Landings, vol. 27, no. 7

Maine Lobstermen's Community Alliance
“You can yell at me all you want. I’ve got thick skin, but it’s really the feds who are pushing this.”

Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) Commissioner Patrick Keliher said this time and again during a series of meetings with the state’s seven lobster zone councils and area lobstermen held in June regarding proposed measures to cut the amount of vertical lines fished by Maine lobstermen in half.

DMR held the meetings with lobstermen to get input on crafting a state-wide plan to reduce vertical lines by 50% while balancing safety and economic concerns and maintaining the diversity of Maine’s fleet. The DMR presented lobstermen with 11 “strawman” proposals, which combine various trap limits -- from 800 to 300 traps -- with minimum traps per trawl requirements based on distance from shore. DMR will hold a second round of meetings with the Lobster Advisory Council (LAC) and Zone Councils in August to get final feedback from the industry on the state’s ‘preferred options’ before submitting Maine’s plan to NMFS in September.

NEW SENSORS TRACK LOBSTERS FROM TRAP TO DEALER

How to keep a lobster healthy has been a riddle plaguing Maine’s lobster fishery forever. According to many lobster dealers, between 3% and 7% of all lobsters harvested in Maine waters die before they reach a dealer’s facility, a mortality rate called shrinkage. Shrinkage is taken into account in terms of price by both lobstermen and the lobster buyers they sell to. But losing that many lobsters before they make it to their final destination represents a large revenue loss for the industry.

“Just take the lower percentage,” said Andrew Goode, a Ph.D. student at the School of Marine Sciences at the University of Maine. “Three percent of the 2018 catch [$484,543,000 value] means $14 million is lost between the trap and the dealer. If we can track the lobsters, we can identify what factors influence shrinkage. We can make more money when we treat them better.”

Goode, who alsolobsters in the Damariscotta River area, is one of the participants in a new project, a collaboration among the University of Maine Lobster Institute, the Maine Lobster Dealers Association, Bates College, and the Maine Lobstermen’s Association. The project will use temperature and motion sensors designed by Matthew Jadud, Bates associate professor of digital and computational studies, and Phil Dostie, Environmental Geochemistry Lab manager, to monitor the conditions experienced by lobsters in the trap, on the boat, in the crate and on the truck.

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When sailing off the coast of Maine in the summer, it’s wise to keep an eye out for fog. The mix of sultry summer air and the cold waters of the Gulf of Maine often produces a legendary “sea soup” fog late in summer along the coast, when headlands and buoys disappear in a blanket of grey. It’s hard to find your way even with the best of GPS units. Consider then how much more difficult it was in the days before electronics, when Maine lobstermen navigated their way in the thickest fog by compass and a deep understanding of coast and currents.

Lobstermen find themselves in a similar situation today, not because of fog, but because of an onslaught of possible regulations related to protecting the endangered North Atlantic right whale. The future course for Maine lobstermen is unclear because of a changing marine environment which has affected right whale distribution and feeding patterns in the region. Those changes have pushed the animals into harm’s way, both in U.S. waters and more importantly, in the lightly regulated waters of Canada. The Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) spent the month of June discussing possible actions the state can take to comply with the National Marine Fisheries Service’s mandate to reduce risk from lobstering gear by between 60% and 80%. To do so, lobstermen will have to remove half their vertical lines from the water and, as we note in this month’s issue, they have very vehement views about that goal. In July, NOAA will hold its own round of meetings with lobstermen to listen to their thoughts on how best to reduce entanglement risk, which is sure to be volatile.

Maine also has a burgeoning aquaculture industry composed of small- and larger-scale enterprises growing everything from baby eels to kelp. Some shellfish farmers want to expand their businesses, which has caused a strong backlash from adjacent landowners and others. Landings reviews the DMR aquaculture lease process, the specific steps applicants must follow to be approved, and opportunities for lobstermen to weigh in.

Caring for lobsters after they have been taken from the traps is an integral part of the animal’s quality and creates an opportunity for lobstermen to weigh in. Considering the environmental stressors lobsters experience as they pass through the supply chain, from boat to dock to shipping truck. Using tiny sensors that can record temperature and motion, researchers will be able to pinpoint practices that harm and, conversely, help lobster survival on the journey to the dealer.

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**COASTAL OUTLOOK**

**Thoughts from MLCA President Patrice Mccarron**

Although the tranquility of summer is upon us. Maine’s lobstermen face a season full of anxiety. MLA photo.

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AQUACULTURE LEASES — UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS

By Antonina Pelletier

Maine’s aquaculture industry is growing. It was valued at nearly $72 million in 2018. If you receive email updates from the Department of Marine Resources (DMR), you’ve probably noticed that your inbox is regularly flooded with notices about aquaculture leases. Or perhaps you have received a letter in the mail or seen a notice in your local paper. So what’s this aquaculture application process all about?

First, there are three types of aquaculture leases in Maine and they all have separate review processes. Limited Purpose Aquaculture or LPA’s are licenses for aquaculture leases that are 400 square feet or less to raise certain types of shellfish, green sea urchins or marine algae. These licenses are renewable annual licenses that expire on Dec 31st of each year. The cost is just a low application fee of $50, and primary approval is by the local harbormaster or a municipal officer before DMR issues the license. An LPA license is often used to try out a new area, or is used by hobby farmers or by small commercial enterprises. They are not expandable nor is the renewal guaranteed. However, this type of application has increased dramatically from 200 to 600 over the past three years.

Experimental leases are granted for sites of up to 4 acres for suspended or bottom cultures. These leases run for three years and are non-renewable. The sites are allowed to grow any species already present in the area, and are rapidly increasing in number. Photo courtesy of University of Maine.

Aquaculture ventures in Maine come in many sizes, feature different species, and are rapidly increasing in number.

The third type is a Standard Lease issued for sites up to 100 acres for any species already present in Maine and are often used as a test site for a permanent or Standard Lease. The application and approval process goes through DMR and has the possibility of public feedback through a comment period or potentially a public hearing. If five or more people who received the notices of the application file written comments a request for a public hearing, then a hearing is required to take place. DMR has the option of holding a public hearing even if one is not requested in order to solicit feedback from the public. So far that hasn’t happened. Typically when a site is controversial, DMR will get five or more public comments about it.

The application and approval process for each of these varies. Once an Experimental Lease application has been submitted and deemed complete, DMR is required to send notices about the application to landowners within 1000 feet of the proposed site, and to the officials of the town, and are required to place notices of the application and hearing in a local newspaper. DMR also sends notices to the local Lobster Advisory Council representatives. Once the notices are sent, the public has thirty days to comment on the application. This is the time to request a public hearing on the application if desired. If no comments are received, DMR science staff are required to visit the site to characterize it and evaluate existing uses within the proposed area (fishing, recreation, how close it is to shore, channels, mooring, and potential conduct a SCUBA dive or drop camera video to characterize the flora and fauna in the area, etc.). This information is used to create a “site review report”. If no hearing is conducted, the application and the report are sent back to DMR Hearings Officer and to the Assistant Attorney General who have 60 days to review the application and to make a draft decision. The draft decision is sent to the Assistant Attorney General for review and the final decision is made by the Commissioner of Marine Resources. The lease paperwork is submitted to the applicant and filed with the DMR office. Notices are sent of the approval or denial, with a 30 to 40 day appeal period to the Superior Court. If no appeals are made, the lease paperwork is submitted to the applicant and filed with the DMR office.

