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Maine Lobstermen's Community Alliance

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STEAMING AHEAD
A Look Back at 2018

Last year was a year of great change for the Maine Lobstermen’s Association (MLA). MLA bid farewell to its President of 27 years, David Cousens, honoring Cousins’ service to Maine’s lobster industry during its annual meeting in March with heartfelt recognitions from Senator King, Senator Collins, Representative Pingree, Commissioner Keliher and members of the Maine Legislature. In addition to saying good-bye to David Cousens, the MLA also bid farewell to several longstanding board members – Arnie Gamage, Dwight Carver and Jack Young. These gentlemen served as tremendous role models and leaders in the Maine lobster industry for many years and they are sorely missed.

With change comes new opportunity. During the annual meeting, the MLA welcomed its new President, Kristan Porter of Cutler, and two new board members, Mike Sargent of Steuben and Jamien Hallowell of South Bristol. Upon accepting the reins as MLA's new president, Porter told the membership, "I want to thank the board for having faith in me. I've got huge shoes to fill and I won't do it right away. These guys on the MLA Board, their lifeblood is lobsters. I stand with these guys. We don't always agree. But we will work together to come to decisions that are right for the future of the industry."

MLA's new leadership team hit the ground running. In the following month, the MLA weighed in against the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management’s (BOEM) proposal for offshore drilling, emerging proposals for ropeless fishing and weak ropes, and the New England Fishery Management Council (Council) proposals to reduce the.

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University of Maine climate researchers’ new report Coastal Maine Climate Futures documents relationships between regional weather patterns over North America, Maine weather, blueberry crops, and lobster catch. It also identifies the way that the Arctic, global volcanic activity and El Nino/La Nina (ENSO) influence Maine weather, and creates five possible scenarios for what the years 2020-2040 could be like.

The researchers found that blueberry yield is higher in years with higher summer rainfall. They also found crop yields were up during years when the Gulf of Maine sea surface temperature is higher than average, due to warmer, moister air flowing from the ocean over the land. In good news for Maine farmers but bad news for ski resorts, the growing season in Maine has gotten longer. During 2000-2015, the average season was two weeks longer than the 20th-century average. There are problems with warmer conditions: repeated freeze-thaw events in late winter and early spring and drought and heat waves during summer will damage some crops.

Unsurprising to anyone who works in the lobster industry, the data analysis confirmed that lobster harvests are correlated with sea surface temperature over the Gulf of Maine — higher catches during warm years, lower catches during colder years. The researchers show how stronger winds over the North Atlantic which lead to a stronger Gulf Stream have contributed to warmer local conditions in the Gulf of Maine.

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It’s the heart of winter and the start of a new year. Maine coastal towns are silent, their harbors quiet in a blanket of cold. Of course, some fishermen are still heading out to sea, chasing the blue-eyed scallop or lucrative offshore lobsters. Overall, however, the world along the coast is in hibernation as the sun slowly brings more light each day.

According to a recent study released by the University of Maine Climate Change Institute, Maine’s winter season could be quite different in future years from what we experience today. The report, Coastal Maine Climate Futures, examines how regional weather patterns over North America influenced by a warming climate will affect Maine weather and two valuable products, blueberries and lobster. As we note in this issue, they found that blueberry crop yields were up during years when the Gulf of Maine sea surface temperature is higher than average, due to warmer, moister air flowing from the ocean over the land. Lobster landings have increased dramatically in the Gulf of Maine in recent years, due in part to stronger winds over the North Atlantic which have led to a stronger Gulf Stream bringing warmer water into Gulf of Maine. The question posed in the report is what will happen in Maine as the Earth’s climate continues to warm.

Matt Jacobson, executive director of the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC), weighs in on the successful activities of the Collaborative in 2018 and its plans for 2019. The MLMC, created by the state Legislature in 2013 and reauthorized in 2018, has focused on educating celebrity chefs and others who influence consumers’ dining choices about the qualities of soft-shell Maine lobster (termed new-shell by canny public relations experts). Through events and an impressive social media presence, the Collaborative has opened the eyes of many to Maine’s dominant seafood product. This year the MLMC will concentrate on those consumers who purchase seafood for restaurants and other establishments. By targeting the buyers, the Collaborative hopes to educate a whole new level of consumers on Maine lobster.

Col. Jon Cornish, head of the Bureau of Marine Patrol, gives his year-end review of Patrol’s 2018 activities. The launch of several new vessels last year has given Marine Patrol better strength offshore and in the Stonington and Mt. Desert Island areas. The Bureau has also prosecuted several trap molesting cases along the coast. As Col. Cornish notes, trap molesting is one of most serious infractions in the lobster fishery. "The charge is the same whether you cut off 50 traps or just possess one not belonging to you," Cornish writes. Late in December, Portland opened a six-month moratorium on any new developments on Commercial Street. The moratorium was in response to fishermen’s concerns that the array of hotel, housing and retail plans for the waterfront side of the street would soon make it impossible for fishermen to access the water. As Monique Coombs notes in her column this month, numerous studies and reports over the years have highlighted the need to protect the few miles of working waterfront left along Maine’s coast. The time for studies, she says, is long over. Communities such as Portland must act in concert with fishermen to ensure their long-term access to the water in harbors large and small.

Landings continues its “People of the Coast” series with a profile of Sonny Willey IV. Willey, 62, lobstermen from Criehaven (Ragged Island), one of Maine’s most seaward islands. Over the years, Willey has seen the mix of creatures in his area change, from an abundance of sea urchins to today’s bounty of juvenile lobsters. The techniques of lobstering have changed as well, from wooden traps and hand-hauling to wire traps and high-tech electronics. But Willey loves his profession. “The only boss I have is mother nature. I take pride in being a fisherman. I enjoy making a living at it.”

In “Voices of the Maine Fishermen’s Forum,” Bruce Fernald, 67, of Little Cranberry Island reminisces about his long fishing career. He is the sixth generation of his family to fish for a living, though his two sons have not chosen to continue in that path. Fernald, like Willey, has seen changes over the years around the Cranberry Islands. With warmer water temperatures, lobsters are settling in deeper areas where they once were absent. Lobstermen use GPS and other equipment to get to and from their traps, losing the skills of dead reckoning that Fernald learned as a child. He worries about what will happen to younger lobstermen if the recent abundance of lobsters turns a take downward. Without the revenue from lobstering, life would change dramatically on Fernald’s island.

And finally, the Maine Lobstermen’s Association (MLA) looks back on a busy 2018. The year was filled with mounting pressure by the federal government and environmental organizations on Maine lobstermen to further protect right whales. In addition, the lobster industry grappled with how to manage deep cuts in the 2019 bait supply. Fortunately for Maine lobstermen, the MLA has been to meeting after meeting to set the record straight on Maine’s strong conservation efforts and to argue loudly about the industry’s need for a steady, safe and affordable bait supply. We wish you a Happy New Year and welcome your suggestions for Landings.

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MLCAlliance is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, established in 2010, which achieves its charitable mission through programs in education, research and charity.
Happy New Year! A wish we make every year. We all have the hope for prosperity and happiness in the new year. While a good time for wishes, the new year is a great opportunity to take stock, review the past twelve months, and make a plan so that our wish of Happy New Year has the best chance to come true.

The Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC) hosted its first “live” video event in New York City in July. More than 335,000 people watched, learning about Maine lobster from rock star lobstermen and chefs. In addition, we hosted more than 125 people at the event from the city’s media and food circles. Those people learned and then wrote about Maine, new-shell lobster, and lobstermen so that many other people got to hear our story. In fact, the live event, coupled with media outreach in other cities and publications, generated more than 1 billion media impressions. The MLMC also launched a video series featuring lobstermen and chefs on lobster boats and in the kitchen, which nearly 7 million people watched online. Our social media channels generated more than 62 million impressions.

To put that in perspective, the California avocados campaign spends 80% of the Maine catch is new-shell.

We had a great year telling the Maine lobster story. But 2018 is now behind us. We will focus on chefs and consumers. This year, you’ll see us focus more on buyers of seafood, the people who directly serve restaurants and other food-service outlets. Our messaging will sound familiar—we’ll still talk about the lobstermen and how they make their living. We’ll talk about sustainability and we’ll talk about seasonality. We will also talk about the many value-added new-shell products the Maine lobster industry produces, from tails to meat.

You will see our tactics change a bit. We will still do our best to tell the Maine story to a broad audience of consumers and chefs. We will use influential people in the food industry to reach a broad audience. This year, however, we are going to use those stories to specifically target food/seafood buyers digitally. We will find them online and tell them our story. Once they begin to click on the “buzz” we generate, we’ll educate them on Maine, new-shell lobster, and Maine lobstermen and their stories. We will teach them about the value-added products we produce and why they should absolutely be selling Maine new-shell lobster to their chef and food-service customers. We are confident that this targeted storytelling will tear down the barriers that have kept food buyers from selling new-shell lobster.

All of us at MLMC wish you the happiest, healthiest, and most prosperous of New Years. You can be sure that we are planning to do our best to make that wish truly come true.

During the last three years we have educated nearly 4,000 chefs about Maine lobster, about new-shell versus hard-shell lobster and the seasonal differences in taste, and about the fishery’s effective sustainability practices. From these interactions we know that every chef we spoke with preferred new-shell lobster for taste, texture and ease of use and chefs love the Maine lobster story. The chefs, however, also told us that the supply chain actually discourages ordering new-shell lobsters. Many fish purveyors at the local level do not even sell Maine new-shell lobsters.

