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Maine Lobstermen's Community Alliance
THE TASTE OF SUMMER: MAINE LOBSTER AND BEER

By Shelley Wigglesworth

There’s nothing like an ice cold beer to wash down a piping hot Maine lobster or traditional Maine lobster roll. So it should come as no surprise that Maine beer brewers have tapped into this tasty combination.

Maine’s most recognized crustacean has been featured on many craft beer logos and in beer advertising state wide over the years, from Portland-based Geary’s Brewing with its signature lobster logo to Kennebunkport’s Federal Jack’s wall mural featuring a rendition of a local man riding on a larger-than-life lobster.

Recently, however, pairing artisanal beer with lobster has become the norm. The combinations are now regularly suggested at many Maine breweries and seafood restaurants.

"Official or not, lobster is the logo associated with the state of Maine. It’s manifested itself in marketing everywhere and the beer business is no different," said Sean Sullivan, executive director of the Maine Brewers’ Guild. "Summer ales are the brews you are most likely to see the lobster logo on, mainly to attract tourists and the export market. But when it comes right down to it, all Mainers know that lobster is a year-round thing."

Quintessential Maine is just the quality that Geary’s Brewing wanted to convey in its marketing. "We chose the lobster specifically because it is a Maine icon and we are a Maine product striving to be a Maine icon ourselves," explained Kelly Lucas, operations manager at Geary Brewing.

Maine beer makers find diners enjoy a Maine lobster paired with a locally made beer. S. Wigglesworth photo.

When it comes to pairing beers with lobster, "That’s where it gets fun," Sullivan said. "There’s a beer to match just about any food and lobster is no exception. We have found that light lagers are commonly paired with and are the favorite choices with lobster, especially in the summertime."

David Carlson of Three Tides Waterfront Bar and Marshall Wharf Brewing Company in Belfast agreed. "Most of our diners prefer the lighter brews with lobster. At our restaurant, we find a lot of people drink our flagship pale ale, Tug Pale Ale, and also our lightest beer, Umlaut Kolsch, when they are eating their lobster," he said.

"Beer is just a wonderful accompaniment to lobster—period! It always has been and always will be," said Tim Adams, owner and brewmaster of Oxbow Brewing Company in Newcastle and Portland. "At Oxford, we like to pair our dry blonde and Belgian Farmhouse ale with lobster."

Maine beer makers find diners enjoy a Maine lobster paired with a locally made beer. S. Wigglesworth photo.

PENOBSCOT BAY HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEY BEGINS IN JULY

by Dean Moyles
Project manager, Fugro Pelagos

Fugro, an international geotechnical, survey, subsea and geoscience services company, will be conducting a NOAA-commissioned multibeam and LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) hydrographic survey in highly- trafficked and fished areas of Penobscot Bay this summer.

Multibeam echosounder surveys are generally conducted in response to requests by marine pilots, port authorities, the U.S. Coast Guard, fishermen, and the general boating community. Since many portions of Penobscot Bay have not received a modern multibeam survey since the 1990s, this new survey will provide valuable information for the community and up-to-date nautical charts for the region. The data from this project will be used to update the current nautical charts for the area and notices to mariners, as well as identifying any new navigation hazards such as wrecks and other obstructions.

The project is tentatively scheduled to begin on July 8 and will run through late September. The survey area covers the regions of Spaulding Island to Mosquito Island, Rockland Harbor, and North Haven Island to Vinalhaven Island.

Fugro will be mobilizing two catamaran-style jet drive survey boats with echosounders mounted on poles either over-the-side or at the stern to obtain multibeam data. These vessels will be used to survey and map the ocean floor in areas with water depths greater than...
Summer in Maine...who could ask for more? Thus far we have enjoyed a spectacular early summer, with dry sunny days and cool nights. The lack of rain may be a problem for gardeners, but for Maine’s visitors the month of June was perfect.

As we enter July, summer swings into high gear for many. And Maine lobster will be a major component of more than a few summer picnics. This month in Landings we look at the link between Maine lobster and one of Maine’s fastest growing small businesses, beer breweries. While using lobster as a logo or brand identity makes good business sense, pairing a Maine lobster with one of the state’s distinctive beers makes great culinary sense as well!

Maine lobster will be on the go in July and August as part of an initiative started by the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC). The MLMC is bringing both Maine lobster and Maine lobstermen to chef events in New York City, Atlanta, and Washington, D.C. to introduce celebrity chefs to the taste and the story of Maine lobster. As some of the lobstermen who will attend the events note in our story this month, it’s important that food professionals know about how a lobster is caught, who catches them and the industry’s long-standing sustainability practices.

One of the key elements that keeps the Maine lobster industry strong is having a steady source of lobstermen’s favorite bait, herring. Herring gather in large schools off the East Coast and travel northeast during this time of year, passing through the Gulf of Maine and on to the Maritime Provinces. They have a role not only as lobster bait, but as a foundational species for the region’s marine food web: everything likes to eat herring. Whales are one of the marine species in the Gulf of Maine which enjoy snacking on herring. Whales also become entangled in fishing gear while swimming in the region, a dilemma particularly threatening to the endangered North Atlantic right whale. But getting a multi-ton moving animal disentangled from heavy line and other gear is not a task for the untrained. Landings looks at who can disentangle a whale and how they do it in this month’s issue.

We also hear this month from two very different columnists. Stewart Lamont is manager of Tangier Lobster Company in Tangier, Nova Scotia. Lamont has been in the lobster buying business for many years and brings a sharp and occasionally controversial perspective on the Canadian lobster fishery. Patrick Keliher is the Department of Marine Resources Commissioner. This month he writes about his actions to ensure that lobster research needs are met well before any change occurs in the Gulf of Maine populations.

Although July promises to be the high point of the Maine summer, one should never forget that in Maine summer also means something other than lobster and the beach: fog. This month Landings begins a series on marine weather forecasts any time you set sail off the coast of Maine! Enjoy your summer. We hope you enjoy this issue and, as ever, would love to hear your feedback!

Thoughts from MLCA President Patrice McCarron

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We should and we must figure out a formula whereby all of these players can be successful. Each is dependent upon the other pieces of the puzzle and we ignore any stakeholder’s role at our absolute peril.

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by Stewart Lamont

For the second time in a short one hundred and twenty years, I find myself asking a very basic question: what, pray tell, is the value of a lobster? I wasn’t sure at Valentine’s Day. And I am even less certain this morning. Lately we have been investing big numbers in the product without a lot of thought beforehand. It has many people’s heads spinning, most of all our international customers (and of course, our bankers).

We have a terrific business sector in both Canada and America: fishing, dealing and exporting wild-caught Homarus americanus to a worldwide market that is increasingly eager for our lobsters. Our only ongoing challenge is to figure out how best to share the proceeds to make certain everyone is profitable and sustainable. Sometimes the dealers get too much, other times the fishers get too little.

We lost more days this spring from blowy conditions than at any time in many years. We had trouble finding supply that produces glorius lobster quality in Canada, but she has done us absolutely no favors with fishing weather. Two days of half decent weather would be followed by two or three days in which it was hardly safe to be on the water. We lost more days this spring from blowy conditions than at any time in the last 30 years or more. No doubt it will even out over time, but this particular spring was weather-challenged and then some.

As this is written the prevailing shore price in Canada is hovering at $3/lb. Canadian, and in many ports, that is fantastic for fishers but not so great for all of the other players. The price is likely not sustainable in the market unless lobsters are in desperately short supply and the shedsders come in later than anticipated. Processors in particular have had trouble finding supply that processed markets could afford at the same price for soft shell as for hard shell. Obviously if the catch is down the price must trend up accordingly. Obviously if the U.S. exchange is unfavorable it will impact the value of our lobster.

On top of all these considerations, please don’t let us forget Mother Nature. This spring she has given us glorious lobster quality in Canada, but she has done us absolutely no favors with fishing weather. Two days of half decent weather would be followed by two or three days in which it was hardly safe to be on the water. We lost more days this spring from blowy conditions than at any time in the last 30 years or more. No doubt it will even out over time, but this particular spring was weather-challenged and then some.

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Continued on page 6

Stewart Lamont is the managing director of the Tangier Lobster Company located in Tangier on the northeastern Nova Scotia coast. Photo courtesy of S. Lamont.

continued on page 6
GUEST COLUMN: We need good research to adapt to inevitable change

by Patrick Keliher
Department of Marine Resources Commissioner

Here in Maine we continue to enjoy good fortune in Maine’s lobster industry. But look a little to the south and things are starkly different. According to the 2015 American Lobster Benchmark Stock Assessment and Peer Review Report, the Southern New England Lobster stock is severely depleted with poor prospects of recovery, while the Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank (GOM/GBK) stock is experiencing record high stock abundance and recruitment.

Now is the time to evaluate the information we have available and what gaps need to be filled. We must be ready to adapt to the changing ocean environment and avoid the collapse that has occurred in the Southern New England (SNE) fishery. That’s why I made a motion in April that the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Lobster Technical Committee devote more resources toward research. This research would provide a deeper look at the complex factors that impact the combined GOM/GBK lobster stock.

The motion, which passed unanimously, is intended to pull together existing information and to gather new data which will provide managers the tools they need to sustain this valued resource.

Synthesize current literature and studies which investigate the connectivity between the GOM/GBK stock and Canada

The motion calls for a synthesis of existing scientific literature which investigates the connection between the GOM/GBK stocks and Canadian stocks. While there are differences in the management approach among Canadian and U.S. jurisdictions, there is clearly a mutual interest in sustaining lobster populations. Reviewing the literature will help establish a baseline from which the U.S. and Canada can work toward developing a coordinated approach to managing and sustaining this shared resource.

