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Maine Lobstermen's Community Alliance

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LOBSTER ENFORCEMENT LAWS STRENGTHENED IN RESPONSE TO INDUSTRY CONCERNS

By Maine Department of Marine Resources

On June 14, Governor Paul LePage signed into law LD 575 An Act To Improve the Enforcement of Maine’s Lobster Laws. Because this law is now in effect, it is important that every license holder is aware of the changes it makes.

This legislation strengthens the laws that exist to manage and sustain Maine’s lobster resource for the benefit of all license holders. “I want to commend the lobster industry for initiating these changes, and supporting them through the legislative process,” said Commissioner Patrick Keliher. “I have heard many concerns about the cheating that has been occurring in this fishery, and I am aware of the frustration it has caused the majority of our fishermen, who are honest and law abiding. I sincerely hope that these new penalties will serve as an effective deterrent to these behaviors.”

The new law imposes minimum and maximum license suspension lengths for violations determined to be the most damaging to the lobster resource and to other fishermen. The Department of Marine Resources (DMR) stresses that all harvesters should understand that if they are found guilty of one of these violations, there is no flexibility on the suspension length. The law requires these minimums to apply.

Also, if a harvester is found guilty of one of the violations (listed on page 17) and has been found guilty of the same violation within the last seven years, the prior offense will be considered when the length of suspension or revocation is determined.

For violations classified as criminal, Marine Patrol may obtain a warrant from a judge to authorize the use of a tracker (to record the speed and location of a vessel) without notifying the individual under investigation, if the judge determines that there is probable cause to suspect that a violation is being committed.

As a result of LD 575, trap molesting has been made a criminal violation, as has fishing untagged gear in excess of 25 traps (fishing fewer than 25 untagged traps remains a civil violation). Fishing over the trap limit, fishing sunken trawls, and artificially removing the eggs from a female lobster (scrubbing) are already criminal offenses.

Following a license suspension for one of the violations listed in the table below, the DMR Commissioner is also authorized to require the fisherman re-entering the fishery to use a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) for a length of time.

MAINE LOBSTERMEN EXEMPT FROM CORAL CLOSURES

by New England Fishery Management Council staff

In June, the New England Fishery Management Council (Council) adopted coral protection zones for violations determined to be the most damaging to the lobster resource and to other fishermen. The Council stresses that all harvesters should understand that if they are found guilty of one of these violations, there is no flexibility on the suspension length.

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Continued on page 17
Summer has arrived and July is the month when everything speeds up. Maine’s summer visitors are here in full force. The restaurants and resorts are brimming with customers. Lobstermen are hauling traps, eagerly waiting for the start of the shedding season.

It’s also a time when lobstermen can breathe a big sigh of relief on several fronts. As Landings highlights, the past few months were tough in Augusta, where the Joint Committee on Marine Resources wrestled with the provisions of LD 575, An Act To Improve the Enforcement of Maine’s Lobster Laws. The bill strengthens minimum penalties for certain lobster law violations and criminalizes some lobster violations to allow the Department of Marine Resources to conduct covert investigations when they have probable cause. Surprisingly, the bill was strongly supported by the state’s lobstermen who were tired of seeing cheaters getting away with a slap on the wrist. But getting the bill to become law, as it did when Governor LePage signed it on June 14, was a difficult journey, as you will read in this issue.

Lobstermen also were relieved when the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) decided in late June to exempt lobster fishing from two coral protection zones in the Gulf of Maine. As detailed in Landings, lobstermen can continue to set traps on their traditional grounds around Outer Schoodic Ridge and Mt. Desert Rock as they have in the past. The NEFMC considered closing those areas to all bottom gear in order to protect corals found at the two sites. However, in the face of opposition by Maine lobstermen and data indicating the high value of the two fishing areas, the NEFMC decided to allow lobstering to continue.

This month will also see the start of the second year of NOAA’s hydrographic survey, this time in eastern Penobscot Bay. Project manager Dean Moyles gives us an overview of the survey’s route and the technology that will be used to gather important bathymetric information this summer. Moyles is working closely with the Maine Lobstermen’s Association to ensure that local lobstermen are aware of what’s going on.

Rebecca Weil and colleagues are continuing their study on how to make personal flotation devices (PFDs) work for lobstermen. Falls overboard are the leading cause of death among New England fishermen, many of whom do not wear PFDs when working on deck. Weil is enlisting Maine and Massachusetts lobstermen to try out one of several types of PFDs while fishing in order to learn from them directly how those PFDs could be altered to make them safer, more comfortable and easier to wear. As she says in Landings, “This is not a regulatory project. This is to keep people from drowning.”

We also hear about two of the many Maine Fishermen’s Forum scholarship recipients. Since 1998, young men and women connected to Maine’s fishing industries have received scholarship money for secondary education from the Forum. They have used that money to pursue their careers in multiple different ways. This month we learn about the educational pursuits of Alayna Caricofe from East Machias and Hattie Train from Long Island in Casco Bay.

Women are no longer rare to see on the docks or in the offices of Maine seafood companies. But that wasn’t always the case. This month Landings profiles Emily Lane, currently the administrative manager of the Vinalhaven Fishermen’s Cooperative and director of sales at Calendar Islands Maine Lobster, about her long career in Maine’s seafood processing world as part of our series “People of the Coast.”

We also catch up with some of the young lobstermen who traveled to Prince Edward Island this spring as part of the second Maine Lobster Leadership Institute. As the closing experience in their winter-long studies, the lobstermen visited with Prince Edward Island lobstermen along the north shore of the island. They fished with them, stayed in their homes, and toured a holding and processing facility owned by a local fishing cooperative. A one participant said, “That was pretty cool to see, that it is all fishermen-owned.”

It is the height of summer this month and many among us are enjoying a casual lobster feast on the weekend or when friends come to call. For dinners in Dallas, San Francisco and New York City, however, indulging in Maine lobster is something entirely different. The Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative is staging another series of Maine After Midnight events this summer specifically for chefs and food professionals in those three cities. Chefs get to conduct covert investigations to allow the Department of Marine Resources to read in this issue.

Your comments and ideas for additional articles are welcome!
by Jay Carroll, Marine Patrol

When the hardwood trees and alder leaves begin to bud, it’s not just brook trout that start biting. After a cool, damp start, spring finally arrived and commercial fishing activities in Marine Patrol’s Eastern Division have increased significantly. Officers have been busy in recent weeks monitoring the spring runs of alewives, smelt, and elvers. With elver season now in the books and the State waters’ halibut season closed, Marine Patrol will refocus its enforcement efforts and priorities accordingly.

**Marine Patrol will be focusing...**

Fisheries management is, of course, an ever-evolving collaboration among stakeholders. The effectiveness of Marine Patrol, in large part, is based on our ability to establish priorities and focus efforts appropriately. In the summer season, Marine Patrol will be focusing a great deal of effort on lobster regulations enforcement, intertidal harvest activities, education, and recreational boating safety.

With lobster fishing now in full swing, it is important to note some important regulatory changes within the fishery. Recent legislation related to lobster includes the criminalization of molesting lobster gear and of fishing 25 or more untagged lobster traps. Another noteworthy change involves the statutory exclusion of an individual’s declared lobster zone. As a reminder, fishermen are required to treat your competitors with respect and may the fruits of your labor be bountiful while you continue to “fish on.”

If you have questions about any regulatory or statutory changes in any fishery, don’t hesitate to call your Marine Patrol Division Office in either Boothbay Harbor (633-9595) or Lamoine (667-3373).

**If you have questions about...**

With our small vessel fleet now deployed into the field, Marine Patrol will be increasing our enforcement efforts at-sea and engaging fishermen at the harvest source. It is vitally important that enforcement officers and fishermen work together as stewards of the state’s marine resources. Information gleaned at the harvest source is critical in helping Patrol establish and adapt our enforcement priorities. Either at the dock, on the boat, or in the bait shed, we will be ready to take your complaints, listen to your concerns, and of course check your catch. So, whether there is a tug on the end of your line, you are grinding through pot gear for the day, or the trawl is paying off the net reel, treat your competitors with respect and may the fruits of your labor be bountiful.

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NOAA SUMMER HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEY CONTINUES IN EASTERN PENOBSCOT BAY

By Dean Moyles, Fugro Inc.

Fugro will be conducting a NOAA-commissioned multibeam and LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) hydrographic survey in eastern Penobscot Bay this summer similar to the one carried out in the western bay in 2016. One of the world’s leading independent providers of geo-intelligence and asset integrity solutions, Fugro is recognized for its highly efficient and cost-effective solutions to hydrographic surveying.

The 2016 surveys are currently in the final review stage at NOAA’s Pacific Hydrographic Branch and, once completed, the high-resolution bathymetric data will be published and existing charts updated. Below are some images of bathymetric data collected in Penobscot Bay during the summer of 2016.