We put all of this information together and decided to alter the MLMC’s strategy to expand our focus on chefs and consumers. This year, you will see our focus more on buyers of seafood, the people who directly serve restaurants and other food-service outlets. Our messaging will sound familiar—we’ll still talk about the lobstermen and how they make their living. We’ll talk about sustainability and we’ll talk about seasonality. We will also talk about the many value-added new-shell products the Maine lobster industry produces, from tails to meat.

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In the early 2000s, a plethora of data was collected and a suite of reports on Maine’s working waterfronts produced, from the Island Institute’s “The Last 20 Miles: Mapping Maine’s Working Waterfronts” to Sea Grant’s “Maine Waterfront Access Status and Future,” even community-specific studies like “Cundy’s Harbor Working Waterfront Study Village Profile and Policy Options.” Each looked at the status of various working waterfronts along the coast of Maine and made suggestions for conservation and improvement. Each of the reports also declared the importance of the fishing industry to Maine’s 142 coastal communities, to the state’s economy and tourism, and to Maine’s culture, heritage, and way of life. Many Maine coastal towns with comprehensive plans also make this same declaration, reiterating how important the fishing industry is to the health of its small coastal community.

The Maine State Planning Office’s “Land Use in Maine: Determinants of Past Trends and Projections of Future Changes,” published in 199, said, “Maine’s fishing communities should be asking the question that the authors asked in the Cundy’s Harbor report: “What needs can and should the town address in order to support the working waterfront and the marine-related businesses?” Portland is now trying to create ways to work with fishermen to identify solutions and create plans to protect the working waterfront on Commercial Street. With all the other issues that fishermen are dealing with, it’s important that they have a safe and stable port to come home to. It’s up to the fishing community and the towns to work together, identify solutions, and act.

In Portland, a Working Waterfront Group consisting of fishermen and other waterfront stakeholders has been meeting regularly to fight to conserve the working waterfront on Commercial Street. In September, the Working Waterfront Group sent the city a request for a moratorium on Commercial Street that would stop new development until a traffic study had been completed. The city did not respond to this initial request so in turn the Working Waterfront Group pursued a citizen’s referendum. The referendum would enact changes to the entirety of the waterfront-central zone ordinance amendments. In particular, the Waterfront Working Group would like to see the elimination of conditional rezoning for uses that are specifically prohibited in the Waterfront Central Zone, as has happened with increasing frequency.

In Brunswick and Eliot, local residents are opposing oyster farms because they think the leases are too large, will negatively impact the environment, and may interfere with recreational and scenic qualities. As aquaculture and oyster farming continue to grow in Maine, this type of conflict — between waterfront businesses and homeowners — will continue to arise. Some local commercial fishermen also worry about sharing space with oyster farmers and their ability to access traditional fishing grounds. Perhaps waterfront industries, wild-caught and farm-raised seafood businesses will consider working together to stave off gentrification rather than creating rivalries within the waterfront.

For now, the Working Waterfront Group only conditionally supports the moratorium and will continue to collect signatures for the citizen-initiated referendum until the city of Portland has demonstrated its commitment to address problems identified in the moratorium. Immediate actions by Portland would include forming a task force that will collaborate in evaluating and making recommendations to the Portland Planning Board and City Council on the use of waterfront Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and waterfront zone ordinance amendments. In particular, the Waterfront Working Group would like to see the elimination of conditional rezoning for uses that are specifically prohibited in the Waterfront Central Zone, as has happened with increasing frequency.

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The Cundy’s Harbor Working Waterfront Study from 2004 included a list of recommendations for policies, regulations, and investments that could help protect the working waterfront in Harpswell. After studying the village and analyzing current land and marine uses, the authors interviewed fishermen and identified many issues as threats to the waterfront: escalating land values, rising property taxes, conflicts with non-fishermen, inadequate parking, restrictions to storage of marine-related equipment, conversion of marine-related sites, availability of marine-related services, crowding in harbors, environmental degradation of harbor waters, regulatory limitations to marine-related activities, public water access, and loss of community character. This past year, the Maine Coast Fishermen’s Association conducted a fishing community needs assessment in Harpswell and confirmed that many of these issues remain as problems plaguing the fishing industry.

It is likely that there is not a one-size-fits-all solution to these problems. In the Cundy’s Harbor report, the authors suggested both regulatory and non-regulatory opportunities to help conserve the waterfront, including tax policies, working with land trusts, educating the community about the fishing industry, revising shoreland zoning, designing guidelines, planning board approval for applications within the commercial fishing zone, dedicated parking, and working with realtors to ensure new residents are informed about fishing activities within commercial fishing zones. They also suggested a “right to fish” ordinance, though noted that this might be difficult to enforce. “The town could pass an ordinance that sends a message to the community that fishing, and its attendant smells, noise, early hours of activity, lights, or other inconveniences is an accepted and permissible practice in the commercial fishing districts...a strong policy declaring fishing-related activities as allowed uses and activities would certainly help support a presumption in favor of commercial fishing in any legal action seeking to limit fishing-related activities or in any political effort to pass a moratorium...”

Maine fishing communities should be asking the question that the authors asked in the Cundy’s Harbor report: “What needs can and should the town address in order to support the working waterfront and the marine-related businesses?” Portland is now trying to create ways to work with fishermen to identify solutions and create plans to protect the working waterfront on Commercial Street. With all the other issues that fishermen are dealing with, it’s important that they have a safe and stable port to come home to. It’s up to the fishing community and the towns to work together, identify solutions, and act.

We don’t need any more reports and we certainly shouldn’t wait until a town is about to lose its fishing industry completely to make changes needed to protect working waterfronts.
Maine Lobstermen’s Association ••• Advocating for a sustainable lobster resource and the fishermen and communities that depend on it since 1954.

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Board of Directors’ Meeting Schedule All meetings take place in Belfast, unless otherwise indicated.

Jan. 7 5 p.m., Darby’s restaurant

STEAMING AHEAD: A Look Back at 2018

herring quota. These proved to be the issues that were on the forefront of MLA’s policy agenda throughout 2018.

Right Whales

In early 2018, the fishing industry was still absorbing the bad news that the right whale population was in decline. Seventeen right whales died in 2017, 12 in Canadian waters. Only five calves were born in 2017 and none in 2018. The population, which had been trending since the 1980s, had started a downturn. Accumulating evidence pointed to climate as a crucial factor in the right whale population’s decline. Warmer water led to distribution shifts, poor foraging and reproductive failure. But the impacts of human interactions, such as entanglement, were also implicated as a hindrance to the right whale’s recovery, putting the Maine lobster industry squarely in the crosshairs of the policy-makers and environmental groups.

The U.S. fishing industry was suddenly facing two lawsuits filed in early 2018 against the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) seeking stronger protections for right whales. These cases were combined into one lawsuit, pitting the Center for Biological Diversity, Humane Society, Defenders of Wildlife, Conservation Law Foundation and Earth Justice against NMFS. In May, the MLA was granted intervenor status in the court case, giving the association a voice in any decisions that may result from this litigation.

The attack on the fishing industry came on multiple fronts. While the environmental groups led the charge in court, whale researchers demanded radical reforms in how lobstermen fish. A new cure-all to save the right whales emerged in the form of ropeless fishing. Scientists posited that if fisherman take rope out of the water there would be no risk to the whales, allowing whales and fishermen to coexist. The approach has pitted many in the fishing industry who argue that ropeless fishing cannot be done, against scientists who argue that it can. The MLA remains squarely in opposition to ropeless fishing as a broad-based whale protection measure because the concept is neither operationally nor economically feasible. And the technology does not exist. The MLA has attended numerous meetings to voice its strong opposition to fishing without rope. Though many continue to push hard for ropeless fishing, most agree that it is not yet ready for adoption in commercial fisheries.

Since ropeless fishing is not yet ready for prime time, researchers have hung their_hats on 1700-pound weak rope as the next-best cure. The theory is that if a right whale encounters a rope with a low breaking strength, it will be unable to break free and avoid serious injury or death. The MLA has voiced many concerns regarding the safety and operational viability of weak ropes, pointing out furthermore that none are commercially available.

To support ropeless fishing and weak rope solutions, the research and environmental community joined forces to push forward on the Rise Forward Whales Act, introduced in Congress in June. The Act would provide $5 million in federal funds each year for ten years to establish a grant program to fund innovative technology focused on reducing whale entanglements in fishing gear and vessel collisions. The groups pushing for passage of this bill are targeting the fishing industry as the primary threat to right whales and looking to Congress to fund their ropeless fishing and weak rope solutions. The MLA has lobbied against this bill and instead, would support Congressional funding that takes a more comprehensive approach to right whale recovery by also supporting long-term monitoring of Calanus finmarchicus, the whales’ preferred food, and its link to right whale health and reproductive success, as well as development of habitat suitability models, long-term tagging technology and broad-scale right whale surveillance.

In July, the MLA began a new collaboration with the Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) and others on a three-year rope testing project to provide real data on solutions that will work for the fishing industry. The project surveys fishermen on the types and rigging of vertical lines as baseline information. It also assesses the functional breaking strength of vertical lines currently in use and documents the hauling loads experienced by fishermen while fishing under various conditions. The project data will be modeled to assess the conservation benefit of any proposed new management measures.

