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Maine Lobstermen's Community Alliance

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LEGISLATURE OFF TO A SLOW START ON LOBSTER BILLS

by Patrice McCarron

The first session of the 128th Legislature started slowly with regard to lobster-related bills. With more than 15 bills submitted that would affect the lobster industry, public hearings have been held on just three; eight bills had not yet been printed as of the end of February.

On February 13, the Marine Resources Committee co-chaired by Senator Joyce Maker (R-Calais) and Representative Walter Kumiega (D-Deer Isle) heard testimony on three lobster bills. LD 14 An Act to Extend the Legal Hours for Harvesting Lobster, sponsored by Rep. Kumiega, proposes to extend the legal hours to harvest lobsters during the month of October by changing the time fishing can begin in the morning from ½ before sunrise to 5 a.m. The DMR opposed this bill, citing concern that it would increase opportunity for night hauling and strain enforcement. The MLA and a few others from the lobster industry testified in favor of the bill. The MLA noted that the start time for hauling has been a long-standing issue for Downeast lobstermen and that LD 14 proposed a good compromise.

LD 113 An Act to Stabilize Lobster Bait Prices, sponsored by Rep. Alley of Beals, proposes to stabilize the price of lobster bait through measures such as increasing the number of people that may fish for bait; amending the limits on specific species of bait; and amending restrictions on the types of species that may be used as bait. The DMR, MLA and several representatives from the herring industry opposed this bill. The primary concern is that bait is managed through the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the New England Fishery Management Council.

Continued on page 10
I'm often asked by people from out of state, "So what do you DO all winter?" They seem to think that we all huddle in our cabins amid 12 foot snowbanks and whistle wooden spoons for months at a time. Far from it! This month, for instance, kicks off with the three-day Maine Fishermen's Forum. The forum brings together a diverse group of fishermen and their families at the Samoset Resort in Rockport to catch up with each other and with the regulators, scientists and non-governmental organizations which play such significant roles in Maine's commercial fisheries. It's a high-octane event which many look forward to.

Later in the month, Seafood Expo North America, formerly the Boston Seafood Show, takes place in Boston. This international seafood show is the largest in North America, attracting vendors and visitors from around the world to learn about new products, trends and activities related to seafood. Maine lobster is represented through the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative's exhibit as well as their Sunday night lobster reception, which brings together lobstermen, chefs and potential clients. Several Maine lobster businesses also exhibit at the show. The Expo is another exciting event highlighting Maine's links to the world.

That global connection is one of the elements focused on at the Lobster Leadership Institute, which began its second session in February. As Landings notes, fifteen young lobstermen are taking part in the Institute to learn the tools and skills necessary to become the next generation of leaders in Maine's lobster industry. They are learning about the science, management, economic and marketing aspects of the lobster business, a business that grows more complicated by the year. In May, Institute participants will visit Prince Edward Island where they will stay and fish with P.E.I. lobstermen in order to learn more about that province's successful fishery.

Winter also marks the time when the Maine Legislature is back in full swing. Landings reviews the work of the Marine Resources Committee on lobster-related legislation, and looks ahead at additional bills under consideration. The Maine Department of Marine Resources has put forward its budget proposal for the next biennium. The budget proposes a controversial increase in all marine licenses to fill DMR's budget but opposed the fee increases, urging legislators to stand in support of Maine's lobster industry by funding the DMR's budget without raising commercial fishing license fees.

Landings continues its month this month on student research taking place at the University of Maine with an article by Kei Tanaka. Tanaka, a doctoral student and National Science Fellow, uses a computer model to predict possible changes in lobster populations based on increased water temperatures at the sealoor. With warmer temperatures, it is likely that the distribution of lobsters in the Gulf of Maine will shift and that certain biological patterns, such as the time of molt, will change as well. Tanaka's computer model has generated maps that show potential change, which could have great significance for Maine's coastal economy.

According to Bernie Berry, head of the Coldwater Fisheries Management Council on an amendment to the region's groundfish management plan and the role that scientific data plays in that process. Groundfishermen have long complained that regulators do not know how to fish and thus do not have the means to estimate how many groundfish are in the ocean. The result has been inaccurate information resulting in poor regulations to manage the fisheries. In response, the MECMA, in concert with other organizations, has outfitted groundfishing vessels with monitoring systems that use cameras. Fishermen can document what they catch and what they throw back on each trip, providing regulators with accurate and timely data. This technique, Martens says, "...is a chance to ensure managers no longer rely on sub-par information to regulate New England's fisheries..."

As March comes to a close we will begin to think about green grass, fresh leaves, and piles of newly painted buoys waiting to go into the water. We will also have to think about brown-tail moths. An invasive species, brown-tail moths decimated trees along the coast of Maine last year, and, according to the Maine Forest Service, promise to do so again this spring. The moths are more than an unsightly mess. Hairs from the caterpillars' skin and cocoon cause a severe rash on human skin and for some people, extreme respiratory problems. The toxic hairs may remain in the environment for two to three years. Spraying pesticides is one way to control brown-tail moth outbreaks. The Maine Board of Pesticides Control recently reviewed the list of chemicals that are permitted within 250 of marine waters and amended that list in order to protect the lobster industry, as you will read in this month's issue.

Winter in Maine may be long, but as readers will learn in Landings, it's rarely quiet. We hope you will enjoy this month's issue and as ever, we welcome your ideas for additional articles.

Patrice

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By Col. Jon Cornish

Recently, it has been brought to the department’s attention that there is some confusion as to how the new double tagging requirement will work for the upcoming lobster season. Those fishing in zones F and G or B and C likely already have some experience working within this process since double tagging, or the use of secondary zone tags, is already in place there. So what does this change mean to everyone else?

Take the time to read the language in the new rule stated below:

**Fishing in a Non-Declared Lobster Zone**

By June 1, 2017, all Class I, Class II or Class III lobster and crab fishing license holders must affix a second zone tag to their traps when fishing those traps in a zone other than their declared lobster zone. This second zone tag will be in addition to their declared lobster zone tag.

A person who holds a Class I, Class II or Class III lobster and crab fishing license may not fish more than 49% of that person’s lobster traps in a zone other than their declared lobster zone unless that person’s license identifies that zone as the declared lobster zone.

The tags must be obtained from the Department of Marine Resources.

The absence of a second tag on traps fished in a zone other than their declared lobster zone shall be prima facie evidence of a violation of this regulation.

Any fisherman that fishes lobster gear outside the boundaries of his/her declared zone must place a secondary zone tag in their trap as well as the declared zone tag. Only 49% of the gear that you are legally allowed to fish may be placed outside your declared zone. All of that gear must be double tagged.

To Summarize:

You may fish up to 49% of your lobster traps in any zone outside your declared zone (also referred to as home zone). Any lobster trap fished in your non-declared zone will have two tags attached to it. One of these tags will be your primary declared zone tag (no change) and the other tag will be a secondary zone tag and will display the letters SCND instead of the declared zone letter. The secondary zone tag will not have EEZ stamped on it even if you have a Federal Permit. Your declared zone tag will have EEZ stamped on it thus covering you.

Remember double tagging applies to both state and federal waters. There is no limit to how many secondary zones you may declare, up to 49%, as long as all gear that you fish outside your home zone is double tagged.

All traps fished in a non-declared zone must have both trap tags attached to it.

When you fill out your application you must declare your home zone and all additional zones you will be setting gear in. A fisherman who purchases 800 tags would be able to fish 392(49%) of their gear outside his home zone.

EXCEPTION: Any fisherman fishing within the Zone E boundaries will only be allowed to fish 600 traps total regardless if you have Zone E listed as your primary or secondary zone. In this case if your home zone was outside Zone E and you had 600 tags you can only fish 294 in Zone E.

The fine points of double tagging

Col. Cornish is the chief of Maine’s Marine Patrol Bureau. DMR photo.

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Accurate monitoring critical in groundfishery

By Ben Martens

The New England Fishery Management Council announced the development of Groundfish Amendment 23 and a series of scoping hearings throughout New England including one on Friday, March 3, at the Maine Fishermen’s Forum. The purpose of this Amendment is to improve the reliability and accountability of the Council’s monitoring program. In a press release, Council Executive Director Tom Nies further explained that “The Council, fishermen, and the public recognize the groundfish monitoring program needs improvement. This is the first and best opportunity for people to suggest ways to create a program that will give the accurate, reliable information needed to manage this fishery.”

The accuracy of the data gathered by these monitors is critical to the success of New England’s groundfishery, as it helps tell the fishermen’s side of the story during the stock assessment process.

Fishery management is a data-hungry enterprise so it isn’t surprising that there is a new focus on getting more reliable data into the scientific process. As much as we have seen movement toward incorporating “big data” into decision-making for marketing, finance and even baseball, fisheries managers are beginning to demand timely, accurate, and verifiable data to help them set regulations and establish catch limits. A lack of good data often forces managers to make decisions with a limited understanding of ecosystems, fish stocks and industry trends. This information gap puts fish stocks and fishing businesses at risk and is irresponsible when we have the tools to fix this problem.

Since the groundfish fishery moved to an allocation-based sector system in 2010, fishermen have been accountable for all fish caught on a trip, whether landed or discarded. While counting the landed catch is fairly simple, determining discards is more complicated. Currently, a set percentage of trips are observed by federal monitors, who collect information about discards observed on those trips. The accuracy of the data gathered by these monitors is critical to the success of New England’s groundfish fishery, as it helps tell the fishermen’s side of the story during the stock assessment process.

In general, monitoring has a negative connotation within the fishing industry. No fisherman wants to have an extra body on the boat watching him fish. However, the stream of information coming directly from an active fishing vessel is crucial to painting a complete picture of our fisheries. No other segment of the fishing industry, including small vessels looking to remove the burden of having an additional body on board, has responded better to finding a way to get their data into the scientific process. These boats ran their cameras on 100% of the trips they took. While the data are collected for management focused on discarded fish, other pieces of information may prove significant over time. For instance, one of the vessels noticed a significant increase in flatfish catch, even after the most recent stock assessment suggested these stocks were declining. So, in future years instead of simply telling regulators that he is seeing more fish, this fisherman will be able to deliver verified data to regulators showing how long it took him to harvest his catch and where it was caught. The information will have greater accuracy because everything was observed with a camera.