Multibeam echo sounder surveys are generally conducted in response to requests by marine pilots, port authorities, the U.S. Coast Guard, fishermen, and the general boating community. Since many portions of Penobscot Bay have not been surveyed with multibeam equipment since the 1950s, this new survey will provide valuable information for up-to-date nautical charts for the region, as well as identifying any new navigation hazards such as wrecks and other obstructions.

Last year the survey was carried out in highly-trafficked and -fished areas of west Penobscot Bay; this year the survey will be similar. This summer’s survey will be conducted in east Penobscot Bay and cover the regions of Isle au Haut, Deer Island Thoroughfare, the vicinity of Swan’s Island, and Eggemoggin Reach. The project is tentatively scheduled to kick off in late June and will run through late September.

2017 Project Area

Fugro will be mobilizing two catamaran-style jet drive survey boats with echo sounders mounted on poles either over-the-side or at the stern to obtain multibeam data. These vessels will survey and map the ocean floor in areas with water depths greater than 8 meters. In addition, a small aircraft fitted with an airborne LIDAR bathymetry (ALB) system will map data inshore of the 8-meter contour. The LIDAR system is ideally suited for mapping shallow water areas and the coastal zone; achievable water depth depends on water clarity and bottom type.

Survey operations will be based out of Stonington; mobilization of the vessels is anticipated to take three to four days. Once this is completed they will conduct one day of system calibrations before commencing survey operations. The current survey plan is to start in Priority 1 (labeled as H13011). It should be noted that as survey operations depend greatly on weather conditions, the operational plan may need to be amended. Both vessels will be monitoring channel 16 and a working channel (yet to be determined). Fugro has established a temporary office in Stonington and our point of contact for any further questions will be: Dean Moyles, cell 858 945-6378, email dmoyles@fugro.com.

For additional information regarding Fugro’s hydrographic survey services and the technologies being utilized on this project visit our website at: https://www.fugro.com/our-services/marine-site-characterisation/cable-route-and-hydrographic-survey-services#tabbed1.
MAINE FISHERMEN’S FORUM SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS EXPLORE HIGHER LEARNING IN DIFFERENT WAYS

The Maine Fishermen's Forum has awarded a total of $385,886 in scholarships since 1998 to students related to a person who is actively involved in the seafood industry. The scholarship criteria are simple: Applicants must be a sophomore, junior, or senior in college; they must have an immediate family member actively participating in Maine's seafood industry; they cannot have won the scholarship before. The awards given each year are based on the amount of money donated and raised through the annual Fishermen’s Forum Scholarship Auction each year.

Landings will introduce you to some of this year's winners throughout the year. Our first profiles are of two young women whose fathers are commercial lobstermen.

by Shelley Wigglsworth

Alayna Caricofe is the daughter of Sean Caricofe, an East Machias commercial lobsterman who also dives for sea urchins. Her mother, Molly Preston Calder, is a teacher. Caricofe went to high school at Washington Academy and is currently attending the University of Maine at Machias (UMM), part of the class of 2019. She is majoring in biology with a minor in environmental studies. "I chose the biology field because I've always really enjoyed science and I'm passionate about nature. My goal is to become a wildlife biologist," she said.

Caricofe, who is a self-proclaimed "hands-on learner," said that UMM fits the bill perfectly for her way of learning. "I really enjoy the direct and involved learning experience that UMM provides, especially for someone in the science department. The professors know who you are and care about your success, making it easy to get help when a topic is difficult for you."

She credits her family members and a grade school teacher with influencing and encouraging her to pursue a degree in the sciences. "My family is a huge motivator for me. Without them, I wouldn't be on the path I am today. I also had an awesome science teacher in grade school at Edmunds Consolidated, David Winski, who first made me realize I really do enjoy science," Caricofe said. Her ultimate goal is "to have a positive impact on the protection of our planet and its natural features."

In addition to the Fishermen's Forum scholarship money, which she said is "a huge help," Caricofe has a work-study job at the UMM Merrill Library plus she works throughout the summer. "Every penny of the scholarship money is greatly appreciated! It takes that much more stress off myself and my family considering the investment that going to college is. It's also a great feeling to be helped."

Harriet "Hattie" Train grew up on Long Island and is the daughter of lobsterman Steve Train and teacher Marci Train. She comes from a long line of fishermen. "At least four generations of my family have been fishermen in the Casco Bay area on my father's side. My grandfather on my mother's side comes from a fishing village in Nova Scotia, so fishing in the Gulf of Maine is in my blood on both sides," she said. "Growing up I often would be involved in either gear work, or buoy painting or sterning as well as fishing on my own for a while."

Train went to Cheverus High School in Portland and is now attending the University of Maine in Orono where she is majoring in marine science with a minor in ocean and coastal ecosystems work and pairing that knowledge with her own observations gained from growing up on an island and fishing have been truly stimulating.

In addition to the Fishermen's Forum scholarship money, Train spends her summers working full-time to offset her student loans and pay for school. "I was a lifeguard at Crescent Beach State Park in Cape Elizabeth during the last two summers plus I worked as an intern for the Island Institute the summer after high school," she said. "This summer I am interning with the Gulf of Maine Research Institute in Portland."

Train hopes to someday work in the policy area of fisheries. "I want to help keep the Gulf of Maine fisheries sustainable and keep fishermen able to continue with the way of life that they have come to know as normal. Commercial fishermen, lobstermen especially, don't just do it because it's their job. Fishing is more of the identity they have and a way of life. It is who people are and I never want to see that disappear," she said.

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“This is not a regulatory project. This is to keep people from drowning.” Rebecca Weil does not mince words. A research coordinator at the Northeast Center for Occupational Health and Safety: Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (NEC), Weil is all too aware that falls overboard from fishing vessels are the most frequent cause of death in the Northeast commercial lobster fishery. Many of those deaths could be prevented if fishermen always wore personal flotation devices (PFDs) when working. She knows that many don’t, citing the PFDs’ awkwardness and tendency to catch and snag dangerously on deck.

The NEC, in partnership with Fishing Partnership Support Services of Massachusetts and McMillan Offshore Survival Training in Belfast, Maine, began a project last year to find out from lobstermen themselves the obstacles to wearing a PFD and to develop fisherman-suggested design modifications to make a better PFD. A similar study was done with Alaskan fishermen which revealed that optimal PFD design varies from fishery to fishery.

Weil and colleagues obtained eight different types of PFDs and went down to the docks in Massachusetts and Maine in January to solicit lobstermen to wear them while working. Each participant received a small stipend and got to keep the PFD at the end of the trial. “The Maine Lobstermen’s Association board suggested that we split the project into winter and summer seasons. We had about 80 lobstermen in Massachusetts and Maine wearing the PFDs in January and February,” Weil said.

The project staff also began to call lobstermen in the two states to conduct a short survey on fishing behavior and use of PFDs. “The survey is very simple,” Weil explained. “We ask questions like ‘does your boat have an open or closed transom?’ and ‘what would an ideal PFD design be for a lobsterman?’ Fishermen can add their thoughts about PFDs and help us in looking at design solutions and to see if we are on the right track. People have been great about the surveys. We know no one likes surveys, so we hope people understand the goal is to save lives and better understand ways to help, so that people can keep doing what they love — working as lobstermen,” Weil said. “Sometimes they call us back to take the survey after we leave a message on their phone!”

Lobstermen also asked about other value-added features PFDs could have that provide additional benefits besides safety.

During the final week of July, Weil and colleagues will be on the docks once again, beginning in Stonington, offering PFDs to lobstermen to test. Whoever is on the dock at the time they arrive is eligible to volunteer for the study, she said. The same activity will occur on the coast of Massachusetts during that week. “This project is just for lobstermen. We can’t answer these questions without them. It’s about keeping people alive,” Weil said.

The PFDs have been provided by Hyde Sportswear, Kent, Mullion, Mustang Survival, Quatic Apparel, Spinlock, and Stormline.

For more information, visit www.necenter.org/fishing/research/?id=28. Rebecca Weil can be reached at weil.rebecca@bassett.org.

**LIFE JACKET TESTING PROJECT MOVES INTO SUMMER PHASE**

**by Melissa Waterman**

SUPPORT the
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**Lobstermen’s Relief Fund Benefit**  
*August 13th 3 - 7 pm*  
*Cook’s Lobster & Ale House*  
*Bailey Island*

**Community Night**  
*Tuesday August 15th*  
*B-Good ‘real food, real fast’*  
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MAINE LOBSTERMEN’S ASSOCIATION UPDATE

STEAMING AHEAD

I am so excited that summer is finally here! It has been a very long and busy winter for the MLA. MLA staff and many board members spent a lot of time in Augusta pushing for major changes to our lobster violations enforcement structure and fighting against increases in lobster license fees.

Since its beginning, the MLA has represented lobstermen in Augusta. We typically monitor and track bills related to lobstering. The MLA board takes positions on bills that affect the fishery as a whole and advocates for policy that is in the long-term interest of the lobster industry. The MLA doesn’t weigh in on bills that are local in nature and do not affect the entire industry.

The majority of lobster-related bills that we see in Augusta seek to change our existing management structure to give an existing group an advantage over others. Examples include allowing the sale or transfer of licenses, changes to the zone council system or weakening the entry system.

