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Maine Lobstermen's Community Alliance

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The Maine Lobstermen’s Association (MLA) welcomes Jane Luxton, a partner at the Washington, D.C.-based firm of Lewis Brisbois to its expanded Legal Defense Team. Luxton joins MLA’s longstanding attorney, Mary Anne Mason, who has lead MLA’s legal effort since 2007.

“We are thrilled to bring this level of talent to our Legal Defense Team,” said Patrice McCarron, MLA’s executive director. “Given the existential threat the whale issue poses to the Maine lobster industry, we needed major legal talent with a track record on high-profile issues. Jane knows the federal process from the inside out and will ensure that MLA’s position is elevated to the highest levels needed.”

Luxton has served in several prominent positions in the U.S. government. From 2007 to 2009, she served as general counsel of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), advising senior decision makers on legal and policy issues related to fisheries management, endangered species and marine mammal protection. “Jane’s high-level experience of the inner workings of NOAA and impeccable track record are a game changer in demanding accountability and fair treatment from the National Marine Fisheries Service,” said McCarron.

The MLA started its Legal Defense Fund in 2007 in response to a lawsuit by environmental groups. The stakes are now much higher. At least 20 right whales have died in Canada since 2017, raising the prospect the species may be at risk of extinction, and creating pressure for urgent, effective action. MLA’s goal is to ensure comprehensive action is taken by all stakeholders that pose a risk to right whales, not just lobstermen. “Regulating U.S. fishermen will not prevent right whales from dying in Canada. And limiting regulations to only lobstermen will not solve entanglement problems in the U.S.,” said MLA’s attorney Mason. “The MLA has assembled a stellar team to implement a multi-pronged strategy to champion the interests of Maine lobstermen and ensure that management efforts are effective in reversing the decline of the right whale population.”

The MLA is attacking the whale issue on all fronts — through the regulatory process, the courts, with federal agency staff, with Maine DMR, and with state and federal politicians. MLA also educates the media and the public that Maine lobstermen were the first to step up to protect right whales, and they remain on the frontlines to keep the Gulf of Maine safe for them.

The MLA has been leading the fight against rules that unfairly target Maine lobstermen for more than 20 years. The association stands ready to do whatever it takes to ensure that Maine lobstermen are treated fairly and that future management actions are safe, effective and necessary. The MLA is prepared for this fight, but it must have support from lobstermen to succeed. “The MLA has assembled the talent and the strategy. Now we are asking anyone who cares about the future of the Maine lobster industry to support MLA’s Legal Defense Fund. The future of our industry is at stake,” said McCarron.

Nothing Comes Close. The Uncompromising Scania V8 Engines

MLA LEGAL TEAM EXPANDS, SUPPORT FROM LOBSTERMEN KEY TO ITS SUCCESS

By MLA staff

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Send your donation today. See page 14 to contribute.

Nothing Comes Close. The Uncompromising Scania V8 Engines

RIGHT WHALE DEBATE HEATS UP

By MLA staff

The past several months have seen a flurry of activity related to the question of how best to protect North Atlantic right whales in the face of changing environmental conditions in the Gulf of Maine and elsewhere. To help Maine lobstermen understand the range of events taking place, we provide a summary of this past month’s activity, with links to the primary documents or articles for further reading.

NOAA response to Maine Lobstermen’s Association withdrawal from the Take Reduction Team agreement

In late August the Maine Lobstermen’s Association (MLA) informed Chris Oliver, Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries, that due to flawed data, it could no longer support the Take Reduction Team (TRT) agreement mandating Maine reduce the risk of serious injury or mortality to right whales by 60%. To reach that goal, Maine lobstermen would have to remove 50% of vertical lines from the water or mortality to right whales by 60%. To reach that goal, Maine lobstermen would have to remove 50% of vertical lines from the water or mortality to right whales by 60%. To reach that goal, Maine lobstermen would have to remove 50% of vertical lines from the water or mortality to right whales by 60%. To reach that goal, Maine lobstermen would have to remove 50% of vertical lines from the water or mortality to right whales by 60%. To reach that goal, Maine lobstermen would have to remove 50% of vertical lines from the water or mortality to right whales by 60%. To reach that goal, Maine lobstermen would have to remove 50% of vertical lines from the water or mortality to right whales by 60%. To reach that goal, Maine lobstermen would have to remove 50% of vertical lines from the water or mortality to right whales by 60%. To reach that goal, Maine lobstermen would have to remove 50% of vertical lines from the water or mortality to right whales by 60%.

The MLA discovered serious flaws in the NMFS’s data, which point solely to the Northeast lobster fishery as the source of right whale serious injury and mortality. NMFS data show that the Canadian snow crab fishery accounts for 31% of serious injury and mortality, gillnet and netting gear accounts for 13%, unknown trap/pot gear represents 4%, and U.S. trap/pot gear represents just 4%. U.S. and Canadian vessel strikes account for the remaining 48%. In addi-
Some people start to slow down as the season moves from summer into fall. Others, like Maine’s lobstermen, remain in high gear, hauling lobsters from the Gulf of Maine by the hundreds of pounds each day while growing increasingly concerned about the future.

In this edition Landings continues its coverage of the North Atlantic right whale dilemma facing New England lobstermen. The whales, another of which was found dead in September after having been tangled in Canada, are at the root of a new rule under development by the National Marine Fisheries Service that calls for Maine lobstermen to reduce risk to right whales by 60%. Disagreements about critical whale data led the Maine Lobstermen’s Association (MLA) to withdraw from the April Take Reduction Team agreement on the management approach recommended to stem the decline of the species. Since then, the tempest about what to do to protect the endangered whales has not slackened in the least, as our lead article this month highlights.

To counter the onslaught of regulatory and legal assaults against the Maine lobster fishery, the MLA, Maine’s oldest and largest fishermen’s organization, this month announced the expansion of its legal defense team. Jane Lutxton, a partner at the Washington, D.C.-based firm of Lewis Brisbois, joins MLAs legal defense team, Mary Anne Mason, to represent the MLA on multiple fronts. From 2007 to 2009, Lutxton served as general counsel at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), advising senior decision-makers on legal and policy issues related to fisheries management, endangered species and marine mammal protection.

"The MLA has assembled the talent and the strategy. Now we are asking anyone who cares about the future of the Maine lobster industry to support MLAs Legal Defense Fund. The future of our industry is at stake," said Patrice McCarron, MLA executive director.

Landings continues its series on aquaculture in Maine this month. Two companies have applied for local, state and federal permits to construct large land-based facilities in Bucksport and Belfast in order to grow Atlantic salmon. The facilities would use recirculating aquaculture systems (RAS) to grow the fish completely separate from the ocean. A 2019 study by The Nature Conservancy noted that RAS salmon systems offer better environmental performance, higher production capacities per unit area and greater control over production outcomes than traditional penstocks.

The Cranberry Isles Fishermen’s Co-operative unveiled its new roof-top solar panel array in September. The 144 panels, installed by Sun Dog Solar of Searsport, are designed to produce 5200 kilowatts per year. Funding for the project came from the USDA’s Rural Energy for America Program, the Island Institute of Rockland and Bar Harbor Bank and Trust. The panels are expected to save the co-op $370,000 in electricity costs over their lifetime. As co-op manager Mark Nighman said at the September 18 celebration on the island, “This is a great day to make energy!”

The MLA has been fortunate to have the longstanding support of businesses up and down the coast to support its work to protect Maine’s lobster resource and fishing heritage. In the next few months Landings will feature profiles of a few of the businesses whose enduring connections to the lobster industry and to the MLA are equally valued. This month we look at Lonnie’s Hydraulics of Topsham, a company that has been working with lobstermen since the early 1980s.

The Meat

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By Marianne Lacroix

As the lobster industry’s marketing arm, the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC) enjoys the power of representing a strong and beloved brand. But we also have to address the same challenges that face all sectors of the industry. This year, in addition to running promotional programs for Maine lobster, we have become immersed in communications related to North Atlantic right whale regulations, tariffs and climate change. Over the summer, the MLMC took the opportunity to evaluate its strategic direction while conducting a comprehensive organizational review. This fall we will plan for 2020, taking into account the needs of our audience groups and the challenges and opportunities within our industry. We will be seeking input from industry members and look forward to developing a program that increases demand for Maine lobster to the benefit of all industry members.