This kind of data can be significant with just one boat. With a fleet of vessels all collecting and supplying data streams we could be looking at a systematic shift in the importance of fisheries-dependent data in the management process. In a fishery based on annual quotas, poor data causes problems to compound. Good data, on the other hand, can create a virtuous cycle in a well-managed fishery. No two fisheries are exactly alike, but those that have invested heavily in good stock assessment data and accurate reporting, such as the New England scallop fishery, have seen an unprecedented increase in value, sustainability and business security. For fisheries with poor accountability, like the New England groundfish fishery, data uncertainty has led to inaccurate stock assessments, a lack of faith in the science, and a federally-declared economic disaster.

The work done in 2016 by fishermen running camera systems and their partners shows a new path toward accurate data collection. There exists a fantastic opportunity for the fishing industry to begin producing valuable data and have a profound impact on science, management and the regulatory process. Amendment 23 to the Groundfish Fishery Management Plan is a chance to ensure managers no longer rely on sub-par information to regulate New England’s fisheries and bring the industry back within the scientific process.

Tags continued from page 3

All trap tags must be placed in the trap as noted below and must be legible. (see prohibitions)

All fishermen need to know what the boundaries are of the zones they are fishing in order to avoid placing gear with only the primary tag in outside zones.

As you shift gear it is important that you always have gear outside your primary zone double tagged as noted.

A. Prohibitions

(1) No person shall fish with or have on board a vessel a lobster trap unless a valid lobster trap tag issued by the Commissioner is securely attached to the fishing vessel. All trap tags must be placed in the trap as noted below and must be legible. (see prohibitions)

All fishermen need to know what the boundaries are of the zones they are fishing in order to avoid placing gear with only the primary tag in outside zones.

As you shift gear it is important that you always have gear outside your primary zone double tagged as noted.

A. Prohibitions

(1) No person shall fish with or have on board a vessel a lobster trap unless a valid lobster trap tag issued by the Commissioner is securely attached to the frame of the trap. The lobster trap tag shall be affixed to the bridge of the lobster trap so that the tag information is clearly visible for inspection by a Marine Patrol Officer.

(2) No person shall fish with, lift, haul, raise, or transport any lobster trap with a tag which has been tampered with or where the tag number is illegible or missing.

Lastly, please remember to order your 2017 tags as soon as possible.

Plan ahead. Patrol will be enforcing the requirements to have traps properly tagged June 1st. Waiting too long to order tags is not an excuse to be fishing without them.

Ben Martens is the executive director of the Maine Coast Fishermen’s Association located in Brunswick.
By Bernie Berry

I am the president of the Coldwater Lobster Association which represents lobstermen throughout LFA 34 (Lobster Fishing Area for southwest Nova Scotia). Coldwater Lobster Association was formed in 2014 to give fishermen an united voice and a strong platform from which we collectively can deal with all of the issues concerning the lobster industry. The individual approach will not work.

LFA 34 consists of 950 licence holders; the season runs from the last Monday in November to the last day of May. The fishery is conducted from the shoreline out to a maximum of fifty miles. Depths range from a few fathom to 120 fathom. So far this season (up to January 31) we have seen a decrease in landings from last year. Early indications show that we are down 20% (last Dec.-Jan. was a record year) from this time last year. This year also saw a reduction in opening price. This year’s price was set at $5.25Cdn/crate run compared to $6.00Cdn/crate run last year.

Weather has also been a contributing factor this year. The number of hauling days this year is down, in particular in December when we had approximately 7 to 10 good days. January has been a more typical month, with fishermen getting out to haul pots a couple times each week. Since then the price has fluctuated a lot.

There are numerous issues on the horizon that could affect the fishery here. Among those are the push for Marine Protected Areas. This issue applies not just to LFA 34 but to the entire Canadian east coast. We must meet targets of 5% coverage by mid-2017 and 10% by 2020. We have taken a proactive approach by engaging the regulators in discussions. We are trying to see if there are advantages if we are involved in how these areas are developed and implemented. We have developed a working relationship with the regulators and, hopefully, a beneficial target can be reached. The initial fear from fishermen was the potential loss of a massive amount of fishing grounds. As we continue our discussions on this issue we believe we can minimize the potential loss of grounds.

Another problematic issue is that of oil exploration. The issue here is the location of some of the potential lease sites (future drill sites). Several of these sites border on the U.S. Georges Bank moratorium area. Another area is LFA 40 (Browns Bank) which is a closed area to lobster fishing. It is not just the drilling process and the possibility of spills, but the lack of clean-up plans put 40 (Browns Bank) which is a closed area to lobster fishing. It is not just the

foot seas. The other clean-up method is to use chemicals that only hide the oil (sink it), not clean it up. As these chemicals react to the oil they develop a more toxic solution. The Nova Scotia government, in particular, seems to believe that an oil industry would help the poor financial shape that the province is in. Our opinion is that a royalty check from the oil industry will never replace a pay check from the lobster fishery in the local communities.

Tidal power is another looming issue. A tidal turbine was installed in the upper Bay of Fundy (LFA 35) in November. This went in against the wishes of area fishermen who wanted more science to establish a baseline of information to judge the effects of the turbine on fisheries in the local area. The Bay of Fundy Fishermen’s Association went to court in November to get an injunction to stop installation of the turbine, but failed. They went back to court in early February to argue another part of their case. There is the potential that this venture will expand into 80-100 tidal turbines installed not only in LFA 35 but in the northern portion of LFA 34, displacing fishermen and possibly hurting different species of fish and invertebrates.

Like the Maine lobster fishery, the Nova Scotian lobster fishery is MSC (Marine Stewardship Council) certified. We are in our second year of our MSC program and progressing nicely in achieving the five conditions that were identified in the original listing. The conditions are harvest control rules, mackerel bait use and stock recovery, by-catch reduction and a lobster research plan.

Thank you for this opportunity to update you on the 2016-2017 season and other important issues. In the future, we hope to build a working relationship with the lobstermen of Maine and their representatives to achieve a better and a more prosperous future for all.
In February, I had the privilege of welcoming 14 lobstermen to the second Maine Lobster Leadership Institute. The program kicked off with a two-day retreat at Point Lookout in Northport. The agenda was packed with presentations on the fundamentals of lobster management, science, lobster in a changing environment, financial and business planning, marketing, and an overview of pressing issues such as whale rules, bait and coral protection zones.

This year’s group includes men and women from from York to Cutler, ranging in age from 17 to 40. The participants are intelligent, thoughtful and eager to learn. Each has a different interest and motivation for joining the leadership program. Yet they also have much in common. Each represents the future of the fishery. Each is an independent business owner who has made significant financial investment in the business. Each needs to become informed on how to manage his/her lobster business as well as how to protect the lobster resource in order to be successful over the decades. Each person has recognized that he or she has a responsibility to get involved.

It is no accident that the leadership program grew out of a strong desire by Maine Lobstermen’s Association board members to get younger lobstermen involved. Since 1954, the MLA has weathered many storms, but has remained steadfast in its commitment to keeping Maine’s lobster industry sustainable and profitable.

As I prepared for the leadership program, I reviewed the many issues the MLA has faced in its 63-year history. And it truly is staggering. A quick review reminds one of the MLA’s contributions every decade since the 1950s. I couldn’t help but wonder what the fishery would look like without the MLA. Some would be quick to say that the industry would have been just fine anyway, but I disagree.

The MLA remains unique among fishery organizations principally because of the leadership of its board and members and their foresight for the future. The contrast between other organizations and the MLA is clear. When I bring an issue to the board for discussion, the directors first raise concerns that they believe lobstermen in their areas will have. But as the board members talk to each other, they realize that the solutions are often not about doing what may seem right for individual lobstermen or areas. The best solutions are about what is good for the Maine lobster industry as a whole, both today and in the future.

I attend lots of meetings in all parts of the coast. I often see lobstermen so consumed by what is going on in their area that they are not able to engage in the broader conversation or understand the full breadth of the issue being discussed. Many of these lobstermen have set-in-stone opinions and are often intractable. It may be because they are stubborn, it may be because they are not well-informed, or it may be that they are not willing to make a small sacrifice or be inconvenienced in any way in order to benefit the industry as a whole.

I saw this play out recently during public testimony before the Appropriations Committee on the DMR budget. The DMR is facing a budget shortfall and has proposed across-the-board increases in license fees to plug a $600,000 gap. Of course, no one wants to pay more for a license so the issue is inherently controversial. However, in the larger sense the lobster industry has a lot to lose if DMR is not adequately funded.

At their monthly meeting the MLA directors discussed the budget situation and were adamant that the DMR should be fully funded. A budget cut is not an option. However, the board questioned the premise that the citizen referenda passed in November will cause a financial burden requiring agencies to be under-funded and thus creating DMR’s shortfall. The MLA argued that it is time for the state to step up and fund a way to fully fund DMR – without license increases.

The Lobstermen’s Union took a different tactic. While they opposed the increase in license fees and supported funding the DMR budget, they claimed that any increase would be a significant financial hardship for lobstermen and then attacked the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative, which draws its budget from a surcharge on licenses instituted in 2013.

They urged the Appropriations Committee to take the MLMC budget and use it to backfill the DMR’s budget. In the process, they made false claims about the value the of the lobster industry since the inception of the MLMC and accused the MLMC of not sharing information. I thought it was odd that Union representatives who apparently have never attended an MLMC meeting, read the frequent columns by MLMC director Matt Jacobson in this paper, or listened to the MLMC’s annual presentation at the Maine Fishermen’s Forum should argue that the Collaborative was secretive.

Reality check: the boat price for lobster has increased each year since the MLMC was formed. In fact, the boat price in 2015, the last year for which data are available, was the third highest on record. Only during the few years prior to the 2008 global economic crisis was the boat price higher. And in each of those years the fishery landed only 65 million pounds. It’s pretty amazing to think that the boat price has remained strong while lobstermen have nearly doubled their landings. Something seems to be working.

MLA board members and myself have followed the work of the MLMC closely and have been impressed with the strategy and discipline it has shown. This is in stark contrast to the lack of cohesive programming we saw during the latter years of the Maine Lobster Promotion Council. Whether you agree with the concept of the MLMC or not, I strongly urge you to find out what it has done over the past few years. They give their annual report back to the industry on Saturday afternoon during the Maine Fishermen’s Forum.

The industry needs to stay focused. The issue that needs to be addressed is the DMR budget, not the existence of the MLMC. The state needs to be pushed to invest in our marine resources through the DMR because our coastal economy depends on those resources. The fate of the MLA and the MLMC is linked. If the MLA is not adequately funded, the MLMC will be in trouble. If the MLMC is not adequately funded, the MLA will be in trouble. The MLA and the MLMC are linked.

The MLA has ably represented this industry for more than 60 years and will continue to do so for 60 more. The lobster industry has changed significantly over the last 10 years; we truly need the next generation to step up to guide the fishery through an unknown future. I am encouraged that there are young lobstermen from throughout the coast who are willing to take part in the Lobster Leadership Institute. It’s their actions that will determine the future of this amazing industry.