Plot changes in size distribution of egg-bearing females over time in the GOM/GBK stock

The Technical Committee will also review changes in the size at which lobsters become mature in the GOM/GBK. This information can help managers understand the impact of factors like temperature and harvesting effort on size distribution.

Investigate the stock-recruit relationship in the GOM/GBK stock

Investigate the competing biological management measures between Area 1, 3 and the Outer Cape Cod to look at the benefits of harmonizing these measures

Differing biological measures among Areas 1, 3 and the Outer Cape Cod Management Area will be reviewed to determine if they should and can be made consistent. As an example, each area has a different definition of a v-notch. Consistent management measures can potentially make sense in areas with the same stock.

Describe changes in GOM ocean currents and how this could be affecting larval supply patterns

Ocean currents within the Gulf of Maine will also be examined to assess how they impact important indicators of health like larval settlement. The more we know about larval settlement the better prepared we are to protect young of the year and thus predict the future of this fishery.

Investigate and develop a Traffic Light Analysis

By advancing a more focused and sophisticated approach to research for GOM/GBK lobster, I hoped to ensure that interstate managers have the tools to foresee and prevent the kinds of management issues that contributed to the collapse of the SNE lobster stock.

Change will happen. We need to have the tools in place to adapt.

MERCURY CLOSURE EXPANDED

The Department of Marine Resources (DMR) announced in late June that it will add a small area to the current lobster and crab fishing closure in the mouth of the Penobscot River in response to data gathered during 2014. The area will extend the closure’s southern boundary to between Squaw Point on Cape Jellison and Perkins Point in Castine.

In February 2014, the department closed an area in the river that extends from Wilson Point across to Fort Point and north into the river after receiving information from a federal court-ordered study, the Penobscot River Mercury Study (PRMS). The area within the 2014 closure is approximately seven square miles. The additional area adds nearly 5.5 square miles to the closure.

To confirm the methodology and results in the PRMS and to determine whether or not to change the closure boundaries, DMR monitored lobster and crab in 2014 and in 2015 in the closed area and beyond. Results of 2015 monitoring work are not yet available.

Data from DMR monitoring work done in 2014 are from areas inside the original closure, including Odom ledge, South Verona, and Fort Point, and three areas outside the closure, including Cape Jellison, Turner Point, and Sears Island. Results from the PRMS and 2014 DMR sampling were similar in that mercury concentrations in lobster tail and claw tissue decreased geographically from north to south. Levels in lobsters sampled from the Cape Jellison shore, an area immediately adjacent to the closure, and the shore adjacent to Turner Point were lower than most of the other areas sampled in 2014, yet elevated enough to warrant including in the closure.

On average, tails in 40 legal lobsters harvested for testing during 2014 along the south eastern shore of Cape Jellison contained 292.7 nanograms (a billionth of a gram) of mercury per gram of tissue (ng/g) while claws contained much less, at 139.2 ng/g. According to the FDA, canned white tuna contains 350 ng/g of mercury. In addition to lobsters, crabs were also included in the original closure and evaluated in the on-going monitoring work.
Atlantic herring (Clupea harengus) is a fat, oily little fish that has long been the mainstay of Maine lobstermen’s bait. It congregates in large schools off the East Coast each year, eventually migrating up the coast and offshore into the Gulf of Maine. Today herring are fished for lobster bait and fish oil. Yet increasingly they are also recognized for the role they play in the marine food web, as prey for other creatures.

Management of herring falls to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), which regulates species that cross state boundaries, and to the New England Fisheries Management Council (NEFMC), the federally-mandated body that sets the annual catch quota for herring, Maine and other states in which herring are caught must comply with regulations set by these two entities.

A specified amount of herring can be harvested each year from four defined areas (Area 1A is inshore Gulf of Maine) at specific times of the year. The NEFMC reduced that quota of herring abruptly in 2009 based on the belief that the herring stocks were overfished. That change had a ripple effect on lobstermen throughout New England. What once had been a stable and relatively inexpensive bait became more expensive and, at times, hard to find. Many made the shift to using what is known as “hard bait,” frozen species imported from around the world.

Following a benchmark stock assessment of the species, the quota for herring was increased and the stock is not considered overfished nor is overfishing occurring. Yet the allocation of herring remains a bone of contention among herring fishermen, environmental organizations, government managers, lobstermen and ancillary businesses such as recreational tuna charter companies.

Landings begins a summer series on Clupea harengus by looking at changes to how the herring quota is monitored in Area 1A this year in the wake of the abrupt shutdown of the fishery in 2015.

Each year a small number of fishing vessels set forth to the nearshore waters of Area 1A to catch herring. From June through September, the 1A fishery is limited to purse seine vessels. Larger boats that typically midwater trawl for herring can serve as carriers for the seine boats or re-rig and fish with seine gear. These are not small boats. The New England Fish Company’s F/V Providian is 113 feet long and can carry 20,000 cubic feet of fish in her hold. Her colleagues in the herring fleet are comparable in size and capacity. “The capacity of the four or five vessels out there is 1100 tons a night,” explained Matt Cieri, a biologist at the Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR). “And 2015 was a different sort of year.”

Herring typically school in massive groups and stay deep in the water column during the daylight hours. At night they may rise closer to the surface pursuing the tiny copepods and other creatures that are their prey. In 2015 unusually large schools of herring moved along the coast in late summer. The vessels, rigged with purse seines for that area at that time, set and caught large volumes of herring and did so very quickly. While the quota for the year in Area 1A was 30,585 metric tons, the amount that could be caught during that period, called Trimester II, was approximately 20,000 metric tons.

“Both ASMFC and the NEFMC monitor where we were in terms of quota,” Cieri continued. “But there were problems in the regulators’ office last year, people out on vacation or sick.”

The herring boats fished hard; carriers returned to port with a lot of herring, often to the point where the regulators were aware of the volume. By the time the boats had landed more than 95% of the total quota, causing the fishing to be shut down with virtually no warning in late August.

“The Period 2 quota was exceeded as a result of a problem with the federal reporting system that prevented effective and timely monitoring of landings to sufficiently slow down the fishery,” added Terry Stockwell, DMR director of external affairs and chair of the NEFMC. “Additionally there were other contributing issues including the aggregation of a large body of fish close to shore and the increased use of large carriers.”

“Keep in mind that the vessels report on a trip level basis every day,” Cieri said. “But they report on paper so there is a lag. A closure takes place within five business days. It’s hard to predict the future, particularly when the vessel trip reports aren’t finalized until March or April of the next year.”

Lobstermen don’t like it when they can’t get fresh herring. Bait dealers don’t like it when they can’t sell the bait that lobstermen want. The DMR doesn’t like it when lobstermen get on the phones and complain about lack of bait. As a consequence of the abrupt shutdown in Area 1A last year, DMR in May promulgated new rules concerning herring landings as a way to ensure a steady supply of the fish throughout the lobster season. The changes focused on limiting the amount of herring that could be landed in a Maine port. Specifically, no vessel can fish or land more than once in a 24-hour period. DMR also implemented the ASMFC’s restrictions on landing days. Vessels can only land during four sequential days in a week, from Sunday night to Thursday night.

“The intent is that fishing days and landings days will be the same,” said Meredith Mendelson, DMR deputy commissioner. When herring boats harvest large volumes of herring from a huge school, they may employ smaller carriers to transfer the fish from their holds to port, thereby allowing the larger boats to keep fishing. Under this rule, harvesting the fish and then loading a carrier to carry the fish to port would be curtailed.

“‘We also are not following the ASFMC rules concerning days out,’” Mendelson continued. Typically when the herring season starts in June, boats may fish seven days a week. During a conference call held among the states in early July, the catch rate is reviewed and the number of permitted days may be altered. This year Maine is instituting more restrictive controls on how many days fishing is allowed each week well before July.

“DMR intends to begin monitoring and posting the herring landings on a daily basis but this timeline is completely dependent on full collaboration with NOAA Fisheries Service,” Stockwell said. DMR Commissioner Patrick Keliher may promulgate the new state rules in July.

At press time, lobstermen were expressing concern that Area 1A herring were being landed too quickly which could lead to another early shutdown. The MLA raised these concerns with DMR and herring management officials. MLA’s executive director Patrice McCarron noted, “I’m hearing from lobstermen that the O’Hara boats are rigged for seining and that the other midwater vessels are serving as carriers. The fishing capacity created by these midwater boats participating in the 1A fishery poses the potential to land fish at a pace that far exceeds any of the projections made to date. Of major concern to MLA are the hundreds of smaller lobster buyers and bait dealers who do not have adequate storage to put up bait in the event of a shortage. This will translate into lobstermen with access to bait, effectively shutting them out of the lobster fishery. And of course, bait prices for everyone will skyrocket. Action needs to be taken.”
This summer the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC) has once again set its sights on educating the movers and shakers in the food world about the special qualities of Maine lobster. The MLMC and more than ten lobstermen will be taking the lobster directly to invited chefs and food service professionals in New York City, Atlanta, and Washington, D.C. this summer. The events will be hosted by a celebrity chef in each city and will take place late at night, when most chefs have closed their restaurants for the evening. “We are calling it ‘Maine After Midnight’ because that’s when the chefs get off work,” explained Matt Jacobson, executive director of the MLMC.

The events will give the chefs a chance to taste new-shell and hard-shell Maine lobster and sample creative lobster dishes cooked up by the host chef. Attendees also will have a chance to learn about the Maine lobster fishery directly from the lobstermen who will be at the events.