Often the MLA fights for the status quo so that we don’t undermine our conservation and management system. But there are also times when the board realizes that we must rethink an existing policy and advocate for new solutions.

The most important work happens when some of the fishery’s cornerstone policies are debated or bills are introduced that could have a major impact on the future of the industry. For example, MLA has fought for many years to keep dragger-caught lobster from being landed in Maine. In 2007, MLA led the charge to defeat LD 170; in 2013 we did the same to defeat LD 1097. Keeping dragger-caught lobster from landing in Maine is part of the fabric of the lobster industry and part of the fabric of the MLA. The MLA remains committed to doing everything within our power to keep this from happening.

Fighting for a sustainable future for Maine’s commercial lobstering is what we do, and what the MLA has done for more than 60 years. What was very different about being in Augusta this year, however, is the amount of time the MLA spent to keep the enforcement bill alive. It was not because it was a poorly written bill or because we failed to do proper outreach and get feedback from the industry. Instead, it was because the lawyer from the Maine Lobstering Union argued that the MLA board did not like the bill and championed a campaign of misinformation regarding the bill to lobstermen.

By way of background, the MLA worked with Senator Langley to put forward LD 575, An Act to Improve the Enforcement of Maine’s Lobster Laws. This bill grew out of many months of work by the MLA board as it debated a myriad of enforcement concerns raised by lobstermen. The board discussed potential solutions at length, and then conducted a survey of MLA members to get feedback. This feedback served to help the MLA board refine its priorities and was followed with an online survey of all lobstermen in the state to gauge their concern about these issues. The survey results were presented to a large audience at the Maine Fishermen’s Forum and in Landings, which is mailed to every license holder. During all these efforts, the MLA board steadfastly advocated for the bill. Everyone agreed that the lobster fishery had reached a point where enforcement had become “a joke” and that the issue of cheating needed to be addressed.

Lobstermen raised many concerns with the MLA on how the lobster industry is changing. However, the MLA surveys showed that there was not clear support to address issues such as abuse of replacement tags, the increase in night hauling, or the number of people working on boats with a Class III license.

The MLA chose to tackle the issue that had overwhelming support among lobstermen, namely, that DMR enforcement lacks the ability to catch offenders and that the penalty structure for those who are caught is too weak and ineffective. For the most egregious and intentional violations, the industry told the MLA that there should be a strict minimum penalty to deter lobstermen from cheating in the first place. For other violations where there is a high probability that it could be a mistake, existing penalties should be kept in place.

And that is exactly what the MLA put forward. The MLA’s bill, LD 575, proposed to set minimum and maximum penalties for a series of lobster violations. The MLA’s industry-wide survey results were included in our testimony in March, clearly demonstrating that stiff minimum penalties were supported by the industry. The MLA also supported DMR’s bill, LD 1370, which sought to give the DMR the authority to conduct covert investigations of those suspected of fishing over the trap limit and fishing sunken travels. The MLA was adamant that this only be allowed if there is probable cause that a crime is being committed and that a third party outside of DMR must sign off on the warrant. To do this, the Marine Resources Committee made these types of lobster violations criminal offenses. This will allow Marine Patrol to show probable cause and then get a warrant from a judge to conduct a covert investigation. Throughout the process, the MLA watched carefully to ensure that lobstermen would be treated fairly.

These two bills were combined into a single bill, and moved forward as LD 575. This created a two-fold strategy: getting DMR the enforcement tools it needs and stiffening the penalty structure for blatant, intentional lobster offenses. Violations that could be accidental (shorts, v-notches, etc.) were left the same.

While the MLA remained open to addressing substantive issues, the goal post continued to move. Defining sunken travel was not enough. The MLA argued strenuously for these enforcement changes. Why? Because MLA members have been unequivocal in their concern that cheaters are reaping huge financial gains and jeopardizing our long-standing culture of stewardship. Throughout the unending opposition to the bill, the MLA kept an open mind focused on the goal of ensuring that these enforcement changes become law. After all, that is what the industry had asked for. The MLA met with the Union’s lawyer, an opposing legislator and DMR to address any substantive opposition. To the bill, the MLA kept an open mind focused on the goal of ensuring that these enforcement changes become law. After all, that is what the industry had asked for. The MLA met with the Union’s lawyer, an opposing legislator and DMR to address any substantive opposition.

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In June, the MLA welcomed Pike Bartlett who shared his ideas on how to build a better lobster trap. His goal is to ensure that traps land properly on the bottom when they are set. The Board discussed the new design ideas and offered feedback.

Under Old Business, Patrice reviewed the status of the bills under consideration by the Legislature. By the date of the meeting, only one had become law, allowing lobstering to start at 4 a.m. in October. The Maine Lobstering Union’s lawyer had raised a series of concerns over the enforcement bill, LD 575. The MLA met with Union representatives and did not share those concerns. Unfortunately, this created a lot of misinformation about the bill. Despite a unanimous vote on LD 1379 and LD 575, Rep. Paula Sutton withdrew her support when the two were combined into one bill (LD 575). Her issues with the bill were ideological rather than the substantive.

The New England Fisheries Management Council (NEFMC) public hearing on Downeast coral zones was held in late May. Several MLA Board members spoke in opposition to any lobster closure. The final vote by the Council was on June 22 in Portland.

The MLA continues to participate in the ASMC subcommittee to plan for future changes in the Gulf of Maine lobster stock. This is an important strategic process to think through how the industry would cope with any downturn in abundance.

Several management changes to the Area 1A herring fishery are in place for June. Herring vessels were required to declare their intent to fish in Area 1A.

The NEFMC herring section has put Trimester 2 effort controls in place. The season opened with three landing days (Sun. to Wed.) with weekly landing limits.

LD 575 was strongly supported by the MLA. He explained clearly what the final LD 575 did and did not do. Lobstermen asked many questions and, in the end, most realized that the majority of their fears were unfounded. Just before the Senate voted on the bill, the Union withdrew its opposition and the Senator passed the bill under the hammer.

Despite strong opposition in the House from Rep. Paula Sutton, who worked closely with the Union’s lawyer, LD 575 was strongly supported by Representatives Hawke, Kuminega, Tuell, Alley and Parry, whom offered compelling testimony on the floor. This is what Representative Tuell said:

“I and my colleagues on Marine Resources voted this bill out of committee with a very strong ‘ought to pass’ as an amended report. Only one member voted against it. We worked the bill tirelessly in a good faith effort to address everyone’s concerns, and we gave people inside the industry and out every opportunity to weigh in. The long and short of it is that the Department of Marine Resources has bent over backwards to work with anyone who wants to work on this bill, and I say that as one who has been critical of the Administration’s relationship with the Legislature, and one who is very dubious of its broad claims of executive oversight. I bring that up because the main argument against this bill is that it gives the Commissioner of Marine Resources too much power to administratively suspend fishing licenses. As my grandmother was fond of saying, ‘Bull, and cow to go with it.’ Sorry, but a fisherman from down home told me in the hall yesterday to be blunt, so I’m being blunt. The excuses, the rationalization, the moral relativity around why we should not hold bad people accountable for some of the most wicked, vile things you can do on the water, is just flat out wrong, and I am not having any of it. And on top of all of that, it’s just not true.”

The House voted in favor of the bill 130 to 16! The bill became law when it was signed by Governor LePage on June 14.

This experience gave me a new and deeper appreciation of the wisdom that the MLA’s 63-year history brings to the fray. As lobster industry groups such as the Maine Lobstering Union become more active, I realize that a strong and active MLA is more important than ever. The MLA is a grassroots organization. The MLA’s policy decisions are made by the Board, informed by our members from throughout the coast, and are based on a thorough and accurate understanding of the issues.

The struggle over LD 575 made me realize how strongly the MLA’s long history guides the organization’s actions today. The MLA has been there for every debate that lobstermen have been part of since 1954. We know where we’ve been and have a strong vision for where we’re going while we’re going. Whether other industry groups struggle to understand the far-reaching implications of today’s issues, the MLA effectively continues to do what it has done for so long: advocate at every level of government for the long-term well-being of the lobster resource and our fishing communities.

Whether it is overhauling our enforcement laws, stopping possible closures due to so-called “Y前线” to new whale rules or ensuring lobstermen have access to fresh bait during the peak fishing season, the MLA is there. I can assure you that in most venues the MLA is the only group at the table.

It doesn’t matter what year it is. The MLA continues to show up, to speak out and to argue with those who would damage the proud traditions which have led to Maine’s thriving lobster industry. Things that don’t work don’t last, and the MLA is not going anywhere! Have no doubts — the MLA has your back.

As always, stay safe on the water.
As the First Session of the 128th Legislature comes to a close, there were only four bills passed that impact the lobster fishery. Three become effective immediately since they were passed as emergency measures, while non-emergency bills are effective 90 days after adjournment, around October.