If five or more people who received the notices of the application file written comments a request for a public hearing, then a hearing is required to take place. DMR has the option of holding a public hearing even if one is not requested in order to solicit feedback from the public. So far that hasn’t happened. Typically when a site is controversial, DMR will get five or more public comments about it.

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I grew up in Maine and I studied lobsters and the lobster fishery at UMaine. It is important for Maine lobstermen to understand the legal and policy implications of the California Dungeness crab situation. My organization’s members are dealing with what would be close to the worst-case scenario for Maine. The Maine lobster fishery should avoid this scenario, and I believe it can.

How did we get here?

On the West Coast, CBD’s legal engagement resulted in a federal court case filed in October, 2017, which focused on entanglements with ESA-listed species in the California Dungeness crab fishery. Our organization, the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen’s Associations (PCFFA), was the sole entity to intervene in CBD v. California, responding intelligently means facing a hairtrigger for future closures because of a settlement in the case, and there may be additional lawsuits in the future.

The state asked the judge for a couple weeks to reach a settlement, and the parties began talks. Those settlement talks were the most difficult and frustrating days of my career, but in the end we had an agreement that was better for the fleet than it would have been absent our participation. At the end of March our Board of Directors voted to agree to the settlement negotiated between the parties, which resulted in the closure of the California Dungeness crab fishery on April 15th and will almost certainly result in subsequent early closures in the spring.

The alternative to settlement was the very real risk that the judge in the case would shut down the fishery entirely for multiple seasons or, less damaging but still extremely troubling, manage the fishery from the bench.

In the end, the decision our Board made was a choice between the least damaging settlement that CBD would agree to (and it most definitely would have been a worse settlement if we weren’t at the table), or the risk of judicial intervention in our fishery. This was a lose-lose deal. Our organization made an extraordinarily difficult choice knowing the risks of both options. The fleet will lose millions of dollars, and our members have suffered and will continue to suffer hardship.

What can lobstermen learn from Cal. crab fishermen?

The implication is clear: fixed gear fisheries with documented/confirmed entanglements are dealing with extraordinary legal exposure. Responding to this exposure in an organized and strategic way is critically important because the alternative is chaos, which our opponents will gladly take advantage of. In the case of the California Dungeness crab fishery, responding intelligently means uniting in common purpose to achieve the most favorable ITP possible, to aggressively fight any future legal challenges, and to remind politicians and the public of the value commercial fisheries bring to them.

We’re also similarly faced with the challenge of reviewing scientific tools and the decisions that are based on them. Like the situation in the Maine lobster fishery, questionable triggers for management action based on unverifiable presumptions are being used in decision making in California. Such approaches should be challenged vigorously.

It’s likely going to take at least two years for the feds to issue an ITP for the Dungeness crab fishery and, in the meantime, the actions we take and the decisions we make under the auspices of the California settlement could mean the difference between a period of belt tightening, or the implosion of California’s coastal communities.

American fisheries have been divided and conquered for decades. The most important thing Maine lobstermen can do right now is unite.

American fisheries have been divided and conquered for decades. The most important thing Maine lobstermen can do right now is unite.
ISLAND MUSIC FESTIVAL ONE OF A KIND

By Antonina Pelletier

Maine is home to musicians of every level. Summer theaters and summer camps bring musicians both young and old to the coast. Outdoor concerts abound, but the Sweet Chariot Music and Arts Festival is an outdoor music experience of a different sort. This three-day festival takes place in early August on Swans Island, an island known mostly for its lobster fishing. Part of its character is that this festival is almost impossible to attend; there are limited accommodations on the island. Another is how the festival is entwined in this island community of lobstermen.

“Swans Island is right up there for attracting interesting characters,” said Doug Day, a Swans Island summer resident and Sweet Chariot’s program director. Located six miles off Mount Desert Island, the island has nearly 400 year-round residents, a number which swells to about 1,000 during the balmier months. With only one inn and a tiny general store, Swans Island is not a tourist destination and that’s fine with its resident lobstermen.

Yet every summer for nearly 30 years, Day has brought professional musicians and performers from all over the United States to the island for the three-day music festival. Using the 225-seat Oddfellows Hall, the Sweet Chariot Music and Arts Festival presents 24 musicians over three nights. A living mural painted by artist Buckley Smith emerges as a backdrop, which he paints in front of the festival audience each year. Photo courtesy of B. Smith. Below, singing sea shanties in the old days.

The connection between lobsterman and visiting musician is forged in other ways. Jefferson Hamer is an award-winning folk musician from New York City. “He’s on the A-list,” explained Day. One summer Day came out of the theater one night and found Hamer sitting on the back step giving a private lesson to then 18-year-old islander Marshall Walker.

Walker is a lobsterman. He hauls full-time on his 35’ Duffy the Josephine Wriggins, named for his sister. Music seems to be his passion: he’s been playing the guitar for seven or eight years, along with the tin whistle and the mandolin. He collaborates with his brother Shep, performing classic country and Celtic music at home, on the mainland and most summers for the Sweet Chariot Music Festival. “We’re the opening music. We play in the theater before the show starts,” he said. Walker likes the festival. He appreciates the opportunity to play with professional musicians from around the country and the fact that they put on a “really good show.”

While the Sweet Chariot Music Festival might be better described as a festival for musicians, there is no doubt that the people and environment of Swans Island nourish and support these musicians “from away.” And it seems that feeling can be mutual. “It’s a fantastic opportunity to listen to some truly great music,” said one local.

The Sweet Chariot Music and Arts Festival takes place this summer August 6 to 8. For more information contact Douglas Day, 156 Atlantic Loop Rd., Swan’s Island, ME 04685 or sweetchariotmusicfestival@gmail.com.

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING SCHEDULE
All meetings take place in Belfast, unless otherwise indicated.

July 10
5 p.m., Darby's restaurant, Belfast

MAINE LOBSTERMEN’S ASSOCIATION UPDATE

One question related to the whale rules weighs heavily on lobstermen’s minds these days: “Who is fighting for Maine lobstermen?”

As the Maine Lobstermen’s Association executive director, I can say emphatically that the MLA is. So why doesn’t it seem that way to many lobstermen?

In my opinion, it is because this issue is so complicated and the consequences potentially dire. In talking to Maine lobstermen, there is a strong sense that the process has been not been transparent and has been aimed at pushing Maine harvesters to shoulder unnecessary burdens. Simply put, lobstermen are being asked to make significant changes without any demonstration that the sacrifices they make would truly help reverse the right whale decline. They want someone to stand up and fight and tell the feds that enough is enough.

Believe me, I get it. I agree that this needs to be done. But we also need to ensure that our industry is prepared for the worst. If the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) determines that the lobster fishery could jeopardize the recovery of right whales in the pending Biological Opinion, the fishery could be shut down. We’ve been told to expect a jeopardy finding against the fishery. We’ve been told that NMFS will implement draconian measures if the fishery itself does not put forward a plan. Those are not rumors, those are facts.

It is the MLA’s job to fight for lobstermen, and I take that role very seriously. But most importantly, it is the MLA’s job to make sure that lobstermen are able to fish, to provide for their families and keep their communities alive. It is MLA’s job to make sure that there is a fishery to pass on to the next generation. That is why we continue to participate in the process to identify whale conservation measures that can work for our fishermen. We want to be sure that Maine lobstermen have had input into those rules so that we maintain a viable fishery.