As always, stay safe on the water.
The MLA Board met on February 1 in Belfast. Peter Emerson from Mack Boring updated the board on EPA's new requirements for Tier 4 engines, due to go into effect in October. This will require any new boats or engines above 800 b.h.p. to reduce emissions significantly. Since the technology is not ready, most engines will need to be outfitted with additional equipment to meet this requirement. Recreational boats are exempt. Less than one-quarter of 1% of diesel engines are put into marine service. The work cycle of a lobster boat is more similar to that of a recreational boat; it transits to a position and then idles for long periods of time. The MLA Directors discussed this issue at length and will explore options to seek an exemption for the lobster fishery. The Directors voted unanimously to present this slate of nominees to serve a three-year term on the MLA Board to the membership for a vote at the Annual Meeting: Bob Baines, Donnie Young, Gerry Cushman, Jack Merrill, Jason Joyce, Dwight Carver and Willis Spear. The Directors voted on the Golden Y-Notch, Marine Patrol and other award recipients. The Board voted to recognized the late Pat White for his many years of service and leadership to MLA and the lobster industry at the MLA Annual meeting.

The MLA supported LD 14 to allow lobster fishing to begin at 5 a.m. during October. The MLA did not support LD 113 which is a concept draft based on the results of its enforcement survey. The survey had an excellent response (400 people completed it). The bill is still in the Revisor's Office; it will provide a vehicle to move forward ideas such as establishing minimum penalties for some violations.

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The Board also expressed interest in maintaining the episodic events program with New York included as a participant in the set-aside. For the Chesapeake Bay reduction fishing cap, the Board recommended three options: maintenance of the cap, removal of the cap, and reduction of the cap to a level which reflects the most recent five-year average of reduction harvest in the Bay. Finally, the Board agreed to include a research set-aside program as an adaptive management tool.

The Board also heard a report from Dr. John Whitehead and Dr. Jane Harrison on results of the socio-economic conducted on the menhaden commercial fishery. The study, which was initiated in March 2016, characterizes the coastwide commercial fisheries, including bait and reduction sectors and the fishing communities they support. As a part of the study, surveys and in-person interviews were conducted with fishermen, dealers, and end-users, and economic analysis was conducted on landings data to determine economic impacts that arise from changes in the Total Allowable Catch. A final report on the socio-economic study will be available in late March on the Commission’s web site.

In order to maintain the current management of the cast net fishery throughout the development of Amendment 3, the Board approved continuing the provision which manages the cast net fishery under the bycatch provision until implementation of Amendment 3. Finally, the Board approved Vincent Balzano (Maine) to the Menhaden Advisory Panel.

NEFMC HERRING MANAGEMENT UPDATE

The New England Fishery Management Council reviewed results from its second Atlantic Herring Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) workshop in December 2016. After considering extensive input from workshop attendees and Council advisors, the Council whittled down the list of potential acceptable biological catch (ABC) control rules to be analyzed for further deliberation.

The Council is developing a new ABC control rule as part of Amendment 8 to the Atlantic Herring Fishery Management Plan. A control rule is a method for establishing an annual catch limit or target fishing level based on scientific advice.

Workshop attendees were asked to provide input on potential trade-offs in the fishery, some of which involved choosing desired levels of herring yield and harvest while accounting for factors such as predator needs and uncertainty related to issues such as climate change. Given collective feedback, the Council took four types of control rules off the table: constant catch; conditional constant catch; biomass-based for five years; and biomass-based for three years with restrictions. This move allows the PDE to streamline the list of potential acceptable biological catch (ABC) control rules for evaluation.

In March, an independent peer review panel will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the MSE methods and data used to develop Atlantic herring ABC control rules and comment on any constraints that may hinder use of the MSE model and outcomes in preparing management alternatives. Amendment 8 also contains a set of alternatives to address potential localized depletion and user conflicts.

NEFMC HERRING – HADDOCK BYCATCH ISSUES

The Council has been working on a range of alternatives to potentially modify the Georges Bank haddock accountability measures (AMs) that apply to the herring midwater trawl fishery. However, after reviewing the alternatives and receiving advice from the Herring AP and Committee, the Council voted to select “no action,” which means existing regulations will continue to govern AMs for the herring midwater trawl fishery.

The Council had considered using “proactive” closures to prevent herring vessels from fishing in areas where haddock are prevalent at certain times of the year. Ultimately, the Council concluded that haddock distribution is too un-
The Council's November vote to increase the herring midwater trawl fishery's quota split and proactive seasonal closures indicated that both the seasonal native as well. Technical analyses led the Council to reject this alternative as well. Technical analyses indicated that both the seasonal quota split and proactive seasonal closures could produce negative, unintended consequences, which factored heavily into the Council's final decision. The Council's November vote to increase the herring midwater trawl fishery's Georges Bank haddock sub-annual catch limit from 1% to 1.5% also played a role in the decision. The higher haddock sub-ACL, if approved, will reduce the risk of triggering the herring AMs, which, in turn, will provide the midwater trawl fleet with more opportunity to maximize revenue from herring landings. The AMs that remain in place are 1) in-season closures when the haddock bycatch cap is reached, and 2) a pound-for-pound payback for any overages that do occur.

"Senator Hamper, Representative Gattine, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, my name is Patrice McCarron, I am the Executive Director of the Maine Lobstermen's Association (MLA). MLA is Maine's oldest and largest fishing industry organization whose mission is to advocate for a sustainable lobster resource and the fishermen and communities that depend on it. I am here today to ask you to reject the Department of Marine Resources' (DMR) proposal to increase commercial fishing license fees. However, the MLA strongly supports the DMR's budget request and urges you to identify funding to fill DMR's $600,000 structural budget gap. lobster has long been an icon of the state of Maine, and an integral part of our culture, traditions and economy. In Maine, local, good-paying jobs are difficult to come by. Yet for more than a century Maine's lobster fishery has been a stable presence along our waterfronts. The significance of Maine's lobster industry to the state's coastal economy cannot be overstated. In 2015, Maine lobstermen landed over 120 million pounds worth more than $510 million. This figure represents only the value of lobster sold by the boat; it does not include the benefit derived from the many businesses connected to lobstering. Maine lobster now represents 44% of Maine's commercial fisheries landings and more than 80% of the value. Landings and value of this magnitude are unprecedented for the fishery and we expect this trend to continue, at least in the near term. Looking back just 20 years ago, the lobster fishery landed less than 50 million pounds and was valued at $138 million. We owe the success of the lobster industry to a number of factors. Certainly, Maine lobster's conservation program and mindful stewardship by lobstermen have been critical, but we've also been helped by favorable environmental conditions and a reduction in predators. One thing is certain, the lobster fishery and the ocean environment are changing rapidly and we face many unknowns moving forward. But the significance of the economic benefits of the lobster industry's $510 million in ex-vessel revenue is very clear. By law, every Maine lobsterman is a small business owner. Each runs his own boat and lives, works, and spends his earnings. The success of the lobster industry is corporate ownership in Maine's lobster fishery, so no corporate headquarters to fund outside of our state. Lobstermen's profits stay in Maine and are spent in our communities. As a business sector, commercial fishing is a primary economic driver. Lobstering income serves as the foundation of the local economy. Each dollar earned by a lobsterman generates several more. The multiplier for the lobster industry has been conservatively estimated at $3. When lobstermen are paid for their product at the dock, they then spend those earnings on everything from meals at local restaurants and gas for their trucks and boats to new traps, boats, and homes. This means that hardworking lobstermen generate $1.5 billion in economic activity for the state of Maine each year. As you contemplate DMR's budget request, it is important to remember that commercial fisheries are part of the public trust, and thus, are highly regulated. The DMR is a small, yet very effective agency which responsibly manages our marine resources for the benefit of the greater public good. The agency does an excellent job supporting our commercial fisheries and working to ensure that they are sustainably managed. With so many livelihoods and Maine's coastal economy directly dependent upon the success of our commercial fisheries, it is imperative that DMR receive adequate funding to support this important economic sector. The DMR cannot effectively operate without adequate funding. The MLA does not agree with the premise that a flat-funded budget scenario is necessary and we strongly oppose looking to the industry to fill that gap. Flat funding does not cover the costs needed to support our Marine Patrol Officers approved. The MLA is Maine's oldest and largest fishing industry organization whose mission is to advocate for a sustainable lobster resource and the fishermen and communities that depend on it.

The MLA firmely rejects looking to the fishing industry to pay a 30% increase on our base license fees to fill this gap. Maine lobstermen have a long history of stepping up to the plate to raise revenue to support our industry. In 1995, lobstermen went to the Legislature to add a surcharge on their licenses raising $350,000 to support marketing and promotion of Maine lobster. In 2013, in response to concern over the value of Maine lobster in the marketplace, the industry went back to the legislature to request an increase in these fees to support expanded marketing of Maine lobster. The lobster industry now contributes $2.7 million to market and promote our product. Maine lobstermen also fund much of the DMR's staff which support the lobster industry. Through fees paid on lobster trap tags, Maine lobstermen raise approximately $1.5 million annually to fund Maine Patrol, lobster science and management staff. Fortunately, the DMR has been very creative over the years in identifying fund outside of the state's budget process to fund research essential to the management and sustainability of the lobster resource. When federal funding for lobster monitoring programs dried up, the DMR worked with the industry to redirect funds from the Lobster Seed Fund to support these essential programs, and has worked closely with the Lobster Research Education and Development Fund to help keep these programs going. Our fishery could not operate in the absence of these research programs. And in recent years, the DMR has completed an effective restructuring process to further maximize their efficiency and effectiveness, making clear distinctions between their policy, enforcement and science programs. In this current budget proposal, the DMR has once again taken a hard look and included some cuts in their proposed budget. Maine's lobster industry and the DMR have worked hard over the years to find ways to make ends meet. We have a long track record of working together to fund programs critical to the success of this industry. The lobster industry already contributes significantly to keeping the DMR funded and our essential programs operating. In this time of unprecedented change in our oceans and our fishery, the state of Maine cannot afford to undercut the DMR's ability to do its job. Given the importance of the lobster fishery to the state of Maine, we should be here discussing how to enhance the DMR's efforts rather than undercut them or increase fees from the industry. It is time for the Appropriations Committee to take a stand in support of Maine's lobster industry by funding the DMR's budget as proposed, without raising commercial fishing license fees.