LD 573 An Act to Improve the Enforcement of Maine’s Lobster Laws was signed into law on June 14. The final amended version of this bill included the provisions originally proposed by DMR through LD 1379. It addresses issues in making enforcement cases and stiffens penalties to improve compliance with Maine’s lobster regulations. The new law criminalizes several lobster violations in order to allow DMR to get a warrant from a judge to conduct covert surveillance if there is probable cause of illegal activity. It establishes minimum penalties for the five most egregious, intentional lobster violations: scrubbing eggers, trap molesting, fishing over the trap limit, fishing sunken trawls and arson or sinking another’s lobster boat. The law does not make any changes to more minor violations such as short and v-notch violations.

The law also gives the Commissioner the authority to require a lobsterman re-instated into the lobster fishery following a license suspension to pay for and install a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) for a period of time not to exceed the length of the license suspension. The Commissioner may also limit the reinstated lobstermen to 300 traps in the first year back in the fishery, thereafter building up by 100 traps each year up to the zone trap limit.

LD 1207 An Act to Make Technical Changes to Maine’s Marine Resources Laws was signed into law on June 8. The final amended bill makes it illegal to sell offal for use as lobster bait and establishes a standard thickness not to exceed 1.25” for hairless hides. It also gives lobstermen the ability to provide marine demonstration licenses to operate on Sundays. Marine demonstration license holders are limited to 20 traps and are not allowed to retain, transport or sell lobster.

LD 14 An Act to Extend the Legal Hours for Harvesting Lobster was signed into law April 28. This law changes the start time for lobster fishing to 4 a.m. during LD 1454 An Act to Extend the Time for an Appeal of Limited Entry Lobster Zones (Hubbell) was signed into law on July 28. Th is law eliminates the time limitation for a military veteran to re-ceive a lobster license. If a license is issued following service, that person must receive a lobster license. If a license is issued following service, that person must

Two bills were carried over and will be discussed during the next session: LD 922 An Act Directing the Commissioner of Marine Resources to Investigate Conditions of Sheepscot Pond Related to a Management Plan for Anadromous Fish Species and LD 703 An Act to Address Marine Debris Resulting from Commercial Activities.

Eleven other bills were discussed but not enacted. The defeat of LD 1105 An Act to Create Consistency in the Regulation of Pesticides was an important win for Maine’s coastal municipalities and the lobster industry. This bill would have made it illegal for towns to enact pesticide regulations that are more restrictive than the state’s. The MLA strongly opposed this bill. LD 705 An Act to Prevent Marine Debris had majority support of the Marine Resource Committee but was soundly defeated in the House. This bill would have made it illegal to have frozen bait packaging (cardboard, plastic and strapping) aboard any fishing boat.

**Lobster bills not enacted**

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<td>LD 113</td>
<td>An Act to Stabilize Lobster Bait Prices (Allen)</td>
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<td>LD 149</td>
<td>An Act to Provide Additional Management for Limited-entry Lobster Zones (Hubbell)</td>
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<td>LD 201</td>
<td>An Act to Provide Flexibility in the Purchase of Lobster Trap Tags (Kumiega)</td>
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<td>LD 252</td>
<td>An Act To Improve Safety in the Disposal of Expired Marine Flares (McCreight)</td>
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<td>LD 373</td>
<td>An Act to Create Pathways to Enter Alternative Marine Industries (Allen)</td>
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<td>An Act Regarding Haul Times outside the 3 mile Line (Tuell)</td>
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<td>LD 616</td>
<td>An Act to Ensure Consistent Access to Limited Entry Lobster Zones (Hubbell)</td>
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<td>LD 1505</td>
<td>An Act to Create Consistency in the Regulation of Pesticides (Davis)</td>
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**FEDERAL OBSERVER COVERAGE FOR LOBSTER INDUSTRY**

NOAA announced the 2018 Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology (SBRM) federal observer coverage requirements in April. The Northeast Lobster Trap/Pot fishery has been allocated 17 observer days. These trips are spread from April 2017 through March of 2018 and include two trips each month from July through November, and one trip per month April through June and December through March.

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act requires all fishery management plans (FMP) to “establish a standardized reporting methodology to assess the amount and type of bycatch occurring in the fishery.” The SBRM program assigns federal observer coverage to estimate annual bycatch in each of the northeast commercial fisheries.

**HERRING FISHERY**

The Area 1A Herring fishery opened on June 4 with three landing days. Catches are limited to landing 10 truckloads per week and there is no transfer at sea between catcher vessels. Harvester vessels are allowed one carrier vessel to carry two truckloads per week. The ASMFC Herring Section meet every two weeks to review landings and make adjustments as necessary.
The ASMFC Atlantic Menhaden Management Board approved a total allowable catch (TAC) for the 2017 fishing season of 200,000 mt. The amount allocated to Maine for 2017 is 171,882 pounds. DMR closed the menhaden fishery on June 3 when the state’s quota was caught.

DMR reopened the menhaden fishery on June 8 under the ASMFC’s episodic event provision. Under an episodic event, additional quota can be allocated to states when the quota has been met but there is still significant biomass available. ASMFC allows allocation of 1% of the overall total allowable catch (TAC) for episodic events. Requirements for executing an episodic event fishery include: daily trip level reporting for all harvesters, menhaden harvested in state waters to be landed in Maine, and limiting daily harvests and landings to 120,000 pounds/vessel. Weekly landings are limited to no more than 160,000 pounds/vessel. Landings are allowed only from Monday through Thursday each week.

MLA LETTER TO HOUSE AND SENATE MEMBERS DURING STATE BUDGET NEGOTIATIONS

The Maine Lobstermen’s Association (MLA) is following the state budget negotiations and firmly rejects the proposal for the fishing industry to pay a 30% increase on our base license fees to fill the state’s budget gap. The MLA also remains stalwart that the Legislature fund the Department of Marine Resources.

The lobster industry already contributes significantly to keeping Maine’s Department of Marine Resources (DMR) funded and our essential programs operating. Through trap tag fees, Maine lobstermen fund approximately $1.5 million annually to pay for Marine Patrol, lobster science and management staff. Since 2013, Maine’s lobster industry has been self-funding $2.7 million annually to market and promote Maine lobster. This is an expansion of the industry’s lobster marketing program that had been in place since 1990. These industry funded programs are essential to the success of the lobster industry and must remain in place.

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 water-fronts. The MLA urges the Legislature to support a budget that invests in the commercial fishing sector, rather than tax it. As a business sector, commercial fishing is a primary economic driver and serves as the foundation of our local coastal economy. By law, every Maine lobsterman is a small business owner. Each runs his own boat and lives, works, and spends his earnings locally. Lobstermen’s profits stay in Maine and are spent in our communities 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. These dollars should not be diverted to funding the state budget.

The state of Maine cannot afford to undercut our commercial fishing industry or the DMR’s ability to do its job in supporting this economic sector. Lobster has long been an icon of the state of Maine, and an integral part of our culture, traditions and economy. Given the importance of the lobster fishery to our state, the Legislature should be discussing how to enhance the DMR’s efforts rather than undercut the agency or increase fees from commercial fishermen.

Please take a stand in support of Maine’s lobster industry by rejecting any increase in license fees on commercial fishermen and to keep Maine Department of Marine Resources fully funded. The MLA thanks you for your consideration of our position on this important matter.

Thank you.
Patrice McCarron

MLA LETTER TO ASMFC ON SHRIMP PLAN

The Maine Lobstermen’s Association (MLA) is providing comments on the Draft Amendment 3 to the Northern Shrimp Fishery Management Plan. The MLA is a Maine-based fishing industry organization whose mission is to advocate for a sustainable lobster resource and the fishermen and communities that depend on it.

The MLA urges the Commission to develop a flexible management approach that supports a more stable and sustainable shrimp fishery able to provide fishing opportunity for a diverse group of vessels. The MLA supports continued open access to the shrimp fishery coupled with a season that allows the majority of shrimp to drop their eggs before they are harvested and effort controls to allow Maine’s trappers as well as our mid coast and downeast fishermen the opportunity to access the resource before allowable catches are reached.

The lobster industry has enjoyed tremendous success in recent decades through continued record landings. The lobster industry’s success is due in large part to our long-standing protection of spawning females, making us one of the few trawl fisheries in the world to maintain the resource. Shrimp, however, the ASMFC must consider the significant changes in the fleet composition in future management actions. There are more lobster vessels interested in trapping shrimp, and there are fewer trawlers than before due to changes in the groundfish plan. The shrimp fishery has traditionally served as an important supplemental winter fishery for many Maine lobstermen. It has provided much-needed economic opportunity for Maine’s owner operator small boat fleet based in communities spanning the length of the Maine coast during the winter months when the inshore lobster fishery is largely dormant.

Draft Amendment 3 states that in 2010, trapping accounted for 48% of Maine’s vessels in the shrimp fishery but only 23% of landings. The trap fishery is a lower volume fishery and most fishermen report that the quality of trapped shrimp is excellent, and the price per pound is consistently higher than for trawl shrimp. Exploring opportunities for future growth in the trap sector would allow more fishermen to participate in the fishery while maximizing the value of the shrimp and minimizing the overall impact on the resource by targeting Stage II females.