The situation is beyond frustrating and I hate knowing that many in the industry feel that the MLA has let them down while the MLA is fighting so hard for Maine lobstermen.

It doesn’t feel like a fair fight. The environmental community’s agenda is simple — save the right whales! They have the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) on their side. Any permitted activity that has the potential to impact the species is subject to strict regulations. Only on rare occasions does a whale die each year from human-causes but right whale deaths attributed to entanglement on average exceed five per year. And they argue that ropeless fishing can provide a future in which right whales and lobstermen coexist.

The job for lobstermen is far more complex. While the fishing industry is committed to ensuring the recovery of right whales, we do not want to take on the burden of oppressive regulations when we do not believe we are responsible for the decline of the species. Lobstermen want to know that any changes they make will help right whales recover.

The MLA has argued that it’s not our gear and asked why we are being asked to make such sweeping changes. The fact is that over the last five years less than 4% of known right whale serious injuries and mortalities due to entanglement were traced back to U.S. fisheries. There have been just two known cases back in the early 2000’s when Maine lobster gear has been removed from right whales.

What complicates matters is that 74% of harmful entanglements are from fishing gear that cannot be traced to any particular fishery or country. It’s just fishing gear out there. As you know, lobster gear fished in most of Maine state waters is exempt from gear marking, so we cannot prove that the unknown rope came from fisheries outside of Maine. We just don’t have that information.

What about the gear that we do mark? According to NMFS, there have been three cases where rope with red marks has been recovered from entangled right whales (in 2011, 2012, 2016), indicating that it was part of the “Northeast trap/pot fishery.” All three cases involved 3/8-inch rope. The whales in 2011 and 2016 were successfully disentangled (the gear from the 2016 case was traced to the Massachusetts lobster fishery) and both whales have been re-sighted healthy. The whale entangled in 2012 died as a result of its injuries.

These are the facts. This is what the available data tells. Given the complexity of the issue, the MLA’s strategy moves on two parallel tracks: 1) don’t let the feds decide our future; and 2) continue the fight by challenging the interpretation of the facts, demanding accountability and improvements in the data.

In the “don’t let the feds decide your future” category, lobstermen must recognize that the Maine lobster fishery, and in fact, all U.S. lobster fisheries, fell squarely in the crosshairs of two of our nation’s most powerful federal laws: the ESA and the MMPA. Those laws have been in place since the 1970s and have only been strengthened. We cannot change those laws.

So we must come together as an industry to identify whale protection measures that will allow us to continue to fish. If we don’t, either NMFS or a federal judge could decide for us. As painful as it is to pick your own poison, it is far riskier to let someone from outside the fishery pick it for us.

Case in point: in 2014 Maine put forward a plan to trawl up our gear to reduce our vertical lines by 30%. NMFS implemented this plan. Massachusetts, on the other hand, refused to put forward a plan — they said they had done enough to protect whales and their gear was not the problem. The result? NMFS decided for them and implemented a five-month closure. This took place before scientists realized the right whale population was in decline.

The MLA does not believe that Maine lobstermen are responsible for the right whale decline and it has vigorously pointed to the multiplicity of other causes of harm to whales. I can assure you that every TRT member, resource manager, and member of our Congressional delegation understands that. But we also understand the laws. If Maine fails to meet the requirements of the law, we are at risk of NMFS implementing whale conservation measures for us. If for some reason NMFS fails to do it, the courts could step in with a mandated remedy. NMFS has talked about taking traps away and looking to Canada as a model for our fishery. For reference, trap limits in Canada range from 250 to 375 per vessel which is far below our industry's current limits. We do not want to give up traps or face short fishing seasons. That is why drafting a strategy to remove half of our vertical lines from the water — and removing them on our own terms — is a prudent part of this process.

A real challenge is to better position our industry for what comes next. If right whales do not show signs of recovery in the next five years, then what? We can’t sit back and watch our industry die a death by a thousand cuts. We need to prove once and for all whether Maine lobster gear is harming whales. That is why the MLA strongly supports unique and expanded gear marking of our vertical lines. Maine must be able to differentiate its gear from that fished in other lobster fisheries so we can prove the extent to which Maine lobster gear is or is not involved in the right whale decline. The MLA supports marking Maine lobster gear to the beach because we cannot afford to have any question about whether the gear came from Maine. Remember, nearly three-fourths of the rope that is killing and harming right whales cannot be traced to where it was set. The MLA supports marking lengtheners because we must ensure that a gear mark can be found if rope is removed from a whale. If we don’t have enough marks on the gear, then why bother?

The MLA also continues to challenge the interpretation of the data and demand accountability from the government. First, we gathered the facts. It is the MLA that painstakingly collected all of the entanglement, serious injury and

Continued on next page
mortality data from NMFS to show that Maine gear has only been confirmed in two entanglements. It is the MLA that dug into the serious injury and mortality data to show that U.S. gear has only been identified in two cases since 2010, while the Canadian snow crab fishery has accounted for eight since 2016. It is the MLA that met with the delegation in September 2018 and April 2019 to raise our strong concerns and demand accountability from the government on the severity of regulations to be imposed on Maine lobstermen. It is the MLA that remains in close contact with the delegation, keeping them fully apprised of our situation.

The MLA has steadily challenged NMFS every step of the way on the current regulatory process. We have argued that the methodology NMFS used to set the risk reduction goal is faulty, and we continue to press that issue. The MLA is pushing for a peer review of the newly developed decision support tool (a computer model) to ensure it can credibly assess the risks of fishery and whale interactions before it is used to estimate the conservation benefit of proposed regulations. The MLA consistently has demanded that Canada be held responsible for its role in the right whale decline, given that so many right whale deaths have occurred in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. With six more deaths recorded in Canada so far this year, this issue remains more important than ever.

In 2018, the MLA intervened in the court case brought forward by five environmental groups seeking more stringent whale regulations such as ropeless fishing. The MLA has a lawyer on retainer advising us throughout this process and ensuring that the lobster industry has a voice in any management actions that could be contemplated by the court. The MLA continues to fight against ropeless fishing and mandatory closures and for lobstermen to have a voice in how our fishery is regulated.

To that end, the MLA held seven industry meetings in 2018 to educate lobstermen and prepare for these emerging whale rules. We have participated in research efforts to test strength of endlines, determine safe working loads for sternmen and prepare for these emerging whale rules. We have participated in new research efforts to test strength of endlines, determine safe working loads for sternmen and prepare for these emerging whale rules.

Lobstermen listened intently at the Zone G Lobster Council meeting in June. MLA photo.

The MLA Board discussed the development of Maine’s whale plan at length. The MLA met with the delegation in April to raise concerns over the development of the whale rules. The delegation sent a letter to the Department of Commerce in May stating its concerns about the impact of the whale rules on Maine and seeking accountability from NMFS.

The MLA is attending all of the DMR meetings with the Lobster Advisory Council and in each zone council to listen to industry concerns and feedback on the rules. The state’s strawman whale rules that Maine has crafted several alternatives, which include trap limits of 800, 600 and 400 combined with trawling up scenarios that set minimum traps per trap from 0 to 3 miles; 3 to 12 miles; and 12+ miles. The state’s proposals include a ¼ mile buffer zone in and around all land and islands in Maine state waters, which would be exempt from any trawling up minimums. DMR stressed that these proposals are a starting point and welcome feedback from the industry. Lobstermen can comment on a statewide plan or bring ideas forward to create a plan on a zone-by-zone basis. Lobstermen must get any proposals to DMR by July 15 so they can be analyzed before DMR’s next round of meetings in August.