The MLA thanks you for your consideration of our position on this important matter."
Management Council and therefore the Legislature does not have the jurisdiction to override these management plans. Additionally, the proposals put forward are likely to destabilize the lobster fishery.

**LD 201 An Act to Provide Flexibility in the Purchase of Lobster Trap Tags**, sponsored by Rep. Kumiega, proposes to allow a lobsterman to purchase up to the maximum number of trap tags purchased under that license in any previous year. The DMR supported this bill, citing that it could help the department manage latent effort by allowing lobstermen to purchase only the number of the tags they want to fish each year. The MLA opposed this bill, raising concern that it would have a fiscal impact on DMR at a time when the department is seeking to increase license fees.

In February, the Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Marine Resources Committees held a joint public hearing on the DMR's budget that includes a proposed increase in marine license fees to fund a $600,000 budget shortfall. The MLA testified that it does not agree with the premise that a flat-funded budget scenario is necessary and strongly opposed looking to the lobster industry to fill that gap. Given the lobster fishery's importance to the state, the MLA urged the Appropriations Committee to take a stand in support of Maine's lobstermen and fund the DMR's budget as proposed, without raising commercial fishing license fees.

The Marine Resources Committee scheduled public hearings on two lobster bills on March 1. **LD 373 An Act to Create Pathways to Enter Alternative Marine Industries**, sponsored by Rep. Alley, proposes to allow a person who has completed a lobster and crab fishing apprenticeship to enter a lottery to be allowed to engage in scallop harvesting during the lobstering off-season. **LD 392 An Act Regarding Legal Lobster Haul Times outside the 3-mile Line**, sponsored by Rep. Tuell, proposes to allow Zone A lobstermen to haul gear without any time of day restrictions in federal waters (outside 3 miles). The Marine Resources Committee has scheduled public hearings on three additional lobster bills on March 6. **LD 149 An Act to Provide Additional Management for Limited-entry Lobster Zones**, sponsored by Rep. Hubbell, is a concept draft that proposes several ideas to limit the amount of traps lobstermen can fish outside of their declared home zone. Ideas include limiting lobstermen to no more than 25% outside their home zone; not allowing new entrants to fish traps outside their home zone; ensuring parity of effort of second zone tags between zones; and requiring that most restrictive management measures are followed. Rep. Hubbell also sponsored **LD 616 An Act to Ensure Consistent Access to Limited Entry Lobster Zones**, which proposes to prohibit new entrants to the lobster fishery from fishing lobster gear outside their declared lobster zone. **LD 575 An Act to Improve Enforcement of Maine’s Lobster Laws**, sponsored by Sen. Langley, was put in at the request of the MLA based on feedback from an industry-wide survey on enforcement. This concept draft looks at establishing new lobster license holders found guilty of violating marine conservation laws to pay restitution to the state, and require lobster license holders convicted of marine resource violations resulting in a license suspension who re-enter the lobster fishery to re-enter as a new entrant and to have a vessel monitoring system aboard the vessel.

**LD 252 An Act to Improve the Safety in the Disposal of Marine Flares**, sponsored by Rep. McGreight, has not been scheduled for a public hearing before the Public Safety Committee. This bill proposes the establishment of a program for the collection and disposal of expired marine flares and for public education regarding expired marine flares.

Eight additional lobster bills, including four from DMR, have been submitted as bill titles, but have not yet been printed. **LR 743 An Act to Make Technical Changes to Maine’s Marine Resources Laws**, submitted by DMR, proposes to allow lobster demonstration licenses to fish on Sunday; clarifies that it is illegal for lobstermen to use offal as bait and that it is illegal to sell offal as bait; and clarifies language that the Commissioner may permanently revoke a license for scrapping lobsters.

**LR 745 An Act to Prevent Marine Debris**, submitted by DMR, proposes to make it illegal to take bait packaging aboard the vessel in order to prevent debris being dumped in the ocean. **LR 750 An Act Regarding Enforcement of Marine Resources Laws and Suspensions of Marine Resources Licenses**, submitted by DMR, proposes to allow the Commissioner to suspend a marine resources license for violation of certain crimes such as theft, offenses against public administrators, and arson and property destruction are committed. This bill also proposes that when a person signs for a marine license, he or she is also consenting to inspection, such the covert use of trackers on the vessel, if there is probable cause that he or she has violated a marine resource law. The DMR deems this legislative change necessary to get control of offshore violations. **LR 751 An Act to Extend the Time for an Appeal of License Denial for Military Members**, submitted by DMR, proposes that future veterans who want to get their lobster license back are no longer subject to any limit on length of time of military service as long as they had at least 30 landing days in the lobster fishery.

Four of the lobster-related bills submitted by legislators have not yet printed. **LD 184 An Act to Give the Department of Marine Resources Flexibility with Licensing in the Herring Fishery** is sponsored by Rep. Parry. This bill proposes to give the DMR Commissioner the authority to manage herring fishermen depending on how recently they have had landings in Maine. This bill would enable Maine to comply with potential changes to the herring management plan through the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. **LR 1746 An Act to Address Marine Debris Resulting for Commercial Activities** is sponsored by Rep. Devins. This is a concept bill to address marine debris resulting from commercial fishing and aquaculture lease sites. There is no information available on the proposed language of two of the bills. **LR 1348 An Act to Amend the Laws Regarding Marine Resources**, sponsored by Rep. Kumiega and LR 1745 An Act to Incentivize Private Investment of Lobster Processing in Maine, sponsored by Sen. Carson, when certain as bill titles, but have not yet been printed. **LR** (Legislative Record) are not printed; bills that begin with “LD” (Legislative Document) are printed so the full text of the bill and tracking is available. **An** (Legislative Document) are not printed; bills that begin with “LD” (Legislative Document) are printed so the full text of the bill and tracking is available. An update on the Marine Resources Committee is distributed weekly. Contact the Committee clerk, Julie Brown at 207-287-1337 or email Julie.Brown@legislature.maine.gov.

**Marine Resources Committee Members**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sen Joyce Maker</td>
<td>Chair (R), Calais</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:Joyce.Maker@legislature.maine.gov">Joyce.Maker@legislature.maine.gov</a> or 207-454-2327</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sen Eric Brackey</td>
<td>Auburn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:Eric.Brakey@legislature.maine.gov">Eric.Brakey@legislature.maine.gov</a> or 207-406-0897</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sen Eloise Vitelli</td>
<td>Arrowsic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:Vitelli@legislature.maine.gov">Vitelli@legislature.maine.gov</a> or 207-443-4660</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep Walter Kumiega</td>
<td>Chair (D), Deer Isle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:Walter.kumiega@legislature.maine.gov">Walter.kumiega@legislature.maine.gov</a> or 207-479-5439</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep Robert Alley</td>
<td>Boals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:Robert.Alley@legislature.maine.gov">Robert.Alley@legislature.maine.gov</a> or 207-263-4442</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep Kevin Battle</td>
<td>South Portland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:Kevin.Battle@legislature.maine.gov">Kevin.Battle@legislature.maine.gov</a> or 207-831-6962</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep Lydia Blume</td>
<td>York Beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:Lydia.Blume@legislature.maine.gov">Lydia.Blume@legislature.maine.gov</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep Michael Devins</td>
<td>Newcastle, <a href="mailto:Michael.Devins@legislature.maine.gov">Michael.Devins@legislature.maine.gov</a> or 207-975-3132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep David Haggan</td>
<td>Hampden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:David.Haggan@legislature.maine.gov">David.Haggan@legislature.maine.gov</a> or 207-944-7471</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep Stephanie Hawke</td>
<td>Boothbay Harbor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:Stephanie.Hawke@legislature.maine.gov">Stephanie.Hawke@legislature.maine.gov</a> or 207-380-6603</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep Abden Simmons</td>
<td>Waldoboro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:Abden.Simmons@legislature.maine.gov">Abden.Simmons@legislature.maine.gov</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep Paula Sutton</td>
<td>Warren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:Paula.Sutton@legislature.maine.gov">Paula.Sutton@legislature.maine.gov</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep William Tuell</td>
<td>East Machias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:Will.Tuell@legislature.maine.gov">Will.Tuell@legislature.maine.gov</a> or 207-271-8521</td>
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Lavallée speaks on behalf of the lobster, explaining how its body functions and how and why it experiences stress. Lobsters can be deceptive when it comes to their health. A lobster may appear to be as armored as a tank, yet its internal structures make it prone to injury. For example, a lobster’s nerve cord runs down its belly, without the protection of vertebrae. A cut from another lobster or a rough toss by a lobsterman can sever that cord, resulting in paralysis of the lobster’s tail and eventual death.

A lobster’s heart is on its back, where the carapace meets the tail. Whack a lobster’s tail and eventual death. Minor injuries to lobsters also add up to lost money. Practices such as tossing lobsters, handling traps roughly and overstuffing, dropping or banging crates can increase limb loss and bleeding. Lobsters that bleed lose fluid which means they lose weight which means a lobsterman loses money. Plus that lobster is likely to be weak when it starts on its trip to the processor or dealer.

In addition, environmental factors such as diet, water temperatures and molt cycle can affect its health. Handling practices and holding environments can cause changes in the lobster’s physiological state and therefore put stress on the animal. Minimizing stress and injury to lobsters will produce a healthier lobster and more profits for lobstermen. Lavallée will also talk about best practices that lobstermen can use on the boat, at the dock, and during transportation to minimize stress and injury maximize quality and value.

The free workshop will take place eight times in various locations along the coast, beginning with a presentation Saturday March 4 at 1 p.m. at the Fisherwoman’s Forum in Rockport. The Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance is grateful to Maine Sea Grant and to Maine’s lobster co-ops and dealers for providing funding for these workshops.

Happy Healthy Lobster Tour dates

**Saturday March 4th, 1 p.m. Samoset Resort/Fishermen’s Forum**
Sponsored by Maine Sea Grant

**Sunday March 5th, 2 p.m. Casco Bay Lines Ferry Terminal**
Sponsored by Maine Sea Grant and Island Seafood

**Monday March 6th, 9 a.m. St George Town Hall**
Sponsored by Maine Sea Grant, Port Clyde Fisherman’s Co-op and Tenants Harbor Fisherman’s Co-op

**Monday March 6th, 4 p.m. Deer Isle Stonington High School Cafeteria**
Sponsored by Maine Sea Grant and Stonington Fisherman’s Co-op

**Tuesday March 7th, 9 a.m. Swan’s Island Fisherman’s Co-op**
Sponsored by Maine Sea Grant and Swan’s Island Fisherman’s Co-op

**Tuesday March 7th, 4 p.m. Northeast Harbor Library, Mellon Room**
Sponsored by Maine Sea Grant and Cranberry Isle Fisherman’s Co-op

**Wednesday March 8th, 9:30 a.m. Gouldsboro Community Center**
Sponsored by Maine Sea Grant, Beals/Jonesport Lobster Co-op & Winter Harbor Lobster Co-op

For more information, contact Andi at 967-4555 or www.mlcalliance.org.
If it’s about lobster, MLA is there.