Protecting the Maine lobster brand

Maine lobstermen know that the ocean supports their livelihood, their families and their communities. As stewards of the marine environment, Maine lobstermen work hard to protect marine mammals and their ocean habitat. MLMC’s role is to protect Maine lobster’s brand image by sharing that message of conservation and responsible stewardship. It’s important for us to make sure that people who buy and eat Maine lobster understand that our lobster harvesters are defenders of the environment, not the enemy. The MLMC has published videos, fact sheets, and answers to frequently asked questions, as well as highlighted select media coverage and noted important dates at our content hub, located at www.rightwhalesandmainelobster.com. If someone wants to learn the facts about the Maine lobster industry’s role in right whale protections, this is the place to look. We will continue to share information to help educate people on all of the great work that has been done and continues to be done by Maine lobstermen.

Expanding the target audience

For the past five years, the MLMC has focused marketing efforts on a target audience of media, chefs and consumers. This year, we continued to reach those audience groups while evolving the marketing program to include a new target audience. Recognizing the importance of the supply chain in bringing Maine lobster to customers, we developed communications tools specifically targeting this group, including product photography, fact sheets and editorial content. We have been sharing the materials with the target group through webinars, podcasts and a robust digital advertising program, as well as making them available to dealers. People in this target group can see web advertisements and search results designed to support the messaging behind Maine lobster.

Evolving the marketing strategy

While I have over twenty years of experience in food marketing, I have never had a leadership opportunity to work with a product as integral to its community as Maine lobster. When the Board selected me as executive director several months ago, I wanted to make certain that MLMC was pursuing the best possible strategy to create strong and sustained demand to help us weather challenges such as assaults on our brand or the unexpected closure of key markets. Following an extensive review of twenty marketing agencies with specialized food expertise, we decided to adjust Maine lobster’s strategic campaign direction.

As part of the agency review process, we took the opportunity to assess acceptance and recognition of “Maine New Shell” branding. MLMC is moving forward with an evolved strategy that focuses on the key product benefits of sweet flavor, sustainable sourcing and Maine origin. We are confident that this shift will help us address industry priorities in a refreshed way. The MLMC will continue to work with global communications firm Weber Shandwick, adopting their recommended strategy evolution and elevating the benefits of Maine lobster through an integrated marketing campaign of public relations, digital marketing, social media, trade partnerships and issues management.

Planning for the year ahead

This fall, the MLMC is developing its marketing plan for 2020, taking into consideration the needs of our audience groups and the challenges and opportunities within our industry. We will be seeking input from industry members and look forward to developing a program that increases demand for Maine lobster to the benefit of all industry members.
Aquaculture is a rapidly growing industry in Maine. As recent articles in Landings have pointed out, in 2018 it was valued at nearly $72 million. And, over the last three years, applications for licenses and leases have dramatically increased, by three-fold. As Landings pointed out in a July article, "Aquaculture Leases – Understanding the Process," if you receive alerts from the Department of Marine Resources (DMR), your phone will be constantly abuzz. Lobstermen up and down the coast are starting to take notice.

Aquaculture presents a new opportunity along our working waterfront. But, this emerging industry should not develop at the expense of existing traditional uses or in a fashion that takes away from those who want to enjoy the waters for recreation. "Aquaculture: Surge in Maine Due to Many Factors," published in August, discussed some of the causes for the recent growth. For example, NOAA funding [through the Sea Grant program] is available for those interested in experimenting with new techniques and starting up their businesses. Those are taxpayer dollars supporting these grants. The state has also made the leasing process simple and inexpensive. This has resulted in an unlevelled playing field for fishers and all of those who make a living off the water. Lobstering is limited to a particular zone and those zones have a limited number of licenses that are issued each year. It is not easy if you want to enter the fishery. There are apprenticeship requirements and long waits until a spot opens up in the zone you desire. Additionally, there are limits on the number of traps that you can fish and you have to pay for each trap tag each year. There are restrictions on days of the week when you are allowed to fish and for certain times of year as well. The rules for aquaculture leases are much less prohibitive. An aquaculture leaseholder can harvest at any time and there are currently no limits set on the number of leases that can be issued in the state. For a standard lease, you have to pay a nominal fee that allows you to maintain the lease for up to 20 years. If you want to sell your business, you can transfer it to another owner, in or out of the state. Lobster licenses are non-transferable. Aquaculture leases can also be aggregated so that a single owner or entity can hold rights to up to 1000 acres of ocean bottom.

This last fact is of great concern. Lobstering is a local business. It is owner-operated and supports independent small business owners. It is controlled locally by zone councils that aim to protect the character of each zone and the interests of the fishermen. Aquaculture leases are controlled by the state. The reason that the state manages state waters is to hold those waters in the public trust for the benefit of all to all to benefit from. It does not make sense that this resource held in the public trust be leased out for private use. Private leasing of a public resource is not only problematic but also begs the question of who owns the oceans. Lobstering is a fixed gear fishery that has to move around depending on the lobsters and changing ocean conditions. They need access to this resource that is supposedly held in trust by the state.

As noted in Landings' "Aquaculture Leases – Understanding the Process," be sure to monitor aquaculture lease notices from the state. As someone who relies on the ocean for your living, your feedback on leases proposed in your area are essential for the state to understand and can affect the approval process. The challenge is that it is not always easy or convenient to attend public hearings regarding lease applications. For a single lease, there can be multiple meetings. Right now, the process puts the burden on the lobstermen who are displaced. Instead, the burden should be on the applicant to work with local lobstermen to determine the best location for a potential lease. The current process gives an unfair advantage to aquaculture applicants. Let us not lose sight of the fact that lobster landings last year totaled 485 million dollars, the top value of all landings statewide by a considerable margin.

Aquaculture is something that lobstermen need to be watchful over and vocal about in order to ensure that the growth of the aquaculture industry does not occur unchecked with dire consequences for the state's most valued fishery.

Maine has a long tradition of bustling working waterfronts. For generations Maine's coastal communities have relied on the ocean to provide employment and healthy seafood that is sold all over the world. Although those traditions continue today, they do so in a rapidly changing world. Anyone who works on the water daily can see the environmental change but then take a moment and look back toward shore.

Maine's coastal communities have changed over time and are currently changing fast. Maine is the second-most-popular state in the country to retire to. We are the oldest state in the country by median age and many of our young folks are moving out of state or to cities in order to seek a living. Those population shifts are directly impacting coastal communities and Maine's working waterfronts.

Maine's new residents often view the coast through a different lens than those who go down to the sea to make a living. Typically, they think the lobster boat or oyster shuck is quaint until it starts up at four o'clock in the morning or brings back a load of wet, stinking gear to the dock next door. Not quite what the postcard implied or the real estate agent mentioned during the property showing.

Maine's working waterfronts and the hard-working people who use them are being pressured by these changes up and down the coast right at a time when aquaculture has started to grow. For many years aquaculture in Maine was stagnant, occupying roughly 1,200 acres statewide. In the last five years we have seen some growth, with acreage increasing to around 1,500 statewide. That's about the size of the Rockland harbor.

In that space Maine sea farmers generate over 700 jobs and about $130 million annually. We are small in comparison to the size and value of the lobster industry. Interestingly, the fastest-growing group of folks experimenting with aquaculture is in fact commercial fishermen or their sons and daughters. If you think of aquaculture as a fishery, it is one of the last ones on the coast of Maine that is not closed to new entrants. As the marine environment changes, families who make their livings on the water are always looking for new ways to continue their maritime heritage.

Aquaculture has existed alongside commercial fishermen in Maine for over 45 years. Certainly, there have been instances when a lease application has raised concerns from local fishermen. In those cases, the fisherman and the sea farmer have generally worked the issue out and learned to live with each other. Under Maine state law fishermen always take precedence. It is simply against the law for the Department of Marine Resources (DMR) to issue a lease if it does not meet certain criteria, one of which is that no significant fishery occurs at the proposed lease site. Assertions that aquaculture is taking away lobster bottom are simply untrue. In fact, leases can be denied for six other reasons that basically add up to the fact that no significant activity or special environmental habitat can occur in the area of the proposed lease.

