GOVERNOR’S OFFSHORE WIND PLAN FRUSTRATES FISHERMEN

By Melissa Waterman

Governor Janet Mills surprised many in Maine’s fishing communities when she announced on November 20 her administration’s intent to apply to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) for a lease to construct an offshore wind research array in federal waters off southern Maine. The lease, if granted, would be the first in the Gulf of Maine. According to the state’s press release, “the development of offshore wind represents a significant opportunity for Maine’s energy future and economic recovery from COVID-19.”

The exact location of the array is yet to be determined, but would be between 20 and 40 miles offshore and occupy up to 16 square miles of the ocean. According to the Governor’s Energy Office (GEO), the state is working with offshore wind developer, Diamond Energy, to design and build the array which would generate and sell commercial power for at least 20 years. GEO plans to submit its application to BOEM for the research array lease in early 2021.

The announcement came a few weeks after the GEO received a $2.1 million grant from the U.S. Economic Development Agency (EDA) to create a “roadmap” for offshore wind energy development in the state. The EDA project will be independent of the research array and begin in 2021 to focus on the policies and actions necessary to grow the industry within Maine.

“There is a lot of talk about potential for offshore wind to strengthen Maine’s economy,” said Patrice McCarron, executive director of the Maine Lobstermen’s Association, in a public statement. “I certainly hope no one believes that jobs in the renewable energy sector can replace the livelihoods of fishermen in quantity or character. Keep in mind that Maine’s fishing industry has successfully supported thousands of quality jobs, produced healthy food for our nation, and sustained Maine’s coastal communities, large and small, for hundreds of years.” GEO continues to assure the fishing community that no decisions have been finalized on many aspects of the wind research array, including its final location, though GEO has determined that it will connect to the grid in Portland or Wiscasset. GEO plans to work with commercial fishermen, the Department of Marine Resources (DMR) and other interested parties before making that decision, as well as many others. As its first step, the state held four webinars in December to provide information about the proposed project and to hear the perspectives of fishermen and the public.

Fisheries organizations expressed skepticism and concern about the proposal. Continued on page 5
While the dead of winter may be upon us, many people are looking at the upcoming year and breathing a small sigh of relief: vaccines are finally available for the COVID-19 virus. The fact that there is a way to prevent falling sick from this unseen virus will give comfort to many who have feared the worst for so many months.

In the world of Maine lobstering, that sigh of relief may be brief. Offshore wind energy development in the Gulf of Maine is now front and center in the sight of state government, private developers and of course, fishermen. In November, Governor Janet Mills announced her administration’s plan to seek a lease from the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) to site and then construct a multi-turbine commercial wind farm off the southern coast of Maine for research purposes. The administration’s plan comes before the state has completed its $2.1 million “road map” for offshore energy development, funded by the Economic Development Administration last November. Landings continues our series on the quickly-evolving state of offshore wind development with a look at the Governor’s Energy Office’s outreach strategy for fishermen.

There was other news, in fact good news for fishermen, in offshore wind energy. First was the announcement of the abrupt termination of Vineyard Wind’s application to BOEM for a large wind farm in federal waters south of Martha’s Vineyard. The company withdrew is Construction and Operations Plan from BOEM in early December, just prior to release of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement that looked at the cumulative impacts of wind energy projects along the eastern seaboard. By withdrawing its Plan, the company effectively stopped review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In mid-December, BOEM announced that the review process had been “terminated.” Next, BOEM released a legal memo stating that it can only approve wind projects if they do not unreasonably interfere with fishing operations and that fishermen’s perspectives are what determine whether interference is unreasonable. Finally, Congress passed a bill in December that requires offshore wind projects to be compliant with the Jones Act.

Landings once again features a column by Maine International Trade Center senior trade specialist Jeff Bennett on the state of seafood exports in Maine. Lobster once again topped the list as of October 2020, although that figure was down 25% compared to the same time in 2019. Still, the demand for Maine lobster remains global, with lobsters exported to a total of 29 countries, including Israel, Vietnam, Denmark, and Costa Rica.

Col. Jay Carroll provides a review of the activities of the Department of Marine Resources’ (DMR) Marine Patrol Bureau as the new year opens. A new 42-foot Marine Patrol vessel is soon to hit the water and two other smaller boats are due to be delivered next summer. The Bureau is actively recruiting new officers to serve along the coast. Carroll also notes that the bureau had to deal with more than the average number of fatalities during 2020, including a great white shark attack in August.

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In a few more months, I will have been working out of DMR’s Augusta Office (more affectionately referred to as “the bait shed”) for two years and I wonder where the time has gone? When I look back over the course of the last year in particular, I am very proud of our agency and how Marine Patrol has adapted and overcome the many challenges 2020 presented us. I am extremely fortu-

tive to work with a group of true professionals who care a great deal about marine resources, sustainable fisheries, and the success of our Bureau.