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

Repairs/Repairs
Richard Stanley Custom Boats
Bass Harbor, ME -- $1,000 off final price of hull with MLA membership.

SW Boatworks
Lamonie, ME -- $1,000 discount for hull or top on a 38′ CB or 44′ CB

Documentation Services
Maine Design Company
Appleton, ME -- 10% discount to surveys on lobster boats. Must be an MLA member & mention this listing to get discount.

Education & Trade Shows
Maine Maritime Museum
Bath, ME -- Free admission to MLA members.

Mount Desert Oceanarium
Bar Harbor, ME -- Free admission to commercial fishermen and their families.

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

Electronic Equipment
Midcoast Marine Electronics
Rockland, ME -- 10% off list price on all marine electronic products.

Navtronics, LLC
York, ME -- 5% off of purchases.

Financial & Investment
Back River Financial Group
Farmingdale, ME -- Free initial consultation and review of previous tax returns.

Alliance Rubber
Hot Springs, AR -- 10% off custom printed lobster bands.

Fishing, Marine & Industrial
Hamilton Marine
Searsport, Rockland, Portland, Southwest Harbor, Jonesport, ME -- Discounts available to commercial fishermen.

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

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

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

Jams and Jellies
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 the last 5 years.

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

Lobster/Seafood/Wholesale
Atlantic Edge Lobster
Boothbay Harbor, ME -- Fuel discount for MLA members.

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

Newspapers
Commercial Fisheries News
Deer Isle, ME -- Discounted annual subscription rate for $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 -- $250 off new installations.

Safety Training & Equipment
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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.

Sea Rose Trap Co
S. Portland -- 5% off list price on traps purchased at the Friendship store. Cannot be combined with other discounts.

Continued on page 21

Your voice matters
- MLA Members nominate and elect the MLA Board to lead the organization and connect with you. Monthly meetings are open to members.

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March 2017 | LANDINGS | Page 5
In January and early February, all eyes were on football as The Big Game was approaching (and our local team clinched their spot as one of the contenders!). Nothing goes better with football than some tail-gating favorites, featuring New England’s best dish, Maine Lobster. The MLMC leveraged the game day conversation to make Maine Lobster a must-have for celebrations across the country, which media shared in publications such as POPSUGAR.com, PARADE.com, Portland Press Herald, Down East Magazine, and The Ellsworth American, as well as newsletters for Parade and Down East. Overall, media coverage earned 10.2 million impressions.

Tailgating was also highlighted on Lobster from Maine’s social channels, and a targeted social campaign generated more than 23,000 clicks to the MLMC recipe pages, more than 21,000 engagements and reached nearly 195,000 food-loving football fans.

The next stop for the MLMC is a presentation at the annual Fisherman’s Forum on Saturday, March 4 at 2:45 p.m. Attendees are welcome to come and learn about the Marketing Collaborative’s efforts from 2016 and what lies ahead for the 2017 season.
It was a brilliant day in early February when the participants in the second Lobster Leadership Institute gathered at Point Lookout in Northport. The fourteen men and women began their two-day exploration of lobster science, management, business and marketing with a welcome by MLA executive director Patrice McCarron. “You have made significant investments in your lobster business. You are the future of this industry. The leadership program is about giving you the tools you need to guide this industry into the future,” said McCarron.

The Lobster Leadership Institute began in 2014 as an effort to give younger lobstermen and women the tools they would need to become advocates for their fishery at the state, local and regional levels. The average age of a Maine lobsterman is 50-plus,” said MLA president David Cousins. “My generation is going to step down at some point. We need these younger people to take our places.

All lobstermen know certain things: how to fish, when to fish, how to maintain their boats and other practical matters. What many lobstermen don’t know are the complex, inter-related elements that are part of the management and sale of those lobsters they catch. Add to that complexity the complications of a rapidly-changing Gulf of Maine. “It’s a multifaceted fishery and the more you know, the better positioned you will be for the future,” Cousins continued.

“I came because my older brother encouraged me to,” said Peter Philbrook, 18, whose brother Abe took part in the first Institute. “Plus I’ve been influenced by the co-op [Cranberry Island Co-op, on Islesford where Philbrook lobsters]. They’ve been really active in marketing the lobsters and I wanted to know more about that.”

The participants first heard from Department of Marine Resources (DMR) resource coordinator Sarah Cotnoir on the historical and current management structure for lobster in the Gulf of Maine. She highlighted the migration of lobster management authority from the New England Fisheries Management Council to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission in the mid 1990s, a process in which MLA leaders were instrumental. Cotnoir also spoke about the workings of the Maine Legislature, the DMR rulemaking process and the inception of the lobster settlement index. The index has shown a decline over the past few years, but these data are difficult to interpret. “It could mean that there is a problem or it could mean that lobsters are now settling in deeper waters,” explained Coastal Maine Lobster Council Chairman, Rick Wahle, research professor at the University of Maine’s seafood science department. Wahle is developing models which seek to forecast future lobster abundance and the effort of the Collaborative to boost demand for Maine lobster, particularly Maine new-shell lobster.

Finally the lobstermen were given an overview of current and future state and regional issues facing the Maine lobster industry, including whale rules, bait availability and coastal zones. The group then talked about ways to get younger lobstermen involved in tackling these issues at a time when the fishery is strong.

“I think it’s very important to find out more,” said Elliott Nevells, age 17, of Deer Isle. “I can count on my fingers the number of student license holders that are actually going to do something with it. There really aren’t many coming up,” he said.

The participants next heard from lobstermen from the Spruce Head area to populate their research team worked with lobstermen to develop a business model to help lobstermen plan for the future, particularly Maine new-shell lobster. Their research team worked with lobstermen to develop a business model to help lobstermen plan for the future, particularly Maine new-shell lobster.

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Bangor has, at the ready, an airport with one of the longest runways in this nation, capable of accommodating the largest cargo aircraft in the world. For the last several years concerned citizens have attempted to contact municipal, state and federal representatives to discuss an incredible and long reaching financial opportunity. In 2014 Maine Maritime Academy’s (MMA) Loeb-Sullivan School of International Business & Logistics developed a 125-page economic feasibility study that clearly showed the way forward. But as incredibly insightful as it was, this feasibility study must not have been good enough because the plan was shelved for all intents and purposes.

I am calling on municipal, state and federal representatives and the Governor’s office to pick up the MMA report and use it as an economic guidebook for moving forward. According to an article in Maine Biz, passenger air travel was down in 2016. The best seafood-related web site in the country, Seafood.com, has consistently written about shipping lobsters and the problems inherent in doing so. Landings has shared stories of other airports making millions of dollars shipping lobsters. Ironically, we don’t ship lobsters from Maine’s airports! Boston does. There’s an airport similar in many ways to Bangor’s airport located in Anchorage, Alaska: falling passenger service, diminishing revenues and two of the nation’s longest landing strips. But then the very forward-thinking Alaskan Senator Ted Stevens drafted an amendment to a bill that transformed the Anchorage airport into the 6th biggest air cargo airport in the world (that’s right – in the world!). That airport now generates millions of dollars in revenues every year for the city of Anchorage and state of Alaska. Anchorage followed this “Ted Stevens Plan” to make the Ted Stevens Airport a success. This has been published in newspapers and printed media — just Google it; it’s no big secret. Those contrails in the Alaskan skies must look just as beautiful as the Aurora Borealis to those Anchorage folks!

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Bangor’s delay benefits competing airports like Halifax, Canada, and in Boston, Newark and JFK and Maine continues to be marginalized. Adding insult to injury, when Maine lobsters are shipped to countries like China, they are re-labeled as “Boston lobsters” because that is where most of them are shipped from! Way to go, Massachusetts, for shipping our lobsters with your name stamped on them...marketing genius. [Editor’s note: the Chinese identify imported lobsters as Boston lobster; they are not labelled as such when shipped].

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Trust this thought: if we don’t do it quickly, someone else will! The clock is ticking. Captain John Nicolai

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- Alaska led all states in both volume and value of landings, increasing 6% in volume and 3% in value. In the Mid-Atlantic, volume increased by 7% and value increased by 9%. In the Gulf of Mexico region, landings increased 27%, while value decreased by 17%.

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**To the editor:**

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tom temperature in the region to increase more than 1°C by 2050. Warmer water can cause changes in a lobster’s biology and behavior, such as early molting and shifts in distribution. Thus there is a growing need to enhance our capacity for predicting changes in lobster distribution under different climate scenarios. To address such a need, I am developing a statistical model that allows managers to predict the impact of climate change (i.e. rising bottom water temperature) on lobster distribution. The model incorporates more than 10 years of survey data collected by the Maine Department of Marine Resources, and based on climatic conditions it can predict the number of lobsters in approximately 800-square-meter grids. The outputs from the climate-lobster model can show changes in lobster abundance under two hypothetical “cold” and “warm” scenarios in the inshore Gulf of Maine, based on historical water temperature data in the area.

...this type of research can provide a critical step toward an adaptive and sustainable management of the lobster fishery in Maine.

The model predicts lobster abundance will increase in the warm climate scenario throughout the coastal Maine waters. Predicted increases were pronounced inshore in spring.

As the rate of climate change is predicted to accelerate in the future, monitoring and management of lobsters need to be more agile by incorporating changes in environmental parameters. One way to improve our ability to predict lobsters’ responses to climatic variability is to make an educated guess using a statistical model about how lobster abundance changes under several different temperature scenarios.

While there are many questions that can be asked in the context of fisheries management in a changing climate, this type of research can provide a critical step toward an adaptive and sustainable management of the lobster fishery in Maine.

Ksei Tanaka is a doctoral candidate and NSF-IGERT fellow at University of Maine.

NEW TECHNIQUE DEVELOPED TO DETERMINE LOBSTER AGE

by Melissa Wood
first published in Phys.org. Reprinted with permission

Research professor Rick Wahle and graduate student Carl Huntsberger are testing a technique at the University of Maine Darling Marine Center to determine the age of lobsters.

Unlike fish, mollusks and trees, lobsters and other crustaceans molt—or cast off their skeletons thereby discarding external signs of growth. That means a lobster’s age is estimated on size, but it’s a rough determination because ocean conditions affect the crustacean’s growth rate.