DMR has a low denial rate for lease applications for one simple reason. In order to apply for a lease, you have to go through a long, complicated, expensive, and at times intimidating, application process. When was the last time you faced cross examination by highly paid lawyers, public relations consultants and expert witnesses in order to apply for your lobster license? Applicants must invest a lot of time and resources before applying because no one in their right mind would go through that process to apply for a lease if their project doesn't meet the criteria.

Aquaculture — farming the sea — is just another way to keep those family traditions going and Maine's working waterfronts alive and viable in the face of changing coastal demographics. If Maine's working waterfronts allow themselves to be divided by wealthy landowners who want to protect "their" viewscape, the only people left along Maine's coasts won't be fishermen or sea farmers. It will be those who only view the ocean, not those who work on it.

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By Crystal Canney, Protect Maine's Fishing Heritage

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By Sebastian Belle, Maine Aquaculture Association

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The Maine Lobstermen's Association has been advocating for a sustainable lobster resource and the fishermen and communities that depend on it since 1954.

"I go to all the MLA meetings. It's important to know what's going on. If you don't, you get blindsided. People need to stay involved!"

Bobby Ingalls, Bucks Harbor
TWO LAND-BASED AQUACULTURE PROJECTS PROPOSED IN MAINE

By Melissa Waterman

While small, one- or two-person aquaculture businesses have seen an uptick in Maine in recent years, the state has also been selected as the site for several large, land-based aquaculture projects operated by national and international firms. Land-based aquaculture farms, largely focused on growing Atlantic salmon, have triggered a vehement public response, both for and against, along the coast.

Aquaculture is the fastest-growing food production sector in the world, according to a 2017 University of Maine report, growing 6.2% annually between 2000 and 2012. In Maine, the total economic impact of aquaculture nearly tripled between 2007 and 2017, from $50 million to $137 million. It has only been in the past three years, however, that companies came to Maine with plans to build large land-based facilities in the state.

Land-based aquaculture depends on recycling the water used to raise a marine species. A Recirculating Aquaculture System (RAS) allows the operator to control the entire environment in which a species such as salmon is raised in order to maximize growth and health. The RAS filters out waste products and controls the water chemistry, temperature and other elements, much as land-based holding facilities for lobsters do. By growing fish outside of the ocean, a land-based aquaculture facility can avoid natural problems such as sea lice or diseases that plague salmon, which are often treated with chemicals.

“RAS systems have a number of advantages and challenges,” said Sebastian Belle, executive director of the Maine Aquaculture Association. “RAS systems allow more environmental control and can help farmers provide optimal conditions to the animals or plants they are growing. They may help increase the biosecurity of farms by reducing the risk that parasites or pathogens get into the facility from the wild.”

RAS technology has been used for at least 25 years; in Europe the technology has been used to grow European sea bass, halibut, trout and catfish. The University of Maine has operated a land-based RAS in Franklin to grow salmon for the past 12 years. A 2019 study by The Nature Conservancy stated that RAS salmon systems “offer better environmental performance, higher production capacities per unit area and greater control over production outcomes than traditional penstocks.”

The scale of projects proposed in Maine, however, has raised concerns at the local level.

On September 3, the Bucksport Planning Board gave its approval to Whole Oceans’ application for a salmon aquaculture facility on the former Verso Paper mill site. The paper mill abruptly shut down at the end of 2014, leaving the town with a vast tract of empty buildings and a sharp drop in tax revenues. In May, Whole Oceans, a subsidiary of Emergent Holdings of Portland, announced that it had closed on purchase of 104 acres of the mill property from American Iron and Metal Development USA LLC. Emergent Holdings was formed exclusively to invest in aquaculture in North America.

The $75 million first phase of the facility is designed to grow just over 5,000 tons, or 11 million pounds, of Atlantic salmon. Whole Oceans plans to construct a freshwater building to house aquaculture systems for hatching salmon eggs, along with freshwater and saltwater systems to support fish growth for the first 10 months. One grow-out building of 350,000 square feet will house tanks and equipment to raise salmon to 10 to 12 pounds in weight. A second, 430,000-square-foot grow-out building will house additional recirculating units and infrastructure. At the end of construction in ten years, Whole Oceans plans to have 945,000 square feet of building area with a production capacity of 10,000 tons of salmon a year. Total cost for the project is estimated to be $180 million.

Some are concerned that RAS technology has not been proven capable of growing so many fish at one time to market size. In fact, Emergent Holdings hoped to purchase Kuterra, a land-based salmon company started by the Native American Namgis First Nation in 2012 on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, a few years ago. It was set to grow 6,000 tons of Atlantic salmon at a site in Port Hardy, B.C., but with operating costs above $200 million and losses between 2015 and 2017, Kuterra called their bluff. In June, they announced that they were looking to sell the company.

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Continued on page 17
tion, the MLA noted specific inaccuracies in the information presented to TRT members at the April meeting. In its response to the MLA letter, NOAA said it was "disappointed" in the MLA's decision. Referring to the association's statement about NOAA's data, "The Maine Lobstermen's Association presented some information to suggest that the risk reduction target of 60% was higher than necessary and noted the risk of entanglement posed by other fisheries. NOAA Fishery reviewers reviewed the letter, as well as conducting additional analysis, and looks forward to working with the MLA on any clarifying questions or concerns." https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/leadership-message/mainelobster-associations-decision-disappoints-work-lobstermen-lower-risk-whales-will-proceed

NMFS August scoping meetings and comments under review
NMFS held four scoping meetings in Maine to gain feedback on the proposed right whale rule during August, as well as one meeting in New Hampshire, two in Massachusetts and one in Rhode Island. More than 300 people attended the four meetings in Maine.

During the comment period, which closed on September 16, NMFS received 27,184 emails; 26,747 appear to have been sent as a result of campaigns by several major environmental organizations. NMFS reported that it received 437 unique email comments on the rule, most of which came from Maine residents. More than 150 letters were received as well, 33 of which provided what the Agency termed "great input on operational challenges, costs, etc."

NMFS will next create summaries of comments received, which will guide its analyses for a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The DEIS is scheduled for release for public comment later this year.

Governor Mills statement on proposed right whale rule
On September 19, Governor Janet Mills sent a letter to NOAA's Chris Oliver and released a press statement on the pending right whale rules. Governor Mills emphasized that NOAA should take into account where the true risk to the species lies, emphasizing that data shows most recent right whale deaths have occurred in Canada. Governor Mills also highlighted the importance of the lobster industry to the state and underscored its commitment to conservation.

"Maine fishermen have been at the table for over twenty years as partners with the federal government, conservation community and other fisheries as the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team has worked to develop and implement regulations including gear markings, weak links, sinking groundline, and vertical line reductions. The entanglement records suggest these efforts have been successful. In the last decade, there have been zero right whale serious injuries or mortalities linked to the Maine lobster fishery. However, even with this record, the lobster fishery is being asked to do more," Mills wrote.

"Data is clear that Canada is responsible for the vast majority of recent deaths, with 8 right whale deaths occurring this year alone. This should not be a surprise. Studies show right whales are spending more time in the Gulf of St. Lawrence at a time when Canada has weakened its protection to right whales. The Maine lobster fishery and the Department of Marine Resources remain dedicated to strengthening protections to right whales, but we continue to stress that NOAA's focus must take into account where the true risk lies," https://www.maine.gov/governor/mills/news/mills-administration-calls-noaa-focus-true-risk-right-whales-2019-09-18

DMR comments to NOAA on proposed right whale rule
On September 16, the Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) submitted official comments to Michael Pentyon, regional administrator of the NMFS, on proposed right whale rules. The comments noted that "In 2018, landings from the Maine lobster fishery were valued at over $486 million and a recent economic study determined the fishery has an economic impact of an additional $1 billion annually. This fishery not only encompasses the roughly 4,800 lobster license holders and 1,100 student license holders but also sternmen, dealers and distributors, bait dealers, and trap builders who contribute to this fishery and their communities. Understanding the full impact of these pending regulations on the Maine lobster fishery, and to the North Atlantic right whale population, will be critical to ensure the appropriate suite of measures is implemented."

