone G lobstermen fishing in this area to improve gear handling and minimize gear loss during the winter months.

Chapter 25.97 Management Framework for Island Limited Entry Program

The proposed regulation also strikes Chebeague Island from the list of islands participating in the Island Limited Entry Program. The Chebeague Island Limited Entry Committee requested a referendum be conducted to assess whether license holders on Chebeague supported the continuation of the program. Of those voting, 83% supported eliminating the program. After reviewing the referendum results, the Chebeague Island Limited Entry Committee requested the Commissioner undertake rule-making to terminate the Chebeague Island Limited Entry Program.

**INFLATABLE VESSEL TO HELP MAINE IMPROVE WHALE DISENTANGLEMENT EFFORTS**

DMR announced that it has received a $20,000 grant from the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund to purchase a 17-foot soft bottom inflatable boat to respond more quickly, safely and effectively to whale entanglement events.

“This boat will help Marine Patrol significantly improve our ability to respond to entanglements,” said Major Rene Cloutier, Marine Patrol’s Field Commander. “Our fleet of vessels is built to respond to law enforcement issues, but is not ideally suited for disentangling whales. We need a boat that is smaller, more stable, is more maneuverable when we work on large species like humpbacks and right whales.”

Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Maine are currently the only states on the East Coast with the authority and training from NMFS to respond to large whale entanglements. One DMR staff member and nine Marine Patrol officers are trained and authorized as first responders for entanglements. The network of responders on the east coast, known as the Atlantic Large Whale Disentanglement Network, is coordinated by NMFS out of its Gloucester, Massachusetts, office.

“ This work is conducted very close to the whale and a soft bottom boat will allow us to maneuver into position so the responders can more easily move around in the boat and handle the specialty tools which are mounted on the end of a long pole and used to cut lines from the whales,” said DMR Scientist Erin Summers, who is coordinating the purchase. “This boat will help Maine continue to improve our efficiency and performance in disentanglement response,” she said.
There are four plan levels available on the Marketplace:

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A VARIED CAREER ON THE WATER LEADS TO MARINE PATROL

By Melissa Waterman

No one would claim that Corrie Roberts’ route to becoming captain of a Department of Marine Resources (DMR) Marine Patrol vessel was direct. Roberts, who operates in Section 4 and is based in Rockland, did many things before joining the bureau in 2006. She farmed mussels and oysters in the Damariscotta area, drove a truck, fished for groundfish, scallops and shrimp out of South Bristol, dove for sea urchins, worked as the night manager at the Portland Fish Exchange, then owned and operated her own vessel providing support for researchers working in Penobscot Bay and beyond.

“I like being on the water. But I like being on the water for a reason,” the 54-year-old said while talking in the cabin of P/V Guardian III in Rockland harbor. It might seem an odd choice for a woman who readily admits that she grew up a horse-obsessed youngster living in California. But in 1971 her parents moved Roberts and her sister, plus their two horses, to a house in Warren. Roberts attended local schools before returning to California for college. When she came back to Maine, she took to the water. “I worked for Ken Grey for four years out of college, growing mussels and oysters,” Roberts recalled. “I started driving trucks for him, packaging product.” Eventually she met Jeff Poole, a South Bristol fisherman, and worked as crew for him.

“I laughed at first: law enforcement?”

“Jeff taught me a lot about rigging, about deck safety,” Roberts said. “He gave me a chick a break.” Female fishermen were a rare sight in the early 1990s. Roberts noted that in the midcoast area just three women – Linda Greenlaw, Zoe Zanidakis (who was a contestant on the TV show “Survivor”) and herself – fished for a living. Her time working for Poole was “very formative for me,” Roberts said.