Not knowing a lobster’s age is problematic for scientists and fishery managers seeking to measure the health of the fishery and the sustainability of the stock. Recent research by Raouf Kilada of the University of New Brunswick revealed that lobsters and other crustaceans have internal structures that exhibit growth patterns similar to tree rings.

Kilada found tree-ring-like microscopic bands, less than 1 millimeter thick, within a lobster or crab’s gastric mill—which is a part of the stomach that grinds food.

Kilada recently visited the DMC to share his technique with Wahle and Huntsberger. Kilada provided hands-on instruction that he’s perfected during many hours of trial and error.

“At this point, we are able to dissect lobsters that have been held in captivity for many hours of trial and error. Huntsberger. Kilada provided hands-on instruction that he’s perfected during many hours of trial and error. We've learned to process a sample, embed the ossicles in epoxy and cut into 150-micron sections. The number of bands can be counted with the use of a microscope.

For reference, the thickness of a human hair is about 75 microns. Huntsberger says preliminary data indicate the bands do show annual growth patterns.

The growth bands are located in the ossicles, which are tiny plate-like structures in the stomach that facilitate grinding of food.

To process a sample, ossicles are embedded in epoxy and cut into 150-micron sections. The number of bands can be counted with the use of a microscope. For reference, the thickness of a human hair is about 75 microns.

Huntsberger says preliminary data indicate the bands do show annual growth patterns.
By Melissa Waterman

Once upon a time, a person learned his or her trade through apprenticeship to an older, skilled practitioner. Learning the profession through hands-on work led, over time, to becoming a recognized craftsman in that field. Today such apprenticeships have grown less common. The Maine Marine Trades Association (MMTA), however, is working to ensure that individuals interested in learning professions related to boat building and maintenance, fields that have become increasingly high-tech, can do so.

The Maine Marine Trade Association was incorporated as a not-for-profit trade association in 1966 as a volunteer-run organization. Currently, its 200 member firms are served by a small professional staff that includes a full-time executive director and office administrator. The Association provides programs and services focusing on workplace safety, environmental compliance and technical training.

The MMTA offers customized apprenticeship opportunities with Maine marine businesses. The Maine Marine Trades Apprenticeship Program apprenticeships are established under a set of standards which include an on-the-job training outline, related classroom instruction curriculum and operating procedures. The program was created in partnership with the Maine Department of Labor’s Director of Apprenticeship Standards and is part of the state’s Apprenticeship Program.

Apprentices can earn college credits for the academic portions of their apprenticeship while they work. When they have successfully completed the program can receive nationally-recognized credentials in that field.


For more information about the Maine Marine Trades Apprenticeship Program, visit the MMTA web site at www.mainemarinetrades.com/default.asp or call 773-8725.

Boat building is a significant and growing business sector in Maine with annual industry sales topping $650 million. Approximately 450 companies and 5,000 jobs are tied to Maine boat building. The most recent study, done in 2007 by the Maine Department of Labor, showed that annual wages at boatbuilders with 20 or fewer employees averaged $29,928; boatbuilders with more than 50 employees paid an average of $41,025.

The world of lobstering has changed greatly in the last century. Where once wood and hemp rope predominated, now plastic and polyesterene are king. Museums such as the Penobscot Marine Museum in Searsport and the Maine Maritime Museum in Bath have conserved many of the artifacts of lobster fishing in bygone days. Here we feature one, courtesy of the Maine Maritime Museum.

Garbo depends on the hard work and stewardship of Maine lobstermen. Thank you!

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An octagonal pine lobster shipping crate, Silver Bay brand, Willard-Daggett Co., Portland; 1930-1940 period.

Hodgdon Yachts in East Boothbay is just one example of Maine’s expanding boat building and maintenance companies. Photo courtesy of Hodgdon Yachts.
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Sunday March 5th
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St George Town Hall
4 pm
Deer Isle Stonington High School Cafeteria

Tuesday March 7th
9 am
Swan’s Island Fisherman’s Co-op
4 pm
Northeast Harbor Library, Mellon Room

Wednesday March 8th
9 am
Gouldsboro Community Center

Cost: These workshops are FREE!
Thank you to Maine Sea Grant for sponsoring these workshops and Beals Jonesport Lobster Co-op, Cranberry Isle Fishermen’s Co-op, Island Seafood, Port Clyde Fisherman’s Co-op, Swan’s Island Fisherman’s Co-op, Stonington Lobster Co-op, Tenants Harbor Co-op, and Winter Harbor Lobster Co-op for additional support.

To register or for more information:
www.mlcalliance.org or call 967-4555
WEB SITE GIVES CONSUMERS A NEW WAY TO COMPARE HEALTH CARE COSTS

By Alisha Keezer

There is a new online resource to compare the costs and quality of health care procedures in Maine. Launched last fall, CompareMaine.org provides consumers with price information on hundreds of medical procedures and tests, including bloodwork, doctor visits, hip replacements, and much more. The site is supported by a federal grant and the efforts of the Maine Health Data Organization.

CompareMaine shows the average cost of common health care procedures at different facilities in Maine. These are the costs that the medical provider will charge your insurance company. The cost estimates on CompareMaine are median payments (meaning that half of the facilities surveyed charge more and half charge less) and are meant to serve as a reference point for comparison.

Factors in your health insurance plan, such as your co-pay or deductible amounts, will make a difference in the actual out-of-pocket costs a consumer will have. The dollar amounts on CompareMaine are the amount your insurance is charged. For instance, an MRI scan of your brain would cost on average $1,656 in Maine. But at Mid-Coast Hospital the average cost billed to your insurance is $2,691 versus $1,235 at Maine Mobile MRI Associates. To find out your actual payment, please contact your insurance company.

For most people, it’s second nature to shop around and compare costs of big ticket items, like washing machines and televisions. Now Maine residents can do the same comparison shopping when it comes to their health care procedures. Maine is among only four states in the country that provide a means for consumers to get price clarity on medical costs.

Alisha Keezer is the MLA’s health insurance Navigator.

Here’s what you can find on the CompareMaine site:

- **Costs:** The amount the facility or provider on average charges an insurer for a medical procedure. This amount can vary by thousands of dollars.
- **Complications:** Each facility is rated on its ability to prevent serious complications.
- **Infections:** Each facility is rated on how well it keeps its patients safe from infections.
- **Insurers:** The site lets you search by insurance company to see whether a procedure is covered and what’s the typical charge by procedure.
- **Patient Satisfaction:** Each facility is rated by patients on overall quality of care.
- **Procedures:** Hundreds of specific procedures are listed currently; more are being added as the database is updated.

The CompareMaine web site is a product of the Maine Health Data Organization (MHDO). MHDO is a state agency that collects healthcare data from health insurance companies and hospitals. CompareMaine shows information on over 230 healthcare procedures from more than 270 facilities organized into 155 facility groups.

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To register: by phone: 207-967-4555 or online at www.mainelobstermen.org/projects
By Melissa Waterman

Even though it's a tiny thing, you don't want to mess with a browntail moth caterpillar. Its skin and cocoon bristle with tiny hairs that can produce a rash like poison ivy and can also cause serious respiratory reactions in some people when inhaled. The Maine Forest Service is predicting another dramatic outbreak of browntail moth caterpillars in late spring this year, even larger than the record-setting outbreak of 2016.

Browntail moth larvae overwinter in webs created primarily in apple or oak trees. In the spring, as soon as leaf buds open, the hundreds of moth larvae in each web become active and begin to feed on new leaves. In late June, the larvae spin rough cocoons in which to pupate. An invasive species, browntail moth populations have moved steadily up the coast over the years and recently progressed inland.

The Maine Board of Pesticide Control (BPC) regulates the pesticides that can be applied to browntail moth and other pests, such as mosquitoes, that affect public health. In 1997, the Maine Legislature passed a law that allows municipalities to take action (i.e. spray pesticides) to control browntail moths if the infestation is declared a public health nuisance by the state's Bureau of Health director.

Those pesticides, however, are effective against not only the targeted species but also other non-targeted creatures. During an outbreak in the mid-2000s, Maine lobstermen became alarmed by the use of pesticides to combat browntail moth. The Maine Lobstermen's Association lobbied for stricter controls of these pesticides and the BPC set up an Environmental Risk Advisory Committee (ERAC) to study the effect of those pesticides on marine species. The Maine Legislature took action in 2007 and the BPC passed regulations in 2008 to restrict browntail moth spraying near coastal waters. Pesticides used to control browntail moth populations within 250 feet of the mean high tide mark adjacent to coastal waters were restricted in type and in manner of application.

To be effective, those pesticides need to be applied when the creatures are still feeding on new leaves, which is typically before the end of May, according to the Maine Forest Service. If pesticides are applied after the end of May when the animals are spinning their cocoons, they will kill the caterpillars but do nothing to diminish the volume of toxic hairs from those cocoons.

Last year's outbreak of browntail moth, the worst in ten years, was concentrated along the coast. According to the Maine Forest Service, "Over 63,000 acres of forest in Sagadahoc County and surrounding towns were defoliated by the tiny, early instar larvae of browntail moth in August and September. These larvae are less than ¼" in length but are so numerous this year that in some cases they defoliated the same trees twice in a single season." The towns of Brunswick, Freeport, Bath, Topsham and Bowdoinham were especially hard hit. But the moths also spread far inland. In 2016 the caterpillars were found from Millinocket and Skowhegan south to Eliot.