DMR's comments went on to ask NOAA specifically to "consider the impacts to industry versus the conservation benefits of establishing regulations within the exemption line. Taking extensive action in areas where right whales rarely, if ever, will not have a measurable impact on the right whale population." DMR also asked NOAA to "include a method for conservation equivalency within the proposed rule... Allowing for conservation equivalency in the rule-making provides an opportunity for fishermen to develop equivalent, or more conservative, regulations in their region to meet the requirements of the ALWTRP. This flexibility is needed to ensure not only the long-term success of the lobster fishery but also the protections provided to right whales."

The comments end by highlighting the role that Canada continues to play in right whale injuries and mortalities. "Specifically, entanglement records indicate the full risk reduction outlined by NOAA should not be solely on the Northeast lobster fishery and the apportionment of risk to Canada should reflect the stark increase in right whale mortalities resulting from the snow crab fishery and Canadian vessel strikes. ME DMR underscores that placing further regulations on the Maine lobster fishery will not improve the status of the right whale population if mortalities are happening elsewhere."


MLA comments on proposed right whale rule
On September 16, the Maine Lobstermen's Association (MLA) submitted its comments on the proposed right whale rule, which would require the state's lobstermen to achieve a 60% risk reduction to right whales. The comments stated that "The MLA will support measures that are based on the best available science and appropriately designed to achieve the Potential Biological Removal (PBR) level to support the recovery of endangered right whales. To achieve this, the scope of management alternatives must accurately reflect the risk posed by each commercial fishery contributing to serious injury and mortality from entanglement."

In its comments the MLA asserted that NMFS "has ignored its data on known causes of serious injury and mortality from entanglement including the significant increase in incidence of Canadian fishing gear and contribution of all commercial fisheries involved. This has resulted in an overstatement of the risk from U.S. fisheries and the erroneous assignment of responsibility for U.S. risk reduction solely to the Northeast lobster fishery."

After analyzing NMFS's data, MLA found that the agency had incorrectly laid most of the burden for reducing risk to right whales at the feet of the Northeast lobster fishery. "The MLA's analysis showed that NMFS's stipulated risk reduction on the Maine lobster fishery will not improve the status of the right whale population. MLA comments on the proposed right whale rule... Allowing for conservation equivalency in the rule-making provides an opportunity for fishermen to develop equivalent, or more conservative, regulations in their region to meet the requirements of the ALWTRP. This flexibility is needed to ensure not only the long-term success of the lobster fishery but also the protections provided to right whales."

On October 20, the MLA presented some information to suggest that NMFS's mistakes, if uncorrected, will be to ignore recent changes in the pattern of interactions between right whales and human-caused risk, which in turn will create a mismatch between risk reduction efforts within the scope of this rulemaking and the best information available about the sources of risk to the species." https://mainelobstermen.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/MLA-ALWTRP-Scoping-Comments_2019_09_16-FINAL.pdf?x44315

Environmental organizations' comments on proposed right whale rule
On September 16, in a joint letter to the Center for Biological Diversity, Conservation Law Foundation, Defenders of Wildlife, The Humane Society of the United States, The Humane Society Legislative Fund, and Whale and Dolphin Conservation, submitted their comments to Michael Pentyon at NMFS. The groups "...request that NMFS take the following actions: Immediately: Validate and update its decision support tool with up-to-date right whale sighting and acoustic data for use in the forthcoming Draft EIS." This is in response to the computer model referred to as the "decision support tool" introduced by NMFS at the April TRT meeting to quantify risk reduction achieved by various management proposals.

The groups also asked NMFS to establish a new seasonal protected area south of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket in which ropeless fishing would be al-
lowed, and expansion of the existing winter closed area in Massachusetts Bay, to allow no more than one line in Lobster Management Area 3 year round, place a cap on the number of vertical lines in all U.S. fixed gear fisheries in the region, and increased gear marking for all fixed gear fisheries.

Concerning the cap on vertical lines, the comments note that “While much focus has been on vertical line reductions in the lobster fishery it is inappropriate for NMFS to require a reduction in vertical line use in lobster fishing while issuing permits for other fisheries in which vertical line risk exists....North Atlantic right whales are known to become entangled in gillnet gear. According to NMFS's right whale incident data, up to 35% of known gear incidents since 2009 were identified with or included descriptions consistent with gillnetting.”

Maine Congressional delegation comments on proposed right whale rules

On September 17, Maine’s Congressional delegation, Senators Susan Collins and Angus King and Representatives Chellie Pingree and Jared Golden—submitted their comments on the proposed right whale rule, calling for additional gear markings, new data collection, and a regulatory exemption for lobstermen operating in shallower waters. “Over the last several months, we have had a number of conversations with lobstermen, the scientific community, environmentalists, and state regulators. The message has been undeniably clear: these whales require increased protections in order to ensure the viability of the species — and that focusing all of our risk reduction efforts on Maine’s lobster fishery will not get us there.” The delegation stated its support to preserve the existing exemption line in Maine waters in any future regulations and urged NMFS to consider the safety and economic implications of the rule. “The misperception that Maine’s lobster fishery is the primary cause of North Atlantic right whale serious injury and mortality relies on data that was collected before Maine fishermen made critical changes to protect this species...Continuing to place the burden squarely on lobstermen is not only unfair to Maine lobstermen, the scientific community, and state regulators. It will fail to accomplish our shared goal of saving this endangered species.”

DMR proposes changes to gear marking

To ensure that any line found on whales could be definitively identified, in September DMR proposed changes to gear marking. Current regulations require individuals fishing lobster gear and trap/pot gear to mark their buoy lines with three 12” red marks in the sliver area and in federal waters. DMR is proposing a new regulation that removes the requirement for the red marks and replaces it with a requirement for all lobster gear and trap/pot gear to be marked with three purple 12-inch marks: one at the top of the buoy line, one midway along the buoy line, and one at the bottom of the buoy line. In addition, each buoy line must be marked with a 36-inch purple mark in the top two fathom of buoy line. This would be required for all Maine lobstermen including gear fished in Maine's exempted waters. Vertical lines fished in Maine's exempt waters would be required to have an additional green mark of a minimum of 6-inches in the top two fathom of buoy line, which could be removed if gear was shifted outside of this area. DMR proposed to implement the new gear marking requirements by April 1, 2020. DMR is also proposing to collect data on where fishing in shallower waters is occurring since the entanglement. In a Newsday article, Philip Hamilton of the New England Aquarium noted, “The real clincher was seeing that pattern of the line that had been embedded in his head which matched exactly” with the last video of him [entangled in the Gulf of St. Lawrence]. Three other right whales were seen entangled in the Gulf of St. Lawrence during the summer; nine had previously died in Canadian waters this year. https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/decline-north-atlantic-right-whale-found-floating-south-long-island-new-york

Whale activist sues NMFS, Maine DMR

In August, Max Strahan, of Durham, New Hampshire, who heads a group called Whale Safe USA, filed a suit in the U.S. District Court in Bangor against the National Marine Fisheries Service and Maine's Department of Marine Resources. He alleged that by permitting lobstermen to use vertical buoy ropes in their fishing gear that are falling two to three miles apart and entangling endangered whales and sea turtles in violation of the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). In April, 2018, Strahan filed a similar suit against the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and the state Division of Marine Fisheries for violating the ESA. In his August suit against Maine, Strahan asked the court to stop the two agencies, immediately and permanently, “from further requiring that its licensed fishermen must use Vertical Buoy Ropes on their fishing gear.” Strahan said that fishermen would still be able to use other hauling methods that do not pose a risk of entangling endangered North Atlantic right whales and other marine species, such as green sea turtles. Strahan is well-known for filing numerous lawsuits against organizations, state and federal agencies, and individuals for the past thirty years in an effort to protect whales. Asked for a response to Strahan's suit, DMR spokesperson Jeff Nichols said, “No comment on pending litigation.”