Bruce Fernald of Islesford is quite straightforward about why he is participating in the New York City chef event. “They asked me. And I like to do what I can to support the fishery. If I can do something good in talking about lobster, I’d like to do it,” he said. Fernald went to a similar event hosted by the Culinary Institute of America in Napa Valley, California, in 2015. It was the first time he had been introduced to food industry professionals. “I was around all the chefs and people in the food business and it was great talking to them. I just don’t like getting up in front of a microphone. I hate a microphone,” he said. Fernald knows that he will miss a few days of hauling in August, when the fishing is busy. “It’s OK. Giving something back is important,” he said. Fernald went to a similar event hosted by the Culinary Institute of America in Napa Valley, California, in 2015. It was the first time he had been introduced to food industry professionals. “I was around all the chefs and people in the food business and it was great talking to them. I just don’t like getting up in front of a microphone. I hate a microphone,” he said. Fernald knows that he will miss a few days of hauling in August, when the fishing is busy.

Captain Tom Martin, F/V Lucky Catch, gives chef Kwame Onwuachi from the Shaw Bijou in Washington, D.C., a hands-on education about Maine lobster. MLMC photo.

July 11
Maine After Midnight at Little Bacch, Atlanta, Georgia, hosted by chef Anne Quatrano (www.starprovisions.com/little-bacch).

July 18

August 1
Maine After Midnight at Marc Forgione, New York City, hosted by chef Marc Forgione (www.marcforgione.com).

Mark Jones of Boothbay Harbor will also be going to Atlanta in July. “I think we [the lobstermen] bring a down-to-earth view of what goes on to catch a lobster, how it’s handled,” he said. “It’s caught by an individual small-business owner basically and it’s a sustainable fishery.” Going to Atlanta in the middle of the summer might not be everyone’s idea of fun but Jones thinks it’s a good use of his time. “It will benefit the industry to talk to these people. Hopefully it will be worth it in the long run. This is what the MLMC is all about, to get more people to buy our lobsters and improve the boat price.”

The events will start at 10 p.m. and run until 2 a.m., hours at which most Maine lobstermen are sound asleep. “It will take me some time to catch up on my sleep when we get back,” Jones admitted.

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By Melissa Waterman

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MAINE LOBSTERMEN’S ASSOCIATION UPDATE

Maine Lobstermen’s Association

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

President: David Cousens
So. Thomaston, 594-7518
1st VP: Kristian Porter
Cutter, 259-3306
2nd VP: John Williams
 Stonington, 367-2731
Sec/Treasurer: Donald Young
Cushing, 394-6404

Directors
Bob Baines, Spruce Head, 563-5208
John Baines, South Thomaston, 594-7518
Herman Combs, Orr’s Island, 807-8996
Gerry Cushman, Port Clyde, 372-6429
Jim Dow, Bass Harbor, 288-9864
Dustin Delano, Friendship, 542-7241
Arnie Gamage, Jr., South Bristol, 644-8110
Dustin Gamage, Jr., South Bristol, 644-8110
Mark Jones, Boothbay, 633-6054
Jason Jusce, Swan’s Island, 526-4109
Jack Merrill, Islesford, 244-4187
Tad Millin, Machias, 372-6491
Billy Spurr, Yarmouth, 846-9279
Jay Smith, Nobleboro, 563-5208
Craig Stewart, Long Island, 829-2109
John Trupp, Spruce Head, 091-9744
Chris Welch, Kennebunk, 205-2093

Staff
Executive Director: Patrice McCarron
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Navigator: Alisa Koester
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Membership Director: Andi Pelletier
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Maine Lobstermen’s Association
2 Storer St., Suite 203
Kennebunk, ME 04043
207.976.4555
www.mainelobstermen.org

Board of Directors’ Meeting Schedule
All meetings take place at Darby’s Restaurant, Belfast, unless otherwise indicated.

July 6, 6:00 p.m.
No meeting in August

STEAMING AHEAD

Summer is finally here! The tourists are pouring into Maine, bringing their generous appetites for Maine lobster. Fortunately for them, the lobster fishery is in full swing this month, with traps bursting with Maine new-shell lobster ready to feed our growing markets.

Summer also signals the time for Maine Lobstermen to share some of their good fortune with the organization that has been here for more than 62 years fighting for you! Yup, it’s membership time. If you join by August 31, you’ll be entered into a drawing to win $1,000! Thanks to Smithwick & Mariners Insurance for their generosity in making this raffle possible. If you don’t have your boat insured with them, please take the time to get a quote. MLA Board members review the policy each year and have made some great improvements for 2016. Boats in the MLA Vessel Insurance program do not have a required lay-up period. If you take sea samplers from Maine Department of Marine Resources, federal observers or researchers from UMaine, they are already covered by your plan if you carry Protection and Indemnity (P&I) insurance. No extra phone call, no extra charge. The MLA Vessel Insurance program also offers a 5% discount if you’ve taken a Coast Guard-certified safety course. It’s a great deal and just one of the great benefits we offer our members.

The MLA has an amazing track record. Anytime there has been an issue that matters to lobstermen, the MLA is there — though it isn’t always easy. There’s no doubt that the MLA has had its ups and downs over the years. During our 62 years, countless issues and changes related to lobstering have come and gone. Some have been easy to resolve, many more have been controversial and others have been downright painful. Plenty of lobstermen have disagreed with MLA positions over the years. But regardless of which side of an issue you stood on, you could always count on the MLA to be there and to be honest, transparent and accountable for its actions.

The MLA continues to be successful due in large part to loyal members who support the MLA year after year, and who have repeatedly elected a very strong board of directors to lead the organization. It is because of its members and the people they elect to the board that the MLA has always been a leader with a clear vision: to balance the industry’s present-day needs with the goal of securing a strong lobstering future for succeeding generations.

Energetic and thoughtful men and women have consistently stepped up to serve on the MLA’s board, with four brand new board members stepping up over the last two years. The MLA board has ably represented lobstermen and harbors from throughout the coast since the day it was organized. Gather lobstermen from throughout Maine at a table and you can be sure that when the dust settles, the consensus in the room will be to do what is good for the industry as a whole. While each person is guided by his own experiences and the needs of his community, board members share a tremendous respect for another’s point of view. After all, they share a mutual aim: to make sure that the opportunities that they have enjoyed — to make a living on the water independent of any corporate interests — does not elude the next generation.

The MLA does not take on work unless it directly benefits or affects Maine lobstermen. We are the oldest and the largest fisheries organization in the state yet still a relatively small and very nimble organization. We have never forgotten who we are and why we are here.

It’s hard to fathom how much our industry has changed over the past 62 years. When the MLA was established in 1954, Maine landed only 22 million pounds of lobster worth $8 million and the boat price was 34 cents! We now have four years in a row with landings exceeding 120 million pounds. The price paid to lobstermen totaled just under $500 million. Maine’s lobster industry is truly a success story, and I genuinely believe that the MLA has played a huge role in its achievements.

Sixty-two years is a long run for a group of notoriously independent lobstermen, each of whom has his or her own business to run, to continue to work together. Just keeping the lights on for more than six decades is an accomplishment all by itself. But when your job is to remain a cohesive and effective organization while representing a group of staunchly opinionated lobstermen spread across 3,500 miles of coast, standing up for this industry for more than 60 years is a true achievement.

The MLA is 62 years old this year, and we are stronger and more flexible organization than ever. I take great pride in the MLA — in its history, in its thoughtful approach and its amazing accomplishments. The MLA always has been and always will be a membership organization. The MLA has never forgotten why it was formed or who it is here to serve. If our membership is strong, the MLA is strong. If it is not, there would cease to be an MLA.

Whether you are old, young, or somewhere in between, a long-time MLA supporter or someone just thinking about getting more involved, we need you! Please show your pride in the Maine lobster fishery and in the MLA and join us in the celebration by renewing your membership today. A membership renewal flyer is included in this issue of Landings, or you can call the office or join online.

Thank you for your support.

As always, stay safe on the water.

Patrice

This peaceful scene of Carver’s Harbor on Vinalhaven gives little hint of the hard work that goes on during the lobster season. M. Waterman photo.
The MLA board met on June 1. Patrice had provided the board with a series of updates on recent meetings and issues including the New England Fisheries Management Council (NEFMC) herring meeting, Take Reduction Team monitoring meeting, International Entanglement and Bycatch meeting, and the University of Maine meeting on groundfish bycatch. Details of these meetings were summarized in the June Landings.

MLA continues to monitor closely other emerging issues. The Northeast Regional Planning Body recently released the Draft Northeast Ocean Plan which is available for review and public comment until July 25. The MLA has worked with the Island Institute to review a lobster characterization that will be included in the plan; the MLA will review the plan and provide comments.

The MLA continues to monitor the Swedish petition to ban Maine and Canadian lobster from the EU. The Maine Lobster Dealers Association has taken on the lead in this issue, and the Maine delegation and Department of Marine Resources (DMR) have been closely involved. The MLA will continue to stay engaged as the issue is resolved. MLA continues to liaise with Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI) on their lobster season forecast and the negative press produced as a result of forecast announcements. We plan to meet with GMRI representatives, as well as Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC) and the Dealers Association to talk about how to manage this information in a more sensitive manner moving forward. MLA Directors discussed the season to date. The Prince Edward Island lobster fishery was off to a slow start which has helped to stabilize Maine lobster prices. As a result, the Maine boat price has actually increased and many buying stations are offering a split price. Most MLA Directors have seen some shedding, but there is no sign that the shed is happening early. Instead, lobstermen are seeing pockets of shedders in deeper waters, where water temperatures are below 55°F. There are a few reports of some shedders in shallow waters, but not up in the rivers where they might be expected.