The MLA does not support the status quo allocation by gear with 87% allocated to the trawl fishery and 13% to the trap fishery. The MLA would support allocation of TAC by state based on recent average proportion of landings (Option C1 or C2) to address relevant management issues on a state by state basis. Under the status quo system, shrimp trappers have not had an equal opportunity to access the resource by being allocated limited quota and a delayed start. Further, fishermen located in downeast areas have not have an opportunity to access the shrimp resource, at a time when nearly all the landings would be comprised of Stage II females, because the quota had already been reached before the shrimp were catchable. This is lost economic opportunity for fishermen who live in rural communities with limited economic prospects.

The MLA urges the Commission not to implement a limited entry system, but rather to implement a management approach which protects spawning females, examines the impact of gear on the resource and allows Maine fishermen from the entire length of the coast an opportunity to access the resource.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.
Patrice McCarron
HERRING BOATS HEAD TO SEA DURING SUMMER MONTHS

In the late afternoon in the summer, Maine herring fishermen head out to sea. They fish during the night hours for Atlantic herring which travel in large schools along the coast, moving in from offshore as the year progresses. Herring are a highly regulated species, in part because they are so prized by lobstermen for bait. Herring fishermen are constrained in where they can fish, when they can fish, and how much fish they may land in a week and over the course of the season.

This summer Maine vessels that plan to fish in Area 1A (the inshore area off Maine) from June 1 to September 30 had to declare to the Department of Marine Resources (DMR) their intention to do so. These vessels use the traditional techniques of purse and pair seining for herring during the four months of their season. We feature here photos of a few vessels and comments by their captains.

The wooden *Double Eagle* was built in 1929 in East Machias for the North Lubec Manufacturing and Canning Company and took her name from one of the company’s brands of sardines. The vessel works as a carrier, meaning that she transports herring caught by a larger vessel to shore, allowing the first vessel to continue fishing. Purchased by Glenn Lawrence in 1991 and substantially re-built, the *Double Eagle* can hold nearly 100,000 pounds of herring in her two holds.

Glenn Robbins, *F/V Western Sea*, 87-foot steel vessel, built in 1974. “I went groundfishing in the past, did trawling, single and midwater. I didn’t like the trawling, it did more damage to the fishery so I stopped.” The *Western Sea* can hold 280,000 pounds of fish and takes six crew in total. Herring fishermen count fish as truckloads – 40,000 pounds to a truckload. “The boat can hold seven truckloads. “She is a comfortable boat. My last boat was a smaller wooden boat. She couldn’t go in hard weather and couldn’t carry many fish. That boat almost sank two, three times. I can tell you. This is a safe boat. We’ve got a shower now, better heat, better living conditions.”

NEW HEAD OF NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

NMFS has a new leader as of June 19. Chris Oliver of Anchorage, Alaska, was named assistant administrator for the service, leaving his 16-year post as executive director of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. Oliver will take the reins from interim director Sam Rauch.

“I look forward to leading NOAA Fisheries and working with our partners to rebuild U.S. fisheries and conserve and recover protected resources where necessary, promote domestic marine aquaculture production where appropriate, maintain our reputation for world-renowned science and analysis, and do so while maximizing fishing opportunities for the benefit of recreational and commercial fishermen, processors, and the coastal communities which depend on them for generations to come,” said Oliver in a press release.

Oliver will oversee the management and conservation of recreational and commercial fisheries, the protection of marine mammals, marine protected areas, and coastal fisheries habitat within the U.S. exclusive economic zone. He will also manage an agency with 3,200 people in five regional offices, six science centers, and 24 labs and fish stations in 15 states and U.S. territories.

Oliver has worked for the North Pacific Fishery Management Council since 1990. During his tenure as executive director, he led the way on several management initiatives, including development of limited access privilege programs and fishery cooperatives, catch share programs, the North Pacific’s comprehensive onboard observer program, and many other programs focused on bycatch reduction, allocation and coastal communities. As the agency’s new assistant administrator, Oliver will manage 3,200 people in five regional offices, six science centers, and 24 labs and fish stations in 15 states and U.S. territories.

Originally from Rockport, Texas, Oliver was a research associate at Texas A&M University from 1987 to 1990, working with federal and state agencies on management issues associated with Gulf of Mexico shrimp fisheries. He holds a BBA in business management and a master’s degree in fisheries science, both from Texas A&M.

Glenn Robbins, *F/V Western Sea*, 87-foot steel vessel, built in 1974. “I went groundfishing in the past, did trawling, single and midwater. I didn’t like the trawling, it did more damage to the fishery so I stopped.” The *Western Sea* can hold 280,000 pounds of fish and takes six crew in total. Herring fishermen count fish as truckloads – 40,000 pounds to a truckload. “The boat can hold seven truckloads. “She is a comfortable boat. My last boat was a smaller wooden boat. She couldn’t go in hard weather and couldn’t carry many fish. That boat almost sank two, three times. I can tell you. This is a safe boat. We’ve got a shower now, better heat, better living conditions.”

Source: Department of Marine Resources
LOBSTERMEN’S RELIEF FUND
BENEFIT PARTY

Sunday August 13th 3 - 7 pm
Cook’s Lobster & Ale House, Bailey Island

- Blessing of the Fleet 3 pm with Rev. Karen Lilli Pax
- Music by the Coastal Outlaws with front man John Jordan
- Silent Auction - crazy good stuff!
- Tickets $50 and includes Geary’s pint glass, 2 beers & dinner Your choice of lobster, steak tips or chicken
- All proceeds benefit the MLCA Lobstermen’s Relief Fund

to find out more or to order tickets
www.mlcalliance.org or call 967-6221

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– Joe Savoie, Owner SS Fish & Sales

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Maine Lobster Launches Maine After Midnight Events

The MLMC builds on success of 2016 Maine After Midnight series with two stops completed.

Maine After Midnight, the successful series of chef industry night events from 2016, is underway for its second year and stopping in five cities, including Portland and Dallas this June.

The Portland event, held at The Honey Paw, was co-hosted by James Beard Award winning chefs Andrew Taylor and Mike Wiley and The Honey Paw chef Lars Taylor. The intimate event brought the Portland culinary community together and rallied them behind the importance of menuing Maine Lobster and Maine New Shell Lobster for locals and visitors alike.

The Dallas event, hosted by Chef Blythe Beck at Pink Magnolia, was a fusion of Southern hospitality mixed with some Maine cheer. Over 100 chefs and media attended and learned about Maine New Shell Lobster; additionally the MLMC was able to meet with local purveyors to educate them about the Maine Lobster industry and its incredible sustainability practices to help continue growth in the region afterward.

The MLMC will be carrying on to Chicago, San Francisco and New York City throughout the rest of the summer.
WHAT ARE SOME BENEFITS OF THE HEALTH CARE TECHNOLOGY REVOLUTION?

By Alisha Keezer

Technology affects nearly every single aspect of modern society. In fact, there isn’t an industry that hasn’t been affected by the high-tech revolution. Whether it’s communications, banking, transportation, security, or health care, each industry counts on technology in one way or another. But nowhere is this impact more apparent than in the fields of medicine and health care. Technological breakthroughs are restructuring the way health care is delivered.

Telemedicine is one of the major changes in the health care system today. Telemedicine allows for patients to interact with doctors via a computer, tablet, or mobile device. It allows patients to check in with their doctor more frequently without a waiting period. For a rural state like Maine, telemedicine can expand access to health care for those living in isolated areas. And for lobstermen who are often working long hours, it can provide more convenient access to the health care system.

Maine is one of the most rural states in the nation. 11 of our 16 counties are identified as “rural.” Long distances and a lack of public transportation limit access to health care services for a large percentage of Mainers. Health care practitioners, including primary care providers, specialists, and mental health providers, can use telemedicine services to evaluate, assess, diagnose, and treat a variety of serious health conditions remotely. They can even save lives.

Two of the insurance providers in Maine’s Health Insurance Marketplace offer this service. Harvard Pilgrim offers telemedicine via its Doctor on Demand application, which allows for anyone, not just those enrolled in their insurance plans, to visit with a doctor wherever and whenever through a smart phone, tablet or computer. Harvard Pilgrim members pay the primary care physician (PCP)-level cost sharing. No referral is required to see a Doctor on Demand provider. If you are not a Harvard Pilgrim member you will have to pay the full price ($49/visit).

Anthem also offers telemedicine through their Live Health Online application, through which members can have live video visits with a doctor at any time, day or night. Members need a smartphone, a tablet or computer equipped with a webcam and Internet access. This feature allows members to get medical advice, diagnoses, treatment, and even prescriptions in about ten minutes or less. Members also can talk to a licensed therapist or psychologist from home. Anthem also offers a NurseLine open to members anytime, day or night. A member can get answers to health questions from a nurse, who can also help the member decide where to go for care and how to deal with a health issue.