Massachusetts Attorney General calls for Canadian premiers, New England governors to collaborate on right whale protections

In a September 4 letter to the Coalition of Northeastern Governors and Eastern Canadian premiers, Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey called for a regional approach to protecting North Atlantic right whales by reducing the risk of collisions with ships and fishing gear entanglements. Healey, whose office is tasked with enforcing the state's Endangered Species Act, said regional leaders should consider actions taken by Massachusetts in recent years, including restrictions on lobster traps and fishing gear, reducing vessel speed limits and seasonal closures in state waters when right whales are feeding. Massachusetts has a mandatory closure in and around Cape Cod Bay to all lobster pot or other trap gear fishing between February and April, which can be extended depending on whale movements. Healey's letter asks other governmental bodies in the region to step up their efforts to protect the right whales. “I ask the NEG/ECP issue a Resolution committing to measures that significantly expand current right whale protections by further reducing the risk of ship strikes and fishing gear entanglement in our waters, and to act immediately on that Resolution,” Healey wrote. “Massachusetts, and its fisheries, has long undertaken efforts to protect these whales as they migrate through our waters. Their fate is our shared responsibility.” Healey advocates for solutions to include weak rope and ropeless fishing methods, and to act immediately on that Resolution. “We recognize, however, that such measures may not be sufficient, and that no state or province, acting alone, can solve this problem,” she wrote. “We must act now; with each whale death, especially the reproductive age females, we tip closer to losing the species.”

Oceana launches right whale campaign, Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative continues to promote Maine's long standing stewardship

Nonprofit conservation group Oceana released a short video in September asking viewers to lend their support to the group's efforts to protect right whales. The 45-second video, featuring actor Sam Waterston, who serves on Oceana's board of directors, was timed to put pressure on NMFS, which has proposed a rule to reduce right whale entanglements, and the lawmakers who are trying to exempt the New England lobster fishery from these regulations. Oceana campaign manager Whitney Webber said in an article in the Portland Press Herald (https://www.pressherald.com/2019/09/12/conservation-groups-video-urges-viewers-to-save-right-whales-before-its-too-late/). Oceana wants regulatory agencies in both Canada and the U.S. to reduce the number of buoy lines in the water and reduce vessel speeds in places that right whales frequent. It also wants to limit seismic testing and wind projects on the whale's Florida-to-Canada migratory path. Just prior to the announcement of the Oceana campaign, the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative released its own two-minute video, entitled “Maine lobstermen working to protect right whales.” The video highlighted the multiple efforts made by lobstermen in the past decade to protect right whales, including weak links in rope, mandatory sinking line and other gear modifications. Nearly 30% of the two million miles of line are killing or entangling right whales, the video notes. "We're committed to helping the right whales. We just want to make sure that we do actually help the right whales,"
STEAMING AHEAD

If you care about the future of the Maine lobster fishery, join the MLA to preserve a future for Maine lobstermen. MLA photo.

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.
October 2, 6 p.m., Joyce’s restaurant, Hallowell

MLA DIRECTORS MEETING SUMMARY

At its September meeting, the MLA Board first held a closed session at 5 p.m.; the public meeting began at 5:20. President Kristan Porter opened the board meeting by thanking MLA staff for all of the work done on the whale issue over the past few months.

Patrice McCarron informed the board that the loss ratio for the MLA vessel insurance program has increased, which is reflected in the 2019 rates. While the number of claims has not increased, the average amount of each claim has increased. The MLA program continues to offer incredible benefits to lobstermen through Smithwick and Mariner with an excellent record for paying claims, free observer coverage and no required layup. Kristian noted that many vessels must pay thousands of dollars to take researchers on their boats, so this is a very valuable benefit. Patrice presented the board with the appraisal for MLA’s building in Nobleboro; the board voted to sell the building at its appraised value.

During the past six months, the MLA has dedicated the majority of its resources to fight for fair treatment of Maine lobstermen in the face of the emerging federal whale rules. Given our limited staff and resources, we realized that to be effective in representing lobstermen’s concerns, the MLA must expand our legal team and our financial resources. Thus I am excited to introduce Jane Luxton of the Washington, D.C.-based law firm Lewis Brisbois as a new member of the MLA’s legal team. Jane will work closely with MLA staff and MLAs long-time attorney, Mary Anne Mason. She has extensive experience in the federal regulatory process, having served as former general counsel for NOAA during the Bush administration from 2007-2009. Jane knows the federal process from the inside out and will ensure that the MLAs perspective is elevated to the highest levels.

In late August, the MLA sent a letter to the head of NOAA Fisheries, Chris Oliver, asking NMFS to step up and do its job by using the best available data to address threats from all fish that affect the recovery of right whales. The MLA identified to NOAA a number of significant errors in the agency’s analysis of data on sources of human-caused risk to whales; currently the agency is reviewing the points we raised. It is clear that the rule being developed by NMFS will do little to prevent future deaths or serious injury to right whales in Canadian waters, which is where the majority of such events have occurred in recent years. As NOAA has stated many times, protecting every individual right whale is a priority in order to avoid the species’ extinction. The MLA will continue to push NMFS to actually do that.

Our point is this: regulating U.S. fishermen will not prevent right whales from dying in Canada and applying future regulations only to New England lobstermen will not solve entanglement problems in the U.S. The MLA will argue the case through the regulatory process and the courts, with federal agency staff, the Maine Department of Marine Resources and our elected officials. We also are educating the media and the public about all that Maine lobstermen have done to protect right whales and that they remain diligent in keeping the Gulf of Maine safe for the species.

The MLA has been leading the fight against rules that unfairly target Maine lobstermen for more than 20 years. The association stands ready to do whatever it takes to ensure that Maine lobstermen are treated fairly and that future management actions are safe, effective and necessary. Having Jane Luxton on our team will expand the MLAs ability to demand accountability from NMFS in this management process. She will be another potent voice to champion the interests of all Maine lobstermen.

Make no mistake, hiring an additional lawyer was not a decision made lightly. But Maine lobstermen are facing a truly existential threat right now, one that could cripple the fishery in a matter of years. Many of you have children or nieces or nephews who are now fishing or want to fish when they get older.

The federal laws protecting right whales may make their aspirations impossible to achieve. The MLA believes that with added legal clout, we can keep those futures open to them.

The MLA is calling for all Maine lobstermen and any who care about the future of the Maine lobster industry to support the MLA and the MLA Legal Defense Fund. The MLA is the only organization in the state to represent the lobster industry on most issues that affect you and your community. Your MLA membership will ensure that the association continues to have the staff it needs to effectively represent the lobster industry. Your donation to the MLA Legal Defense Fund will ensure that the MLA can fully utilize our talented legal team by remaining active in the pending court case and that we can prevail in calling for fair treatment of Maine lobstermen.

To do so demands an incredible amount of time and energy. Please take a moment to join us in this fight!

If you have children or nephews who are now fishing or want to fish when they get older, the federal laws protecting right whales may make their aspirations impossible to achieve. The MLA believes that with added legal clout, we can keep those futures open to them.
The Lobster Institute has announced that its annual Town Meeting will take place January 24 and 25, 2020 in New Brunswick.

The MLA submitted written comments on NMFS’ proposal for new whale rules. The MLA continues to reject the NMFS’ 60% risk reduction target for the northeast lobster fishery and urged NMFS to properly account for the role of Canadian fisheries in right whale serious injury; and to address that full scope of U.S. fisheries that interact with right whales and not focus solely on the lobster fishery.

The ASMFC closed the Area 1B, period 3 herring fishery on September 15 because the fishery was projected to have landed 92% of the period 3 allocated quota. Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts will determine the specifications for the period 4 quota (November and December) on October 2. The ASMFC announced the Western Maine and Massachusetts/New Hampshire herring spawning areas will be closed starting September 23 to November 3, 2019. The default closure date was applied for the Western Maine spawning area due to insufficient samples. The Massachusetts/New Hampshire spawning closure is based on analysis of four samples of female herring. An incidental bycatch allowance of up to 2,000 pounds of Atlantic herring per trip/calendar day is allowed for vessels in non-directed fisheries that are fishing within the Western Maine or Massachusetts/New Hampshire spawning areas.