MLA continues to monitor the NEMFC’s work on the coral amendment which could have significant impacts on areas around Mount Desert Island and Schoodic Peninsula where some deep water corals have been identified. MLA is also staying in touch with the contractor for the Penobsot Bay Hydrographic Survey and will keep area lobstermen informed as that project schedule is finalized.

MLA Board of Directors prepares for change of leadership

by Melissa Waterman

The dictionary defines “transition” as the process of changing from one state or condition to another. For the Maine Lobstermen’s Association (MLA) transition is just another facet of the organization’s long history. The MLA began in 1954 as a small group of lobstermen who were concerned about getting more than 34 cents per pound for their catch. Today it is a statewide organization that grapples with local, state and federal issues affecting all Maine lobstermen and the fishery. During those 62 years, the MLA has been fortunate to have a board of directors comprising lobstermen from harbors large and small, led by a president whose perspective encompasses the entire coast. First Leslie Dyer of Vinalhaven, then Ossie Beal of Beal’s Island, followed by Ed Blackmore of Stonington, and David Cousens of Beals Island. The MLA has been fortunate that Patrice McCarron. During each leader’s tenure the MLA faced many controversies and conflicts.

At the MLA Board meeting in June, David Cousens announced that he plans to step down as the MLA president in 2019. By that time Cousens will have served as MLA president for 28 years, the longest-serving president in the organization’s history. The process of handing over the helm of the MLA has already begun. New officers were elected from the board of directors at the June meeting, Kristan Porter of Cutler will serve as vice-president, taking the position vacated by Jim Dow; John Williams of Stonington will serve as second vice-president; and Donny Young of Cushing will serve as secretary/treasurer, taking the position vacated by Arnie Gamagne Jr.

Williams has been a member of the MLA “since forever,” he said. “I signed up in 1969 and haven’t had any other interest in fishing. I’d better be a member.” He has served on the board of directors for slightly more than three years now. “They asked me to be on the board several times. When my wife became free to drive me, I joined,” Williams said. Being a board member of the MLA doesn’t always sit well with the other lobstermen in Williams’ area. He said that he’s been accused of being brainwashed. “I say to people stop complaining. If there’s something you don’t like, come to a meeting. I have a friend who doesn’t like the MLA because of Dave. I told him now there’s no excuse not to be a member!” Williams laughed.

MLA membership renewal will take place this summer. The MLA board voted not to increase dues and to continue to focus on growing the MLA membership base. The harvester renewal will start with an insert in the July issue of Landings, will continue with electronic notices, and finally a direct mailing. Those who join by August 31 will be entered to win a $1,000 prize, generously funded by Smithwick and Mariners Insurance and the MLA. There will be new member hats as well as other gear for sale.

The MLA board discussed the herring fishery, and the need to closely monitor the last few days. MLA is also advocating to keep the Area 1A herring bait supply open through September.

The Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance will be hosting several Claws for a Cause events this summer to raise funds for the Lobster Leadership Program. MLCA welcomes suggestions on local restaurants, pizza joints and other shops along the coast that might be interested in hosting a fundraising night or having a donation jar.

During open discussion, board members raised several concerns. Some are concerned that replacement tags are too easy to obtain; they suggested that DMR should consider issuing only 20 replacement tags at a time. Others are concerned that the penalties for violating marine laws are not stiff enough to deter violations. Board members cited infractions such as lobstermen who use 880 as the trap limit, those who continue to store gear over winter in the lobsterman’s own territory is like in terms of lobstering,” he said.

Donny Young, who lobsters out of Cushing, has been on the MLA board for eight years. “I wanted to be involved, to know what was going on and to have a voice,” he explained. Being a board member has allowed Young to learn more about how other lobstermen operate along the coast and to meet lobstermen from areas very different from his own. “Any rules or regulations apply to everyone but they affect other regions differently. It’s important to know how they fish in other areas and how laws affect lobstermen there,” he said.

Becoming secretary/treasurer of the MLA wasn’t easiest thing, either. “I thought much about until he was elected. “I think the guys worked it out in the car on the way to the meeting. Then they nominated me and there you go!” he joked.

MLA Board hopes that this first step begins to lay the groundwork for the transition. There are a lot of new board members who need to get a few more years of experience under their belts before considering a leadership role in the organization. “The MLA is an amazing organization and our board is top-notch,” said Patrice McCarron. “Change is never easy but this group is clearly able to rise to the challenge.”

The MLA Board of Directors prepares for change of leadership
The Zone C Council convened on June 9 to continue its deliberations regarding limiting entry to the zone. The Council voted unanimously to close the zone and to send out a survey which will ask all Zone C lobstermen three questions: Do you support limited entry in Zone C? If yes, do you support an entry/exit ratio of 1:1 based on licenses exiting the fishery? and do you support grandfathering apprentices who have completed 92% of their apprentice hours (184 days and 920 hours) as of June 9? If the Zone Council supports grandfathering these Apprentices, they would be exempt from any waiting list.

The Zone C Council has up to one year to consider the survey results and make a recommendation to the Commissioner, though it is expected that the process will not take that long. If the recommendation to implement an exit ratio of 1:1 is accepted, the proposal will go through rulemaking and go before the DMR Advisory Council for approval.

## SWANS ISLAND – ISLAND LIMITED ENTRY PROGRAM

In June, the Swans Island interim committee of lobstermen voted to move forward with the Island Limited Entry Program. In preparation, a referendum survey was conducted of Swans Island lobstermen to get feedback on the issue. The referendum received a 67% response rate. In response to the question “Do you support establishing a Swans Island limited-entry program allowing for up to 72 commercial lobster licenses to be issued to Swans Island residents?” 56% (28 votes) were in favor of establishing the program, while 44% (22 votes) were against. The Legislature recently changed the rules of the Island Limited Entry Program. Previously a 2/3 majority vote was required to move forward with the program, but now only a majority of the votes is necessary.

The question will move through the rulemaking process which will include a public hearing and an opportunity to provide written comment. If the proposal is recommended to move forward, it would then go to the DMR Advisory Council for approval. If an Island Limited Entry Program is established, it would allow those on the waiting list to obtain a license on Swans Island; up to 72 licenses would be permitted. Swans Island had 74 licensed lobstermen in 2015, and there were 67 licenses issued as of June 2016.

## MAINE LOBSTER MARKETING COLLABORATIVE (MLMC)

The MLMC Board met in June. The Board reviewed its criteria to assess its progress over the previous quarter. These reports will be issued four times a year. The MLMC also previewed several new videos highlighting different aspects of the lobster industry. These will be used to support marketing and promotion of Maine lobster and will be released over the summer of 2016. MLMC’s key focus this summer is “Maine after Dark,” a series of events with influential chefs in New York City, Washington, D.C. and Atlanta. Maine lobstermen will be part of each event, providing an opportunity to speak directly with influential chefs about Maine lobsters' stewardship practices, traditions and sustainable fishery.

## ASMFC SHRIMP SECTION

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission’s (ASMFC) Northern Shrimp Section met in early June to resume development of Draft Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Northern Shrimp. The amendment was initiated in 2014 to address overcapacity in the fishery. Prior to closure of the fishery in 2014 due to collapsed stocks, overcapacity had been identified as an important issue to be addressed in order to effectively control harvest.

Draft Amendment 3 explores state-by-state allocations, seasonal- and area-based management to control effort in the fishery, and the mandatory use of size-sorting gear systems to minimize harvest of small shrimp and ensure resource sustainability. The draft amendment will also explore additional reporting measures to ensure all harvested shrimp are reported. The Section removed limited entry as an option for consideration in the draft amendment with the understanding that Maine would explore alternative options to reduce overcapacity in the state's shrimp fishery. The Section will meet in November to review the 2016 stock status report for northern shrimp and set fishery specifications for the 2017 fishing season. The draft amendment will be presented to the Section for its consideration this winter.

## FEDERAL OBSERVERS ON LOBSTER BOATS

NOAA announced that Northeast lobster vessels will be required to carry federal observers for only 14 sea days in 2016. This is sharp decline from the 484 trips assigned to Maine and Massachusetts in 2015. In the last quarter alone (Jan. to March 2016), Maine lobster boats completed 33 federal observer trips.

## DRAFT NORTHEAST REGIONAL PLAN

The MLA continues to monitor closely other emerging issues that could affect the fishery. The Northeast Regional Planning Body recently released the Draft Northeast Ocean Plan which is available for review and public comment until July 25. The Plan advances three goals: healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems; effective decision making; and compatibility among past, current, and future ocean uses. The Plan focuses on the ocean environment from the shoreline seaward (thus including waters in state and federal jurisdictions), while recognizing linkages with the ocean to the north, south, and east, as well as with coastal communities. Although the Plan imposes no new regulatory requirements, it proposes the use of data, intergovernmental coordination between federal agencies, tribes, and states, and stakeholder engagement to guide and inform federal agency activities toward meeting these three goals.

The National Ocean Policy, established by President Obama’s Executive Order in 2010, funded the formation of nine regionally focused Regional Planning Bodies to better manage the nation’s oceans and coasts. New England was the first region in the nation to respond to this call, launching the Northeast Regional Planning Body in November 2012. It includes representatives from the six New England states, ten federally recognized tribes, ten federal agencies, and the New England Fishery Management Council. The RPB has no authority to create new regulations. Its mandate is to create a plan and oversee its implementation, with many opportunities for public participation.

## AREA 1A HERRING LANDINGS

![Table of herring landings](image)

The herring fishery had 3 landing days in June; four landing days on July 1. The default plan would increase to five in mid-July. The draft amendment is scheduled to meet again on July 11 to review landings and reassess landing days.