The DMR has stated that Maine will move forward with unique gear marking in 2020 in order to build a stronger case that Maine lobster gear is not involved in right whale entanglements. The state is also moving forward with 100% har- vester reporting for all lobstermen and vessel tracking for federal lobster boats. The MLA board has strong concerns over the draft proposals put forward by DMR. The Board is concerned about smaller vessels going to quads in state wa- ters, offshore boats going to 30’s or 40’s, and many strongly opposed trap limits. There is also a strong concern about the potential for offshore boats to shift long trawls closer to shore which would put many in the inshore fleet at risk. Additional alternatives must be developed. While a zone-by-zone approach may generate better ideas for local areas, there is concern about how this concept will work on a statewide basis.

The Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC) is developing a proactive campaign to deal with the media in regard to the Maine lobster fishery and pending whale rules. The MLMC will highlight Maine’s strong track record of sustainable management, which includes protections for whales, and empha- size protecting the economic viability of Maine’s fishing communities as new whale rules are developed. The MLA will hold its next meeting on Wednesday, July 10 at 5 p.m. at Darby’s.

NEFMC APPROVES DEEPER HERRING CUTS IN 2020

The New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) approved changes to the herring management plan that lower the quotas for 2019 and 2020 and redefine overfishing to be more consistent with the 2018 benchmark herring stock assessment. The Annual Catch Limit (ACL) for 2019 is 15,065 metric tons (mt) and 11,751 mt for 2020 and 2021. However, the 2021 specifications likely will be revisited following a new stock assessment that is scheduled to take place in 2020. The 2019 ACL is already in place through a NMFS in-season adjustment.

Although provisions are in place to allow for the carryover of unharvested catch from one year to the next by up to 10% of an area’s sub-ACL, the Council

Continued on page 8

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The Council voted to set Overfishing Limit (OFI) and Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) based on the ABC control rule proposed in Amendment 8 while using the original projections made by its Scientific and Statistical Committee. This was referred to as "Alternative 2 Original" in the draft framework.

The Council set the management uncertainty buffer, which is between the ABC and the Annual Catch Limit (ACL), and is factored into specifications to help ensure that the ABC is not exceeded due to Canadian catch in the New Brunswick weir fishery. Management uncertainty previously was set at 6,200 mt. This time, the Council supported using a 10-year average of Canadian catches, which resulted in an uncertainty buffer of 4,560 mt. If the New Brunswick weir catch through October 1 is less than the 4,000-mt trigger in 2019 or the 2,942-mt trigger in 2020 and 2021, then 1,000 mt will be subtracted from the buffer and added to Area 1A. The Council set the border transfer figure, which applies to fish caught in Area 1A by U.S. fishermen then transferred to Canada via a Canadian carrier and which must be used for human consumption. Until 2019, the border transfer allocation was set at 4,000 mt annually. In 2019, however, it was zero. For 2020 and 2021, the Council voted to set it at 100 mt. The specification has not been utilized in recent years.

The Council set the specific management area sub-ACLs, keeping the same spatial percentage splits for the available quota: Area 1A 28.9%; Area 1B 4.3%; Area 2 27.8% and Area 3 39%. The Council also kept the same Area 1 seasonal splits: Area 1A January through May 0%; Area 1A June through December -100%; Area 1B January through April 0%; Area 1B May through December -100%.

The Council’s changes to the herring management plan must be approved by the NMFS before it is implemented. The target implementation date is January 1, 2020, the start of the new fishing year for Atlantic herring.

GOVERNOR SIGNS OFFSHORE WIND, CLIMATE CHANGE BILLS

Governor Mills signed LD 994 on June 19, a resolve to require the Public Utilities Commissioner to approve a long-term contract for the Maine AquaVentus wind project proposed off Monhegan Island. The MLA opposed this bill due to the term interest of the state of Maine or our fishermen. In addition, the Governor signed on to participate with Massachusetts and New Hampshire in a Gulf of Maine Intergovernmental Regional Task Force on offshore wind. She also will create the Maine Offshore Wind Initiative. This will be a state-based program to identify opportunities for offshore wind development in the Gulf of Maine and to determine how Maine can position itself to benefit from future offshore wind projects.

Gov. Mills also moved to establish the Maine Climate Change Council to develop a climate plan for Maine to mitigate, prepare and adapt to climate change. The bill establishes greenhouse gas emission reduction goals (45% by 2030 and 80% by 2050 below 1990 levels) and includes development of a clean energy economy transition plan. The MLA testified neither for nor against this bill, citing the wide range of views among lobstermen on climate change and the fear that poorly-planned climate change solutions could be very costly to small businesses, like lobstering, while offering little reward.

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I have been lobstering for 66 years. Lobstering is the largest shellfish harvest in the state, worth $500 million. Aquaculture leases are rapidly increasing, and I don’t think the rules are in place for an equal playing field for lobstermen, fishermen or the Maine people. I don’t think we should allow selling Maine’s oceans. Now is the time to protect the working waterfront — that means for everyone. – Ernie Burgess

I am a sternman and I am interested in aquaculture. The time is now to get the rules right so both can survive. – Kelsey Fenwick

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PORTLAND ARTIST REFLECTS THREE GENERATIONS’ LINKS TO THE SEA

By Antonina Pelleiter

One of Alison Bramhall’s strongest memories is growing up on the water. With an artistic father who loved to draw, the Maine shore was Bramhall’s summer oasis and a source of ideas and materials. Her brightly colored art is a testament to those days when she was small. “Growing up, it was fun to explore the coast and discover all the little treasures along the shore,” she says. “Fun” is just one word to describe her decorative art. Her company, Festive Fish, sells notecards, pillows, calendars and decorative items for the home. All her vibrant designs have their roots in Maine’s briny waters.

Festive Fish.com also carries a line of notecards designed to pay tribute to her father, Peter, who began creating pastel paintings of the Maine coast once he retired as a vice-president at the financial firm, Hornblower and Weeks. Most of those paintings contain lobster boats, traps and buoys. “I remember we took a two-day painting class at Maine Audubon one summer, and the assignment was to paint this tree on the property,” reminisces Bramhall. “We’re standing in the middle of this field and I look over to see how my dad is doing and his painting is of lobster buoys!”

Peter Bramhall started painting later in life and focused on the Maine coast. Photo courtesy of Festive Fish.

The elder Bramhall inherited his artistic leanings from his mother, Elinor. With an art degree from Simmons College, Elinor preferred to draw people, creating medical illustrations documenting her husband’s work as a doctor at Maine Medical Center. She also drew handbags and gloves for advertisements in the Portland Press Herald and was a celebrated painter.

Her most striking piece is a two-tone chart of Casco Bay. Previously on loan to the Portland Yacht Club, it currently hangs in a boathouse in Boothbay, owned by granddaughter Betsy.

Each generation of the Bramhall family created art in his or her way, which one can see on Bramhall’s website. She creates charts of Maine waters herself, brightly colored posters and prints designed to serve as love letters to the Maine coast. All profits from the sale of her father’s notecards go toward The Bramhall Family Scholarship Fund. While Bramhall confesses that she’ll never draw like her grandmother or even her father, her own art reflects the same passion for and appreciation of Maine’s remarkable coast.