After a short stint at the Portland Fish Exchange, Roberts began working for the Island Institute, a nonprofit organization based in Rockland. She soon became the head of the Institute’s vessel operations. About that time, the Island Institute became the lead investigator in a five-year, multi-million dollar research study of Penobscot Bay. The project involved multiple scientific organizations which explored all aspects of the bay, from the lobsters on the seafloor and the currents and chemistry of the water itself. Through the project, Roberts got to know many of the state’s key scientists. “I would take out Bob Steneck and his graduate students, including Carl Wilson [who later became the state’s lead lobster biologist and is now Marine Sciences Bureau director]. We did all the lobster work,” she said.

Eventually Roberts decided it was time for her own boat. She held a 100-ton Coast Guard license and was confident of her boat handling skills. She commissioned a 36-foot Calvin Beal design, which was built by Pen Bay Boat Company in Sedgwick. The Alice Siegmund was chartered by Penobscot Bay project researchers on a steady basis. “We’d go six or seven days in a row,” Roberts recalled. She also contracted with scientists involved with the GMOOS program (now part of NERACOS) to service Gulf of Maine buoys. “I had a lot of work. But then the project started to wind down. They had a ton of data at the end and the field work was done.”

She put the Alice Siegmund to use as a water taxi, ferrying workers and material to the Penobscot Bay islands. Then one day Carl Wilson, now working for DMR, called Roberts to let her know that the captain’s position in Marine Patrol had opened up in Section 4. “I laughed at first: law enforcement?” Roberts recalled. But then she considered the arc of her career on the water thus far, from aquaculture to commercial fishing and then to scientific research work. “And now I’d be in enforcement of the laws that came about because of that research,” she reflected, “I went for it.” She was hired in 2006.

“This is a great job. You have a lot of freedom,” Roberts said. Her crew comprises five other Marine Patrol officers, four of whom have remained in the crew for ten years. To be a good Marine Patrol officer, one needs to be capable of a certain degree of independent thinking, according to Roberts, something that comes naturally to most boat captains. “They want you to come up with ideas on your own. But you know, we’re trained. There’s years of methods behind what we do.”

Roberts made the news in Octtober, 2015, when she and Sergeant Matt Talbot investigated a lobster boat with no one at the helm turning in circles off Owls Head. The wind was about 20 knots and seas were high. Roberts was able to leap onto the Legacy and gain control of the vessel. The boat’s owner, lobsterman Robert Staples of North Haven, had apparently died of natural causes while hauling.

“That’s the hardest part. We go through some body bags. There’s a lot of death, more than you think,” Roberts said. “It’s sad and can be gruesome. The guys kid me about this but I think it’s an honor to be able to treat that person well, to get themsituated.”

She emphasizes over and over again in her conversation the need for fishermen to be aware of safety on board their vessels. “If you are going to call yourself a boat captain, then be a boat captain. You are responsible for your crew and the boat.” She shook her head when speaking about some of the tragic events that have happened as more lobstermen venture offshore to fish in federal waters. “I think that fishermen are thinking more about the dangers of being that far off shore and how quickly the weather can change. It’s a clue when no one else is fishing.”

Roberts shows no inclination to retire from her line of work. She is building a house on 14 acres of land in Lincolnville on the Ducktrap River. “We can only live 30 minutes away [from the office]. I am 29 minutes!” She and the other Marine Patrol officers are likely to remain familiar faces to those who work on the water. “I like what I do. I take being a boat captain seriously. We’re of this community,” she said.

Can’t wait for the next issue of Landings?

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Here we are in January, the lobsters have headed to deeper, darker waters, and those of you who don't fish in the winter have hauled in your traps, hauled out your boat, and hauled yourself into the easy chair. But it is not that simple. These darker days of winter are a change from your usual routine of early rising, checking weather, getting bait, being on your feet fishing for the whole day, unloading the catch, refueling and heading home. In winter you have to change from a daily fishing routine that is largely imposed from outside, i.e., by your work, to daily activities that are largely controlled from the inside, i.e., by your own (internal) choices. Perhaps we can think of it as a bit like rotating your tires: tires wearing on the outside are moved so they will now wear on the inside.