Patrice McCarron testified on behalf of MLA members in support of EPA’s proposal to extend the implementation time to implement Tier 4 engine emission standards at EPA’s September public hearing in Bath. McCarron noted that the EPA proposal would allow Maine’s boat builders and marine engine manufacturers the time to explore whether or not there are workable solutions to meet the Tier 4 requirements. She noted that it remains to be seen whether or not the Tier 4 standard will be feasible or warranted for Maine lobster boats given that this sector contributes less than one-tenth of one percent of the national annual emission for these pollutants from commercial Category 1 marine diesel emissions. The MLA continues to support an exemption for lobster boats to operate under the Tier 3 standards.

The fall trawl survey began in New Hampshire waters in late September and will work its way east to complete its survey northeast of Cutler in late October. The trawl survey will fish the first five good days each week, using the weekend to make up for bad weather or equipment problems. The goal is to maintain a predictable schedule as the survey moves up the coast.

The survey is conducted by the F/V Robert Michael, a 54-foot fiberglass Northeast 54’ captained by Rob Tetrault. The survey is designed to provide information that has not been available to NMFS for stock assessments. Obtaining this information is critical to making rational management decisions. The better information we have about ALL our fisheries resources, the better we can ensure a future for both fishermen and the resource.

The best source of information is directly from the boat crew. You may hail them on either channel 16 or 13, and then switch to your preferred local working channel. The crew cell phone is 207-557-5276. Cell phone service can be spotty at times, but messages can be left for the crew to notify the public that actions taken after the control date may not be correctly reported by NMFS as “unknown” gear. The confirmation of gear other than lobster gear as a source of recent serious injury and mortality calls into question NOAA’s strategy to regulate only U.S. lobstermen. MLA also remains concerned that NMFS has not adequately acknowledged the role of Canadian fishing gear in the current crisis. In addition to remaining active on the current right whale rulemaking process, MLA continues to develop a strategy to address the pending biological opinion under the Endangered Species Act and remains active in educating the public about the facts about right whale entanglement through the media.

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For more information, visit www.maine.gov/dmr/science-research/projects/trawlsurvey/index.html.
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Massachusetts Congressman attacks MLA on withdrawal from TRT agreement

On September 17, on a teleconference organized by the International Fund for Animal Welfare, Massachusetts Representatives Seth Moulton said the Maine Lobstermen’s Association was “shortsighted” in its decision to withdraw support for the plan that centers on removing enough vertical lobster buoys lines from the region’s waters to produce a 60 percent reduction in serious right whale injuries and deaths. “I think the lobstermen in Massachusetts are being really smart. I think right now the lobstermen in Maine are being shortsighted. But we hope to bring them back on board, because ultimately they’re going to be better off having a seat at the table than not,” Moulton said.

In response, MLA executive director Patrice McCarron wrote to the Gloucester Times, where the article was first published, saying, “Contrary to the congressman’s characterization, the MLA remains engaged in the (Take Reduction Team) process and will continue to work with the agency and our members to identify measures to reduce the risk that the Maine lobster industry poses to right whales. However, the MLA cannot support the Northeast lobster fishery being singled out as the sole source of entanglement risk.”

McCarron continued, “At NOAA has stated many times, protecting every individual right whale is a priority in order to avoid the species’ extinction. The MLA is asking the agency to step up and do its job by using the best available data to address threats from all fisheries that threaten the recovery of right whales. We have identified to NOAA a number of significant errors in their analysis of available data on sources of human-caused risk to whales, and the agency is reviewing the points we raised.”


Aquaculture continued from page 5

in order to obtain that company’s RAS knowledge. Kuterra is the first company using RAS to grow salmon from eggs to eight pounds in size. But the company has struggled. Despite $9.5 million in Canadian government and private funds, it shut down for several months in 2018. Additional financial support allowed the company to reopen and, it stated in a press release, it still anticipates harvesting 70,000 salmon this fall. The vote tributed in July against the Emergent offer.

Only five North American companies currently are growing Atlantic salmon in RAS: Atlantic Sapphire of Homestead, Florida; Cape D’Or Sustainable Seafoods of Nova Scotia; Kuterra; Superior Fresh of Wisconsin; and Sustainable Blue of Nova Scotia. Atlantic Sapphire announced this year that it plans its first commercial harvest, of 9,000 tons, early in 2020. In Belfast, south of Bucksport, another firm, Nordic Aquafarms, announced in early 2018 its plan for a large land-based salmon facility on 56 acres of land off Route 1. The facility would draw water from Penobscot Bay to grow its proposed 33,000 metric tons of salmon per year within ten years. The site would include nine buildings, to house hatcheries, freshwater juvenile

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Scientists argue against DMR, MLA positions

Eighteen scientists from public and private organizations wrote a letter on September 17 to Senator Susan Collins expressing their dismay at efforts by the DMR, the MLA and Maine’s elected officials to “undermine proposed conservation measures critical to the North Atlantic right whale’s survival.” The scientists contend that letters from the MLA and elected officials “contain statements that do not reflect the facts in hand and minimize or ignore the changes needed to prevent the North Atlantic right whale from going extinct. Here we aim to set the record straight.”

The letter argues that right whale mortality from entanglements is higher than observed, that whale entanglement rates are high, that entanglements occur everywhere there is fishing gear, and that the 60% entanglement risk reduction goal is biologically and legally defensible.

“Entanglement in lobster and crab pot gear is undoubtedly contributing to the North Atlantic right whale’s looming extinction. There are additional threats to right whales that include shipping, ocean noise that masks whale communications, climate change, and fisheries interactions with other types of gear and in Canada. However, reducing entanglements in East Coast waters of the United States is a critical part of a comprehensive strategy for right whale survival and recovery. Over the last ten years, entanglement in fishing gear has been the main cause of population decline that, if continued, will be catastrophic to the species. It will also be an impediment to the pot fishing communities, which will likely be forced to close entirely, if the right whale population reaches a critically low level. As scientists, we call on Maine, together with all New England states and their representatives, to provide their full support for NOAAs efforts to develop and implement new, effective, and science-based risk-reduction measures that will protect both whales and fishermen from the serious risks they both face.”

MLA executive director, Patrice McCarron commented, “There is no new information in the [scientists’] letter. MLA is disappointed that the science community is not supportive of using the best available information and ensuring that the management strategy addresses the comprehensive array of risks that threaten the recovery of right whales.”
Cranberry Isles Fisherman's Co-op Goes Solar

By Antonina Pelletier

On September 18, the Sea Princess left Northeast Harbor with passengers bound for a celebration. She was accompanied by lobster boats laden with guests and beverages, all headed to Little Cranberry Isle. The fine September weather was very different from the first visit Katrina Oesterby paid to the Cranberry Isles Fishermen's Co-op eighteen months ago. A College of the Atlantic (COA) student, Oesterby was part of the Solar Analysis Feasibility Study undertaken for the Co-op by the school in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Agriculture back in 2017.

The effort began several years ago when Co-op staff member Jonathan Parton approached co-op manager Mark Nighman. “We have all this roof. Why aren’t we solar powered?” Parton asked. Nighman’s told Parton to find out more about the costs for such a system. Working with an associate at the College of Atlantic, Parton was able to present Nighman and the Co-op board of directors with the Solar Analysis Feasibility Study from COA’s Community Energy Center. The USDA’s Rural Energy for America Program provided grant funding to get the project rolling.

Ultimately three other organizations stepped in to offer advice and financial support for the project, which was designed to save the Co-op $9,000 per year in electricity costs. Climate to Thrive, a non-profit organization dedicated to making Mount Desert Island energy independent by 2030, was able to offer advice and guidance on the design of the solar array while The Island Institute and Bar Harbor Bank and Trust provided financial support through a seven-year loan plan equal to the Co-op’s current monthly electrical costs. Searsport-based Sun Dog Solar did the installation of 144 panels on five roof surfaces this spring. The array will collect enough energy from the sun to produce 5200 kilowatts of energy per year. The Co-op expects to repay the loan in seven or eight years, saving $370,000 in electricity costs over the life of the panels.

On that warm Wednesday afternoon, representatives from these organizations as well as staff from Maine’s Congressional delegation gathered to eat lobster rolls and home-baked treats and to celebrate the solar panels now glinting in the sun. "This project proves lobstermen care just as deeply about the future of our oceans and our world as environmentalists," said Morgan Pottle from Rep. Jared Golden’s office. Stephanie MacLagen praised the Co-op for being "leaders in the industry and the community by their willingness to innovate and to secure their own future."