Alison Bramhall’s work often begins with the shapes and patterns of Maine’s lobster industry. Photo courtesy of Festive Fish.

Bramhall Family Scholarship Fund. While Bramhall confesses that she’ll never draw like her grandmother or even her father, her own art reflects the same passion for and appreciation of Maine’s remarkable coast.

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Alison Bramhall’s work often begins with the shapes and patterns of Maine’s lobster industry. Photo courtesy of Festive Fish.

Bramhall started painting later in life and focused on the Maine coast. Photo courtesy of Festive Fish.
**LANDINGS**

**MARINE APPROVED**
- Any Species in NEFMC Groundfish Complex (Gulf of Maine or Georges Bank)
- Atlantic Cod (US East Coast & Canada East Coast)
- Atlantic Herring (US East Coast & Canada East Coast)
- Balao [Hemirampus balao]; must be frozen (Florida/FAO 31)
- Ballyhoo [Hemirampus brasiliensis]; must be frozen (Florida/FAO 31)
- Blackbelly Rosefish [Helicolenus dactylopterus]; must be frozen (Uruguay)
- Croaker (US East Coast)
- Halibut (Atlantic & Pacific Ocean)
- Gulf Menhaden [Brevoortia patronus]; must be frozen (Gulf of Mexico)
- Jamaican Weakfish [Cynoscion jamaicensis]; wild caught, frozen, racks only (Suriname)
- King Weakfish [Macrodon ancylodon]; wild caught, frozen, racks only (Suriname)
- Kinky, aka rockfish, long/short spinyhead, idiotfish [Genus Sebastesobus]; must be frozen (US West Coast & Canada West Coast)
- Lingcod (Atlantic & Pacific Ocean)
- Mackerel [Scomber japonicus]; must be frozen if from China (US East Coast, Japan, Portugal and China)
- Mullet [Genus Mugilidae] (US & Canada)
- Orange Roughy (Australia & New Zealand)
- Menhaden, aka pogie, bunker (US East Coast)
- Patagonian toothfish, must be frozen (Australia and Argentina)
- Pollock (Atlantic Ocean only)
- Redfish (N. Atlantic Ocean & Pacific Ocean)
- Red Alphonsino (NE Atlantic Ocean)
- Roundnose Grenadier (NE Atlantic Ocean)
- River herring, aka alewife, blueback herring (Maine)
- Rockfish [Genus Sebastodes]; must be frozen (US West Coast & Canada West Coast)
- Sablefish (Alaska & Western Canada)
- Skate (US Northeast Coast)
- Shad (Maine)
- Sole (US West Coast)
- Southern Kingfish [Menticirrhus americanus]; wild caught, frozen, racks only (Suriname)
- Tuna (North Pacific Ocean)
- Any species that was legally caught in Maine coastal waters, except as otherwise prohibited in regulation

**FRESHWATER APPROVED**
- Carp (Maine)
- Pickerel (Central Canada)
- Suckerfish (Maine, Canadian provinces of Manitoba & Saskatchewan)
- Any freshwater species that was legally harvested in Maine

**MARINE PROHIBITED**
- Any salmonid fish species (prohibited pursuant to DMR Chapter 24.23)
- Alphonsino (New Zealand) - Exotic pathogens
- Aka Mackerel [Pleuroncinus Menopterygius] (North Pacific Ocean, Alaska) - Exotic pathogens
- Bonito Panama (West Coast) - Exotic pathogens
- Cobia (South Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea) - Unknown pathogen status
- Cod (US West Coast & Canada West Coast) - Possibility of exotic agent
- Eulachon [Thaleichthys pacificus] (Alaska) - Exotic pathogens
- Flatfish (Pacific Ocean) - Possibility of exotic agent
- Hake (US West Coast) - Exotic pathogens
- Horseshoe Crab (Asia) - Possibility of invasives
- Monkfish (FAO Major Fishing Area 27) - Exotic pathogens
- Pacific Herring [Clupea pallasi] (Pacific Ocean) - Exotic pathogens
- Pacific Sardine or South American Pilchard (US West Coast & Canada West Coast) - Exotic pathogens
- Plaice [Pleuronectes platessa] (Netherlands, France, Germany) - Exotic pathogens
- Pollock (Pacific Ocean) - Exotic pathogens
- Red Gurnard [Chelidonichthys cuculus] (Netherlands, France, Germany) - Exotic pathogens
- Snapper (Panama West Coast) - Exotic pathogens
- Tilapia (Panama West Coast) - Exotic pathogens
- Yellow Goosefish [Lophius Lutulon] (FAO Major Fishing Area 61) - Exotic pathogens

**FRESHWATER PROHIBITED**
- All Carp, including Asian Carp, grass carp, common carp, Amur carp, silver carp, largescale silver carp, bighead carp, black carp, goldfish, crucian carp, mud carp (Asia, US caught outside of Maine & Canada) – exotic pathogens. NOTE: Carp caught in Maine ARE approved.
- Catfish (Asia) – Exotic pathogens
- Mudshad (Central US & Virginia) - Unknown pathogen status
- Sheepshead or Freshwater Drum (US & Canada) - Exotic pathogens
- Farmed or Wild Tilapia (Africa, Asia, Florida, Latin America and Vietnam) – Exotic pathogens

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**Herring is just one of a multitude of baits approved by the DMR for use in the lobster fishery. Photo courtesy of the Ellsworth American.**

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HY-LINER ROPE COMPANY
ST. GEORGE, MAINE
The Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC) has an important mission: to create awareness of and demand for Maine lobster. We do this through a variety of activities such as producing content and videos showcasing the industry’s history of conservation, working with media on lobster-related stories, and hosting food industry events like “Maine after Midnight,” which create publicity and inspire chefs.

We are also dedicated to protecting the reputation of the entire Maine lobster industry, in ways that are not always visible to the Collaborative’s marketing initiatives. Recently, we have been paying close attention to the new measures under development to protect endangered North Atlantic right whales. Our goal is to communicate to our key audiences that the Maine lobster brand is inextricably linked to sustainability and conservation, values that are at the core of its identity.

As the new regulations are deliberated, MLMC will work to emphasize to the public that Maine lobstermen have long been stewards of the marine environment and support measures to protect right whales. The MLMC is committed to maintaining the health and sustainability of the fishery and our coastal communities while co-existing with all other marine life and supporting efforts that will genuinely protect the right whales. Weber Shandwick, MLMC’s public relations firm, has deep experience in issues management and support measures to protect right whales. The MLMC is committed to maintaining the health and sustainability of the fishery and our coastal communities while co-existing with all other marine life and supporting efforts that will genuinely protect the right whales. Weber Shandwick, MLMC’s public relations firm, has deep experience in issues management and support measures to protect right whales.

Three midcoast lobster buyers — Ready Seafood, Luke’s Lobster, and Rocky Coast — have agreed to take part in the project. “The project, which begins this month, comes from the University’s Research Reinvestment Fund; the second year will be supported by the Maine Lobster Dealers Association.”

Three midcoast lobster buyers — Ready Seafood, Luke’s Lobster, and Rocky Coast — have agreed to take part in the project. “The companies will identify three wharves and fishermen to use these sensors,” Goode said. “The sensors will be fixed monitors attached at the wharves themselves, said Wahle. The new sensors will act as mock lobsters as they travel from the trap to the dealer, continuously recording what they experience. If a lobster is kept in an un-aerated tank on deck, the sensor will record the warm water temperature. If a crate is thrown roughly on the dock, the sensor will track that motion.