There are two major components of your life that change from the summer to the winter. One is your routine and the other is interaction with fellow fishermen or networking. Consider the routine component: In the fishing season your routine is prescribed but in the winter you have to create it yourself. The occupational medicine physician I talked with in preparation for this article said that establishing a winter routine is very important for both mental and physical health.

This routine should include elements such as eating healthy, being physically and mentally active, and engaging in hobbies and activities you enjoy doing. Of course, I know that most of you spend a lot of time maintaining buoys and boats, so you are not 100% without fishing-related activities. Yet you certainly have more time at your disposal than during the season.

**Eating healthy suggestions:** Search out winter farmer's markets, try some new vegetarian recipes, experiment with slow-cooker dishes, etc.

**Physical activity:** Take a daily walk. work out in the gym or YMCA, park your truck at the far end of the supermarket parking lot, play toss with the kids, etc.

**Mental activity:** Do crosswords, Sudoku, play Scrabble, read, take a course online or locally, use your skills to help the local industrial arts teacher with a class, research a new Sourdough or some gear for your boat, etc.

**Hobbies:** The sky and the pocketbook are the limit! Woodworking, home repairs, cleaning up the workshop, improving the ventilation system, etc. You get the idea.

Also in the winter your connection with your fishing buddies is different. Now, I admit I don't know how much your social network changes, but I presume you don't have the close radio contact and buying and selling contacts in the winter that you have in the other seasons. Having an active network of friends is very important. You can participate in community, church and industry-based activities such as the MLA and the Fishermen's Forum. It is important to spend time with people you enjoy.

Some people don't take well to these darker months and lack the energy required to stick to a self-generated routine and maintain friendships. Keep an eye out for signs of depression in your friends (and yourself) which would include a lack of interest in activities, constant sadness, feeling overwhelmed or worthless, and grumpiness. Physical characteristics can change as depression sets in include weight loss or gain, difficulty concentrating, tiredness or trouble sleeping. Symptoms such as these, if they persist, call for a visit to a health care provider.

In summary, to keep yourself (and your truck) on a roll this winter, rotate into these, if they persist, call for a visit to a health care provider.

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- New England Propeller Inc
- Dover, NH -- 20% off propeller repair.
- Discounts vary by manufacturer for new propellers, shafting and other hardware.

Applied Refrigeration Services
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Penobscot Marine Museum
- Searsport, ME -- Free admission for MLA members.

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Sea Rose Trap Co.
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Smithwick & Mariners Insurance
- Falmouth, ME -- Discounted vessel insurance plus 5% discount with proof of CG approved Drill Conductor course within the last 5 years.

SW Boatworks
- Lamonie, ME -- $1000 discount for hull or other tops.

Weathervane Seafood Inc
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Winter Harbor Fishermen's Coop
- Winter Harbor, ME -- 10% off picked lobster meat.
Licenses continued from page 1

The issues noted in that report were the amount of latent effort existing in the fishery (those with licenses who could set more traps than they currently do), the long waiting periods for those waiting to obtain a license in most zones, and the lack of a plan for a possible future decline in lobster landings.

During the most recent legislative session, four bills were submitted with proposals to change the lobster entry system. Rather than take action on these bills, the Legislature killed them to allow DMR Commissioner Keliher an opportunity to engage lobstermen on potential ways to reform the licensing system. In response, the Commissioner and several key staff members hit the road during late summer and early fall of 2015 to speak directly with lobstermen about potential changes to the lobster entry system. This was the DMR’s third round of coast-wide lobster industry meetings. During this most recent round, Keliher explained to lobstermen, “We need to create a functional entry system, but the resource is already fully exploited so we don’t want to increase effort into the fishery. But people on the waiting list are looking for a predictable time frame to receive a license so that they can plan to get into the fishery.”