Advancements in technology have also started to influence the quality of life of elderly people. New technological solutions are aimed at keeping seniors at home rather than in a nursing home. As baby boomers age into their golden years, caregivers and families are looking for ways to keep loved ones safe and well-cared for at home. New technology allows for seniors to avoid unnecessary visits to the emergency room or stays at costly nursing homes.

Devices that remotely monitor health conditions such as blood pressure or glucose levels allow the elderly to remain at home. Wearable and “smart home” technology can capture an individual’s sleep patterns, number of steps taken in a day, heart rate, and medication schedule and other data in real time. A health care provider can use these technologies to monitor such things as when the light in the bathroom was turned on and how often a door was opened during a certain time. Although some may feel it smacks a little of “Big Brother,” this type of remote monitoring can allow an elderly person to stay home without a caregiver unless medically necessary. Some medical researchers predict that this form of telemedicine will explode in use in the near future. Although these programs are still in the beginning stages here in Maine, it’s likely residents will put them to good use.

### Legal Haul Times ~ 2017

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time equal to that of the license suspension. In addition, a fisherman may be limited to only 300 traps when re-entering the fishery, with the ability to build up by 100 traps per year until the zone limit is reached.

Finally, arson and other means of destroying another lobsterman’s vessel are now violations for which the penalty is permanent revocation of the lobster license.

Harvesters with any questions should contact DMR Commissioner Keliher’s office at 624-6553, or the nearest Marine Patrol Division Office at 633-9595 (Division I) or 667-3373 (Division II).

**MANDATORY LICENSE SUSPENSION LENGTHS EFFECTIVE JUNE 14**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Violation</th>
<th>1st offense – Suspension length</th>
<th>2nd offense – Suspension length</th>
<th>3rd offense – Suspension length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trap molesting</td>
<td>Minimum 2 years; Maximum 6 years</td>
<td>Minimum 2 years; Maximum 10 years</td>
<td>Permanent revocation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over the trap limit</td>
<td>Minimum 3 years; Maximum 10 years</td>
<td>Permanent revocation</td>
<td>(NA – license already permanently revoked)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentionally fishing sunken trawls</td>
<td>Minimum 3 years; Maximum 10 years</td>
<td>Permanent revocation</td>
<td>(NA – license already permanently revoked)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artificially removing the eggs from a female lobster</td>
<td>Minimum 4 years; potential for permanent revocation</td>
<td>Minimum 4 years; potential for permanent revocation</td>
<td>Minimum 4 years; potential for permanent revocation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arson/destruction of lobster boat</td>
<td>Permanent revocation</td>
<td>(NA – license already permanently revoked)</td>
<td>(NA – license already permanently revoked)</td>
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**South of Georges Bank, Continental Slope and Canyons Region**

During its April meeting, the Council considered six options for the Continental Slope/canyons region south of Georges Bank, and selected Alternative 6 as its preferred option. This alternative calls for a broad coral protection zone boundary of 600 meters minimum depth, equivalent to roughly 325 fathoms. The use of all bottom-tending gear would be prohibited within the zone, but a pot gear exemption for the deepsea red crab fishery was included. This is the only fishery using bottom-tending gear known to take place deeper than 600 meters.

During the May public hearings on the coral amendment, a coalition of environmental groups put forward a new broad zone alternative, which the Council’s Habitat Committee agreed to have analyzed. At its June meeting, the Council reviewed this analysis for what was being called Alternative 7. The alternative reflects both fishing effort and coral data at depths ranging from 300 to 550 meters and was developed to freeze the footprint of bottom-tending mobile gears.

The Council voted to consider combining Alternatives 6 and 7 and will review the analyses at a future meeting. Consideration of the additional alternative means final action on this portion of the Coral Amendment is delayed to later this year.

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**Check out our shipping rates!!! 2 Days to Alaska. Overnight to Maine!!!**
When the former Weathervane seafood distribution center property on Badgers Island in Kittery became available, Kittery Trading Post owner Kevin Adams saw a business opportunity that would benefit the lobstering community and local economy. Through his vision, Maine Ocean Lobster was founded.

"I have been very fortunate to be a third-generation owner of the Kittery Trading Post. I’ve been blessed to have a successful life in great part because of the local people. When this property became available, I knew it was time to do something to give back to the community," Adams said.

He purchased the property in 2015 with his partner in business and in life, Jen Watson. Together they then made significant upgrades to the plant, including upgrading the original holding tanks and chilling systems along with several other items. In April of last year, Adams, Watson and their team which includes Bob Adams and David Labbe, CFO of Kittery Trading Post, opened Maine Ocean Lobster, a fully operational wholesale lobster business. A waterfront restaurant on the premises, The Pointe, soon followed.

"Our goal all along was to keep this a working waterfront and protect it from public. So far it has been win-win all the way around."


Adams noted that live lobster from Maine Ocean Lobster is now also available at the Kittery Trading Post. "We have a holding tank there which serves a dual purpose as an educational display and a retail purchase center. Right now we are waiting on a permit to display a 13 pound lobster there for the public to see."

In the spirit of the family business, Jen and Kevin’s children have recently come on board at the operation as well. Zack Watson assists with daily management of Maine Ocean Lobster and Hayley Adams is part of the team at The Pointe. The Pointe’s menu includes offerings from executive chef Kevin Labell such as vanilla butter poached Maine lobster, lobster wontons, seafood sauté, lobster rolls, chowders, land tithe neck clams. They also offer a variety of local fresh turf items, such as duck and potato, grilled local vegetarian dishes, and desserts. Adams said, "The Pointe keeps the sense of community alive. It has become a popular gathering spot for the locals, who know they are supporting their own when they eat here."

When the local lobstermen bring their landings right to us by boat and those eating at the restaurant can watch them come in and unload. As of today, we do not buy Canadian lobster. All of our lobster is strictly from Maine and New Hampshire because we are so close to the border here in Kittery. Right now, we purchase from fishermen as far North as Wells and we hope to stretch our buying area further up the coast as the demand allows. We guarantee to pay more for the catch and we have established a good working relationship with the fishermen because of that alone."

Jay Lehman is the front line manager at Maine Ocean Lobster. A former sternman with four years retail experience in the seafood business, he handles all of the buying and selling and manages the day-to-day operations such as grading lobster, arranging for deliveries and pick up and more. "We differ from many other wholesale buyers because we specialize in lobster alone. Our philosophy is if we start to deal with other seafood we won’t be able to be experts on our main focus. Our biggest point of pride is that we are always dealing direct and local. We process everything here, from picking to serving, and it’s done fresh to order. When people eat lobster at our restaurant it was most likely swimming in the ocean hours before."

Though the company ships lobsters all over the United States, they do not ship overseas. "We figure the best grades and quality lobster are born and caught here in the U.S., let’s eat them in the U.S." Lehman said.

Jay Lehman, left, and Kevin Adams on the dock at Maine Ocean Lobster on Badgers Island.
By Melissa Waterman

Emily Lane is a small person. But, as a review of her career quickly shows, her energy and devotion to Maine's seafood industries is much greater than her stature.

Lane currently works as the administrative manager of the Vinalhaven Fishermen's Co-operative and as vice-president of sales at Calendar Islands Maine Lobster in Portland. She was one of the original members of the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (she is now on its advisory board) and serves as vice president of the Island Institute board of directors.

Yet she started out with a desire to work in an entirely unrelated industry. “I wanted to work in publishing and editing at McGraw Hill. When I got out of college, however, there were no jobs in the field. So I got my teacher’s certificate instead,” Lane said. She taught in the Thorndike area before taking a position on Vinalhaven in 1971.

Lane’s mother grew up in Augusta, where her grandfather worked as the chief agricultural inspector for the state. “He traveled up and down the coast inspecting blueberries, sardine plants, clam plants,” she said. Lane settled into her new life on Vinalhaven quickly. She married Tim Lane, whose family went back generations, gave birth to twin boys, and got involved. “I served on the Board of Selectmen, the School Board, every board in town except the board of appeals,” she laughed.

One day in 1987 Alfred Osgood talked to Lane about serving on the board of the Penobscot Bay Fish and Cold Storage cooperative. The seafood processing facility had been built with federal money earlier in the decade and was owned by the town. “Penobscot Bay Fish and Cold Storage did all sorts of species, shrimp, scallops, groundfish, herring. We even processed squid brought up from Pt. Judith [R.I.],” Lane recalled. She first served as chair of the cooperative’s board and then became facility manager until the company closed the plant.

In 1991, another company came calling, this time Claw Island Foods from North Carolina. The business leased the facility from the town and asked Lane to be office manager and later general manager. “I ran the plant and oversea sales until 1998,” Lane said. The facility was next leased by Resource Trading Company out of Portland, then by Portland Shellfish Company. The latter company concentrated its seafood processing activities in Portland; ultimately the processing facility on Vinalhaven was torn down.