### Swedish claims called into question by lobster experts


The European Union (EU) has been considering a request from Sweden to ban the import of American lobsters because they can be considered an invasive species. Researchers found no scientific evidence to support that claim, and forwarded a report to the EU Scientific Forum on Invasive Species to counter claims from Swedish scientists that American lobster pose a threat to European waters.

"We are pleased that both U.S. and Canadian experts have found there is no firm evidence that American lobsters are an invasive threat to Europe and that their analyses will be considered in the risk assessment," Collins and Poliquin said in a joint statement with other members of Maine's congressional delegation. "We will continue to fight for Maine's lobster industry and do everything we can to ensure that all of the facts are considered in this assessment."

EU officials said that Swedish scientists have until July 31 to provide additional information to the Scientific Forum to support their claim before a final ruling is issued.

If the forum finds convincing scientific evidence, the Committee on Invasive Alien Species will consider additional factors like economic considerations before ruling on a proposed ban on American lobster imports.
Many thanks to these fine businesses, the MLA’s Keeper members!

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FOUND A TAGGED LOBSTER?

If you find a lobster with a yellow t-bar tag marked with “AOLA” please contact:
Heidi Henninger at 603-828-9342 or heidi@offshorelobster.org

Atlantic Offshore Lobstermen’s Association (AOLA), working with the New Hampshire Fish and Game, is tagging eggbearing, v-notched, and oversized lobsters on Georges Bank in 2015, in order to track migration and investigate growth rates.

What to report: date, location, tag #, lobster sex, whether the lobster had eggs or v-notch and whether you kept or released the animal. If you have a way to measure carapace length in millimeters, we would appreciate that information as well.

Rewards: 1st place - $500, 2nd place - $300, 3rd place $200. Each tag report will qualify as one entry into the raffle. Raffle winners will be drawn July 1, 2016. Planning underway for another raffle in 2017.

If you haul a tagged lobster, please release it and contact:
Heidi Henninger 603-828-9342 or heidi@offshorelobster.org

MAKE IT MAINE, MAKE IT NEW SHELL

MEDIA DIVE INTO THE MAINE LOBSTER INDUSTRY FOR AN IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE

The Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative hosted local and national media to educate them about the industry and Maine New Shell Lobsters

This June, the MLMC hosted national and local media in Maine so they could experience the industry first-hand. Local media joined the MLMC to learn more about the robust industry in their own backyard.

National media and bloggers traveled to Maine to learn about how lobsters get from trap to table - with a look at how they are caught, processed, and prepared. They went out on the water to get an overview of how lobsters were harvested, toured a processing facility, and along the way they experienced the culinary side of Maine Lobster, and saw (and tasted) different variations on how to enjoy!

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**Support Maine’s future Leaders**

The Maine Lobstermen Leadership Institute’s (MLLI) purpose is to develop leadership amongst younger lobstermen. Curriculum includes:

- lobster fishery science & management
- understanding lobster markets
- hands-on learning opportunities
- cultural exchange program with other fishing communities
- and mentoring from current industry leaders.

75% of 2014 MLLI participants are in leadership positions throughout the lobster industry.

Please support our future leaders.

Donate today.

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Typographical errors are unintentional and subject to correction.
Business support matters

The health of Maine’s economy depends on the success of our lobster fishery. And that success happens when the industry works together to keep our profession thriving.

Here at MLA, we work hard to keep our lobstermen prospering. We are grateful to have strong support from the business community.

Join us!

Be part of the success. Join the MLA and connect.

www.mainelobstermen.org/member
207-967-4555  andi@mainelobstermen.org

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MLA MEMBERS DISCOUNT DIRECTORY

Bait Dealers

Bessy Bait, LLC
Seabrook, NH -- $5 discount per drum on multiple drum purchases (must show current MLA card).

Boat Builders/Repairs

Richard Stanley Custom Boats
Bass Harbor, ME -- $1,000 discount for hull or tops.

South Portland, ME -- 10% off hydraulic components and Cable Craft cables.

Legal Services

Nicholas H Walsh PA
Portland, ME -- 20% off legal services.

Lobster/Seafood/Wholesale

Craig’s All Natural
Durham, NH -- 10% discount on all Victorinox Cutlery bait knives. Call to order.

Fishing, Marine & Industrial

Hamilton Marine
Seabrook, Rockland, Portland, Southwest Harbor, Jonesport, ME -- Discounts available to commercial fishermen.

North Atlantic Power Products
Exeter, NH -- 10% discount on parts and service.

Maine Camp Outfitters
Sunset, ME -- 10% off all apparel and promotional product orders.

Hydraulics

Coastal Hydraulics
Seabrook, NH -- 10% discount on all in-stock items for MLA members.

Nehs Company, LLC
South Portland, ME -- 10% off hydraulic components and Cable Craft cables.

Industry Organizations

Maine Lobstermen’s Association
Kennebunk, ME -- 10% off MLA merchandise.

Insurance

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

Legal Services

Nicholas H Walsh PA
Portland, ME -- 20% off legal services.

Winter Harbor Fishermen’s Coop
Winter Harbor, ME -- 10% off picked lobster meat.

Newspapers

Commercial Fisheries News
Deer Isle, ME -- Discounted annual subscription rate of $18.75 with MLA membership noted on check.

National Fisherman
North Hollywood, CA -- Special annual subscription rate.

Propellers

Accutech Marine Propeller, Inc
Dover, NH -- 10% off propeller repair & new shafts. New propeller discounts vary.

New England Propeller Inc
Plymouth, MA -- Discounts on marine propeller, shafting, and related items, sales & repairs.

Refrigeration Services

Applied Refrigeration Services
Windham, ME -- $230 off new installations.

Safety Training & Equipment

Liferaft Services, LLC
York, ME -- 5% off liferaft repack with proof of MLA membership. CAN be combined with other promotions.

McMillan Offshore Survival Training
Belfast, ME -- 10% discount on USCG Drill Conductor training.

Liferaft Services, LLC
York, ME -- 5% off liferaft repack with proof of MLA membership. CAN be combined with other promotions.

McMillan Offshore Survival Training
Belfast, ME -- 10% discount on USCG Drill Conductor training.

Trap Builders, Stock & Supplies

Friendship Trap Company
Friendship, ME -- 5% off list price on traps purchased at Friendship store. Cannot be combined with other discounts.

Sea Rose Trap Co.
Scarborough, ME -- 5% off trap list price when you show your MLA card.

Winter Harbor Fishermen’s Coop
Winter Harbor, ME -- 10% off picked lobster meat.

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Press release

Trace My Lobster is the first and only U.S. company to build a technology platform to trace a live lobster from its origins in the ocean to its destination on your plate. Over 60 lobstermen, three lobster wharves, three lobster dealers, and one national grocery chain now participate in the program that utilizes internet and smartphone technology to improve seafood traceability in the lobster fishery.

Since the program was launched at the Portland, Maine Whole Foods Market location two years ago, Trace My Lobster uses uniquely coded tags, attached to every lobster caught by a participating lobsterman, to record when and where the lobster was caught, as well as the lobsterman who caught it. By entering the tag’s code online or using a smartphone app, consumers can follow the timeline of an individual lobster’s journey through the supply chain, verifying its source, freshness and story behind the lobsterman who caught it.

“As a leader in seafood sustainability and traceability initiatives, Whole Foods Market is pleased that our Portland, Maine location is the first grocery store in the U.S. to offer live lobster traceability from the lobster trap to the table using Trace My Lobster,” said Matt Mello, the North Atlantic seafood coordinator for Whole Foods Market. “Trace My Lobster is a meaningful way to showcase some of Maine’s hardest working lobstermen while providing full transparency to our customers.”

Trace My Lobster presents a new way for the lobster industry to meet the growing demand for seafood that is sustainably sourced, responsibly harvested, and reliably traced. In connecting lobstermen with retailers, the program provides participating grocery stores and restaurants the opportunity to distinguish themselves from their competitors by offering consumers complete transparency and fully traceable seafood. "The technology still relies on the traditional, and very important, supply chain between harvesters, wharfs dealers and distributors to bring the tagged lobster to market” stated Craig Rief, founder of Trace My Lobster and president of Craig’s All Natural, an all-natural seafood product company based in New Hampshire.

“Trace My Lobster is a unique and innovative program that allows us to convey the story behind the important connection we have with lobstermen and the high quality lobster our company is able to provide to our domestic and international customers,” said Tom Adams, CEO of Maine Coast, one of the newest participants in Trace My Lobster.

Trace My Lobster was developed in 2014 as a collaboration between Craig Rief and Jonathan Caron. Rief has over 10 years of experience in the lobster industry and currently serves as the president of the Maine Certified Sustainable Lobster Association. Caron has over 20 years of experience in technology and intellectual property through his previous employment at Vivendi Universal.

Joining Trace My Lobster is fast and easy for retailers. Grocery stores and restaurants can use their existing suppliers or Trace My Lobster can provide access to a list of participating suppliers. The same holds true for harvesters, wharfs and dealers that want to join.

“As an industry we have such a powerful story to tell, and believe that the Trace My Lobster program is a valuable and exciting innovation to help connect consumers with our narrative,” said Matt Jacobson, Executive Director of the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative. “Our mission is to encourage both chefs and consumers to make it Maine when choosing what product to consume, and with this program we can deliver the rich stories of our lobstermen who are committed to sustainably harvesting the best lobster on earth.”