Based on feedback from these eight meetings, DMR drafted a concept proposal to be used as the basis for the bill sponsored by Rep. Kuminega for consideration by the Legislature this winter. DMR’s Senior Policy Advisor, Deirdre Gilbert, explained to the Lobster Advisory Council in November that the proposal has five major components which encompass changes to the lobster entry program and address latent effort. The DMR has shared its proposal with the Lobster Advisory Council and zone councils (except Zone C, which met before it was available) and feedback on the proposal has been mixed.

The first proposal to be included in the bill is to return to using licenses in all limited-entry zones. Zones would no longer be able to base exit ratios on tags retired. Zones A and B have already voted to change their exit ratio to licenses. Commissioner Keliher acknowledged these changes during his outreach meetings, referring to Zone A as the “poster child” of how to create a more functional entry system. Zone A voted to change its 3:1 exit ratio to licenses, which has allowed 22 people to come off the waiting list in the last two years. However, Zone B also changed its ratio to licenses but remained at 5:1 and has seen only four new entrants in the last two years.

Lobstermen from Zone D and Zone F acknowledged exit ratios based on licenses might work for some areas of the coast, but cited the need for zones to have different tools to deal with entry. Zone D and F lobstermen fear that changing exit ratios to licenses could lead to an increase in effort in their respective areas because licenses with little fishing activity will be retired and replaced with more active effort from new entrants. These lobstermen strongly oppose this change because it takes power away from the zones. DMR countered that the zone councils will still retain the authority to set their exit/entry ratio; however, it must be based on licenses.

The second proposal to be included in the bill is to raise the age by which a student must have completed the apprenticeship program from “before the age of 18” to “before the age of 23.” Gilbert explained that several conditions would apply to this change. The age increase will only apply to individuals who begin the apprenticeship program before they turn 18 years old. This provision would be retroactive, so that those 53 individuals who are currently on the waiting list and meet these criteria would be eligible to receive a license. An additional 11 apprentices are currently in the system and would be expected to receive a license based on these criteria if the bill passes. Moving forward, the additional time (after age 18) would only be available to apprentices who have completed high school or received a GED, but the requirement to remain a student would be waived. Most lobstermen were very sympathetic to the difficulty many students face in getting 1,000 apprentice hours completed while they are in school, and therefore support raising the age. However, there was a mixed response on making this retroactive with lobstermen both strongly supporting and opposing this provision. Many lobstermen also opposed the provision to raise the requirement to remain in school as a student in order to be eligible for this program.

The third proposal to be included in the bill would create a “Limited Commercial” lobster license to be sold at a reduced fee. DMR will propose that the license be sold for half price and be eligible for only 300 tags. If this license is created, the existing half-price over-70 licenses (LCO, LCOU and LCO3) would be eliminated. This license would be available to all lobstermen to purchase on a voluntary basis, regardless of age. However, once a lobsterman “drops down” to the Limited Commercial license, s/he would no longer be eligible to purchase a full commercial license or a higher tag allocation in the future. The license would be counted toward the exit/entry ratio when it exits the fishery. A Zone F lobsterman stated that he would consider purchasing the Limited Commercial license to help out those on the waiting list, but a 300-tag limit would be too severe. He asked DMR to consider a 500-tag limit instead. Sarah Cotnoir, DMR’s Zone Council Liaison, clarified that purchasing a Limited Commercial license would not have any impact on those on the waiting list when the full commercial license was converted to a limited license. Rather, the Limited Commercial license would only be counted against the exit ratio when it is retired.

The fourth proposal to be included in the bill is to eliminate the limitation on increasing tags by 100 per year for all license holders who have already reached 800 tags. Instead, once a lobsterman has purchased 800 tags, s/he could drop down to a lower number and then back up to 800 without building back at 100 traps per year. Lobstermen did not voice any objections to this proposal.

The final piece of the proposed legislation would waive the requirement that a license holder must have apprenticed in that zone to obtain an island license that is part of the Island Limited Entry Program. Currently, Monhegan, Cliff, Frenchboro and the Cranberry Isles participate in the program.