By this time Lane had expanded her seafood marketing skills. “I worked in export sales primarily [for Portland Shellfish Company],” Lane said. “Then I took a position at Calendar Islands Maine Lobster.” Calendar Island Maine Lobster was organized by Casco Bay lobstermen. It buys lobster from its owners and others, processes the lobster, and markets its products throughout the world. “[The company model] gets the fishermen involved in the ownership of a company to give them a broader view of the industry, supply and demand, and the value of their product,” Lane said.

Lane credits her career path to good managerial skills and a desire to educate people about Maine seafood. “If I look back, I would never have told you that I would be involved in the seafood business. It has given me the chance to travel the world and to meet people,” she said.

Part of the set of skills Lane brings to her varied positions is the ability to communicate among different cultures and levels. “I will bring buyers and distributors to Maine to educate them and have them experience the fishery firsthand,” she explained. That desire to educate also extends to Maine lobstermen. “It’s a challenge to get people to realize that what happens in the market affects their price. It’s always market-driven. It’s been hard to get [lobstermen] to understand the volatility of the market,” Lane said.

“I like to think outside of the box,” she added. And she has brought that innovative thinking to the Vinalhaven Fishermen’s Cooperative as well as her sales activities. The Co-op fell on hard times in 2005. Working with the late Ted Johansen, Lane reorganized the business and rescued it from near bankruptcy. Today, as administrative manager, Lane is moving the Co-op forward in new ways. She has held financial planning workshops for Co-op members. She has organized trips to the Boston Seafood Show for members to see how their product is regarded in the global marketplace. In June, she organized a workshop for the Co-op Board with Island Institute staff to discuss the possibility of starting a kelp aquaculture project. “We have a market for the kelp and someone has seed for us to use. It would be an alternative revenue stream, something in the late fall and early spring,” she said.

Lane acknowledges that there have been some bumps in the road during her years in Maine’s sometimes cutthroat seafood industry. “Running a plant on Vinalhaven was a challenge. As a woman in a predominantly male industry and community I had to earn my stripes and the respect of people,” she said. She has no intention of retiring any time soon. “I love going out and reaching people all over the world and teaching them about the great signature products of Maine.”
Prince Edward Island is just a seven-hour drive from the coast of Maine, but for Maine lobstermen it’s another world. At least that was the experience of a group of young lobstermen who visited the province to fish and talk with P.E.I. lobstermen and processors in May. The trip was part of the Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance (MLCA) second Lobster Leadership Institute, a four-month hands-on educational program designed to give young lobstermen and women the skills needed to guide the fishery in the future. The MLCA is the nonprofit sister organization of the Maine Lobstermen’s Association, whose mission is to educate the public about Maine’s lobstering heritage, support scientific research to further the industry’s conservation ethic and stewardship of ocean resources, and provide assistance to distressed fishing families.

The ten Maine lobstermen stayed with lobstermen on the north shore of P.E.I. and hauled traps with them. In the Maritime Provinces, lobstermen can fish only during set seasons, generally eight weeks in duration, and are limited in the number of traps they can set. The season on the north shore of P.E.I. runs from May 1 to June 30 and trap limits range from 273 to 300. If the weather turns poor or a boat engine breaks down, a P.E.I. lobsterman loses time on the water, something that is not possible for Maine lobstermen because they have a brief two-month season. “They are definitely under the gun. They really crack the whip when they go,” Sargent laughed. They are paid a set salary. “The sternman makes between $1,000 to $1,200 each week and expenses are deducted” or “off the bottom” (after expenses), on P.E.I. the sternmen are paid a set salary. “The sternman makes between $1,000 to $1,200 each week and the captain makes way more,” Sargent said.

Brian Billings of Stonington noticed one difference between Maine and P.E.I. “The ports are just kind of a man-made place. It’s not a real harbor. The boats are tied up along a breakwater and when you go out you are in open water immediately,” he said. He went lobstering with fishermen from Tignish and Fortune. He and the other visiting lobstermen also toured a processing plant in Tignish that is owned by a cooperative of local lobstermen. “That was pretty cool to see, that it is all fishermen-owned,” he said.

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The young Maine leaders were given a tour of large live holding facilities, sorting areas, and the processing plant. General manager and former lobsterman Francis Morrisey lead them on the tour and talked about the importance of marketing in selling the product. He has closely followed the development of the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative. “Maine is well ahead of us with your marketing effort. You’ve done such an incredible job selling Maine lobster that it has even raised the price for our lobstermen,” he said. Like Tripp, Billings was struck by how different a season-based lobster fishery is. “They have a couple of months to fish and they keep practically everything. For female lobsters, they have a certain size in the middle that they can’t keep. But they can land large and small females,” he said. He found the ability of P.E.I. lobstermen to move among different fisheries during the course of a year “When the season ends, they go into herring, mackerel, charter trips for tuna. We are pigeonholed in one fishery. We can’t diversify,” Tripp noted.

Mike Sargent of Steuben went to P.E.I. to meet new people and see how lobster fishing is done on the island. “It was so different and yet so much the same. They are like a twin brother to us in Maine,” he said. The first thing he noticed was the pressure under which the P.E.I. lobstermen operated. This spring the water along the island’s north shore had stayed colder than usual. Thus the lobsters were not as active as in years past. Each day the water stayed cold meant fewer lobsters in the lobstermen’s traps during their brief two-month season. “They are definitely under the gun. They really crack the whip when they go,” Sargent laughed.

He took particular notice of the system by which sternmen are paid. Unlike in Maine, where a sternman gets a percentage of the catch, either “off the top” (before expenses are deducted) or “off the bottom” (after expenses), on P.E.I. the sternmen are paid a set salary. “The sternman makes between $1,000 to $1,200 each week and the captain makes way more,” Sargent said. Brian Billings of Stonington noticed one difference between Maine and P.E.I. instantly. “The ports are just kind of a man-made place. It’s not a real harbor. The boats are tied up along a breakwater and when you go out you are in open water immediately,” he said. He went lobstering with fishermen from Tignish and Fortune. He and the other visiting lobstermen also toured a processing plant in Tignish that is owned by a cooperative of local lobstermen. “That was pretty cool to see, that it is all fishermen-owned,” he said.

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Those opportunities come with a cost, Sargent noticed. “There are opportunities but you have to buy into them,” he said. A lobster license, for example, can be bought and sold and represents a sizeable investment for any young person wanting to enter the fishery, upwards of $1,000,000 in some areas. Such high prices mean that young lobstermen, such as the men he fished with, must wait many years to become their own captains. “The guy I was with, he was sterning for his father and would be doing that until his father decided to retire,” Sargent said.

MLCA president Patrice McCarron, who led the tour across P.E.I., noted. “We were blown away by the hospitality of all of the lobstermen and others who hosted us during our visit.” She added, “Our lobstermen were fully immersed in the P.E.I. fishery. The trip is such an eye-opening experience for young lobstermen. When you are able to see a similar fishery successfully executed under a different management structure, it allows you to think about your own fishery in a new light.”
It was a hot time in Dallas, Texas, on June 19 when Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC) board members, a gang of Maine lobstermen and a posse of that city’s finest chefs gathered late at night to talk (and eat) Maine new-shell lobster. The Maine After Midnight event took place at the popular Dallas restaurant Pink Magnolia. Chef Blythe Beck hosted the Maine visitors and her fellow chefs for a late-night exploration of Maine new-shell lobster and Maine’s lobstering heritage.

The event inaugurated a summer series that will bring Maine lobster to the discerning palates of chefs in Chicago, San Francisco, and New York City. “The MLMC is building upon the success of last year’s highly effective Maine After Midnight series to continue to build awareness of Maine new-shell lobster,” said MLMC executive director Matt Jacobson.

In 2016, the MLMC staged three Maine after Midnight events, in Washington D.C., Atlanta, Georgia, and New York City. “The MLMC is building upon the success of last year’s highly effective Maine After Midnight series to continue to build awareness of Maine new-shell lobster,” said MLMC executive director Matt Jacobson.

Lobsterman Brian Tripp demonstrates how to measure the body of the lobster. Brandon Wade/AP Images.

Chef Blythe Beck co-hosted Maine After Midnight at her restaurant, Pink Magnolia. Brandon Wade/AP Images.

As a result of last year’s events, more than 350 million people got a chance to read about Maine lobster, Jacobson noted. More than 600 articles and references showed up in magazines and newspapers all over the country. The Maine After Midnight gatherings typically include about 100 chefs and media guests who have the opportunity to meet Maine lobstermen, taste the difference between new-shell and hard-shell lobster, and enjoy a variety of innovative Maine lobster dishes curated and prepared by the host chef.

In addition to the event itself, the MLMC concentrates on flooding the local media for several days with media appearances, interviews, and chef training sessions. The Collaborative uses interviews with host chefs, lobstermen, and chef and author Barton Seaver to drive local and national media coverage in each city. Beginning this year, MLMC will be hosting a separate event for local seafood purveyors to introduce them to new-shell lobster and share the Maine lobster story, helping to sustain momentum in the market.