Standing in the bright sunshine Nighman exclaimed, "This is a great day to make energy!" Kevin Beggs of the USDA’s Rural Energy for America Program noted, "When rural America thrives, all of America thrives."

Riding home aboard the F/V Alison Ann, Luke Holden, whose company, Luke’s Lobster, is a partner with the Cranberry Isles Co-op, spoke thoughtfully. "This is the most progressive Co-op. Their fishermen are out in front of the issues. They are a forward-thinking, passionate group of fishermen. They innovate how they manage their business and how to compete in the business world. I expect them to take their profits [from electricity savings] and invest them in the industry, leading through opportunity," he said.
VACCINES A CRITICAL PART OF PREVENTATIVE HEALTH CARE

By Melissa Waterman

You may think you are healthy and strong. Yet all it takes is a miniscule, invisible scrap of life called a virus to send you whimpering to your bed or, in some cases, to the hospital. Viruses are a pernicious part of this planet, causing illnesses that vary from the annoying to the life threatening. How can you protect yourself? Get vaccinated.

The human body is set up to respond to invasion by viruses and bacteria by activating its immune system. The immune system, which is made up of cells, tissues, and organs, sends cells to neutralize invaders that have entered the body and expel them. Bacteria and viruses have proteins on their surfaces called antigens. Think of them as bumps on the outside of a small ball. When the antigens link to cells involved in the immune system called antibodies, those cells are able to “remember” the pattern of the antigens. The human immune system learns from experience to defend the body from future attacks by cells bearing those particular bumps.

A vaccine is made from very small amounts of weak or dead viruses that can cause illnesses such as influenza, shingles, or pneumonia, among others. Once you receive the vaccine, your body activates the immune system; antibodies are deployed and learn to “recognize” that virus. When you next are exposed to the virus, the immune system is ready to go to squelch the invader.

In some instances, the immune system remembers the virus for your entire life. People who have been vaccinated against measles, mumps, rubella, chicken pox and yellow fever have long-lasting protection. Others, like vaccinations for the virus for chickenpox and shingles need to be repeated. Some vaccines are designed to use just specific parts of the virus to cause a strong and very targeted immune system response. This is why the vaccines for illnesses such as whooping cough, meningitis and shingles tend to be very powerful and long-lasting.

Fall is the time of year when public health agencies begin to encourage people to get their annual flu vaccine. The reason a flu vaccine is recommended annually is because the influenza virus changes every year. The virus has the ability to randomly mutate, very quickly, as well as to absorb the genetic material of other viruses. Pigs, as it turns out, are a perfect host for swine, avian and human viruses, which mix and exchange genetic material while in their bodies.

The virus for chickenpox and shingles has extensions with receptors at the ends, called antigens, which the body’s antibodies can recognize. Image courtesy of C&G News.

Once you receive the vaccine, your body activates the immune system; antibodies are deployed and learn to “recognize” that virus.
MONEY FOR NEW LOBSTER MARKETS

Food Export USA–Northeast will provide $20 million in funding from its Agriculture Trade Promotion Program to all food exporters, with a special focus on helping the New England lobster industry gain new markets. The industry has been hit hard by the trade war with China. New initiatives will also focus on growing international markets for seafood products, such as Jonah crabs and oysters that are in ample supply and could benefit from market diversification. In 2009, the European Union (EU) represented two-thirds of all foreign market lobster consumption. By 2013, China had become the leading foreign-market destination for American lobster exports. In addition to losing sales to China due to the trade war, sales have been lost to the EU due to the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA), which gives Canada’s lobster industry a competitive advantage over American lobster exporters. The funds will allow Food Export–Northeast to help companies find new opportunities for American lobster products and to rebuild those tariff-impacted markets once trade barriers are removed.

TOO DAMN HOT

August 2019 was the second-hottest August on record globally. It was also tied with 2016 for the hottest Northern Hemisphere summer (June through August). The heat shrunk Arctic sea ice coverage to the second smallest for the month on record. For the year-to-date, 2019 is the third-warmest year on record. For the year-to-date, 2019 is the third-warmest year on record. Th e heat shrank Arctic sea ice coverage to the second smallest for the month on record. For the year-to-date, 2019 is the third-warmest year on record. For the year-to-date, 2019 is the third-warmest year on record. It was also tied with 2016 for the hottest Northern Hemisphere summer (June through August). Th e heat shrunk Arctic sea ice coverage to the second smallest for the month on record. For the year-to-date, 2019 is the third-warmest year on record. Th e heat shrank Arctic sea ice coverage to the second smallest for the month on record. For the year-to-date, 2019 is the third-warmest year on record. It was also tied with 2016 for the hottest Northern Hemisphere summer (June through August). Th e heat shrunk Arctic sea ice coverage to the second smallest for the month on record. For the year-to-date, 2019 is the third-warmest year on record. For the year-to-date, 2019 is the third-warmest year on record. Th e heat shrunk Arctic sea ice coverage to the second smallest for the month on record. For the year-to-date, 2019 is the third-warmest year on record. For the year-to-date, 2019 is the third-warmest year on record. Th e heat shrunk Arctic sea ice coverage to the second smallest for the month on record. For the year-to-date, 2019 is the third-warmest year on record. For the year-to-date, 2019 is the third-warmest year on record. Th e heat shrunk Arctic sea ice coverage to the second smallest for the month on record. For the year-to-date, 2019 is the third-warmest year on record. For the year-to-date, 2019 is the third-warmest year on record. It was also tied with 2016 for the hottest Northern Hemisphere summer (June through August). Th e heat shrunk Arctic sea ice coverage to the second smallest for the month on record. For the year-to-date, 2019 is the third-warmest year on record. It was also tied with 2016 for the hottest Northern Hemisphere summer (June through August). Th e heat shrunk Arctic sea ice coverage to the second smallest for the month on record. For the year-to-date, 2019 is the third-warmest year on record.

LOBSTER MOLT LESS PREDICTABLE

Variation in lobster molt timing has been increasing in recent years and is related to changing ocean temperatures in the Gulf of Maine, according to a new University of Maine study. The study was spurred by an extreme shift in timing of lobster landings in 2012, when they landed much earlier than usual. This shift was attributed to early molt and coincided with a warming trend that began in 2004. Using logistic models and Department of Marine Resources lobster sea sampling data, the study’s authors found differences in the pattern of initial molt timing and suddenness between regions, sexes and stages of maturity of the lobsters and studied the potential effects of seasonal temperatures on initial molt timing. Warmer temperatures were usually associated with earlier molt, according to the researchers, but that relationship was not uniform across seasons, regions or lobster demographics. In conclusion, the study noted that lobster molt timing has become much less predictable in recent years.

NOAA GRANT MADE FOR LOBSTER RESEARCH

In September, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s National Sea Grant College Program has awarded $2 million to support a range of research projects to advance understanding of the American lobster. Two University of Maine professors, the Gulf of Maine Research Institute, and the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve were the four Maine recipients. Maine Sea Grant also plans to launch a regional lobster extension program that will link the research with industry.

THREE CHARGED WITH VIOLATING LAWS INTENDED TO PROTECT REBUILDING ATLANTIC HERRING STOCK

In September the Maine Marine Patrol issued citations to three men for violating laws designed to protect the Atlantic herring fishery which has faced serious quota reductions in recent years. Glenn Robbins, 72 of Eliot, owner and captain of the fishing vessel Western Sea, has been charged with exceeding the weekly limit of 160,000 pounds of herring, and with failing to file accurate reports of his harvest, Ethan Chase, 42 of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, who also operated Robbins vessel, was cited for failing to properly notify DMR prior to landing and for exceeding the weekly harvest limit in September by over 110,000 pounds of herring, all of which was seized by Marine Patrol. Dustin Reed, owner of wholesale seafood dealer New Moon Fisheries, has also been charged with failure to report herring he purchased and failure to hold a permit to buy and sell herring. The charges against Robbins, Chase and Reed could result in fines of $100 per violation. However, while the civil fines are limited under law, the Commissioner of the Department of Marine Resources has the authority to suspend harvester and dealer licenses for failure to comply with reporting requirements and for exceeding landings limits. “These violations are nothing short of a blatant disregard of the rules that protect Atlantic herring,” said Commissioner Patrick Keliher. “Mr. Robbins has attended many herring management meetings over the years to speak to the need to protect this industry from overfishing. His actions and those of his crew are directly counter to his publicly stated positions. This is disappointing, to say the least.”