Several lobstermen questioned why DMR did not include a proposal to require apprentices to renew their spot on the waiting list on an annual basis. And Zone G lobstermen were disappointed that the bill does not contain any provisions to deal with lobstermen on the waiting list seeking to transfer between zones.

Gilbert told the LAC that she does not expect to see the text of the bill drafted by the Legislature’s Revisor’s Office until January 25 at the earliest. Rep. Kuminega added that he expected the Marine Resources Committee would seek to schedule a public hearing on the bill in early February, and hold multiple work sessions during February and March in order to complete work on the bill by mid-March. The LAC hopes to meet in January to discuss the bill once it is available.

Once the bill is printed, it will be available through the Legislature’s website at www.legislature.maine.gov. DMR will email the bill to its lobster industry list. If you wish to receive lobster industry updates from DMR, send your email to sarah.cotnoir@maine.gov.
LOBSTER SUPPLY SEES CHANGES FROM 2010 TO 2014

By Patrice McCarron

The National Marine Fisheries Service publishes *Fisheries of the United States* (FUS), an annual yearbook of fishery statistics for the United States. The report provides data on U.S. commercial and recreational fisheries landings and values as well as other aspects of U.S. commercial fishing. In addition, data are reported on the U.S. seafood processing industry, imports and exports of fishery-related products, and domestic supply and per capita consumption of fishery products.

The FUS for 2014 shows continued steady growth in the U.S. lobster fishery. During the five-year period from 2010 to 2014, U.S. landings of American lobster increased by 28%, from 115.4 million pounds to 147.8 million pounds. In 2014, Maine accounted for 84% of U.S. landings.

This increase in lobster landings has significantly increased revenue from lobster in many small communities along the Maine coast. According to the Maine Department of Marine Resources, Stonington remained Maine’s most profitable port for lobster landings from 2010 to 2014, showing a $15 million increase (33%) in value. In 2014 Vinalhaven was second and posted an 80% increase in value, from just under $20 million in 2010 to more than $35.5 million in 2014. Beals, a town with just over 500 residents, was the fourth most profitable port, nearly doubling its value over that period, from $11.3 million in 2010 to $22 million in 2014.

The FUS 2014 report also shows that the U.S. and Canadian lobster supply chain continues to be tightly connected. U.S. exports of lobster to Canada increased by 57% over the five-year period, from 44.7 million pounds in 2010 to 70.3 million in 2014. During that same time period, imports of Canadian lobster to the U.S. increased by 33%, from 74.5 million pounds in 2010 to 99 million in 2014. The report does not break down how much of the lobster imported from Canada was originally landed in the U.S., then processed in Canada and sent back to the U.S.

Exports of U.S. lobster to overseas markets showed a dramatic increase of 66% over the five years, rising from 30.1 million pounds in 2010 to 49.9 million pounds in 2014. The amount of lobster sold in the U.S. decreased by 32%, from 40.6 million pounds in 2010 to 27.6 million in 2014.

**Maine’s Top 10 Ports by Value: 2010 vs 2014**

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<th>Rank</th>
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<th>Value (Millions)</th>
<th>Port</th>
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</table>

Source: Maine DMR and U.S. 2010 Census

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Northern shrimp (Pandalus borealis) live for about five years and can reach a carapace length of about 30 millimeters (about 1.2 inches). But the most unusual part of their life story is that they first mature as males and die as females. “[Northern shrimp] usually function as males at age 1.5 and again at age 2.5, then they transition to females,” explained Department of Marine Resources (DMR) marine resource scientist Maggie Hunter. “It’s not clear why they do this, but we know the larger females can produce more eggs. And the males don’t need to be larger to still produce a large number of sperm,” Hunter speculated. According to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), female shrimp may live up to five years old.

In early fall females begin carrying their eggs on their abdomens. In December, the shrimp migrate inshore to release their eggs. “The shrimp fishery is traditionally December through May because that’s when the shrimp make themselves available,” Hunter said. It may seem strange, especially to lobstermen who don’t keep egg bearing females, that the shrimp are fished when they have eggs. “It does sound strange to people,” Hunter added. “But if they were fished in the summer or spring, the larger females would be mixed with the smaller males. The winter season allows a natural size selection.”