Improving the shrink rate might be as simple as using a live well with a chiller in it or hoisting a crate by both sides, not one,” Goode commented. “The project is about not pointing fingers at any one but is rather a way of saying to lobstermen ‘you are your own boss, you want to make as much money as you can. These are some steps you can take to do that.’ It’s a way to improve the industry.”

“We want to identify the stress points in the supply chain and look at how wharves and lobstermen differ in how they handle lobsters,” explained Rick Wahle, executive director of the Lobster Institute. Funding for the first year of the project, which begins this month, comes from the University’s Research Reinvestment Fund; the second year will be supported by the Maine Lobster Dealers Association.

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If you do nothing, you can be sure that NOAA will do it for you," Keliher told a gear to the beach, increase the frequency of the marks by marking lengtheners, color to distinguish them from the gear of other states, mark all Maine lobster a ¼ mile buffer from the shore where lobstermen would be exempt from new rules, told lobstermen. Maine is exploring the "Dwight Carver safety exemption" as need to keep our small, inshore boats safe under any new whale rules," Keliher 

To meet this goal, Maine agreed to remove 50% of vertical lines from the water and each lobster management areas (including Area 1 and Area 3) must reduce the risk posed by lobster fishing by 60%. To meet this goal, Maine agreed to remove 50% of vertical lines from the water and each lobster management areas (including Area 1 and Area 3) must reduce the risk posed by lobster fishing by 60%. To meet this goal, Maine agreed to remove 50% of vertical lines from the water and each lobster management areas (including Area 1 and Area 3) must reduce the risk posed by lobster fishing by 60%

The ESA considers all of these factors when contemplating regulation of any federally-permitted activity that has the potential to inhibit the species' recovery. "NMFS is conducting a Biological Opinion to determine if the lobster fishery could jeopardize the recovery of right whales," explained Keliher. "Given the dire situation facing these whales, we've been told by the agency to prepare for a 'catastrophe'." Five environmental groups sued NMFS in 2017, arguing that the lobster fishery jeopardizes the survival of the species. The court case is still pending.

NMFS held a Take Reduction Team (TRT) meeting in April to develop proposals to strengthen protections for right whales under the federal whale plan. Shortly before that meeting, NMFS announced that fisheries managers under the federal whale plan must reduce the risk of serious injury and mortality from entanglement by 60% to 80%. NMFS' second command, Sam Rauch, told the TRT that if they failed to agree upon a plan, NMFS would do it for them. This means that each state (Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts) and each lobster management areas (including Area 1 and Area 3) must reduce risk posed by lobster fishing by 60%.

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The TRT put forward by the environmental community to close prime fishing grounds around Mount Desert Rock during late summer and Jefferey's Ledge during the fall and winter. "The conservation groups continue to push hard for ropeless fishing," Keliher noted. "The Maine representatives at the TRT worked tirelessly to get that off the table for this round of rulemaking. The environmental community continues to hate ropeless fishing as the ultimate solution to the whale entanglement issue.

One question asked consistently by frustrated lobstermen at each meeting was, "Why don't we just sue them?" "Maine reserves the right to file a lawsuit if NMFS takes this plan above and beyond what is reasonable or if Maine is forced to do more than other fishing areas. But that remains to be seen because the rules are still being developed. Right now, there is nothing to sue over," Keliher responded. He noted his concern that typically in legal cases the courts give deference to federal agencies. "I was involved in two cases that Maine filed over listing of Atlantic salmon under the ESA. Maine lost both. These cases are very hard to win," explained Keliher.

Ryan Post, a Zone D lobsterman, disagreed with Keliher. "Maine needs to stand up and say we do not consent. Possibly the only person who could save our industry now is the President of the United States. No one in Maine wants to hurt whales. But we need more science before we just implement something that could wipe us out."

DMR's Bureau of Science Director, Carl Wilson, had the daunting task of explaining the 11 strangwan propositions generated by DMR that could meet the statewide 50% vertical line reduction. The proposals use combinations of trap limits and minimum trawling up numbers based on distance from shore to take rope out of the water. DMR did not present any zone by zone scenarios. "These proposals were developed to give the industry an idea of what it will take to meet the goal. We did not want to presume what might work for each zone. We are here to get that feedback to help ensure that these whale rules are as flexible as possible," Keliher emphasized.

Wilson noted that not all scenarios achieve a 50% reduction in vertical lines. To get to that figure, the state can consider expanding the weak rope requirement into state waters or using seasonal closures to gain the extra risk reduction percentage.

In order to calculate the reduction in vertical lines achieved by various proposals, DMR estimated current gear configuration and the fishing effort of active lobstermen using 2017 data from dealer and harvester reporting. The 100% dealer reporting provides data on the number of active versus latent permits and the 10% harvester reporting data is used to estimate the number of traps in the water and trap configurations fished in each zone, by month and distance from shore.

Johnny Smith, a Zone D lobsterman, was frustrated that the state is using estimates of gear in the water. "We need better data to move forward. Come back with real information because these changes are going to affect us for the rest of our lives," Smith challenged.

Wilson responded that while the data are not perfect, they provide a good representation of Maine's fishing effort. Keliher agreed that the state needs better data. "Not going to 100% harvester reporting was a mistake. I wish we had that data now to help us with these whale rules. But Maine's 10% reporting still produces more data than other states (because of the number of Maine lobster traps)." noted Keliher. "DMR plans to implement 100% harvester reporting by 2021, stating it will take that long to fund and develop the program. Zone A lobsterman Dixon Smith was disappointed to see only one option that maintained the state's 800 trap limit. Wilson explained that to achieve a 50% reduction in vertical lines with 800 traps would require fishing a minimum of quads in state waters, 20 trap trawls from 3 to 12 miles and 40 trap trawls in waters beyond 12 miles. "We recognize that these trawling up requirements would be very difficult for our fisherman. This is to give you an idea of what it would take to keep 800 traps," Wilson told the crowd of more than 350 lobstermen at the Zone A meeting. "We need to see more options that keep us at 800 traps if our fishery is going to survive. Managers must consider that vessels operating in federal waters have higher operating costs than state waters vessels."

Smith said. At the LAC meeting in late May, David Cousins of Zone D asked DMR to develop scenarios that would allow lobstermen to continue to fish pairs in state waters. Wilson stated that to lower the minimum trawl configurations, trap limits would have to come down.
We need to stress safety and efficiency,” Cousins reiterated at the Zone D meeting in June. “Forty trap trawls are not safe. Lobstering is already the second most dangerous profession. We don’t need to make it the first.” He continued, “And fishing quads on hard bottom is not an efficient use of traps. Many lobstersmen from across the state concurred that lobstering 40 trap trawls are a big request to make for offshore boats. Several noted that such large trawls are just too many traps for most boats to handle and that a lobstersman simply can’t see the second end.

Others shared Cousins’ concern about going to quads in state waters. “Zone G lobstersmen need singles to fish in the holes and cracks. Is there any way to get a larger exemption so guys can continue to fish?” asked lobstersman Wayne Parry. Several Zone G lobstersmen commented that the ¼ mile buffer is not enough in Zone G. They suggested looking at a ½ mile exemption or a ¼ mile from the demarcation line.