The blossoming populations caused the BPC to review the four chemicals it had approved for use in 2008. "Because the browntail moth..."
### ADMINISTRATIVE SUSPENSIONS RELATED TO LOBSTER OFFENSES, JAN. 1, 2016-FEB. 15, 2017

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<tr>
<td>DUSTIN</td>
<td>REED</td>
<td>Admin Suspension-Issued</td>
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<td>5/26/16</td>
<td>12/27/16</td>
<td>12/27/19</td>
<td>LOBSTER TRAP TAG SYSTEM Lobster Harvester</td>
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<td>BRAY</td>
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<td>5/19/16</td>
<td>9/9/16</td>
<td>5/19/22</td>
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<td>GRAY</td>
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<td>10/5/15</td>
<td>10/27/16</td>
<td>8/26/18</td>
<td>MOLESTING LOBSTER GEAR Lobster Harvester</td>
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<td>1/13/16</td>
<td>1/12/19</td>
<td>MOLESTING LOBSTER GEAR Lobster Harvester</td>
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<td>3/30/16</td>
<td>1/30/19</td>
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<td><strong>LOBSTER VIOLATIONS, OCT. 1, 2016 TO FEB. 15, 2017</strong></td>
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<td>Work Status</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Offense date</td>
<td>Comments</td>
<td>Offense Location</td>
<td>Offense Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resolved-Guilty-NoSuspension</td>
<td>OLIVER, JONATHAN</td>
<td>10/3/16</td>
<td>SELLING/POSSESSION OF 3 SHORT LOBSTERS</td>
<td>STONINGTON</td>
<td>LOBSTER MEASUREMENT (NON-MANDATORY) OVERSIZED/SHORT</td>
<td>$ 800.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pending-Adjudication</td>
<td>WHITE, JAKE</td>
<td>10/4/16</td>
<td>LOBSTER FISHING WITHOUT A CLASS I LICENSE</td>
<td>TREMONT</td>
<td>NO LOBSTER AND CRAB CLASS I LICENSE</td>
<td>$ 610.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resolved-Guilty-NoSuspension</td>
<td>BEAL, MICHAEL</td>
<td>10/9/16</td>
<td>Exceeding Class I lobster and crab fishing limitations</td>
<td>Cushing</td>
<td>NO LOBSTER AND CRAB CLASS I LICENSE</td>
<td>$ 250.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resolved-Guilty-NoSuspension</td>
<td>HUTCHINSON, BLAINE</td>
<td>10/13/16</td>
<td>FISHING LOBSTERS DURING THE CLOSED PERIOD</td>
<td>STONINGTON</td>
<td>LOBSTER FISHING DURING CLOSED PERIODS</td>
<td>$ 250.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pending-Adjudication</td>
<td>MARASS, NELSON</td>
<td>10/17/16</td>
<td>Possession of nine short lobsters</td>
<td>West Bath</td>
<td>LOBSTER MEASUREMENT (NON-MANDATORY) OVERSIZED/SHORT</td>
<td>$ 250.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pending-Adjudication</td>
<td>EAGER, CHRISTOPHER</td>
<td>10/17/16</td>
<td>Fishing 60 untagged lobster traps</td>
<td>Wells</td>
<td>LOBSTER TRAP TAG SYSTEM</td>
<td>$ 250.00</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pending-Adjudication</td>
<td>REED, CHRISTOPHER</td>
<td>10/20/16</td>
<td>POSSESSION OF 5 FEMALE V-NOTCHED LOBSTERS</td>
<td>LUBEC</td>
<td>V-NOTCHED LOBSTERS; OR MUTILATED LOBSTERS</td>
<td>$ 700.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pending-Adjudication</td>
<td>REED, CHRISTOPHER</td>
<td>10/20/16</td>
<td>POSSESSION OF 5 V-NOTCHED FEMALE LOBSTERS</td>
<td>LUBEC</td>
<td>V-NOTCHED LOBSTERS; OR MUTILATED LOBSTERS</td>
<td>$ 700.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resolved-Guilty-NoSuspension</td>
<td>SIMMONS, ADAM</td>
<td>10/20/16</td>
<td>Hauling traps during a closed period</td>
<td>Burnt Island</td>
<td>LOBSTER FISHING DURING CLOSED PERIODS</td>
<td>$ 250.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resolved-Guilty-NoSuspension</td>
<td>WALLACE, JONATHAN</td>
<td>10/20/16</td>
<td>POSSESSION OF 2 FEMALE V-NOTCHED LOBSTERS</td>
<td>LUBEC</td>
<td>V-NOTCHED LOBSTERS; OR MUTILATED LOBSTERS</td>
<td>$ 700.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resolved-Guilty-NoSuspension</td>
<td>RHYS, JOSIAH</td>
<td>10/30/16</td>
<td>HAULING GEAR DURING A CLOSED PERIOD</td>
<td>SWANS ISLAND</td>
<td>LOBSTER FISHING DURING CLOSED PERIODS</td>
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<td>Pending-Adjudication</td>
<td>NEWCOMB, RANDY</td>
<td>10/31/16</td>
<td>HAULING LOBSTER GEAR BEFORE LEGAL HAULING HOURS</td>
<td>LUBEC</td>
<td>LOBSTER FISHING DURING CLOSED PERIODS</td>
<td>$ 250.00</td>
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<td>Pending-Adjudication</td>
<td>GRIFFIN, BRENT</td>
<td>10/31/16</td>
<td>HAULING LOBSTER GEAR BEFORE LEGAL HAULING HOURS</td>
<td>LUBEC</td>
<td>LOBSTER FISHING DURING CLOSED PERIODS</td>
<td>$ 250.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resolved-Guilty-NoSuspension</td>
<td>LUNT, TRAVIS</td>
<td>10/31/16</td>
<td>CLOSED PERIOD LOBSTER FISHING</td>
<td>FRENCHBORO</td>
<td>LOBSTER FISHING DURING CLOSED PERIODS</td>
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<td>Pending-Adjudication</td>
<td>TARBOX, BRIAN</td>
<td>11/2/16</td>
<td>Hauling lobster traps not registered to vessel</td>
<td>Metinic Island</td>
<td>LOBSTER TRAP TAG SYSTEM</td>
<td>$ 250.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pending-Adjudication</td>
<td>TARBOX, BRIAN</td>
<td>11/2/16</td>
<td>Exceeding Zone D vessel trap limit</td>
<td>Metinic Island</td>
<td>TRAP LIMIT</td>
<td>$ 250.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resolved-Guilty-NoSuspension</td>
<td>BEAL, RICKEY</td>
<td>11/7/16</td>
<td>POSSESSION OF 5 SHORT LOBSTERS</td>
<td>JONESPORT</td>
<td>LOBSTER MEASUREMENT (NON-MANDATORY) OVERSIZED/SHORT</td>
<td>$ 1000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pending-Adjudication</td>
<td>PINKHAM, ROBERT</td>
<td>11/11/16</td>
<td>Possession of 18 short lobsters</td>
<td>Georgetown</td>
<td>LOBSTER MEASUREMENT (NON-MANDATORY) OVERSIZED/SHORT</td>
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<td>Pending-Adjudication</td>
<td>PINKHAM, ROBERT</td>
<td>11/16/16</td>
<td>Possession of 23 short lobsters</td>
<td>Georgetown</td>
<td>LOBSTER MEASUREMENT-DESCRIBE # OF SHORT OR OVERSIZED</td>
<td>$ 1000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pending-Adjudication</td>
<td>DEMOLET, RILEY</td>
<td>11/17/16</td>
<td>POSSESSION OF ONE FEMALE MUTILATED V-NOTCH LOBSTERS</td>
<td>LUBEC</td>
<td>V-NOTCHED LOBSTERS; OR MUTILATED LOBSTERS</td>
<td>$ 1000.00</td>
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<td>Pending-Adjudication</td>
<td>EATON, MITCHELL</td>
<td>11/22/16</td>
<td>Possession of 32 untagged lobster traps</td>
<td>North Haven</td>
<td>LOBSTER TRAP TAG SYSTEM</td>
<td>$ 1000.00</td>
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<td>Pending-Adjudication</td>
<td>KIEDAUSCH, DUNCAN</td>
<td>11/25/16</td>
<td>Possession of 34 short lobsters</td>
<td>Kittery</td>
<td>LOBSTER MEASUREMENT (NON-MANDATORY) OVERSIZED/SHORT</td>
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<td>Pending-Adjudication</td>
<td>ANDERSON, DOUGLAS</td>
<td>11/26/16</td>
<td>Possession of six short lobsters</td>
<td>Port Clyde</td>
<td>LOBSTER MEASUREMENT (NON-MANDATORY) OVERSIZED/SHORT</td>
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<td>Pending-Adjudication</td>
<td>PINKHAM, ALTON</td>
<td>11/29/16</td>
<td>FISHING 13 UNTAGGED LOBSTER TRAPS</td>
<td>FRENCHBORO</td>
<td>LOBSTER TRAP TAG SYSTEM</td>
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<td>Pending-Adjudication</td>
<td>NICKERSON, ARNOLD</td>
<td>12/2/16</td>
<td>Possession of one oversized lobster</td>
<td>Cape Porpoise</td>
<td>LOBSTER MEASUREMENT (NON-MANDATORY) OVERSIZED/SHORT</td>
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<td>Pending-Adjudication</td>
<td>ROCKABASIN, EDWARD</td>
<td>12/26/16</td>
<td>POSSESSION ON ONE OVERSIZED LOBSTER</td>
<td>EASTPORT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pending-Adjudication</td>
<td>WARD, GREG</td>
<td>1/2/17</td>
<td>Possession of one oversized lobster</td>
<td>Kittery</td>
<td>LOBSTER MEASUREMENT (NON-MANDATORY) OVERSIZED/SHORT</td>
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<td>Pending-Adjudication</td>
<td>DOLTY BROS INC</td>
<td>1/18/17</td>
<td>Violation of Import/Export program</td>
<td>Portland</td>
<td>LOBSTER IMPORT/EXPORT PERMIT</td>
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<td>DOLTY BROS INC</td>
<td>1/18/17</td>
<td>Violation of Import/Export program</td>
<td>Portland</td>
<td>LOBSTER IMPORT/EXPORT PERMIT</td>
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<td>Pending-Adjudication</td>
<td>HARDY, ROBERT</td>
<td>1/20/17</td>
<td>POSSESSION OF 11 SHORT LOBSTERS</td>
<td>STONINGTON</td>
<td>LOBSTER MEASUREMENT-DESCRIBE # OF SHORT OR OVERSIZED</td>
<td>$ 1000.00</td>
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<td>Pending-Adjudication</td>
<td>NEVELLS, MARK</td>
<td>1/21/17</td>
<td>WET STORAGE OF LOBSTER GEAR OVER 30 DAYS - 6174 CHP 25.02</td>
<td>STONINGTON</td>
<td>LOBSTER AND CRAB</td>
<td>$ 1000.00</td>
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</table>
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Browntail moth continued from page 19

By Rebecca Weil, Bassett Healthcare Network

Did you know that falls overboard are the leading cause of death in the Northeast lobster fishery? According to the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Center for Maritime Safety and Health Studies, these deaths could largely be prevented with the use of personal flotation devices (PFDs). Lobstermen in Maine and Massachusetts are taking part in a project to redesign PFDs. Designed just for Northeast commercial lobstermen, the project involves trying different models of PFDs and giving feedback about how comfortable and workable the models are. The lobstermen receive an honorarium for participating, and they also get to keep the PFD when the project is complete. But perhaps the most important incentive for participation is they will help keep other lobstermen alive.