The MLA organized the whale session at the Maine Fishermen’s Forum and held eight industry whale meetings — one each lobster zone and a statewide meeting — to update lobstermen on the emerging whale issue and strategize on Maine’s response. The MLA summarized the feedback received at the industry meetings. That information was then used to respond to NMFS’s request for draft whale proposals for consideration by the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team (TRT) in October. Based on industry feedback, DMR proposed to limit the amount of rope used in surface systems between buoys, establish Maine-specific gear marking, expand gear marking into the exempted waters, and identify a reduced rope strength or rope diam-eter for Maine lobstermen, based on the results of ongoing research projects with the industry.

Throughout all this, the MLA has been working diligently to set the public record straight on what actually is happening with right whales. The MLA has written several articles and editorials and developed educational materials to inform the public about the Maine lobster industry’s tremendous track record in protecting right whales. Maine has participated in the right whale plan since its inception in 1997 with excellent compliance. Maine gear has only been confirmed as the cause of one right whale entanglement and has not been implicated in any right whale serious injuries or mortalities. NMFS’s serious injury and mortality data since 2016 show that eight of the 20 cases were confirmed to be due to Canadian snow crab gear. The other 12 cases were caused by gear of “unknown” origin. The MLA has demanded that Canada implement a comparable whale protection plan before any Maine or U.S. fishermen are asked to do more.

The MLA voiced its strong concern over the Northeast Fisheries Science Center’s Technical Memo on right whales. The lobster industry had high hopes that the Memo would take a holistic approach to the stressors and threats facing right whales to provide useful context for pathways to achieve the species’ recovery. Unfortunately, the Memo Boris the trust that has been built over the past 20 years between the lobster industry and the federal government as both worked together to protect the whales.

The MLA and the lobster fishery have been working full tilt to update lobstermen on the right whale issue and to keep them informed on how the MLA is addressing the issue. The MLA has been working with the Maine Lobstermen’s Association to update their members on the right whale issue and to keep them informed on how the MLA is addressing the issue.
Whale Consortium meeting, the Ropeless Fishing Consortium meetings, and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Right Whale Working group. The MLA has also provided written comments on proposed rules related to right whales, including the proposed rule to allow ropeless fishing in closed areas and the listing of the American lobster fishery as a Category 1 Fishery under the Marine Mammal Protection Act. In September, the MLA met with the Maine delegation in Washington, DC, to ensure that they are fully up to speed on the Maine lobster industry’s perspective and strategy on the whale issue. Each pledged to support the lobster industry throughout the management and legal process.

HERRING
Throughout the early months of 2018, the MLA participated in developing Amendment 8 to the Herring Management Plan through the Council. Amendment 8 determined the methodology to set the commercial quota allocation for the herring fishery, known as the ABC (Acceptable Biological Catch). Amendment 8 also addressed where and when the midwater fleet will be allowed to fish to address concerns over user conflict and localized depletion of the resource. The MLA’s message throughout has been simple: Maine lobstermen want to conserve the herring stock and keep a steady supply of herring for their bait supply. In June, the MLA learned that the herring benchmark assessment had determined that the herring biomass had declined significantly. This was due to poor incoming year classes of fish and was not a result of overfishing. Given the low herring biomass, the MLA did not oppose a lowering of the 2018 herring quota to 49,900 metric tons, mirroring 2017 herring landings. The MLA attended several public hearings on Amendment 8 and submitted comments opposing the use of an aggressive control rule that would result in large cuts to the commercial herring quota. The MLA instead supported continuing the existing method of setting the annual herring quota. The MLA also favored extending the seasonal ban on midwater trawlers in Area 1A to a year-round ban. In September, following a protracted and unrelenting push from the environmental community, the Council adopted an aggressive control rule and banned midwater trawlers within 12 miles from shore. The collaborative impact of Amendment 8 in combination with the benchmark assessment resulted in the Council’s recommendation of a drastic 71% cut to the herring quota for 2019 and beyond.

Continued from page 5

24,468 metric tons of herring quota for 2019. This is 9,400 metric tons higher than the Council’s recommendation (15,066). In December, the MLA submitted written comments in support of the NMFS proposal for 2019 and urged them to increase the amount of fish available to be landed from Area 1A.

Nordic Aquafarms which has proposed to develop a large land-based salmon farm in Belfast has reached out to the MLA to learn more about the bait needs of the lobster industry. Nordic is interested in learning more about Maine’s bait standards to determine if there are ways to develop an approved, disease-free bait source from the head and racks from its salmon processing facilities.

LOBSTER REPORTING REQUIREMENTS
In February, ASMFC voted on Addendum 26 to the lobster management plan implementing a 100% mandatory reporting requirement in 5 years. The reporting elements are essentially the same as what DMR is currently collecting, with the addition of endline counts and gear configuration to inform whale rules. Data will also be reported by 10 minute areas to improve the spatial resolution of the data. ASMFC recommended 100% reporting for the federal fishery along with the development of a lobster-specific VTR. In the interim, jurisdictions not at 100% harvester reporting must redistribute the current effort associated with harvester reporting to focus on active, as opposed to latent, permit holders. In addition, it establishes a one-year pilot program to explore electronic tracking devices in the fishery which would address the special resolution and enforcement concerns. The MLA opposed the 100% mandatory reporting requirement for Maine harvesters because that form is not well-suited to collect lobster data and does not include all of the data elements required by ASMFC. MLA instead supports the development of a lobster-specific VTR that includes all of the required data elements before implementing this program for federal lobster permit holders.

OCEAN ENERGY
The MLA board unanimously adopted a policy statement opposing ocean energy development in the Gulf of Maine in order to protect commercial fishing opportunities, culture and way of life. This includes the Trump Administration’s plan to open areas of the Gulf of Maine and the Atlantic coast to oil and gas exploration or development, and proposals, such as Maine AquaVentus, to develop wind projects off the Maine coast.

MAINE LOBSTER MARKETING COLLABORATIVE REAUTHORIZED
The MLA supported the reauthorization of the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC) through October 2021. The MLMC was reauthorized with a status quo fee structure, a three-year sunset and the formal establishment of an executive committee. The Legislature tasked DMR to investigate whether the fee structure for dealers could be amended to reflect the amount of lobster handled to minimize financial burden on smaller businesses. The DMR will report its findings in January 2019.

The MLA has been participating in development of the MLMC’s 2019 strategic marketing plan. The 2019 marketing plan hails from a focus on U.S. chefs and consumers to the U.S. supply chain. It seeks to demonstrate the value of Maine new-shell lobster, to market live and value-added product, and to digitally engage decision-makers in the supply chain. The strategy will utilize and build on the tremendous catalog of marketing materials that has been developed. The MLA is concerned that dealers are pushing hard to exert more control over the operations and strategy of the MLMC. They succeeded in establishing a Dealer Advisory Committee to provide additional input to the Collaborative yet did not vote to support the 2019 marketing strategy because they did not believe that the Collaborative was responsive enough to their feedback. The success of the Collaborative depends on the willingness of various board members to work together to find common ground. Despite the fact that harvesters fund nearly 80% of the budget there is equal representation among all sectors on the Board of Directors. The MLA will remain vigilant to ensure that the MLMC continues to address the industry’s fundamental need — to create demand and build value for Maine lobster.

BUILDING A BETTER LIFE JACKET
The MLA continued its partnership with the Northeast Center (NEC) Commercial Fishing Advisory Board on their project to identify a life jacket for lobstermen that would be comfortable and safe to work in on deck. To date, NEC researchers have tested nine different life jackets with lobstermen in Maine and Massachusetts. Some were tested during winter fishing and others during summer fishing. The NEC is working with life jacket manufacturers to improve designs based on fishermen’s comments. NEC will be sponsoring a life jacket van along the coast in 2019 featuring the most promising life jackets for
sale at a discounted rate. The MLA also collaborated with Fishing Partnership Support Services to provide a free safety training on Vinalhaven in April.

**Health Insurance Enrollment**

The MLA concluded its work as a Health Insurance Navigator in August due to a loss of funding. The MLA bid farewell to its Navigator, Bridget Thornton, in September. The MLA began offering Navigator services in 2013, and we are grateful to have had the opportunity to help so many lobstermen and their families meet their health insurance needs.

**Seafood Industry Gubernatorial Forum**

In October, the MLA partnered with Maine Coast Fishermen’s Association and several other industry groups, to sponsor a forum with the candidates running for Governor. All four candidates — Shawn Moody, Janet Mills, Alan Caron and Terry Hayes — attended. Candidates responded to a variety of questions ranging from who would be our next DMR Commissioner to health care, climate change, right whales, bait shortages, and many more. The Forum was streamed on Facebook live and received more than 2,000 views.

**Tier 4 Engines**

The MLA worked with a Mack Boring engineer and Maine's Congressional delegation to seek relief for Maine’s boat builders and lobstermen regarding EPA’s strict diesel emission standards for Tier 4 engines. These standards apply to marine engines over 800 horse power. There are currently no Tier 4 engine solutions for Maine lobster boats, leaving those who wish to power new vessels at this level without any engine options.

**Lobster Research Collaborative**

DMR recognized the need for a collaborative approach to lobster research in Maine and formed the DMR Lobster Research Collaborative (LRC) earlier this year. As a member of the RED Board, the MLA helped to review lobster research proposals in April and selected six research projects targeting lobster distribution, shifts in lobster habitat and the changing environment. The LRC is supported by a $340,000 investment from the Lobster Research, Education and Development (RED) fund supported by the sale of lobster license plates.