Lobstermen in Zone D urged the DMR to look at depth contours rather than using a ¼ mile buffer for the safety buffer. “How would a child know if he was ¼ mile from shore?” asked lobstersman Wayne Parry. Several lobstersmen stated that using depth contours would also be easier for enforcement.

Lobstermen in Zone B had conflicting concerns. Carroll Staples asked, “Can we be more aggressive with trawling up to avoid fishing weak rope and trap limits?” David Horner, chair of the Zone B Council said, “Zone B could live with 600 traps as long as other zones don’t bring traps into the zone.” At every meeting lobstersmen agreed that if they are required to take rope out of the water, the state must ensure that it is not put back in by new entrants or those building into the fishery. Kelher noted that this issue will be taken up by Legislature again in January. “A tiered licensing system may need to be considered by the Legislature when it looks at waiting lists and new entrants,” he said.

Zone C lobstersman Brian Tripp expressed a sentiment shared by many along the coast. “These DMR proposals are a one-size-fits-all and won’t support fleet diversity. They won’t work.” Kelher stressed that maintaining the diversity of the Maine fleet is a paramount consideration in crafting Maine’s whale plan. “We had unanimous feedback from thousands of lobstersmen during our industry meetings in 2012 that maintaining diversity of the Maine lobster fleet was important to the future of this fishery,” he said. DMR wants feedback from each lobster zone on how the state can support regional differences in fishing practices in order to conserve Maine’s diversity of lobstersmen and boats. “If you don’t agree on the statewide approach, we need the zones to come forward with a plan that will work for your area,” urged Kelher.

DMR’s goal is to develop a statewide plan that allows for variability within the plan from zone to zone. Zones already have the authority to regulate the number of traps on a trawl and reduce trap limits. But to change zone regulations requires two-thirds approval of all those who vote and takes time.

The Zone E Council voiced support for staying at 600 traps and members said they thought that trawling up to 15’s from 3 to 12 miles and to 30’s outside of 12 miles would be doable for the zone. “If we go to 15’s and 30’s offshore, we would need to have standard-sized gears and specific direction, maybe require a flag on one end,” said Eben Wilson. “Zone E, however, would not support quads inside state waters. “Using quads is like throwing a trap away,” noted Arnie Gamage of Zone E. “It’s not going to fish.”

One Zone D lobstersman expressed his concern over asking so much of lobstersmen fishing in state waters. “Where are the entanglements taking place?” he asked. “Taking rope out of state waters may not do shit to save the whales. How does putting regulations in place where there is no problem to benefit the whales?” Carl Wilson explained, “There is a lot more gear set inshore than offshore, orders of magnitude more. It would be impossible to remove half of Maine’s vertical lines by focusing only on the offshore fishery.” He asked a question of lobstermen: “Which is more dangerous, less rope and more whales or a lot of rope and fewer whales?”

Josh Conover of Islesboro was not convinced. “If entanglements don’t go down in five years, won’t they be back again for further reductions?” In recognition of the different needs of the inshore and offshore portions of the fishery, the LAC asked the DMR to develop scenarios that would allow lower trap limits and smaller minimum trawl configurations in state waters and higher trap limits with larger minimum trap configurations in federal waters.

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LOBSTERMEN JOIN MLA IN RESPONSE TO FUTURE UNCERTAINTY

By MLA staff

Maine lobstermen are known for looking toward the future by taking steps to preserve the fishery for future generations. As regulatory and economic pressures increase on Maine’s lobstermen, many are deciding to join the Maine Lobstermen’s Association (MLA) as members in order to have a voice in what shape that future may take.

Kyle Kennedy of Milbridge fishes his 42-foot H&H offshore and has a new 45-foot Calvin Beal heading to sea in August. Future whale regulations might not affect him as much as they may others because of the way he currently fishes. However, with two boys of his own, Kennedy is uneasy. “There are some people who will be severely affected,” he said, expressing concern for both the young and the older lobstermen who might be fishing smaller boats. With new regulations facing everyone, he decided to join the MLA this spring. “It’s not that I didn’t value the MLA before, I guess I was just busy,” Kennedy said. Now that he is a member, he reads the MLA’s Friday E-weekly regularly and feels more connected to what’s going on. Becoming a member wasn’t a hard decision, he admitted. “I knew the MLA would represent us best.”

Jeff Conant is a quiet guy who likes to do his own thing. He too fishes an H&H. This year he goes on his 38-footer with deck extensions, which is an upgrade from the 35’ H&H he owned last year. Conant has always paid attention to what was happening related to lobstering and read the MLA newspaper Landings, which is sent to all commercial lobstermen in the state regardless of their membership in the MLA, each month. But when he heard that changes to whale rules were coming, he decided it was time to join the MLA.

“I figure the only way to handle the situation is to band together. I figured the MLA could use help with what we are up against,” Conant said. He fishes seven- and eight-trap trawls off Harpswell. After the recent Lobster Zone E Council meeting with the Department of Marine Resources about possible trawling up to protect whales, Conant was in shock. “The whole thing is mind-boggling,” he said, referring to the proposed requirements. His older daughter Morgan has her lobster license and hauls 10 traps in a 16-foot flat-bottomed skiff. Conant is hoping to get her a bigger boat soon since her younger sister Allison will be eligible for her license next year. His daughters are likely to be lobstering under commercial fishermen and Portland’s working waterfront. Becky includes fishermen as part of her family and has continuously supported them by hosting meetings, organizing fundraisers, and being a vocal advocate for their businesses and way of life.

Ben Martens, MCFA’s Executive Director said, “Becky Rand is a shining example of an individual who, in all aspects of her life, gives back to Maine’s fishing community and Portland’s working waterfront. We are thrilled to award her the MCFA Community Leadership Award.”

MAINSTAY OF PORTLAND WATERFRONT RECOGNIZED

By Monique Coombs

On June 5, the Maine Coast Fishermen’s Association (MCFA) hosted its annual meeting at the newly renovated Maine Beer Company in Freeport. Members elected the 2019 board of directors and selected officers for the organization. MCFA staff gave overviews of the past year’s projects and accomplishments, which included working with fishermen in Portland and Boothbay Harbor to elevate the importance of the working waterfront in their communities; working with groundfishermen to ensure their voices are heard in policy-making regarding groundfish, scallops, and herring; and a review of the strategic plan approved in December 2018. This plan includes developing priorities in the organization for building sustainable fisheries, expanding fishing access, and promoting innovative fishing businesses in Maine. The highlight of the night was the presentation of the first annual Maine Coast Fishermen’s Association Community Leadership Award. The recipient of the 2019 award was Becky Rand, owner of Becky’s Diner, who was recognized for her support of Maine’s working waterfront.

Becky Rand, center, with, from left, Willis Spear, Jon Bisnette and Bill Coppesmith. Photo by T. Bell.
MURRY PROMOTED TO SERGEANT OF MARINE PATROL
SECTION FIVE

Mark Murry, who has served as a Marine Patrol Officer for 20 years, the last 17 of which as a Specialist, has been promoted to Sergeant of Section Five, which runs from Hancock to Jonesboro.

As a Marine Patrol Specialist, Murry has operated large patrol vessels in the down east region. His responsibilities included operation and maintenance of vessels and transporting Marine Patrol Officers during patrol, enforcement, and search and rescue operations. He has also developed an excellent rapport with and the trust of the local fishing and coastal communities, which is a critical quality for a Marine Patrol Officer. During his career, Sergeant Murry has received several awards including the Marine Patrol Lifesaving Award, the Commissioners Letter of Appreciation, the Washington County Officer of the Year Award and numerous awards and medals from the U.S. Coast Guard.