The 2016 shrimp fishery has been closed for the third year in a row due to a collapsed stock. ASMFC announced the extended moratorium in early December in response to the 2015 Stock Status Report for Gulf of Maine Northern Shrimp, which reported the lowest abundance and biomass of shrimp on record in the past 32 years. “2014 was the first time in a long time that the fishery was closed,” said Max Appelman, Fisheries Management Plan coordinator at ASMFC. “The stock collapsed due to overfishing in the past years and environmental factors.” During two of the three seasons leading up to the first moratorium, the amount of shrimp harvested surpassed the set total allowable catch (TAC). In 2011, the limit was set at 8.8 million pounds, but the total catch added up to about 13 million pounds. The limit was lowered to 4.9 million pounds in 2012, but again, harvesters surpassed that limit. In 2013, the limit was reduced to 1.4 million pounds; harvesters landed only 563,000 pounds of shrimp that year. Appelman acknowledged that the lag in reporting in previous years is a contributing factor for the surpassed limits. “Now the Fisheries Management Plan has a new tool for projecting when the TAC will be met. So the Section now has the ability to close the fishery when the TAC is projected to be caught.”

Both Hunter and Appelman spoke about warming ocean waters and how that has affected Northern shrimp. “Shrimp are very sensitive to temperature,” Hunter said. The Northern shrimp is at the southern-most part of its range in the Gulf of Maine, and the increasing water temperatures have negatively affected the population. But how exactly is the temperature affecting shrimp? “Maybe the warmer temperatures are causing the time of the egg hatch to shift. When it’s warm, the eggs develop faster and they would hatch sooner. Then maybe they are missing the spring plankton bloom that they feed on,” speculated Hunter. In 2014, the egg hatch timing appeared to be normal, but the recruitment, the number of juvenile shrimp that survive, was low.

There are a number of surveys to collect data on the Northern shrimp, including the ASMFC’s summer survey which began in 1984, the National Marine Fisheries Service fall trawl survey, and the Maine and New Hampshire inshore trawl survey. This winter, as in past seasons with a moratorium, ASMFC has established a total allowable catch for selected fishermen in order to obtain samples of this year’s stock. “The Section implemented a Cooperative Winter Sampling Program through the research set-aside that allows select fishermen to fish as they normally would during an open season in order to collect samples and look at egg hatch timing and the [age distribution] of the shrimp,” said Appelman. The selected fishermen have pre-determined regions they can fish in and trip and trap limits to control the total catch. “It’s not completely the same way they would fish if the season were open, but the pre-determined regions provide more information on the distribution of the shrimp,” said Appelman. Despite the seemingly gloomy outlook for Pandalus borealis and the shrimp harvesters, Appelman says there is still hope. “There was a small peak in the [shrimp that hatched in] 2013. The Section decided to keep the moratorium to allow those shrimp to grow and reproduce so that they can contribute to the future stock.” He said people have asked ‘why not fish what’s left if they will just die anyway?’ ‘There’s still hope. There are still some shrimp out there.’
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ONE-CENT LEVY ON LOBSTER APPROVED ON P.E.I.

The Prince Edward Island cabinet has approved new regulations that will result in a one-cent-per-pound lobster levy collected from buyers next spring. P.E.I. Agriculture and Fisheries Minister Alan McIsaac said this is the final step for the province, after the regulations for a one-cent-per-pound levy for lobster fishermen were passed in the summer. Lobstermen will contribute one cent per pound of lobsters harvested; lobster buyers will contribute one cent per pound of lobsters purchased. The funds will go toward a generic marketing program for lobsters. “This is something that is trying to be done right across the region. P.E.I. will be the first province to have this in place and we are going to start in the spring fishery,” McIsaac said.