**Support for DMR Commissioner Patrick Keliher**

In November, the MLA organized an industry association group letter to Governor-elect Mills to support the re-appointment of Patrick Keliher as Commissioner of Maine DMR. The letter was signed by MLA, Maine Lobster Dealers Association, Downeast Lobstermen’s Association, Maine Coast Fishermen’s Association, Maine Aquaculture Association, Alewive Harvesters of Maine, Elver Harvesters Association, and Independent Maine Marine Wormers Association.

**MLA Speaks at Events**

In June, MLA’s Executive Director made a presentation on Maine’s efforts to protect whales and the state’s lobster conservation practices at the Capitol Hill Ocean Week (CHOW) conference. The session focused on how fisheries are responding to a changing climate. Congresswoman Pingree gave the opening remarks and the session was attended by members of Congress and staff.

In addition, MLA’s President Kristan Porter spoke on Maine’s efforts to protect whales as part of a panel on right whales at the New England Aquarium. MLA Memberships Benefits

While policy and advocacy are the bread and butter of MLA’s work, we also strive to offer a membership program that is meaningful to lobstermen. The MLA’s work has meant to maintain a robust portfolio of benefits for our members including the MLA’s vessel insurance program; monthly newsletter; weekly email updates on relevant news; weekly lobster, bait and fuel prices; and business discounts.

**Next Year**

As we’ve done since 1954, the MLA will continue to pursue its mission to advocate for a sustainable lobster resource and the fishermen and communities that depend on it. The organization has been in business for more than 60 years, a sign of its value to Maine’s lobstering communities. That value will be achieved in a single year with so few paid employees is an indication of the dedication of the MLA’s board of directors and staff.

Please take some time to consider all that the MLA has done on your behalf during this past year. And I hope to see you at the Annual Meeting in March!

**MLA Directors Meeting Summary**

The MLA Directors met on December 12 in Belfast. MLA President, Kristan Porter, welcomed Commissioner Patrick Keliher. The Commissioner engaged the board in discussions on whales, bait and the upcoming legislative session.

The Commissioner reiterated that the whale issue is one of the most serious issues to face the lobster industry. The whale issue is moving forward on two separate tracks — the Take Reduction Team (TRT) under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and the outcome of the Biological Opinion under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The TRT is charged with making recommendations to NMFS on the whale plan to ensure that the number of right whales that are killed or seriously injured by fishing gear remains below PBR, which is currently 0.9 whale per year. Through the TRT, Maine has participated in the ropeless fishing and weak rope meetings to advocate for solutions that will work for Maine fishermen. DMR has rejected ropeless fishing as an alternative and has serious concerns over weak rope as a solution. Instead, DMR is working with fishermen to document size and strength of existing ropes, and to determine safe working loads needed under various conditions at sea.

DMR sponsored MLA’s eight industry meetings last winter and spring to solicit input from lobstermen on solutions that will work for the industry. Based on this feedback, DMR submitted a draft proposal to NMFS to limit amount of rope used in surface systems between buoys, establish Maine specific gear marking, expand gear marking into the exempted waters and identify a reduced rope strength or rope diameter for Maine lobstermen based results of several research projects with the industry. The TRT will recommend an alternative for new whale rules to NMFS in March.

Parallel to the TRT process, NMFS is conducting a Biological Opinion (Biop) under the ESA on whales to determine whether current fisheries, including lobster, pose a risk to the existence of the right whale species. Through this process, NMFS considers not only the serious injury and mortality of right whales (as done under MMPA), but also other threats such as climate change and sub-lethal impacts to whales. There is concern over the entanglements that don’t seriously injure or kill whales because it may weaken the whale’s overall health and impact its ability to reproduce. To address this, ASMFC has convened a Right Whale Endangered Species Act (ESA)-management group to examine changes through the lobster management plan that could address non-lethal entanglement impacts to whales from entanglement in lobster gear. ASMFC has tasked its Plan Development Team to examine alternatives that would reduce endines by up to 50%. Methods could include endine caps, trap reductions or a combination. These will be discussed at the ASMFC meeting in February with preliminary analysis expected for review at the May ASMFC meeting.

The Commissioner noted that the environmental groups continue to push hard for ropeless fishing and grappling of gear so other options must be explored.

MLA Directors had many concerns over how and when lobstermen will be engaged in this process. Endline reductions will pose serious difficulty for Maine lobstermen. Maine will need to establish a baseline of how many endlines are currently fished industry-wide and by individual lobstermen. A typical technician waters lobsterman may fish 300 endlines, while an inshore lobsterman may have 400 endlines. Expanding the length of trawls offshore will pose operational difficulties as it will become harder to sight either end of the trawl resulting in set overs. Inshore lobstermen will not be able to reduce endines due to complex bottom and vessel limitations which could force trap reductions in certain areas. Reducing endlines in Maine will be very complicated given the diversity of fishing methods, boat sizes and geography.

Lobstermen also want assurance that any new whale regulations will not have unintended negative consequences as some have questioned whether the increased rope strength needed would haul longer trawls poses an increased risk to whales. Does the size or strength of groundlines matter, or is it just vertical lines? Many board members warned that DMR must be able to enforce existing trap limits before any reductions are considered, and trap reductions cannot be implemented unless latent effort is addressed and there is a way to prevent build up of those who currently fish less than 800 traps. Maine must learn from the mistakes of our last trap reduction. The Commissioner noted that ASMFC is moving forward with 100% harvester reporting by 2024, and a lobster-specific VMS is under consideration. NMFS is expected to announce a vessel trip report (VTR) requirement for all federal waters’ lobstermen in 2019 through a rulemaking that it already underway.

In addition to the two management tracks addressing whale rules (TRT and Biop), the Commissioner explained that the court case filed by the environmental groups against NMFS is still moving through the courts. They are in the discovery phase during which they bring forward new information. It is unknown how this case could affect the timing, implementation or substance of any new whale protection measures. The MLA has intervened in this case to have a voice in any resulting actions. Given the population decline of right whales, it is reasonable to believe that the success of this year’s right whale calving season may impact the timing and severity of new whale regulations.

Continued on page 8
there is a poor calving season, the implementation of emergency whale rules would be more likely.

The Commissioner updated the MLA Board on pending herring regulations. NMFS has published a proposed rule that would allocate 24,468 mt of herring for 2019. This is an increase of 9,400 mt of herring above the New England Fishery Management Council recommendation of 15,066 mt. The trade-off is that if the NMFS proposal is implemented in 2019, the quota will be slightly lower in 2020 (6,472 mt vs 9,931 mt) and 2021 (21,194 mt vs 24,459 mt). In terms of where the quota will be caught, NMFS has proposed the same area allocations as used in the last herring specifications package. DMR had urged NMFS to use the 5-year landings average instead which would put more fish in Area 1A. NMFS may consider combining the Area 1A and 1B quota. DMR has not yet taken a position on the 2019 quota allocation. Comments are due to NMFS by Dec 31. Several MLA Directors urged that any Area 1A quota available after October next year be caught as quickly as possible to minimize conflict and large loss of lobster gear. Lobstermen around MDI have lost a lot of gear to purse seiners this year.

NMFS has moved the herring assessment up a year to 2020. The success of the herring assessment is dependent upon strong recruitment. The CN weir fishery landed over 11,000 mt this year, mostly fish that are 2 years old or less. It is hoped that this recruitment will be accounted for in the 2020 assessment.

DMR has been investigating the possibility of Asian carp from Illinois becoming an approved bait source for the Maine lobster fishery in 2019. Illinois has a 100 million pound biomass of carp. According to DMR research, there is no incidence of disease (VHS) in these fish. US Fish and Wildlife is investing in methods to remove these invasive fish from Illinois waterways to keep them from reaching the Great Lakes. It is possible that USF&W funds could be used to test for disease to meet Maine’s bait standards. If DMR can determine that the source of the fish and the fish themselves are disease free, these carp could be added to the approved bait list. Canada has approved carp for their fisheries, however, the fish need to be gutted and frozen for import to Canada. Other ASMFC lobster states have voluntarily agreed to work to implement comparable bait safety standards over the next two years. ASMFC is conducting an ecosystem assessment on menhaden; there will be no change to the Menhaden management plan until 2020 at the earliest. Maine was allocated 2.4 million pounds of menhaden in 2018, however, Maine landed nearly 14 million pounds due to the episodic quota and quota transfer from other states. If the fish show up in Maine again next year, it will be possible for Maine to pick up more quota. DMR is holding a herring and menhaden industry meeting on December 17 to discuss harvest regulations for the upcoming 2019 season.

The Commissioner also provided an update on the upcoming Legislative session. DMR is not putting forward any lobster bills, however, they will have an amendment to the established base of operations standard for non-resident vessels in its technical changes bill. DMR has heard of several lobster-related bills that may be put forward by legislators including the time of day of fishing in the Gray Zone; allowing children under 12 to fish without a license aboard a lobster boat; allowing unlicensed parents to assist children with a student license; allow flexibility for those with a terminal illness to fish and maintain a lobster license; to establish a maximum waiting time on a zone waiting list; and a potential bill for the Monhegan lobster conservation zone. Some of DMR’s enforcement leadership will be retiring in 2019; DMR is working on a transition plan.

Patrice provided several MLA updates to the Board. MLA submitted written comments to NMFS regarding the category for Maine lobster under the MMPA List of Fisheries and submitted an article to Right Whale News emphasizing the lack of data on whale entanglement in Maine lobster gear and the need for Canada to implement whale rules across all fisheries. MLA attended the Stock Assessment Review Committee (S ARC) meeting in Arviat with NMFS and DMR to discuss next steps on whale rules, and is working on the potential for additional gear modifications such as a time tension line cutter. MLA also submitted a letter to NMFS urging them to increase the herring quota for 2019. The MLA board voted to support NMFS proposed rule to increase herring quota in 2019, and will also urge NMFS to use the five-year average landings by area when setting the area allocations.