### 2016 MAINE LOBSTER BOAT RACING

**NEW APPLICATION ALLOWS CONSUMERS TO TRACE MAINE LOBSTERS**

| 16 JUNE | Boothbay Harbor | Ashley Latreue | (207) 633-2413 |
| 19 JUNE | Rockland | Dot Black | (207) 972-5669 |
| 26 JUNE | Bass Harbor | Wayne Rich | (207) 244-6523 |
| 3 JULY | Moosabec Reach, South Island, Jonesport | Adrian Rood | (207) 396-5397 |
| 10 JULY | Stiegelton | Nick Whallon | (207) 316-3373 |
| 15 JULY | Pineus Point | Wes Lash | (207) 633-7507 |
| 15 AUGUST | Winter Harbor | Scott Young | (207) 613-2172 |
| 16 AUGUST | Kearsarge Harbor | Don Doolittle | (207) 677-1952 |
| 26 AUGUST | Long Island Lobster Boat Races | Lisa Kimmell | (207) 332-3503 |
| 31 AUGUST | MS Lobster Boat Race | Jon Johnson | (207) 323-8546 |

**SCHEDULE**

**AB Races:**
- **Sign-up:** 5 to 9 AM
- **Races Start:** 10 AM

**Exceptions:** Long Island. Sign-up 5-2 PM. Start 3 PM

**Late or VIP:** Check-in 10
OLD ANTHEM INSURANCE PLANS TO BE DISCONTINUED

by Alisha Keezer

Do you have a grandfathered or grandmothered* Anthem health insurance plan? Be aware: Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield has been given permission by the Bureau of Insurance to stop offering their grandfathered and grandmothered legacy plans. For lobstermen, this means that if you have a high-deductible health insurance plan from the pre-Obamacare days, you are likely to lose that coverage.

The plans that are ending are:
- Anthem HealthChoice
- Anthem HealthChoice Standard and Basic
- Anthem HealthChoice HDHP
- Anthem HealthChoice Standard and Basic
- Anthem Lumenos Consumer Directed Health Plan

The plans that are ending are:
- Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield

Maine residents have seen steep premium increases over the past few years for these ‘grandfathered’ and ‘grandmothered’ health plans. As more and more Mainers have purchased their health insurance through the Affordable Care Act’s (ACA) health insurance marketplace, those who have stuck with their grandfathered or grandmothered plans have been hit with double-digit premium increases.

Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield had a 19.9 percent premium increase in 2016 for these plans. The increase was due in part to the fact that so many people have switched over to the ACA plans, thus there are fewer people in the insurance pool for the old plans. That increases the financial risk for insurers which drives the premiums up.

Many lobstermen purchased these plans before the ACA was implemented. At that time, they were attractive because the plans had lower premiums and higher deductibles. They were considered catastrophic coverage plans which would protect assets in case of major medical bills rather than covering day-to-day medical care. These old plans typically do not meet the ACA standards or cover the services required by the ACA. The government permitted these plans to continue to exist for a limited time; as of 2017 they will no longer be available.

In many cases switching to the health insurance marketplace will be a better deal for consumers, though family size, income, age and geography all affect monthly premiums. The ACA was designed to enable people who don’t have access to employer-based health benefits, such as self-employed or part-time workers, to be able to buy affordable health coverage.

Plans available through the health insurance marketplace are offered in four different categories:
- **GOLD:** Covers 80% of medical costs
  - Premium: $$$
  - Cost of Services: $*
- **SILVER:** Covers 70% of medical costs
  - Premium: $$
  - Cost of Services: $$*
- **BRONZE:** Covers 60% of medical costs
  - Premium: $*
  - Cost of Services: $**

**CATASTROPHE:** Only available to those under the age of 30
- Premium: $*
- Cost of Services: $$$*

*Note: Health plans in place prior to passage of the ACA on March 23, 2010, are referred to as ‘grandfathered’ plans. After millions of existing health insurance plans were cancelled at the end of 2013, the Obama Administration decided to allow insurers to renew certain non-ACA policies that were not grandfathered if they were in place on October 1, 2013. These plans are referred to as ‘grandmothered’ plans.

CENTER FOR MARITIME SAFETY AND HEALTH STUDIES ESTABLISHED

By Alexis De Leon

Technical Information Specialist and Research Assistant, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Alaska

The ocean environment presents many challenges to those who must protect seafaring workers’ safety and health. Some of these challenges are seen dockside at shipyards and marine terminals, while others are unique to vessels operating in commercial fishing, freight transportation, and passenger service. Workers in marine industries are at higher risk for work-related fatalities. The commercial fishing industry regularly has the highest annual fatality rate among all occupations in the U.S., and the water transportation industry has a fatality rate 11 times higher than the rate for all U.S. workers.

In November 2015, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) announced the establishment of the Center for Maritime Safety and Health Studies (CMSHS). The Center will conduct research to enhance occupational safety and health for this high-risk worker population. The CMSHS hopes to build research partnerships with stakeholders throughout the U.S. and the world.

*Priority research and prevention projects will be determined by assessments based on the burden of the hazard, the need for the project, and its potential impact. Stakeholder input will be collected throughout the research process,* said CMSHS director Jennifer Lincoln.

The establishment of CMSHS builds on the success of the NIOSH Commercial Fishing Safety Research and Design Program. In 2007, NIOSH expanded its fishing safety research program from a regional program (located in Alaska) to a national program. Since then, the Commercial Fishing Safety Research and Design Program has undertaken a national surveillance program for all commercial-fishing fatalities in order to identify high-risk fisheries and regional hazards. Research activities have focused on the prevention of vessel disasters and falls overboard, which are the leading causes of fatalities in commercial fishing.

NIOSH research has influenced regional, national and international fishing safety polices and NIOSH scientists are frequently approached by external partners for technical assistance. The success of the Commercial Fishing Safety Research and Design Program serves as a base for the CMSHS to expand to other maritime subsectors such as marine transportation, ship building and commercial diving. For more information about the Center visit www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/maritime/default.html or email the center at CMSHS@cdc.gov.
**DISENTANGLING A WHALE TAKES TRAINING, SKILL**

By Melissa Waterman

Many visitors to Maine this summer will go out on a whale watching tour. If they are lucky they may see one of the Gulf of Maine’s many whale species: humpback, sei, minke, finback, or the endangered North Atlantic right whale. Unfortunately, the whales that enrapture visitors may find themselves entangled in fishing gear as they traverse the region. Rope from lobster traps, fishing nets and other gear can cause serious harm to or even kill an entangled whale. The Marine Mammal Protection Act, passed by Congress in 1972, requires that such animals be set free as soon as possible.

But that’s not easy. A whale is a big animal with powerful muscles and, like any wild animal, will shy away from a human’s approach. North Atlantic right whales are among the most powerful of the whale species found in the Gulf and the most depleted in population. Getting fishing gear off a whale is a dangerous process, both for the whale and for the rescuers. Thus only those specifically trained in the proper procedures are legally allowed to do so.

The NOAA Fisheries Service certifies who can disentangle a whale. Initially, only staff from the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies (PCCS) were licensed to do so. Trained personnel from the Center travelled all along the East Coast in response to sightings of entangled whales. In 1995, NOAA organized the Atlantic Large Whale Disentanglement Network in order to coordinate responses to sightings. Finally, in 2009 NOAA Fisheries moved to a decentralized approach. It began to work with state agencies to develop trained regional response teams. In addition, NOAA Fisheries set up agreements with states through Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act to provide funds for whale conservation and disentanglement activities.

In Maine, only trained staff in the Bureaus of Marine Patrol and Marine Science within the Department of Marine Resources (DMR) are authorized to disentangle a whale. Earlier, beginning around 2002, lobstermen had been trained by the department and experts to disentangle non-endangered marine mammals. Nearly 100 lobstermen were trained as Level 2 responders and 12 lobster boats were equipped with stainless steel cutting and grappling tools, explained Laura Ludwig, who worked for DMR at the time and is now at PCCS. Keeping a large number of fishermen up to date in terms of training proved too unwieldy, however; getting in touch with them on short notice in the event of an entanglement was difficult as well. NOAA Fisheries moved away from fishermen responders to a trained team approach.

"There are nine [Marine Patrol] officers and myself trained to Level 3," explained Erin Summers, a marine resource scientist at DMR [see sidebar]. "Two are about ready to move up to Level 4."

The object of the responders is to free the whale from any gear tangled around its body. That is difficult when the animal is swimming freely. In order to get close enough to the whale and reduce the risk of injury, the responders attempt to tire the animal. Kegging buoys, typically polyballs, are attached to the trailing gear to create more drag and to keep the whale at the surface where it can be approached.

Six of the bureau’s vessels are outfitted with equipment kits designed specifically to disentangle a whale. "The kits carry 10-foot aluminum or carbon fiber pole sections that can be fit together to different lengths," Summers said. "There are cutting tools -- a flying knife [used when the animal is moving] and a fixed knife. Plus different types of grapples." Most often used is a four-prong grapple with a line tied to it which is thrown across the trailing gear in an effort to latch on. The vessels also have standard and GoPro cameras to document the entanglement. The GoPro cameras can be attached to the vessel, on the helmet of a responder, or mounted on a pole to get underwater footage of the entanglement. There are also satellite tags which can be attached to the whale to track its location if responders can’t begin work immediately.

Advanced training for responders takes place at PCCS in Provincetown. "The Center runs a multi-day program on assessment, how to attach to a whale, and other essentials," explained David Morin, NOAA Fisheries large whale disentanglement coordinator. Those attending the class watch videos the Center has recorded of disentanglement cases and practice techniques on the water. "One vessel will act as the whale, trailing gear behind it as it moves. The other team practices grapple throws, attaching buoys and cutting," Morin explained. To move to a higher level requires an advancing amount of experience and skill. "There is no concrete number of cases required," Morin continued. "It really depends on experience and skill.