SHRIMP SEASON CANCELLED FOR THIRD TIME

For the third winter in a row, there will be no commercial shrimp season in the Gulf of Maine. The shrimp population in the gulf remains depleted and is too low to allow commercial harvesting, according to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.

“Ocean temperatures in western Gulf of Maine shrimp habitat have increased over the past decade and reached unprecedented highs in the past several years,” commission officials said in the statement. “While 2014 and 2015 temperatures were cooler, temperatures are predicted to continue to rise as a result of climate change. This suggests an increasingly inhospitable environment for Northern shrimp.” Estimated numbers for shrimp in the Gulf of Maine from 2012 to 2015 remain “the lowest on record” over the past 32 years, according to commission spokeswoman Tina Berger.

The commission did approve a research sampling program for 2016. The sampling limit was set at 45,000 pounds, with four travel vessels sampling four regions with a maximum trip limit of 1,800 pounds, plus two trappers with a weekly trap limit of 40 traps and a 600-pound trap limit. Participating trawlers and trappers will be able to sell their catch.

STATOIL GIVEN LEASES TO EXPLORE IN GULF OF MAINE

Two leases granted by Canada to Norwegian energy giant Statol would allow the company to look for oil offshore on two parcels of land near Georges Bank and the entrance to the Gulf of Maine. The two offshore licenses cover an area slightly larger than 2,500 square miles which lies about 225 miles southeast of Bar Harbor. Depths on the two parcels range from about 1,000 to 3,000 meters (approximately 3,300 to 9,900 feet). The northern sections of the Statoil parcels are located at the entrance to the Northeast Channel, the 22-mile-wide deep-water passage that is the primary entrance and exit for the ocean water that circulates through the Gulf of Maine. Statol paid $82 million Canadian for the rights to the two ocean-floor parcels. Shell Canada is already drilling two wells in deep water east of the Northeast Channel and Statol’s new leases.

JUDGE RULES PENOBSQUIT RIGHTS ARE TO LAND, NOT WATER

The Penobscot Indian reservation includes the islands on the main stem of the Penobscot River but not the water itself, a federal judge ruled in December. U.S. District Court Judge George Singal also ruled that members of the tribe may take fish from the entirety of that section of the river for sustenance. Singal’s rulings came more than three years after the tribe filed a lawsuit against the state as a result of a letter sent by former Attorney General William Schneider in 2012 to the tribal warden service saying that the state, not the tribe, has the authority to charge people with violating fishing regulations and water safety rules. The tribe alleged in the lawsuit that its reservation includes the water in the river because of the tribe’s sustenance fishing rights. Singal based his decision in part on language in the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act, which defined the Penobscot Indian Reservation as the islands “consisting solely of Indian Island, also known as Old Town Island, and all islands in that river northward.”

BELFAST SHIPYARD MOVES INTO CARBON-FIBER BOATS

Front Street Shipyard in Belfast is partnering with a Norwegian company to construct carbon-fiber ferry boats. J.B. Turner, president of Front Street, signed a memorandum of understanding with Brødrene Aa, a shipyard in Norway that has been building high-speed, carbon-fiber ferries for several years. The ferries Front Street is expecting to build would be between 100 feet and 130 feet long. The company intends to focus initially on passenger-only ferries that carry up to 150 people.

Per federal law, any commercial vessels operating within the United States, from lobster boats to passenger ferries, need to be built in the United States. This effectively meant the market was off limits to Brødrene Aa.

The carbon-fiber boats will result in much lighter boats, reducing the engine size and the amount of fuel used. “It’s an important step for Maine in general,” Turner said. “We have University of Maine, one of the biggest and best composite labs in the country, and so why shouldn’t Maine also be leading the way for boat building? It just makes perfect sense.” Front Street now employs slightly more than 100 people; building the ferries could add 50 to 100 jobs in the mid-coast area.

UMAINE REVIVES OFFSHORE WIND PLANS

University of Maine received a $3.7 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy which puts Maine back in the running for a $40 million grant to install two six-megawatt wind turbines in deep water off Monhegan Island.