The MLMC Board met and approved its marketing plan for 2019. This year’s workplan strategically shifts from a focus on US chefs and consumers to the US. supply chain. It seeks to demonstrate the value of Maine new shell lobster, market live and value-added product, and digitally engage decision makers in the supply chain. The strategy will utilize and build on the tremendous catalogue of marketing materials that has been developed. The MLA board voted to pursue the possibility of seeking a state match to the industry-funded lobster marketing budget. The MLA Board discussed other MLA business and will hold its next meeting on January 2 at Darby’s in Belfast.5pm.

<table>
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<th>Catch YTD</th>
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<td>Total</td>
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*Quota Jane 1 thru Sept 30 = ~18,581; Oct 1 thru Dec 31 = ~6,942

New England Fishery Management Council

Atlantic Herring (adapted from NEFMC meeting summary) – In September, the Council asked NMFS to develop an in-season adjustment to set 2019 catch limits for the Atlantic herring fishery, to reduce the probability of overfishing in light of the poor stock assessment. The Council asked NMFS to use the new acceptable biological catch (ABC) control rule adopted in Amendment 8 to the Atlantic Herring Fishery Management Plan. NMFS published a proposed rule on November 30, 2018 containing three alternatives for 2019 specifications: no action; the Council-recommended approach; and the NMFS proposed alternative. The NMFS-proposed alternative does not utilize the Amendment 8 ABC control rule. NMFS expressed concern about using a control rule that had not been finalized in regulation yet. Instead, the agency proposes to set the ABC equal to the overfishing limit (OLF). The Council expressed serious concern over the NMFS-proposed alternative, noting that, while catch limits for fisherman would be higher in 2019 than under the Council’s approach, the economic impacts of both alternatives are severe. Meanwhile, the NMFS alternative poses a much higher risk of overfishing in 2019 and does not account for scientific uncertainty in the new assessment. It also may result in an even lower ABC in 2020, which would impose further economic hardships on the industry. The Council voted to reiterate its support for using the Amendment 8 ABC control rule, which is biomass based. When biomass declines, the allowed amount of fishing mortality – and, in turn, catch limits – also is reduced. The
Council emphasized that this approach lowers the probability of overfishing and helps the stock to rebuild more quickly. The Council is working on a heroin specification package for fishing years 2020 and 2021 and may revisit OFL and ABC specifications depending on the outcome of the 2019 decision. Also, the Council will consider the results of a new assessment for herring in 2020, which may impact 2021 specifications.

Comparison, NMFS vs Council Proposed Quota for 2019 and Beyond

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<td>Area allocation for 2019</td>
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<td>9,402</td>
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MAINE LOBSTER MARKETING COLLABORATIVE

The Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative Board met on December 11 in Rockland and approved its 2019 marketing strategy. The marketing plan shifts from a focus on a U.S. consumers and to the supply chain. It seeks to premier Maine new shell lobster, market live and value-added product, and digitally engage decision makers in the supply chain. The strategy will utilize and build on the tremendous catalog of marketing materials that has been developed.

National Marine Fisheries Service released a report on confirmed U.S. large whale entanglements in 2017. There were 76 confirmed cases of large whale entanglements in U.S. waters: 70 involved live animals and six were dead. There were 49 humpback entanglements, 11 gray whales, 7 minke whales, 3 blue whales and 2 North Atlantic right whales. More than half of all confirmed entanglements occurred in two states: 33% in California (25 whales) and 27% in Massachusetts (20 whales). The Massachusetts cases were located off Cape Cod and Stellwagon Bank and primarily involved humpbacks (16 whales). Of the 76 entangled whales, disentanglers were able to respond to 50 cases and 25 animals were fully or partially disentangled.

DMR INDUSTRY BAIT MEETING

On December 17, Maine DMR held an industry meeting to solicit industry input on potential changes to state waters herring and menhaden fishing regulations for the 2019 fishing season which will be published in a proposed rule. The DMR will propose that all harvesters report daily or weekly via email. The state waters herring fishery currently has a 295 mt set aside; this will be lowered to 50 mt to remain consistent with the 2019 herring specifications. It will be important to accurately measure these landings so that the Area 1A quota is not exceeded. There is currently no daily landing limit in place for the state waters only herring fishing. Given the extremely low quotas in 2019 and the number of small fish sighted close to shore, DMR is considering a 6,600-pound limit to on what is in line with other states and with state waters landings. Many industry members commented that 6,600 pounds is too low to be economically viable and urged the DMR to consider allowing state waters permits holders parity with landings limits for federal permit holders. Others disagreed stating that federal permit holders are already being cut severely and it would be unfair to allow state license holders an equal allocation. If the state landing limit is low, some asked DMR to consider allowing the stacking of 2 permits to a boat.

With regard to state waters menhaden, the DMR is seeking feedback on keeping the state waters menhaden provisions in place from last year, allowing 120,000 pounds per day and 160,000 pounds per week, with landings allowed Monday through Thursday. Industry members urged DMR to consider flexibility in when fish can be landed and not limit landings to four days. Others asked for flexibility with the use of carrier vessels. For smaller vessels to utilize the full landing limits, they need to use multiple carrier boats. Several lobstermen also requested that the small scale fishery remain in place as was in 2018 with the 6,000 pound daily limit. DMR expects to publish the proposed regulation in January and hold another public hearing to take comments from the industry.

LOBSTER ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Lobster Advisory Council met on December 18.

Herring – As of December 13, 9.1% of the Area 1A herring quota (25,155mt), and 8.7% of the overall herring quota (43,330mt) has been caught. NMFS published a proposed rule that would allocate 24,468mt of herring next year with 7,071 mt allocated for Area 1A. This is higher than the Council’s recommendation. NMFS is accepting comments until December 31.

Menhaden – Maine’s menhaden quota is 2.4 million pounds, up from 176,000 lbs in 2017. However, in 2017, Maine landed more than 12 million pounds of menhaden due to access to the episodic quota (4.7 million pounds) and transfer of unused quota from other states. The menhaden season is an unknown for 2019. It will depend on whether the fish come to Maine, how much of the episodic quota is available to Maine after Maine’s state quota is landed because episodic quota is shared with other New England states. DMR has already received positive feedback from other states willing to transfer menhaden quota to Maine next year if they do not land it in response to help offset herring quota cuts.

Carp – DMR is investigating the potential to allow Asian carp from Illinois as an approved bait for Maine’s lobster fishery; Illinois has a very large biomass of carp that is not known to carry VHS. The US Fish and Wildlife Service may be able to harvest in the carp management program and provide chain of custody for these fish because they want to prevent them from invading the Great Lakes. If these fish are disease free and become legal to sell as lobster bait in Maine, the bait distribution system can address the market logistics of acquiring this bait source.

Whales – The whale population is in decline and NMFS is pushing for new whale protection measures. Maine is engaged in the management process through the Take Reduction Team. Maine is considering additional gear mark-in programs to minimize ropes in surface systems and looking at standards for vertical line breaking strength based on safe hauling loads for Maine lobster vessels. NMFS is also conducting a biological opinion on right whales to determine if commercial fisheries jeopardize the survival of whales. ASMFC has formed a Right Whale Working Group to explore the potential to reduce vertical lines in the lobster industry to ensure that the fishery does not inhibit the recovery of right whales. The Lobster Board will discuss this at the ASMFC’s February meeting. DMR will be conducting outreach meetings with the lobster industry to discuss options before the Take Reduction Team meets in March.

Legislature – DMR is not proposing any new lobster regulations during the next legislative session. However, DMR will propose a minor change to the “base of operations” through a technical changes bill. Potential lobster bills that have been discussed and may be introduced by legislative Oversight Committee for access permits to continuing lobster entry, medical waivers, hauling times in the Gray Zone, the Monhegan lobster fishery, marine debris and youth fishing aboard boats without a student license. Legislators must have bill titles submitted by December 31.

Zone Transfer Waiting List – The zone transfer waiting list is the mechanism through which lobstermen can transfer zones. Since it was started, it has resulted in one swap the first year and six swaps the second year. However, there is concern that there is no mechanism to ensure movement off of this waiting list. The LAC supported DMR taking this issue to the lobster zone councils for ideas on alternative ways to structure this zone transfer waiting list.

Trap Tag Cost – DMR is losing money on the sale of lobster trap tags. The cost of a tag increased from 4 cents per tag to 12 cents per tag. This means DMR is losing money on catastrophic, second zone and reissued tags each of which costs 10 cents. In response, the cost of catastrophic tags will increase to 15 cents and second zone and reissued tags to 20 cents. While this will cover losses, it does
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BAIT BAG
Material: P.E. (Polyethylene) No.18 (300d/24)
Mesh: 1” Or 1-1/2” Stretched Mesh
Packaging: 1 Dozen

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BOSTON SEAFOOD SHOW

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Boston Convention & Exhibition Center

Catch the bus & join the fun!

MLA Seeks Nominations for Board of Directors

MLA Members -- Don’t miss your opportunity to influence the future of your organization and your industry!