Level 1

- Professional mariners (i.e. fishermen, naturalists, Marine Patrol Officers). Boating experience and/or experience around whales is highly suggested.
- Rapidly alert NOAA Fisheries Disentanglement Network of first hand and/or second hand knowledge of local entanglements;
- Depending on experience, stand by an entangled whale until backup arrives; and/or
- Communicate with crew on the vessel that is directly standing by the entangled whale.

Level 2

- Professional mariners. There is a higher expectation of commitment and participation from Level 2 responders.
- Provide a thorough assessment of the nature of the entanglement and the species, condition and behavior of the whale;
- Provide local knowledge, transportation, and assistance to Primary First Responders, as needed, on a voluntary basis;
- Be on call, as available, to assist in planned disentanglement operations on telemetry-tagged whales.

Level 3

- Whale researchers and naturalists, fishermen, natural resource agency personnel, Marine Patrol Officers
- Be on call 24 hours and respond if conditions allow;
- Initiate and maintain preparedness with local fishing industry, U.S. Coast Guard, and other resources;
- Prepare local disentanglement action plan;
- Provide entanglement assessment, documentation and recommendations to Primary Disentanglers during events;
- Attach telemetry equipment to entangling gear if needed and authorized;
- May be asked to disentangle a minor entanglement other than North Atlantic right whale under the supervision/authorization of Level 4 or 5 network members. Authorization and supervision may be given over the phone or radio depending on the circumstances and level of experience.

Level 4

- Responsibilities
- Report, stand by, assess, document, attach a telemetry buoy, consult on an action plan and disentangle all large whales except North Atlantic right whales
- Report, stand by, assess, document and attach a telemetry buoy to North Atlantic right whales
- On a case-by-case basis and after consultation, certain cuts on known entangled North Atlantic right whales may be permitted at level 4 if the proposed action is first approved by NOAA Fisheries Service and/or level 5 disentanglers
- Level 4 Disentanglers should routinely be able to attempt disentanglement of all large whales other than North Atlantic right whales.

Level 5

- Responsibilities
- Report, stand by, assess, document, attach a telemetry buoy, consult on an action plan and disentangle all large whales including North Atlantic right whales.

Department of Marine Resources Marine Patrol officers and NOAA staff untangle a humpback whale off Mount Desert Island. DMR photo.
Pale Ale brews with lobster. These brews are citrusy, dry and refreshing, a perfect complement to lobster, and our customers seem to agree."

Oxford Brewing took the concept of lobster and beer a step further by using Maine lobsters as an ingredient in its Saison dell’Aragosta beer (‘aragosta’ is the Italian word for lobster). "We add live lobster to the boil kettle during the brewing process. It’s great because we get to eat the lobster afterward and it has a delicious and distinct flavor from being brewed in the malt,” Adams said.

After the lobsters are cooked, the brew mixture itself absorbs the lobster essence and the end result is a tart, salty, wheat beer with a hint of lobster flavor. Saison dell’Aragosta came about as a collaboration between Oxbow Brewery and an Italian brewery called Birrificio del Ducato, located outside of Parma.

"Giovanni Campari, their master brewer, was in Maine and suggested we try to boil lobster in the wort, which is a liquid created in the brewing process. So we did it," Adams explained. He replaced much of the hops normally used in the brew process with live lobsters and used wild yeast for fermentation. The beer was then aged for a year. “It was quite a process but it worked well and received rave reviews. We continue to brew it today,” Adams said.

The lobster beer became news, spreading the Oxbow Brewery’s name throughout the United States and abroad. Adams thinks that notice helped not only his company but the Maine lobster industry as well. ‘I have no doubt that the enormous press we got for the Saison dell’Aragosta benefitted not only the beer brewing industry but the Maine lobster industry as well. Worldwide attention and recognition of Maine lobster and Maine brews sparks interest in the unique culinary possibilities of lobster. That is something that benefits all of us.’
GULF PRODUCTIVITY IN TROUBLE DUE TO PHYTOPLANKTON DECLINE

By Fred Bever, MPBN
Reprinted with permission

Over the last century the Gulf of Maine’s blue waters have yellowed. That’s what scientists at the Bigelow Laboratory in East Boothbay reported in a recent study this month, and it indicates trouble for the microscopic plants that are the foundation of the gulf’s food chain.

And the findings wouldn’t be possible were it not for some overlooked 19th-century work the researchers didn’t realize was right under their noses.

More than a century ago, Henry Bigelow piloted his 90-foot wooden schooner, the Grampus, into the Gulf of Maine. He was starting a 12-year, systematic study of the gulf, its fish and its plankton.

He brought along a recently invented device called a Forel-Ule scope — a row of test tubes in a wooden frame, filled with colored fluids that ranged on a precise scale from blue to green to yellow to brown. With the sun at his back, the 32-year-old scientist held the rack toward the horizon and carefully noted the water’s comparative color at dozens of coordinates.

For many decades, those data points, published in a 1,000-plus page compendium of his gulf work, went largely unexamined. But two years ago Dr. William Balch, senior scientist at the Bigelow Lab, took a deep dive into the treatise, which had been kicking around his office since an antiquarian bookseller sold it to him 10 years before.

"I was sitting right on this chair and I was hootin’ and hollerin’, because it was just too good to be true," he says.

That’s because, for nearly two decades, Balch has been making eerily similar measurements of ocean color as he creates his own long-term baseline study of the gulf. He uses all the latest gear — he’s got an updated plastic Forel-Ule scope, electronic light meters, access to NASA satellite data, GPS and submersible data-hunting drones.

But what’s being measured? It’s basically the same.

And we had all the information we needed to then go back to calculate what were the Forel-Ule scales and then to compare them to what Bigelow saw over a century ago," Balch says.

"The coordinates are there. The temperature and salinity he measured as well, and the color. And it's yellower. It's extraordinary, the changes in water color now that we see compared to what they used to be," Balch says.

It's still predominantly blue, but the range from blue to yellow is greater — about twice as wide along the scale as what it was in Bigelow's day. And that correlates with increased precipitation scientists link to climate change. It's washing dissolved organic material from watersheds up and down the coast into the gulf.

Balch says it's like dark, yellow-brown tea steeped from dead leaves and soil. And that, he says, contributes to massive declines in the productivity of phytoplankton.

"Think of it like basically putting sunglasses over the ocean. So the phytoplankton now have to compete with the tea that's coming in and is absorbing all the blue light that the plants need for photosynthesis. That's one of the hypotheses," he says.

Balch and his colleagues have measured declines in phytoplankton productivity of as much as 80 percent, which may correspond with declines in some gulf species higher up the food chain. And using current models of continuing increased precipitation, he and his colleagues predict the trend will continue.

On Thursday, they’ll load a cargo container full of equipment onto a borrowed research vessel and set out from Portsmouth for a three-day voyage to gather more baseline data from the changing Gulf. In more senses than one, they’ll be sailing in Henry Bigelow’s wake.
SUNNY? CLEAR? JUST WAIT

By Melissa Waterman

As any fisherman knows, the clear skies and warm sun that charm vacationers to Maine during the summer months often exist only over the land. Out at sea the sun quickly can become hidden by a bank of cold, dank fog, obscuring land, sea and sky for hours or days at a time. Maine and Canada’s Maritime Provinces have the dubious reputation as the summertime home of fog. Where does all this fog come from?

"Fog is the condensation of water particles in the air," explained John Jensen, a National Weather Service meteorologist in Gray. "Humid air will move over a colder surface. As the air temperature drops to the dew point, you start to get fog."

Air contains water vapor. As air cools, it loses the ability to hold all that dissolved moisture. The dew point is the temperature at which air can no longer hold water vapor; that moisture precipitates out as fog or rain. On land, fog often occurs overnight in valleys, as cooling air sinks into the valley, reaches the dew point, and its water vapor is released as fog.

Despite reports of its warming, the Gulf of Maine remains a cold sea. For example, data from the Eastern Maine Shelf buoy recorded by NERACOOS in 2015 show that the sea surface temperature in that area of the Gulf stayed in the 49°F to 53°F range for most of July and August. On a few occasions the surface water reached 56°F and 58°F. The air temperature, however, hit 65°F several times during those months. That contrast leads to fog over the water.

There are lots of different types of fog. "Advection fog means fog that is moving," Jensen said. "If you have a sea breeze in the afternoon, that fog will move in to land." Radiation fog happens when large air masses begin to cool, typically in the fall, while the ground is still quite warm. The moisture evaporating from the land hits the cool air and makes fog. In the winter fishermen may experience sea smoke. In this situation, it’s the water that is warmer than the air. Extremely cold, dry air moves in over the ocean, whose temperature is significantly warmer than the frigid air. "Moisture from the warmer water moves up into the air. That’s sea smoke," Jensen said.

It’s not surprising that fishermen from Newfoundland to Maine refer to the thick banks of fog they encounter during the summer as a "dungeon of fog." You can’t see a thing in a fog bank. Sound refracts oddly; straining eyes see things that aren’t there. Given that the temperature of the Gulf of Maine has gone up by 0.4°F annually during the past decade, one might think that a time would come when the traditional fogs of summer would disappear from the Maine coast. Don’t get your hopes up. “It’s hard to project into the future. But even if the atmosphere and the water are warming, there still will always be a sharp difference," Jensen said. And that difference equals fog.