“It does put us back in the game,” Habib Dagher, director of UMaine’s Advanced Structures and Composites Center and principal investigator of the DeepCwind Consortium, told MaineBiz in a telephone interview Monday afternoon. “We couldn’t be more pleased. This is a big deal.”

These funds build on the $3 million received for the Maine Aqua Ventus pilot project in May 2014.
The next Aquaculture in Shared Waters class is forming and is scheduled to begin in late January. The course, which has been run three times since 2013, aims to promote diversification along Maine’s working waterfront through training and support for fishermen and family members who want to branch out into aquaculture. Helping fishermen grow seafood as well as catch it is one way to increase options for those who make their living from the sea.

The class has been run twice in Harpswell and once in Corea. Participants included lobstermen, clam harvesters and others; several new businesses have begun as a result of the program. Collaborators in the program include Coastal Enterprises Inc., the Maine Aquaculture Association, the Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center, Maine Sea Grant and University of Maine Cooperative Extension.

The course covers a wide range of topics including site selection, gear and husbandry, permitting and regulatory issues, business management, sales and marketing, biosecurity, and more. The course is mostly targeted at shellfish and seaweed culture, but with possibilities for other products and processes as well. In the 2016 group, the course also will explore opportunities to link producers with the tourism and culinary industries. The class itself is a mixture of discussion and field trips, with frequent guest speakers. Course instructors have long experience in the aquaculture field, and those who go through the class will have access to all course instructors for continued help as they move forward with their new ventures.

Anyone with an interest is encouraged to get in touch. The project web page is www.seagrant.umaine.edu/aquaculture-in-shared-waters and you may contact Dana Morse, Maine Sea Grant, at 207.563.8186, dana.morse@maine.edu.

University of Maine Sea Grant Extension Associate Dana Morse, right, will be coordinating the 2016 aquaculture training classes. Aquaculture in Shared Waters teaches fishermen and others how to run a successful aquaculture business focusing on shellfish, seaweed and other marine species in Maine. Maine Sea Grant photo.
MLA Seeks Leaders for Board of Directors

Here's YOUR opportunity to set the course for the future of YOUR Industry
MLA Board Nominations are OPEN until Feb 1
Annual Meeting and election will be held Friday, March 4 at 9am

Did you know?
- MLA Directors are elected by Membership (com’l lobstermen)
- MLA Directors are elected for a 3-year term
- MLA Directors meet monthly, except August, in Belfast.
- Board members expected to attend at least 4 meetings/yr.
- Maximum # of Board members: 21
- Current board: 20
- Seats open: 7
- Average age of MLA Board: 56 (range 25 to 72)
- Age: (1 in 20’s, 0 in 30’s, 4 in 40’s, 6 in 50’s, 8 in 60’s, 1 in 70’s)
- MLA officers are elected by the Board

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<th>MLA Board geographic representation:</th>
<th>2016 Board Recruitment priorities</th>
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<td>A 3</td>
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<td>B 3 (1 expiring)</td>
<td>Dedicated lobstermen</td>
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<td>C 4 (2 expiring)</td>
<td>Diverse age and geographic</td>
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<td>Islands 7</td>
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Nomination Requirements
- To make a nomination, you must be an MLA member in good standing.
- All nominees must hold a valid commercial lobster license and be an MLA members in good standing.
- Deadline for nominations: February 1, 2016.
- Feel free to nominate yourself, or someone else.

Nominee Information
Name: ________________________________
Fishing Port: ________________________
Zone: ________ Town of residence: ________

Please let us know how this nominee could contribute to the MLA Board:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Nominator Information
Name: ________________________________
Lobster Lic. #: ________________________

Thank you for helping to keep the MLA strong!

Mail your nomination to the MLA office: MLA, 2 Storer St, Suite 203, Kennebunk, ME 04043.
Or feel free to call in your nomination to 967-4555 or email: patrice@mainelobstermen.org.