Annual Meeting will be held Friday, March 1, 2019 at 9am

Did you know?
- MLA Directors are elected for a 3-year term
- MLA Directors meet monthly (except August) in Belfast
- Board members expected to attend at least 4 meetings/yr Overview of MLA Board
- Maximum # of Board members: 21
- Current Board: 20 members
- Number of Directors with Terms expiring: 6
- Average age of MLA Board: 49
- Youngest MLA Board member: 25
- Oldest MLA Board member: 70

MLA Board representation
- Zone A 4 (1 expiring)
- Zone B 3 (1 expiring)
- Zone C 3 (1 expiring)
- Zone D 4
- Zone E 2
- Zone F 3 (2 expiring)
- Zone G 1 (1 expiring)
- Islands represented 4

2019 Board Priorities
- Dedicated lobstermen who care about the future of the industry
- Lobstermen who can talk about the industry’s needs and priorities
- Young lobstermen

Nomination Requirements
- To make a nomination, you must be an MLA member in good standing.
- All nominees must hold a Maine lobster license & be an MLA member in good standing.
- Deadline for nominations: January 31, 2019
- Feel free to nominate yourself, or someone else.

Thank you for helping to keep the MLA strong!

Nominee Information (must be MLA member)
Name: ________________________________
Fishing Port: __________________________
Zone: ________, Town of residence: ________

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

Person submitting nomination (must be MLA member)
Name: ________________________________
Lobster Lic. #: ________________________

Mail your nomination to the MLA office: MLA, 2 Storer St, Ste 203, Kennebunk, ME 04043
Or feel free to call in your nomination to 967-4555
or email: patrice@mainelobstermen.org.
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> ¼ MILLION sold

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I grew up [on Little Cranberry]. I'm sixth generation from there. I have twin boys. They're 35. They've moved away. I also have three brothers and two sisters. Two of my brothers are lobster fishermen. One has two sons, one has one son. They're not lobstering. My younger brother, he has two sons. My younger brother is not a fisherman and nor do his children want to be fishermen. So that's the end of our six generations of lobster fishermen from Little Cranberry.

I didn't push [my sons]. I said, "You guys want help, I'll help all I can." But no, they wanted to do other things. One's a commodity broker in Baltimore and the other's a chef outside of Portland.

We have a co-op on the island with 25 members, and there's probably nine that are 30 or younger. A lot of us are in our 60s, so it's good to have those younger guys, but we're going to need even more. A lot of people live on the island half the year and move to the mainland the other half of the year because of their kids going to high school. We do have a school on the island, but it just goes through eighth grade.

Some parents want more for their kids than what the island can offer. It's a positive-minus kind of thing. There's one-on-one teaching practically because there's only 11 kids in the school and they got two teachers. You get a great education. There's not so much of the social activities, but a lot of kids that come off the island, as far as sports go, are great runners because that's one thing that you can do real easy. One of my sons came home his sophomore year and said, "I'm going to go for pole-vaulting." I said, "Pole-vaulting?" Well, his senior year, he ended up being state champ. So I thought that was pretty cool coming from Little Cranberry Island.

There is a lot of positives about the island as far as kids go. It's a great place to grow up because it's a safe place. In the summertime, it's like a summer camp for them. All the summer kids are there. It goes up to 300 or so in population. They can get on their bikes and go wherever without any hassles. So it's a good place to grow up or to spend your summer. By the time September rolls around, you're ready for some peace and quiet. I used to not like winters, but sometimes now they're not long enough because I like sitting by the wood stove and watching movies. Get my head back together not like winters, but sometimes now they're not long enough because I like sitting by the wood stove and watching movies. Get my head back together after eight months of pounding my body on the water.

--

I fish basically around the Cranberry Islands and Baker Island and off towards the Duck Islands and off to the east, maybe a mile or so from Baker Island. I go off about 10 miles and that's where I fish. A lot of the guys from our harbor now are going 30 or 40 miles or more out. I'm getting too old for that.

Things have changed. Whether it's water temperature or what, there never used to be the body of lobsters out in the deeper water 25 to 30 miles off as they are now. But now they're there almost all the time. It's like there's a wall that these lobsters, wherever they're coming from, they'll stop. My theory is some of them trickle in and go into the inshore, where it's trashier. But now they're there almost all the time. It's like there's a wall that these lobsters, wherever they're coming from, they'll stop. My theory is some of them trickle in and go into the inshore, where it's trashier. But now they're there almost all the time. It's like there's a wall that these lobsters, wherever they're coming from, they'll stop.

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I work with Jim Manning out of Woods Hole. He does a project called eMOLT, which has a temperature probe. You put it in one trap. I've had it there for 12 years. It records the bottom temperature at 180 feet constantly. I'll keep it until I take my gear up and then I send him the little tube. He downloads all that information onto his computer and sends me a graph of what the water temperature did the whole year. That's pretty cool. I work with Jim Manning out of Woods Hole. He does a project called eMOLT, which has a temperature probe. You put it in one trap. I've had it there for 12 years. It records the bottom temperature at 180 feet constantly. I'll keep it until I take my gear up and then I send him the little tube. He downloads all that information onto his computer and sends me a graph of what the water temperature did the whole year. That's pretty cool.

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My eighth grade year I had 20 traps and a skiff. I did it for one summer and I never did it again. I didn't like it. I worked different jobs on the island and stuff. Then I spent four years in the Navy and came back home. Got home one day in late afternoon and having dinner that night at my parents' house, my father said, "Well, see you in the morning. 5:30." I said, "What? I just got home. I need a few days to chill out." "No, see you in the morning." That was in 1973. I haven't stopped since.

I had an old wooden boat then. You had wooden traps. The gear has changed a lot. The electronics have changed a lot. Before, I had a compass and a flasher that would show me how deep the water was. Now we have GPSs, plotters, radars, temperature sensors on your bottom machine that tells you what the water is on the surface. Everything has just leap-frogged, basically. Wooden buoys that we used to have, Wine bottles for toggles between the buoy and the trap that would help hold the rope up. A lot of guys got hurt by them because the glass flying everywhere. All that old stuff is done and now we're in a modern era. It makes it a lot easier to go fishing. Guys can step right into a boat. They turn their GPS on and say, "Oh, there's a shoal here," put the cursor on it, that's where they go to. Before you had to know landmarks. "I have to line up this lighthouse with this mountain and then this island coming out by this island so I have to go until those points intersect." Then, if you got fog, you get to rely totally on your compass and your fathometer to try to find that area. All this has changed big time with electronics.

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There's a lot of fear of right whale regulations, which right now is probably the most serious we've ever seen. There was 15 or so that were killed in the Gulf of St. Lawrence this summer [2017]. That was from crab fishermen and ships up there. The whales were there, but they'd never really been there before. All of a sudden, it's right in the season where these guys fish for snow crab. They use big traps and a lot of floating rope which comes right to the surface, and a lot of whales got wound up. It was like all of a sudden, boom, they're there, and they'd never been there before like that. That really sparked the lawsuits going. Even though we had nothing to do with it, we're still in the whole circle of things. That's just the scariest thing.

I'm 67 years old, so I can retire if I get forced out of it and I'm fine, but a lot of the younger guys, I don't know. Especially on the island, the island's probably 90 percent dependent on lobstering. We had 1.5 million pounds brought into the co-op last year. Total sales are probably $8 million. That's not coming from painting houses and mowing lawns. That would be the end of the island or the way we see it and know it.

[Fishing has] been my life. I have built a house. I have put two kids through college. I have built three new boats. I'm comfortable. So I'd say that lobstering treated me very well. It's been right on through the years, even in the lean times. Fortunately, lobsters went through the roof when my kids went to college or I wanted to build a new boat.
By Col. Jon Cornish

2018 is behind us but there is no shortage of issues facing the Department of Marine Resources (DMR) and the Marine Patrol Bureau for 2019. Likely the two largest looming over the lobster industry are the significant herring quota reduction and the additional impacts on fishing that will be discussed in support of right whale preservation, not to mention the potential impacts of offshore wind power, increased aquaculture and the continued threat of warming waters. Folks far more well-versed in these areas than I will have their work cut out for them in 2019 and beyond.

Of course, DMR enforcement will have a seat at the table for all of these issues since they impact the Marine Patrol Bureau. In the Bureau we are constantly challenged by new regulations that often require Patrol to reach further offshore to enforce zone lines, trawl limits and whale-compliant gear. We continue to see a need for larger vessels and advanced technologies to meet the needs of the modern era. Who would have thought 30 years ago that Marine Patrol Officers would be doing virtually all their administrative work on a computer. That they would have access to computers and iPhones 24/7. That they would be actively tracking vessels offshore, and that we would be talking about new and emerging technology, such as the use of aerial drones, nearly daily. Hey, and what about hopeless gear?

I, for one, long for the simpler days when my supervisor said to me, “If you work your docks, board some boats and work your complaints, things will be fine.” Nevertheless, I am not a naysayer. I have a great deal of faith in our workforce and see that the young officers today have little or no difficulties with technology.

Our new 26’ General Marine vessel is now in Stonington for the use by the two officers stationed there. This vessel will allow the officers to work an extended season in a comfortable and safe environment and to conduct additional gear inspections. Our new 31’ Brunswick Impact is now in South Portland to be utilized by the two officers and specialist who patrol that area. This boat will be used primarily as a mid-range boarding platform, allowing officers to respond to complaints in a safe and expedient manner.

Last week the 38’ P/V Dirigo was transported to South Portland where it will be permanently ported as a Section One asset replacing the vessel, built in 2014, that would be a Super 46’ WESMAC being finished. Its replacement on Mount Desert Island will be the queen of the fleet and will be used for extended trips into offshore waters as well as inshore.