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR IMMERSION SUIT

By Alisha Keezer

Immersion suits, also known as survival or "Gumby" suits, have been around since the 1960s in their current form and even earlier in simpler forms. Immersion suits are the key reason why fishing fatality rates have dropped in the past decades. Today, a neoprene shell with a waterproof zipper is the most common type of suit. These suits provide the two most important features for cold water survival: flotation and insulation. In order to ensure your safety and your suit’s effectiveness, you must pay attention to it.

Caring for your immersion suit

- Maintain the snaps on the bag, allowing for the suit to come out easily.
- Make sure to remove any paperwork that is in the bag with the immersion suit. Most likely, there will be registration forms and an instruction placard. These may hamper donning the suit.
- Regularly wax both the inside and outside teeth on the zipper of the immersion suit.
- Look on the back panel of your suit where the instructions for donning and care are located and find the date of manufacture. Suits should last 12 to 15 years depending on care, maintenance, and stowage.
- Never store your suit in hot areas.
- Fold the suit by rolling it up from the feet, place the arms over the roll, and then place the hood over the arms. This allows the hood to come out first.
- Make sure that the inflation valve for the high rider ring/pillow can reach your mouth. It is manufactured short and when used under stress, may be pulled on and possibly torn.
- Proper care and maintenance of immersion suits will extend their working life and possibly your own.
- Place the suit in a clean, dry, and accessible location. Proper care and maintenance of immersion suits will extend their working life and possibly your own.
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- Fold the suit by rolling it up from the feet, place the arms over the roll, and then place the hood over the arms. This allows the hood to come out first.
- Make sure that the inflation valve for the high rider ring/pillow can reach your mouth. It is manufactured short and when used under stress, may be pulled on and possibly torn.
- Make sure to remove any paperwork that is in the bag with the immersion suit. Most likely, there will be registration forms and an instruction placard. These may hamper donning the suit.
- Proper care and maintenance of immersion suits will extend their working life and possibly your own.
Disentanglement continued from page 17

depends on the difficulty of the situation. A panel of advanced disentanglers reviews a person’s resume to decide.”

The number of whale entanglements along the coast of Maine varies from year to year, Summers said. One year there may be three or more incidents; in other years, none. To keep their skills sharp, the Marine Patrol Officers regularly take part in refresher training exercises. In addition, DMR recently acquired an inflatable soft-bottom boat specifically to use for entanglement incidents through a grant given by the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund. The new boat can be sent quickly to wherever it is needed on the coast. Marine Patrol Officers are learning how to deploy the boat this summer.

In Morin’s opinion, the most important thing to keep in mind when disentangling a whale is patience. “Take your time and understand how the whale is wrapped in the gear,” he said. “You don’t have to do something right away. If the animal can get to the surface to breathe, you have days, even weeks.”

If you see an entangled whale, contact the NOAA Fisheries hotline immediately at 866-755-6622.

Penobscot Bay and the planned Priority sections for the hydrographic survey.

8 meters. In addition to the two vessels, a small aircraft will be fitted with an Airborne LiDAR Bathymetry (ALB) system to map data inshore of the 8-meter contour. The LiDAR system is ideally suited for mapping shallow water areas and the coastal zone.

Vessel selection for this survey was based on feedback from a meeting held with Maine Lobstermen’s Association members and lobster zone representatives on April 6 in Rockland. During the meeting it was noted that Fugro was actively looking into vessels that were equipped with jet drive propulsion, which would avoid tangles with fishing gear.

Survey operations will be based out of Rockland, with the first vessel planned to be in Rockland on July 8; mobilization of the vessel is anticipated to take three to four days. Once mobilization is completed the vessel will conduct one day of system calibrations and then commence the survey. The current survey plan is to start in Priority 1 (labeled as 1 in the graphic). It should be noted that survey operations depend greatly on weather, therefore survey operations may be shifted to another Priority. The second vessel is planned to be in Rockland on July 16; again there will be three to four days to mobilize and one day of calibrations. Fugro plans on starting this vessel in Priority 4 and in exposed areas depending on the weather. Both vessels will be monitoring channel 16 and a working channel (yet to be determined).

Fugro will have a temporary office established in Rockland. The company’s point of contact for any further questions is Dean Moyles (Cell: 858 945-6378; Email: dmoyles@fugro.com).
The New England Aquarium received $180,000 in June for research into developing a rope that would be useful to fishermen and also whale-friendly. The organization will work with rope manufacturers and an engineer to develop ropes that would break at a maximum of 1,700 pounds, thus reducing whale entanglements significantly, according to Aquarium scientists. A second grant of $19,000 went to the South Shore Lobster Fishermen’s Association to field test a breakaway rope that splices buoy ropes every 40 feet with “sleeves” made of hollowed-out cord used in Gill net fishing. When pulled, the sleeves tighten, holding the rope pieces together so that traps can be retrieved. But the sleeves, in theory at least, will break under the immense power of a large whale. The rope projects are efforts to reduce the number of entanglement deaths of whales, sea turtles and other large ocean animals.

A new fisherman’s hoist has been installed at the Bar Harbor town pier. A group of 21 lobstermen who fish full-time split the cost of having the new hoist built by Frenchman’s Bay Boating Company (FBBC) to replace an older, gantry-style hoist near the eastern corner of the pier. The other hoist, on the western corner of the pier, has not changed. ‘The fishermen agreed it would be a good idea to have a second hoist,’ Harbormaster Charlie Phippen said. “It’s configured differently than the one that got replaced. It was designed and fabricated by FBBC based on what the fishermen said they needed for capabilities.”

NOAA photo.

Lobster RED Board makes grants to four Maine organizations

The Maine Department of Marine Resources has announced that it will provide four organizations with grant awards from the Research, Education and Development fund.

Penobscot East Resource Centre (PERC), the Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance, University of Maine System and Colby College are the four organizations set to receive funding. “These projects will help sustain Maine’s iconic lobster fishery by fostering a new generation of educated and engaged fishermen, by improving our understanding of the complex marine environment, and by refining our ability to measure the impacts of the lobster industry on Maine’s economy,” said Patrick Keliher, Maine Department of Marine Resources Commissioner.

PERC will receive $37,500 to develop four lobster curriculum units for its Eastern Maine Skippers Program which is an education initiative for high school students planning a career in the lobster fishing industry. The Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance will be awarded $37,500 to build the Maine Lobstermen’s Leadership Institute (MLLI), which provides education for Maine’s lobster industry members. Participants in the MLLI program will complete three training modules which will include discussions of industry issues such as management, science, market and supply chain dynamics and product quality. There will also be modules that provide opportunities for experiential learning and information exchange with fishermen participants outside of Maine.

A research project, titled “A Prospective Approach to Addressing Lobster Health in the Context of a Changing Ecosystem,” will be developed by the University of Maine System. The university will receive $127,482 to support the project which will be on the changing ocean ecosystem and how these changes can impact lobster reproductive development and susceptibility to disease.

Finally, Colby College will receive $81,657 to conduct an analysis of economic impacts at each point along the supply chain in Maine’s lobster industry.

The funding for projects is provided by the Research Education and Development Board through revenues from the sale of Maine lobster plates.
DEEP SEA CORAL AMENDMENT MOVES FORWARD

During its April meeting, the New England Fishery Management Council reviewed and adopted the Habitat Committee’s recommendations for updates to previously adopted alternatives in the Deep Sea Coral Amendment.

The Deep Sea Coral Amendment is a measure designed to protect deep sea corals which are found at depths of 50 meters and below, provide shelter for managed fishes and their prey, and are slow growing.

At the April meeting, the Council also adopted the Committee’s problem statement, which serves to articulate goals and objectives for the Council as it continues to move the amendment forward.

Management alternatives may include restrictions on mobile and fixed gear.

The problem statement is as follows:

“The Council is utilizing its discretionary authority to identify and implement measures that reduce, to the extent practicable, impacts of fishing gear on deep sea corals in New England. This amendment contains alternatives that aim to identify and protect concentrations of corals in select areas and restrict the expansion of fishing effort into areas where corals are likely to be present.”

“Deep sea corals are fragile, slow-growing organisms that play an important role in the marine ecosystem and are vulnerable to various types of disturbance of the seafloor. At the same time, the importance and value of commercial fisheries that operate in or near areas of deep sea coral habitat is recognized by the Council. As such, measures in the amendment will be considered in light of their benefit to corals as well as their costs to commercial fisheries.”

The Council approved revised boundaries for analysis including the following twelve canyon zones already under consideration: Alvin, Veatch, Hydrographer, Welker, Heel tapper, Oceanographer, Gilbert, Lydonia, Powell, Munson, Nygren, and Heezen.

The Council also added the following eight canyon zones for analysis: Atlantis, Nantucket, Dogbody, Clipper, Sharpshooter, Filebottom, Chebacco, and an unnamed canyon between Nygren and Heezen.

The Council also approved for analysis the following deep-sea coral zones in the Gulf of Maine: Jordan Basin, Outer Schoodic Ridge and Lindenkohl Knoll.

A Habitat Committee meeting is scheduled in August to review the analyses and to continue the development of alternatives for the Draft Amendment. The Council is scheduled to finalize its decision on the preferred boundaries in September. Public hearings will be scheduled for November-December with the Council slated to take final action in January 2017 and implementation planned for October 2017.
Maine residents and visitors alike look forward to the many festivals celebrating the state’s connection to the sea during the summer months. Events like the Maine Lobster Festival in Rockland, now entering its 69th year, or the popular Yarmouth Clam Festival, which has been held each year since 1965, reflect Maine’s traditional fisheries in new and updated ways. Whether it’s a clam shucking contest (below right) or a dash across lobster crates in a chilly harbor (below left), these festivals are a celebration of Maine’s vibrant fishing heritage.