Fishermen consistently report that they do not regularly wear PFDs because they are not comfortable and can be difficult and dangerous to work in. Given that falling overboard often ends in death, there is a strong need to redesign PFDs to meet the needs of the lobstermen. Thus the Northeast Center for Occupational Health and Safety (NEC), Fishing Partnership Support Services (FPSS), and Northeast lobstermen are collaborating to figure out specifically what works for lobstermen when it comes to PFDs and then redesign them to meet the needs of this fishing sector.

The goal is to create innovative solutions to keep lobstermen alive if they fall overboard. Falls overboard will happen, but they do not have to be fatal.

In January, 80 lobstermen started wearing one of the eight PFD models chosen after surveying lobstermen through the Maine and Massachusetts Lobstermen's Associations. More lobstermen will be invited to join the project in the summer, and others can participate in phone surveys. In order to gather a range of perspectives, participants will be randomly selected.

Thank you to all the lobstermen who are helping with this endeavor! We are also extremely grateful to the following manufacturers who have donated or provided discounted rates on PFDs for this project: Hyde Sportswear, Kent, Mullion, Mustang Survival, Quatic Apparel, Spinlock, and Stormline. Thank you for all of your support!

Brownntail moth continued from page 19

population has exploded, we decided it was time to look at the list and see if other products should be added and whether these four are still working well,” explained Henry Jennings, director of the BPC. The new ERAC formed by the Bureau studied two new sets of monitoring data concerning browntail moth control and reviewed existing literature on the topic. It generated a chart that showed the risks of various chemicals to the marine environment. Based on that review, one previously permitted chemical, permethrin, was removed and several new chemicals were added.

“The Board of Pesticides Control takes the use of pesticides in our state very seriously. We feel confident that the pesticide review has been thorough and that restrictions are in place to protect lobsters,” said Patrice McCarron, executive director of the Maine Lobstermen's Association. “They have been great about seeking our input and keeping us informed of their efforts.”

For more information about browntail moth and pesticide control regulations visit the Maine Forest Service web site http://maine.gov/dacf/mfs/forest_health/invasive_threats/browntail_moth_info.htm and the Board of Pesticides Control web site http://www.maine.gov/dacf/plp/pesticides.
LOBSTER EXPORTS TO CHINA STILL RISING

Live lobster exports to China are on pace to triple in value in 2016, despite the incursion of some new lobster suppliers into the growing Asian market. Through November, 2016, the value of live lobster shipments from Maine to China climbed to $27.5 million, nearly tripling from the $10.2 million reported in November 2015. The growing appetite for lobster has attracted Australia, which is heavily marketing its smaller rock lobsters to Asian markets too. Although competition for the Chinese market is heating up, American lobster exporters are benefiting from a tariff reduction on imported lobster and other seafood that went into effect this month. The lobster tariff in China fell from 15 percent to 10 percent.

NOVA SCOTIAN COMPANIES START QUALITY PROJECT WITH ALIBABA

Several Nova Scotian seafood companies will help pilot a provincial project that could see more Nova Scotia lobster exported to China as part of a new lobster quality initiative between Nova Scotia and Tmall-Alibaba, an online retail company in China. The goal is to help provide premium quality Nova Scotia lobster to growing online markets in China. Taking part are Nautical Seafoods Ltd., Gidney Fisheries Ltd., and Fisherman’s Market Intl. Ltd. Through the agreement the suppliers have committed to sending 300,000 quality-certified live lobsters as the beginning of a long-term quality program.

LOBSTER BLOOD, A MEDICAL WONDER?

Researchers in Maine have determined that uncooked lobster hemolymph — a fluid equivalent to blood — has a number of antiviral, medicinal purposes and may even be effective against the viruses that cause shingles and warts. Researchers in Maine have determined that uncooked lobster hemolymph — a fluid equivalent to blood — has a number of antiviral, medicinal purposes and may even be effective against the viruses that cause shingles and warts. LobsterRx for treating dry skin, chapped lips, cold sores, minor cuts and burns. Th e researchers have developed a lobster blood-based healing cream called LobsterRx for treating dry skin, chapped lips, cold sores, minor cuts and burns. The researchers have developed a lobster blood-based healing cream called LobsterRx for treating dry skin, chapped lips, cold sores, minor cuts and burns. Huntersberger says preliminary data indicate the bands do show annual growth patterns. Kilada found tree-ring-like microscopic bands, patterns similar to tree rings. Research professor Rick Wahle and graduate student Carl Huntsberger are research professor Rick Wahle and graduate student Carl Huntsberger are research professor Rick Wahle and graduate student Carl Huntsberger are researchers. In addition to the three mothers and their calves, only one other right whale was spotted off the Georgia and Florida coasts in December and January. At least 40 to 60 whales typically would be expected each year. Having as few as three births hasn’t happened for at least 15 years, when one calf was born in 2000, preceded by four in 1999 and five in 1998. While the right whales, whose population now numbers 524, have returned in greater and greater numbers to Cape Cod Bay to feed, the whales have moved out of other traditional feeding areas. Nearly 30 right whales were identified by aerial surveyors in February in Cape Cod Bay.

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE LEARNS NEW PROCESS TO FIND LOBSTER AGE

Research professor Rick Wahle and graduate student Carl Huntsberger are testing a technique at the University of Maine Darling Marine Center to determine the age of lobsters. Unlike fish, mollusks and trees, lobsters and other crustaceans molt—or cast off their skeletons thereby discarding external signs of growth. That means a lobster’s age is estimated based on size, but it’s a rough determination because ocean conditions affect the crustacean’s growth rate. Recent research by Raouf Kilada of the University of New Brunswick revealed that lobsters and other crustaceans have internal structures that exhibit growth patterns similar to tree rings. Kilada found tree-ring-like microscopic bands, less than 1 millimeter thick, within a lobster or crab’s gastric mill — which is a part of the stomach that grinds food. Huntersberger says preliminary data indicate the bands do show annual growth patterns.

WINTER WHALE CALVING NUMBERS DISAPPOINTING

The birth of only three North Atlantic right whales this winter has dismayed researchers. In addition to the three mothers and their calves, only one other right whale was spotted off the Georgia and Florida coasts in December and January. At least 40 to 60 whales typically would be expected each year. Having as few as three births hasn’t happened for at least 15 years, when one calf was born in 2000, preceded by four in 1999 and five in 1998. While the right whales, whose population now numbers 524, have returned in greater and greater numbers to Cape Cod Bay to feed, the whales have moved out of other traditional feeding areas. Nearly 30 right whales were identified by aerial surveyors in February in Cape Cod Bay.

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Each lobsterman in Maine must purchase an identifying tag for his or her lobster trap in order to legally fish it. Beginning this year, they also must buy a second set of trap tags to use to fish any traps fished outside of his home zone.

So trap tags are an important topic among lobstermen. Landings queried the Department of Marine Resources communications director Jeff Nicholas about how the DMR selects the company to supply trap tags for the Maine lobster industry.

What company makes the tags and where are they located?

TydenBrooks Security Products Group of Atlanta, Georgia.

Have any Maine companies bid on the contract to make trap tags?

There has not been a Maine company awarded the trap tag contract since the tag system was instituted in 1996. One company, TOP-ME Tags from Brunswick, bid on the current contract.

What specifications did the company have to meet to become the trap tag supplier?

The company had to meet the specifications of the DMR: The tags should not interfere in any way with the operation of the trap or any other device that the tags are used for outside of the trap; the dimensions of each tag must be a minimum length of 6 to 7 inches and a width of 3/8 to 1/2 inch; each tag must also be imprinted with specific identifications, including the harvester’s license number and fishing zone; and a width of 3/8 inch.

How does the requirement for all lobstermen to have second tags affect the company and the cost?

There will be no change in the cost for second zone tags once the new rule goes into effect on June 1, 2017. Primary trap tags are 50 cents each and second zone commercial tags, and demonstration tags, must be produced.

According to DMR, 1,119 student license holders purchased 79,197 lobster trap tags.

Have there been any changes associated with the tags produced by this company than those associated with other vendors in previous years?

There have been no more complaints associated with the tags produced by this company than those associated with other vendors in previous years.

How do the tags get to the lobstermen?

They’re shipped directly from TydenBrooks to the license holder so we don’t have any in-house.

According to DMR, 1,119 student license holders purchased 79,197 lobster trap tags.

4,862 commercial license holders purchased 2,849,124 tags in 2016. These figures include initial and unregistered tags, not replacement tags or second zone tags.
It took Peter and Nikki Sullivan, a retired couple from Bowdoinham almost a year to come up with a buoy birdhouse design that they were proud enough to share and market. That was five years ago and since then, The Lobster Buoy Birdhouse Company has steadily captured the attention and hearts of bird lovers in Maine and beyond.

With sales of their product increasing approximately 20% each year, the couple crafted 2,500 buoy birdhouses last year alone. Here is how they got started. "We decided we wanted to make a little extra money together during our retirement and one day we saw a buoy birdhouse at a salvage store and thought we could probably make something like that," Peter explained. "Our intent all along was to keep it as simple as possible and not spend a lot of money."

And keep it simple they did. The building process, Peter said, is straightforward and solid. "We use northern Maine cedar for all of our products because it is renowned for its decay resistance. The butts of logs are great for our products and the lumber company we use does not have a lot of uses for them so we get them at a decent price," he said. The tools of the trade to create the product are basic as well: a band saw, a bench sander to shape, and a drill to make the holes. The couple then hand paints each buoy (in one of eight colors) and adds recycled fishing rope for hanging. The recycled rope comes from pieces of used lobster rope which they find when beachcombing after winter storms, though some of it is purchased used from lobster co-ops, adding to the charm and authenticity of the products while being eco-friendly at the same time.

"Our birdhouses are both visually pleasing and functional. They appeal to Mainers and tourists as the lobster buoy is associated with the state of Maine. Backyard birders love them for their proven nesting results, and birdhouse collectors appreciate them for the handmade factor. Any box-nesting bird will use our buoy birdhouse to nest. In Maine we see bluebirds, chickadees, nuthatches. Folks from all over the country send us photos of birds from their regions nesting in the buoy birdhouses," Nikki said.

A drainage hole and slide-out dovetailed base for easy cleaning make the birdhouses even more appealing. "The flat sides on the houses allow for pole as well as post-mounting along with the traditional hanging using the rope handle," Peter added. And the buoys can be personalized. "We can hand-imprint up to three lines using traditional metal stamps. Many of our orders have personalization with the recipient’s family name," Nikki said.

In addition to their ever-popular buoy bird houses, which retail for $44, the Sullivans also make lobster buoy suet bird feeders ($26), lobster buoy planters ($34), and lobster buoy decorative ornaments.

Photos courtesy of Lobster Buoy Birdhouse Company.