ERIN SUMMERS, CHARLOTTE EKSTROM HONORED BY MAINE DMR

In September at a ceremony at the Department of Marine Resources (DMR) offices in West Boothbay Harbor, DMR Commissioner Keliher awarded Erin Summers the Manager of the Year Award for her work on right whale protection efforts and Charlotte Ekstrom the Employee of the Year Award for providing exceptional customer service in the licensing division.
THE MLA’S STEADFAST BUSINESS MEMBERS: Lonnie’s Hydraulics, Topsham

By Melissa Waterman

The Maine Lobstermen’s Association (MLA) was established in 1954. In that year a determined group of lobstermen banded together to gain greater control of their fishery and the price paid for their hard work. Since that time, numerous businesses connected to the lobster industry have shown their support for Maine lobstermen by becoming MLA business members. Many have done so for decades, passing on the belief in the organization to their children and grandchildren. This month Landings begins a series of interviews with a few of the MLA’s longtime business members.

Lonnie’s Hydraulics Inc. of Topsham is run by Rodney and Karen Woods. But the business was started by Rodney’s stepfather, Lawrence “Lonnie” Staples, who passed away in 2015. Staples had worked for 45 years as a crane operator, a member of the International Union of Operating Engineers, Local No. 4, before, according to Woods, “he started fixing hydraulic jacks in the cellar. Then some fishermen talked him into getting some hose machines.” Bit by bit Staples took on more hydraulic work until in 1986 he officially started his company with his wife as bookkeeper and Woods as his co-worker.

A talkative man, Staples was a Mainer to the core, proudly announcing that he had never left the Pine Tree State’s borders. And he was a frugal person. “He started out with 25 feet of hydraulic hose and a few fittings because that was all he could afford. You only spend what you’ve got,” Woods recalled. “All the old-timers on the coast remember him.”

Woods is proud of the business he and Lonnie built which his son, Nick, who graduated with a degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Maine, is now a part of. Today they do machine work related to hydraulics both for fishing vessels and for heavy excavation companies. “When the phone rings you don’t know what will be on the other end,” Woods laughed. “It keeps it interesting. If you ever think you know all about hydraulics, then you’re a fool.”

Being a MLA business member continues to be important to Woods, as it was to Staples. “Lobstermen are a big part of our business,” Woods said matter-of-factly. “It makes sense to look out for them.”

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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 was created by lobstermen for lobstermen. It is not a generalized marine policy!

- Lobster boat racing coverage
- 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

Call today and find out how you can save money AND get better coverage!

Join online today at www.mainelobstermen.org/membership

MLA MEMBERSHIP FORM
Mail with payments to: MLA, 2 Storer St, Ste 203, Kennebunk, ME 04043

Harvester Membership Levels

- 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

Payment info: Pay with: Visa MasterCard Check: #_______
Credit Card #: _________-_________ Exp. date: _______ CV code: _______
Billing town/state/zip: __________________________

Name: ____________________________________________
Address: __________________________________________
City/State/Zip: _____________________________________
Phone: _______________ Cell: _______________ D.O.B: ____________
Email: _______________________________________________

(Please include to receive weekly e-news updates and lobster, bait, & fuel prices)

Boat Name: ____________________________________________
Lobster License #: ___________________ Zone & District: _____________
*Family Members: ____________________________________________

Legal Defense Fund: The MLA is a part of the court case brought 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: __________
**MLA Merchandise**

*Buy online at www.mainelobstermen.org, write us a note, or call 967-4555*

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<td><strong>2020 MLA Hoodie</strong></td>
<td>Large logo on back of an 8 oz, 50/50 navy sweatshirt, with a small text logo on front chest</td>
<td>$45.00</td>
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<td><strong>2020 MLA T-shirt</strong></td>
<td>Large logo on back of 100% cotton tee with a small text logo on front chest</td>
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<td><strong>2020 MLA Womens T-shirt</strong></td>
<td>Large logo on back of 60/40 cotton, trim fit tee and a small text logo on the front chest</td>
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<td><strong>2020 MLA Kids Hoodie</strong></td>
<td>Large logo on back of a 8 oz, 50/50 navy sweatshirt, with a small text logo in red and white on front chest</td>
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<td><strong>2020 MLA Kids T-Shirt</strong></td>
<td>Large logo on back of a 100% cotton, royal blue tee with a small text logo in white and red on front chest</td>
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<td>Large text on back and small MLA text on front chest</td>
<td>$20.00</td>
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<td><strong>MLA Hats</strong></td>
<td>Wear a hat featuring your favorite MLA logo. All hats, washed canvas Adams style hat except 2017. One size fits all $15.00</td>
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Name: ____________________________
Address: ____________________________
City/State/Zip: ____________________________
Phone: ____________________________
Email: ____________________________

**Payment Info:**

Circle one: Master Card  Visa  Check (#__________)
Credit Card #: ____________________________
Exp. Date: ____________________________
CV #: ____________________________
Billing address: ____________________________
Billing City/State/Zip: ____________________________

**Total Cost:** ________________

Vote for an MLA flag!

☐ Yellow  ☐ Red

☐ Please contact me when it becomes available!
Cook’s Lobster & Ale House, located on Bailey Island, was once again host to the Lobstermen’s Relief Fund benefit in early September. In its fourth year, the benefit event raises money to help commercial lobstermen and their families who have experienced tragedy or hardship.

Owners Nick and Jen Charbonneau graciously donated 10% of all food items sold for the entire day. Event sponsor Geary Brewing donated a selection of beers, with every dollar of their special Cribstone Red Ale and their newly released Pulling Traps IPA going towards the Fund.

Three meal specials were offered throughout the day and, because the ingredients had been donated, 100% of the purchase price benefitted the Fund. “We are incredibly grateful to the food vendors that made this day possible,” said Antonina Pelletier, Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance staff, who organized the Relief Fund benefit. “Our thanks go to Sysco Foods, Bow Street Market, Luke’s Lobster, Maine Shellfish and Our Farm, along with local lobsterman Willis Spear.”

Specials included a shore dinner, had-dock Florentine and an herb-baked chicken with a goat cheese fondue. Diners also had the option of drinks made with Tito’s Vodka, which for the entire weekend donated $1 for every drink made with their vodka. Homemade dessert options included an almond-apple pie or a chocolate peanut butter brownie; 100% of the purchase price went to the Relief Fund.

Meanwhile, diners and visitors to the bar were able to browse an all-day silent auction. Bidding was so competitive that the auction closing time was extended to give everyone a chance to bid. Among the items available were hotly-con-tested Tito’s Vodka copper mugs, a gift basket from the Maine Maritime Museum including a two-hour cruise aboard the schooner Mary E, a bundle of lobster-shack gift cards, a rocker made of lobster traps donated by Brooks Trap Mill, a gift basket from Coffee by Design, and an overnight at Sugarloaf Resort, donated by Shipyard Brewing. The silent auction raised $3,000 for the fund with close to another $3,000 coming from food and drink sales. But even more exciting than the money raised was the enthusiasm expressed by participants in the event. “We had a remarkable turn out for a cause that is really important,” said Patrice McCarron, president of the MLCA. “Maine’s lobster fishery is made up of self-employed fishermen. If something happens, whether illness, accident or tragedy, it is important for them to know that they are not alone.”

The mission of the Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance, a non-profit organization committed to preserving Maine’s lobstering heritage, is to foster thriving fishing communities along the coast. When lobstermen can’t fish, it will affect not just their families but their community as well. The annual fundraising event at Cook’s Lobster & Ale House is just one way the MLCA raises funds for this vital program. Citizen Maine, a local clothing company based in Newcastle is currently offering 10% of their net profits to the Relief Fund this year. Cobalt Sky Studio, a homewares company known for brightly painted buoy pillows, remains a long-time supporter. For more information on the Relief Fund, please go to www.mlcalliance.org.