Who determines what items are on a restaurant menu? It turns out that it’s not only the restaurant chefs but also “culinary tastemakers,” those food writers and bloggers who lead the way in new food trends. To reach those people with innovative Maine lobster dishes curated and prepared by the host chef. The key to success was to make time for our guests to meet and talk with Maine lobstermen. Since the chefs get off work around 10 p.m., we decided to start our events at 11 p.m. and run them until 2 a.m.” Maine lobstermen often meet with local media to continue the discussions about the lobster fishery and Maine’s longstanding conservation efforts.

In 2015 the MLMC surveyed 2,000 upscale-casual restaurants between Baltimore and Maine and found that only 4% had Maine lobster on their menus. “It became very clear that we needed to get Maine lobster on more menus, especially in the summer and early fall,” Jacobson said.

In 2016, the MLMC staged three Maine after Midnight events, in Washington D.C., Atlanta, Georgia, and New York City. The events grew in response to the fact that, according to the National Restaurant Association, more than 80% of all seafood consumed in the United States is consumed in a restaurant. In 2015 the MLMC surveyed 2,000 upscale-casual restaurants between Baltimore and Maine and found that only 4% had Maine lobster on their menus. “It became very clear that we needed to get Maine lobster on more menus, especially in the summer and early fall,” Jacobson said.

Who determines what items are on a restaurant menu? It turns out that it’s not only the restaurant chefs but also “culinary tastemakers,” those food writers and bloggers who lead the way in new food trends. To reach those people with the story of Maine new-shell lobster, the MLMC decided to go to their turf. “The Maine After Midnight events are exclusively for chefs and selected media to tell their story and give them a chance to experience new-shell lobsters,” Jacobson continued. “The key to success was to make time for our guests to meet and talk with Maine lobstermen. Since the chefs get off work around 10 p.m., we decided to start our events at 11 p.m. and run them until 2 a.m.” Maine lobstermen often meet with local media to continue the discussions about the lobster fishery and Maine’s longstanding conservation efforts.

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Lobsterman Frank Gotwals explains the difference between maine new-shell and hard-shell lobsters. Brandon Wade/AP Images.
SURGE OF RIGHT WHALE DEATHS IN GULF OF ST. LAWRENCE

Scientists are trying to figure out what caused the recent deaths of six endangered right whales in the waters off eastern Canada. A fisheries official says six North Atlantic right whales were found dead in the Gulf of St. Lawrence in late June near Quebec’s Magdalen Islands. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans dispatched aircraft and Canadian Coast Guard vessels to locate, tag and get biological samples from the dead whales, and was considering towing one of the carcasses to land so a post-mortem can be conducted. The Department is working with partners Canada and the U.S. to discover what happened in order to prevent further deaths.

SALMON NUMBERS DROPPING

Atlantic Salmon Federation, based in New Brunswick, released a report in June on the state of North American Atlantic salmon. The report indicates that fewer salmon are making it back to rivers to spawn. The total estimated returns of Atlantic salmon are making it back to rivers to spawn. The total estimated returns of the fish to North America in 2016 was a little more than a half million salmon. That is a 27% decrease from the previous year. Young salmon that spent only one winter at sea before returning to their home river, called grilse, fared especially poorly last year, returning at a rate nearly a third lower than 2015. The report said that Greenland fishermen are catching fewer of the fish, which could indicate poor survival of salmon in the wild. Greenland fishermen caught less than half as many salmon last year as in 2015.

UNDERWATER CORAL EXPLORATION UNDERWAY

In June U.S. and Canadian researchers conducted research using a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) to explore underwater canyon and slope habitats off the Northeast Shelf and in the Gulf of Maine. ROPOS, short for Remotely Operated Platform for Ocean Science, focused on known or suspected deep-water coral habitats. The research project began in 2014. Scientists aboard the NOAA vessel Henry B. Bigelow also mapped the sea floor where data is missing or incomplete, explored and photographed new areas and collected samples of corals and other biological life.

MAINE ELVER FISHERY AGAIN PROFITABLE

Maine elver fishermen harvested more than $12 million in elvers during the 2017 season which ended in early June. When the season ended, 9,282 pounds of elvers had been landed, just 334 pounds less than the state quota. Maine’s 1,000 or so licensed elver fishermen earned an average earned just above $1,300 per pound this year, keeping the average price above $1,000 per pound for the fifth time in the past six years. The highest average price was in 2015, when fishermen earned more than $2,100 per pound. Maine’s elver fishery has been one of the state’s most valuable fisheries since 2011, when changes in global supply and demand made prices in Maine nearly quintuple, from $185 per pound to nearly $900 per pound. The baby eels, about 2,000 of which comprise a pound, are shipped live to East Asia, where they are raised in aquaculture ponds and later harvested for the region’s seafood market.

NOAA RECOMMENDS GRANTS TO MAINE MARINE PROJECTS

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced last week that it was recommending six Maine fisheries research projects for a total of $1.5 million in Saltonstall-Kennedy program grants. In line for funding, but still subject to final approval, are grants to:

• The Downeast Institute for Applied Marine Research and Education, $278,000 for demonstrating aquaculture technologies designed to increase the supply, quality and diversification of domestic seafood and field experiments with cultured arctic surf clams.
• The Gulf of Maine Research Institute, $288,888 to study the issue of “choke species” in a changing climate. Choke species are fish with very small landings quotas and fishermen who haul them in as bycatch may be forced to stop fishing for other species.
• Atlantic Offshore Lobstermen’s Association, $141,092 for the continuation and expansion of 2015 tagging effort studying lobster migration and growth on Georges Bank and in the Gulf of Maine.
• Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences, $298,932 to study the phytoremediation potential of farmed kelp in connection with shellfish aquaculture.
• University of Maine, $299,623 for evaluating the life history and stock structure of yellowfin tuna in the northwest Atlantic Ocean.
• University of Maine, $275,308 for a study assessing the potential for sustainability of fishing-dependent coastal Maine communities in the face of environmental and socioeconomic change.

TWO NEW OFFICERS JOIN MAINE MARINE PATROL

Taylor Shewokis, from Weymouth, Massachusetts, has been assigned to the Biddeford/Saco area as a Seasonal Marine Patrol Officer for the summer. He will be patrolling the Saco River conducting recreational boating and fishing checks. A recent graduate of the Maine Criminal Justice Academy’s Law Enforcement Pre-Service Course, he has also completed an internship with the Massachusetts Environmental Police. Officer Shewokis is a senior at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology majoring in Environmental Studies.

Jonathan Varnum, from Oakland, Maine, will serve in the Gouldsboro area after completing Marine Patrol’s nine-week Full Time Officer Training Program and the Maine Criminal Justice Academy’s 18-week Basic Law Enforcement Training Program. A graduate of Beal College’s Conservation Law program, and the Maine Criminal Justice Academy’s Law Enforcement Pre-Service Course, Officer Varnum is an experienced outdoorsman, having worked for guide services in central and northern Maine.
Don’t forget to check out our expanded calendar at www.mainelobstermen.org. You can find more information, links, and photos. And let us know if you have upcoming events.

July 1
Moosabec Reach Lobster Boat Races, Jonesport

July 5
MLA Board meeting, 5 p.m., Darby’s restaurant, Belfast. FMI: 967-4555.

July 8
The Lobster Roll Festival, noon-5 p.m., Thompson Point, Portland. www.downeast.com/lobsterroll.

July 9
Stonington Lobster Boat Races

July 12-13
NEFMC Herring Plan Development Team meeting, Gloucester, MA. FMI: www.nefmc.org.

July 16
Annual Fishermen’s Day, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Stonington. Organized by the Island Fishermen’s Wives Association.

July 17
Maine after Midnight event, GT Fish & Oyster restaurant, Chicago, IL.

July 21-23

July 23
Friendship Lobster Boat Races

UPCOMING
August 1-3
ASMFC summer meeting, Alexandria, VA.

August 2-6
70th Annual Maine Lobster Festival, Rockland.

August 3
Preparing for Sea Level Rise, An Interactive Experience, 6:30 p.m., Gulf of Maine Research Institute, Portland. FMI: 228-2647.

August 7
Maine after Midnight event, The Progress restaurant, San Francisco, CA.

August 12
Winter Harbor Lobster Festival and Lobster Boat Races.

August 13
Merritt Brackett Lobster Boat Races; State Park Restaurant, Pemaquid.

MLCA Relief Fund Benefit, 3-7 p.m., Cook’s Lobster and Ale House, live band, silent auction, beer and dinner included in ticket. FMI: 967-6221.

August 15
MLCA benefit at B-Good, 5-9 p.m. S. Portland. FMI 967-6221.

August 19
Long Island Lobster Boat Races

August 20
MS Harborfest Lobster Boat Races; Portland Yacht Services.
From August 2 to 6, thousands of lobster fans will descend on the city of Rockland for five days. The festival includes the coronation of the official Sea Goddess, seafood contest, art shows, a Saturday parade, and the ever-popular Atwood Lobster Crate Race. Festival organizers estimate that more than 20,000 pounds of lobster will be steamed and eaten during the festival.

Photos by Tim Sullivan, courtesy of the Maine Lobster Festival.