SIX DEAD RIGHT WHALES IN CANADA

As of June 28, six right whales have been reported dead in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. On June 26, Transport Canada announced that it would be implementing precautionary speed restrictions. The preliminary necropsy results of the first deceased right whale were inconclusive but officials noted that the death did not appear to be caused by entanglement or ship strike. The second whale was a 38-year-old female, known as Punctuation. The necropsy showed signs of sharp trauma, consistent with vessel strike. The third right whale was a 38-year-old male known as Comet; a necropsy was planned for June 28. The fourth whale was #3815, an 11-year-old female. The carcass of #3815 is still floating west of the Magdalen Islands, and the carcass of the fifth right whale washed ashore on a remote stretch of Anticosti Island.

PORTLAND OK’S SMALLER NON-MARINE USE ZONE

Portland’s City Council voted unanimously in late June to support waterfront zoning changes that were recommended by the City’s Waterfront Working Group, and not a weakened version that had been recommended by the Planning Board. Fishermen supported City Councilor Belinda Ray’s proposal to reduce the non-marine use overlay zone on Commercial Street from 150 to 125 feet, saying that without it they would be forced off Portland’s waterfront. Pier owners opposed shrinking the overlay zone saying it would cripple their ability to generate revenue needed to maintain aging piers.

WORKING WATERFRONT ACCESS GRANTS AWARDED

The Land for Maine’s Future Board selected six projects for grants through the Working Waterfront Access Protection Program. The funds are used to purchase development rights which will ensure that the property remains available to support commercial fishing or aquaculture activities. The awards include $216,250 to the Stonington Co-op, $118,750 to the town of Jonesport; $68,750 to Wottons Lobster Wharf, LLC in New Harbor; $301,500 to the Boothbay Region Maritime Foundation for Carters Wharf; $155,000 to Interstate Lobster, Inc., a lobster coop in Harpswell; and $276,000 to the Spruce Head Fishermen’s Co-op.

The Working Waterfront Access Protection Program is part of the Land for Maine’s Future Program and was first capitalized by a bond originally passed in 2005 and has been renewed three times since by Maine voters. To date, 25 properties have received funds through the program.

From left, Col. Jay Carroll, Mark Murry, and Lieut. Troy Dow.
are only 2,000 recreational lobster licenses limited to five tags each likely fish-of-lobstermen and will look into it, "Keliher responded. "Keep in mind that there the federal rules do not impact them but we've heard that concern from a lot Another common theme raised by many lobstermen from across the state was ensure that the gear can be retrieved. of options similar to what was done for weak links. Weak rope equivalencies to reach the 1,700 pound weak rope requirement. We hope to develop a suite of ideas through the risk reduction model. DMR will take this feedback into consideration and identify preferred alternatives to bring to the zone councils to submit alternative proposals for their zone to DMR by July 15. Zone ate ideas that might work better for that particular zone. He invited each zone member to discuss the strawman proposals within their districts and gener-

Another common theme raised by many lobstermen from across the state was whether the new whale measures would impact recreational license holders. "The federal rules do not impact them but we've heard that concern from a lot of lobstermen and will look into it," Keliher responded. "Keep in mind that there are only 2,000 recreational lobster licenses limited to five tags each likely fishing within the safety buffer." Occasionally a lobsterman would voice an optimistic point of view. As the Zone A meeting wrapped up, Mike Sargent of Steuben noted, "We are looking to the Zone A council to find strategies that will work for Zone A. The important thing is that Maine lobstermen will still be able to fish under this plan. We will take a hit, but we will adjust and we will continue to fish." Throughout the meetings, Keliher listened and responded to the concerns and fears raised by lobstermen in each zone. He acknowledged that crafting a fair plan that meets NMFS risk reduction goal will not be simple. "It would have been a lot easier for Maine to just put together a plan and hand it off to the feds," Keliher told Zone C lobstermen. [Doing it in collaboration with lobstermen makes it more difficult but I am here because I am willing to have this conver-
sation with the industry]."

The Commissioner closed out each meeting by challenging each zone council member to discuss the strawman proposals within their districts and gener-
ate ideas that might work better for that particular zone. He invited each zone council to submit alternative proposals for their zone to DMR by July 15. Zone council members are also welcome to meet with DMR's science staff to run var-
ious ideas through the risk reduction model. DMR will take this feedback into consideration and identify preferred alternatives to bring to the zone councils for discussion in August. Zone G Chair Steve Taylor had his own homework assignment for his fellow zone council members at the close of that meeting. "Go home and kick your buddy in the ass for not showing up. This room should have been filled wall to wall. This is our livelihood."
Maine Lobstermen’s Association
Est. 1954

The MLA advocates for a sustainable lobster resource and the fishermen & communities that depend on it.

Become a member today!

Membership matters for your future & the future of the lobster industry.

Benefits of Membership

- E-weekly: a round-up of lobster news & a snapshot of the lobster, bait, and fuel prices for the entire coast
- Discounts at marine businesses
- MLA hat and bumper sticker
- Special events including trainings and trips that benefit you.
- Voting privileges to elect the Board of Directors.
- A voice on issues affecting your industry

MLA Vessel Insurance program
This unique and affordable policy created by lobstermen for lobstermen. It is not a generalized marine policy!

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- Credit when you lay-up without any limitation of how long your boat is out of the water; lay-up credit available
  - Credits and discounts for MLA members with CG Drill Conductor Certification within 5 years
  - Automatic coverage for observers & sea-samplers with P&I Coverage for Loss of Earnings
  - Coverage of older and wooden vessels

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- First Time Member $200
- Highliner $350
- Harvester $250
- Harvester Family* $325
- Junior Harvester (under 18) $125
- Senior Harvester (over 65) $125
- Retired Harvester (no longer a captain) $50

Individual Membership Levels:
- Sternman $50
- Lobster Friend $100
- Lobster Lover $250

Name: _______________________________________________________________
Address: _____________________________________________________________
City/State/Zip: _______________________________________________________
Phone: ___________ Cell: ___________ D.O.B: ___________
Email: _______________________________________________________________
(please include to receive weekly e-news updates and lobster, bait, & fuel prices)

Lobster License #:_________ Zone & District:___________

Boat Name: ___________________________________________________________

*Family Members:_______________________________________________________

Payment info: Pay with: Visa MasterCard Check: #________________________
Credit Card #:________-________-________-________ Exp. date:________ CV code:________
Billing town/state/zip: _________________________________________________

Legal Defense Fund: The MLA is a part of the court case brought against NMFS by environmental groups who want extreme whale protection measures. MLA’s intervention ensures Maine lobstermen have a voice in any court decisions that affect our fishery. MLA cannot fight this battle without your support. Please consider a donation to MLA Legal Defense Fund. No amount is too small. Thank you.

Additional Contributions:
- Donation $______
- Legal Defense Fund $______

Total enclosed: ________
Support the MLA Legal Defense Fund

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2 Storer St, Ste 203, Kennebunk ME 04043

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PURE AND SIMPLE,
our focus is on providing our customers consistent service and reliability for one product and one product only: the best, highest quality, wild-cought Stonington Maine lobsters.

—Hugh Reynolds, Owner