Officers in the mid-coast region have recorded some solid cases over the past couple of months. There have been two trap molesting cases out of the Harpswell and Georgetown areas as well as a large untagged trap case out of the same area. All three fishermen are facing potential license suspensions. Officers in other areas are busy with the recent opening of scallop season.

Some fishermen seem to have a different view of what trap molesting is or see it differently depending on the seriousness of the event. The charge of trap molesting is and always has been one of our most serious. Through a legislative change, the violation now carries a minimum of a two-year suspension. What that means is that the Commissioner is locked into a minimum two-year suspension once a fisherman has been found at fault through the administrative license suspension process. There is no leeway. The Commissioner actually has the right to increase that suspension based on several criteria, such as prior history, the magnitude of the case and the results of a length-of-suspension hearing.

What fishermen need to remember is that trap molesting is broad in its meaning. It includes possessing another’s trap, intentionally damaging another’s trap, opening and/or removing lobsters from another’s trap, cutting the endlines attached to traps, etc. The charge is the same whether you cut off 50 traps or just possess one not belonging to you. The penalties are severe for a reason and were supported by industry. One moment of poor discretion can lead to a world of hurt.

As we progress into the winter months, please take extra precautions to be safe. Over the past month at least two commercial lobster boats have sunk, with everyone coming out of it OK. We know the results are not always that favorable. Be safe.
By Sammy Roth, Los Angeles Times. Reprinted with permission.

Fishermen would until December for permission to catch Dungeness crabs off California’s northernmost coast this season — and they want oil companies to pay for the delay. State officials have postponed the start of the commercial Dungeness crab season because of high levels of a neurotoxin called domoic acid. Similar closures have wreaked economic havoc on the industry in recent years.

Climate continued from page 1

The researchers conclude by noting that “It can be expected in the long term that the inexorable rise of greenhouse-gas concentrations from industrial activity will warm the oceans and atmosphere.” In the long-term, Maine will feel more like New Jersey does today, unless we decrease our carbon emissions.

The “New Normal”

Another abrupt Arctic warming and sea ice collapse – if the Arctic continues to warm as quickly as it has since 2000, it could be ice-free a few months each year. The “New Normal” has taken that an additional 10- to 15-degree drop in the air temperature above the surface of the Arctic Ocean, the so-called Arctic Dipole mode, and will be similar to that of the 1980s, which was a time of accelerated warming.

Like the Gulf Stream, the Arctic region influences conditions in Maine. The eastern Arctic has warmed so far in just five years, which the authors point out “is as dramatic as the abrupt change from ice-age to modern climate that took place 11,500 years ago.” Arctic Ocean sea ice has declined rapidly. At the same time, Maine has experienced a 30% increase in summer precipitation and rapid warming in summer and fall, especially of nighttime temperatures. These warmer, wetter summers have been good for blueberries and lobsters. Many would like to know if they will continue.

Both the warmer Arctic region and the stronger Gulf Stream are linked to large regional pressure system patterns over North America and Greenland. During the 20th century there were two periods when a shift in these large-scale weather patterns brought years of colder conditions to the Gulf of Maine and coastal Maine: 1900 to the 1920s and the 1960s to the early 1990s. ENSO is a global phenomenon, with its origin in the equatorial Pacific. When El Nino conditions develop Maine experiences warmer, drier conditions state-wide. The state-wide record drought in 2016 was associated with the El Nino conditions developing in the Pacific and the Environment at UCLA. Carlson said it’s the courts will be sympathetic to the fisherman.

“Is it really interesting to have a group of plaintiffs alleging specific economic harm to their livelihoods, I think it’s compelling in a lot of ways,” she said. “It’s true the governments are alleging they’re being harmed financially by climate change, but it’s a little more nebulous than having fishermen who have been harmed.”

Sean Comey, a spokesperson for Chevron, one of the oil companies named in the fishermen’s lawsuit, said the case is “without merit and counterproductive to real solutions to climate change.” “The lawsuit seeks to penalize the production of reliable, affordable energy, which has been lawful and encouraged by government. Energy companies and their products are vital to the global economy,” Comey said in an email. Representatives for ExxonMobil and BP, which were also named in the lawsuit, didn’t immediately respond to requests for comment. Small-scale fishermen in Northern and Central California rely heavily on Dungeness crabs, said Noah Oppenheim, the federation’s executive director. He said the crabs can generate more than $250 million in annual revenue for fishermen and coastal communities in California alone. “It’s one of the most lucrative fisheries in the region,” he said. “Our communities on the north coast are generally rural and highly dependent on this economic sector.” But climate change has been making the Dungeness fishery less lucrative lately. Most of the extra heat trapped in the Earth’s atmosphere by rising levels of carbon dioxide is absorbed by the planet’s oceans. Off the coasts of California and Oregon, that extra heat has helped fuel algal blooms, which in turn have led to dangerous concentrations of domoic acid in areas normally scoured by crab fishermen.

According to Oppenheim, there had never been a domoic acid closure in the history of California’s Dungeness crab fishery until 2015. And that fall, state officials delayed the start of the season by several months off parts of the California coast. Fishermen are being forced to consider costly adaptation strategies as the threat from global warming continues to grow. He said the oil industry is directly responsible for some of those costs. “We genuinely feel that the industry that caused this economic harm needs to be held to account,” he said.

California crabb ing is far from the only commercial fishing industry facing climate-related harm. The Fourth National Climate Assessment cited the effects of warming waters on fisheries across the country, from cod in the Gulf of Maine to shrimp in the Gulf of Mexico.

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Walter “Sonny” Willey IV, 62, of Spruce Head, Maine, has been a lobster fisherman for more than 45 years. “It would take a week to explain all the changes I’ve seen in the business,” said Willey. “I started on wooden traps, then wire pots, which everybody has now. I’ve seen them change the V-notch.” V-notching became mandatory in Maine in 2002, as a way to mark egg-bearing female lobsters so they can be identified whether they are bearing eggs at the time or not. Those with notching are returned to the ocean to grow and reproduce for future generations.

Before lobstering full-time starting in 1974, Willey went out with his father, who taught himself, in an outboard boat. “I got his outboard,” said Willey, “but basically also had to teach myself.”

While he keeps his boat, Morning Star, in Spruce Head, he belongs to a close-knit and longstanding lobstering community of about a dozen fishermen on Criehaven (a local name for Ragged Island). For 32 years he has been part of the fabric of Criehaven, 18 miles offshore. Unlike some Maine islands, Criehaven is not centered on tourism. Visiting requires a two-hour boat ride.

“Out there, we have a longer season because the water is cooler,” he said. “On Criehaven, I have a house, wharf, workshop, but no electric power — it’s pretty off the grid.” Solar power and a generator help. “It’s like camping,” he said. “I don’t work on Sunday, but in summertime, my wife joins me. I’m there seven days a week.”

Criehaven, to Willey, is “magical.” “Being on an island is special. You never know what to expect. Every year is different.” At first, spring lobstering was strong, and urchins were plentiful. Now, he says, seeders (female lobster carrying eggs, which get notched and tossed back) have become abundant.

“We average anywhere between 2 and 3 up to 8 or 9 per trap,” he said. “They’re everywhere, and have made our business quite difficult. I do think it’s good to see them, because that’s lobster for the future — but if they never leave, it’s hard to make a decent living.”

Willey describes his father, 83-year-old Walter Willey III, as his hero. “He lives for fishing — he’s an inspiration. He’s still fishing! He’s been at it for at least 60 years.” Like his father, Willey cannot envision any other path. “I’ll go till I can’t go no more,” he said. In fact, he recently had a new boat built by Peter Kass named Island Magic.

“I like being able to work my own pace,” he said. “The only boss I have is Mother Nature. I take pride in being a fisherman. I enjoy making a living at it.”
The dictionary defines stress as a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or very demanding circumstances. By that definition, fishing as a profession can be very stressful. Being away from families for extended periods of time, limited interactions while out at sea, the cold environment, and even boredom can all lead to increased stress.

Stress triggers certain automatic responses in the body. Faced with a threat, the body floods itself with hormones that elevate the heart rate; increases blood pressure and boosts energy levels, all of which prepares it to deal with whatever the threat might be. That’s great in the short term. Stress can make us more focused, increase our alertness and concentration. Stress turns into a health problem, however, when there is too much of it and it lasts too long. The longer the stress lasts, the worse it is for both your mind and your body. A person will begin to feel tired or irritable for no good reason. And chronic stress can cause real harm to your health over time.

Some individuals may turn to cigarettes, drugs or alcohol as ways to cope with too much stress. Though these may feel as if they help, they actually can be harmful. Additionally, winter is a time when some are more likely to abuse drugs or drink excessively due to darkness or isolation.

Alcohol consumption has consequences when done to excess. Between 2006 and 2010 in Maine, alcohol use was the cause of 489 deaths. Alcohol was also involved in 91% of fatal crashes for drivers under 21 and 49% of fatal crashes involving a drunk driver. Alcohol can affect us all differently, and what is normal for one person can be excessive for another.

Excessive drinking or binge drinking is often defined as five or more drinks for men and four or more drinks for women on the same occasion. Depending on your weight, this amount of alcohol can result in a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.08 grams per deciliter of blood. It is against the law in Maine to drive with a BAC of 0.08 What you are drinking — hard liquor, wine or beer — can influence your blood alcohol level. A ‘standard drink’ is generally defined as a 12-ounce can of beer (5% alcohol), an 8-ounce bottle of malt liquor (7% alcohol), a 5-ounce glass of wine (12% alcohol) or a 1.5-ounce shot of liquor (40% alcohol, 80 proof).

Some effects of alcohol to keep in mind this winter:

- Alcohol decreases reaction time, judgment and inhibitions; can lead to reckless decision-making.
- Initially alcohol acts as a stimulant but over time quickly becomes a depressant.
- Alcohol use can lead to poorly controlled behavior and aggression or violence.
- After drinking stops, alcohol in the stomach continues to enter the blood and cause impairment for hours; effects are masked but not reduced with coffee or stimulant use.
- Alcohol can make you feel warmer by increasing blood flow along the skin and outer parts of the body, but actually cools your body core.

Some tips for responsible use:

- To avoid hypothermia it is important to wear a coat outside while consuming alcohol, even if you feel warm.
- Consume non-alcoholic drinks with alcohol – they can help counteract dehydration.
- Eat while you drink – food can help slow alcohol absorption and avoid stomach upset.
- Use designated drivers, taxis and ride-sharing to get home safely.

Drugs can also have dangerous consequences if not used correctly. In 2016 Maine experienced 301 opioid-related overdose deaths resulting in the 10th highest mortality rate in the nation. Opioids — substances that are chemically similar to heroin — are a type of prescription drug used to treat pain. They are commonly abused to deal with stress and can be highly addictive. Opioids interact with parts of the brain involved with feeling pain and pleasure. In the short-term, opioids can relieve pain and give a feeling of relaxation and happiness but they can also cause drowsiness, confusion, nausea, constipation, slowed breathing, coma, brain damage and death. Older adults are at higher risk for the severe and deadly effects of opioid overdose. These effects are also increased when opioids are used while consuming alcohol. Opioids and other prescription drugs should only be used at the direction of a physician; even if taken as prescribed, they can still lead to addiction and substance use disorders.

Here are some coping strategies for dealing with stress that you can use while out at sea:

- Maintain a positive attitude. Only you can control your attitude. Strive to stay positive even when others aren’t. Replace negative thoughts with positive thoughts.
- Limit alcohol use. Alcohol can interfere greatly with the quality of sleep you get. Although some people will indulge in a ‘nightcap’ before bed, alcohol actually keeps you from getting to the deeper stages of sleep necessary for a good night’s sleep. This can cause one to be easily irritated the next day even by small things.
- Avoid drug abuse. Only take prescription medications as prescribed by your physician. Do not share your medication with others or take someone else’s prescription.
- Share a laugh with a friend or co-worker. Humor can instantaneous relieve stress.
- Practice breathing. When feeling stressed out, take nice deep breaths and slowly exhale. Count to 10 slowly. Repeat as necessary.
- Do your best. Focus on the task at hand and take pride in your work!
- Avoid boredom. During your downtime when not sleeping, engage in activities to keep your mind active. Have a good book or portable movies available. Learn a new language.
- Talk. Your co-worker may face the same life challenges that you might be dealing with. Having someone to talk to who understands you can help decrease stress.

Finally, if you feel constantly overwhelmed, please seek advice from a medical professional. We all need help from someone else from time to time. A medical professional not only can help with other coping strategies but may also screen for any underlying medical condition that could be causing stress.
STONINGTON GETS A NEW MARINE PATROL BOAT

The Maine Marine Patrol launched a new boat in Stonington to support its work patrolling Maine’s most lucrative fishing port. The new 26-foot patrol vessel Moxie, built by Biddeford-based General Marine, replaced a 21-foot Boston Whaler. “The PV Moxie’s name represents the courage and determination of Marine Patrol Officers,” said Marine Patrol Colonel Jon Cornish. The new boat will provide Officers Tyler Sirois and Daniel Vogel, who work in the Stonington patrol, the ability to haul lobster gear without having to bring a vessel from another patrol area, said Cornish. “This saves valuable time and allows us to maintain assets in the other areas.”

GOVERNMENT APPROVES SEISMIC TESTING ALONG EAST COAST; CONSERVATION GROUPS SUE

The Trump administration has approved a first step toward offshore oil and gas drilling on the Atlantic coast. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) issued permits in December for five private companies to conduct offshore seismic tests from New Jersey to Florida. The NMFS authorizations allow companies to “incidentally, but not intentionally, harass marine mammals” while conducting testing. The tests fire acoustic pulses into the sea floor in search of oil and gas deposits. The blasts go off every 10 seconds, 24 hours a day.

Large Lobster Restaurant Planned for Portland Waterfront

Luke’s Lobster is building a new restaurant at the end of Portland Pier that will seat 175 diners indoors and 25 outdoor on a patio. The restaurant at 60 Portland Pier will be the seafood chain’s largest by far. Set to open at the beginning of summer 2019, the Portland Pier location will be Luke’s second in Maine. The planned restaurant will adjoin an existing lobster wholesaling and distribution facility also operated by Luke’s Lobster that opened in July. Luke’s Lobster has 40 seafood restaurants across the country, including Luke’s at Tenants Harbor in St. George, as well as seven locations in Japan. The company also operates Cape Seafood, a Saco-based seafood processing company.

NEW BIODEGRADABLE PLASTIC FROM LOBSTER SHELS

Audrey Moores, an associate professor of applied chemistry at McGill University in Montreal and her graduate student Thomas Di Nardo have discovered a simple way to make biodegradable plastic from the chitin contained in the shells of lobsters, shrimp, crabs and insects such as crickets and beetles. Chitin is already used to create a polymer called chitosan. The chitosan-based plastic could be used for biomedical materials such as stitches or implants, where both durability and biodegradability are important. There may be many other potential applications, including plastic for 3D printing, cutlery, food packaging, perhaps even plastic bags, removing the need to use petroleum-based plastic.

LOBSTER REMAINS MOST VALUABLE U.S. SPECIES

The American lobster fishery remains the most valuable single-species fishery in the country, according to the 2017 Fisheries of the United States report published in December, 2018, by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. More than $550 million worth of American lobster was caught in the United States last year, with $423 million of that total landed in Maine. Only Alaska’s annual salmon fishery brought in more revenue to any one state, generating $645 million in gross revenues for fishermen there in 2017.

APPLICATIONS

The Land for Maine’s Future Board will accept proposals for Working Waterfront Access Protection Program projects for the first time in many years. The Working Waterfront Access Protection Program provides funds to protect and secure commercial fishing access in Maine. The grant program requires that properties that receive grants remain in use for commercial fishing and closely related activities. Private individuals, and business entities, non-profit land conservation organizations, counties, cities, towns and state agencies are eligible to apply. However, projects must be sponsored by the Department of Marine Resources. In order to receive a sponsorship, applicants are encouraged to submit a letter of intent by Friday, Jan. 4, 2019. Final proposals must be submitted by March 22 to Matthew Nixon, Maine Coastal Program deputy director, at the Maine Coastal Program, ME DMR, 21 SHS, 32 Blossom Lane, Augustus, ME 04333-0022.

THE MLA WORKS FOR YOU

“Whether it’s whale rules, bait issues or lack of profitable marketing, MLA is in the forefront of those issues. I wanted to be a part in shaping that voice.”

Bob Baines, Spruce Head
not address the budget shortfall in the Lobster Management Fund. DMR is looking into alternative tags, but will need to address this budget gap of over $230,000.

**ASMFC Updates** – ASMFC has formed several working groups to address important issues. The Bait Safety Working group is looking to establish uniform bait safety standards for all lobster fishing states. The Enforcement Working group is addressing the lack of enforcement in the Area 3 lobster fishery. The Vessel Tracking Working group is looking at developing a lobster specific vessel monitoring system that has a low cost and would ping with enough frequency to track lobster hauls. The Reporting Working Group is looking at technologies to help Maine meet its mandate to implement 100% harvester reporting by 2024. The Right Whale Working group is looking at ways to reduce vertical lines in the lobster fishery so that the fishery does not inhibit the recovery of right whales.

**Marine Patrol Updates** – Marine Patrol graduated two officers; one will serve in Gouldsboro and the other in Kittery. DMR launched a 26’ General Marine assigned to Stonington. A new 46’ Wesmac will be launched and assigned to Southwest Harbor. The 38’ Calvin Beal currently in Southwest Harbor will be reassigned to Portland. Another Impact boat purchased with Homeland Security funds is going to Portland. DMR’s entire small boat fleet of whalers is nearly 20 years old. DMR is working on a plan to replace these vessels. DMR has had a few high profile trap molesting cases in the last few months. DMR did an enforcement detail in lobster management Area 3 and found very poor compliance. June 1 is the start of the new trap tag year. If you get your 2019 tags before then, they are not legal without a 2018 in the trap. If you need to set new traps with 2019 tags, contact Marine Patrol. They will have you sign a document stating that your 2019 tags are valid and give you a window of time to retag all of your traps with 2019 tags.

**Alternative Bait** – DMR is willing to review existing bait regulations and explore options with the two proposed land-based salmon farms to use racks as a potential bait source. DMR is willing to move forward only if it can be done without the threat of introducing diseased fish to the bait supply. This must be done carefully to ensure that it does not open a back door for other diseased products to make it into the bait market. For example, there are ISA cases in some salmon farms in Canada. The Lobster Advisory Council will be meeting more frequently in 2019.
The MLA Legal Defense Fund is supporting MLA’s fight against extreme whale rules such as ropeless fishing and closures. Funds are being used to pay for legal fees in response to a lawsuit filed by several national environmental groups.

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If you are a Maine lobsterman, please support the Legal Defense Fund.

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