It is no secret that officer recruitment and retention have and continue to be a part of our challenges for the Bureau and we remain com-

mitted to keeping the public and our officers safe during the performance of their duties. One of the biggest impacts on Patrol involves training requirements for new officers.

I am very pleased to report that our three newest Marine Patrol Officers have just recently completed the Maine Criminal Justice Academy’s 38th Basic Law Enforcement Training Program. Before being interrupted by COVID, they were to have graduated back in May. Evan Whidden, Keegan Nelligan, and Adam Atherton are all now working in the field as certified full-time law enforcement officers. It seems that we have arrived at a peculiar waypoint, where the majority of council meetings, training classes and industry meetings are taking place on a virtual platform. Who would have ever thought?

Unfortunately, Marine Patrol responded to an unusually high number of mar-

time fatalities during 2020. These tragedies are difficult for all involved and our thoughts continue to be with the friends and families of the victims.

We remain optimistic that 2021 will be filled with good times, good fortune, and a goodbye to COVID-19.
I ended last year’s guest column optimistically looking ahead to 2020, to ending the uncertainties of 2019. Few could have predicted that in addition to ongoing trade policy challenges, the world would face a global pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic caused downturns in world economies, disruptions in channels of distribution and supply chains, constraints in global logistics, and cancellations of nearly every trade show and trade event beginning last March. As of mid-December 2020, COVID-19 infections are still rising in 64 countries.

Global real G.D.P. is expected to see a contraction between -4.2% to -5.4% in 2020. Trade policy remained uncertain and chaotic in 2020. As a result, Maine lobster exports were down -25.16% thru October 2020 compared to the same time in 2019.

Nonetheless, Maine seafood topped the state’s exports in 2020. This marks the 7th straight year seafood has been Maine’s leading commodity. Through October 2020, Maine exported over $304 million (USD) of seafood products globally. Through October 2020, Maine exported over $304 million (USD) of seafood products globally. Seafood exports were heavily driven by lobster exports, with most coming from live lobsters. Maine’s top international markets were Canada, China, Hong Kong, Korea, and the United Kingdom. Highlighting the global demand for Maine lobster, Maine lobsters were exported to a total of 29 countries including Israel, Vietnam, Denmark, and Costa Rica.

2021 — an uncertain year ahead

Global economic recovery rates remain uncertain for 2021. According to Euromonitor International’s Recovery Index (forecasting five key indicators), most advanced economies will not fully recover to 2019 levels until the fourth quarter of 2021. China will likely be the only major economy to rebound to pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2020. The world’s economic recovery will be dependent on continued vaccine developments.

Trade uncertainties will likely remain in 2021. Trade issues with China are not going away; the implications of BREXIT are unclear; several countries continue to sign multilateral trade agreements which the U.S. is not a part of. The new Biden administration will understandably be focused on the pandemic and economic recovery. Its trade actions remain to be seen, however, they are likely favor a return to more predictable and stable policies.

There are a few hopeful signs. The E.U. and the U.S. are closer to implementing a five-year tariff exception for U.S. lobsters. China continues (albeit slowly) to favor a return to more predictable and stable policies.

Perhaps most hopeful is the continued resiliency of the Maine lobster industry and its reputation abroad as a hardworking, sustainable fishery with a long heritage and the world’s best lobsters.

Here’s to fewer uncertainties in 2021. This time, I hope I am right!
Many in the fishing industry have taken issue with the Governor’s unilateral decision and expedited timeline, particularly during the pandemic. “The state never asked the fishing industry if they want it [an offshore wind farm], they’ve only asked where we want it,” said Kristan Porter, MLA President.

Ben Martens, executive director of the Maine Coast Fishermen’s Association, told state officials during a recent webinar that “the timeline is completely inappropriate for the fishing industry right now. You are essentially establishing a 20-year closure. Please reconsider the timeline so you can reach out to the industry for meaningful input.”

Friendship lobsterman and MLA board member Dustin Delano said, “The brakes, we are in the middle of a pandemic. People have been told not to celebrate the holidays with their families, but the state thinks it’s OK to push forward with an application for offshore wind? I would have no problem getting 300 fishermen in a room on this issue.”

### Offshore lease

While receiving a lease in federal waters takes time, the lease site must be chosen before the application is submitted to BOEM. Once a site is selected, it cannot be changed. GEO intends to submit its application in early 2021 but does not anticipate that construction would begin for at least five years. That gives the state just a few months to engage with the fishing industry to choose the site to locate its research array which would produce and sell electricity for at least 20 years.

Celina Cunningham, GEO deputy director, says that the development of the proposed project will be collaborative. “A number of decisions have not been made. We want to engage with fishermen on these to make the project better. We would like to hear from fishermen what they think would be the best way to communicate. We are starting with the webinars. The goal is to refine criteria and inform the siting effort by the perspectives of fishermen to make the project stronger,” she said.

Fishing industry members asked lots of questions during the webinars, such as “Why is the state calling this a research array if it will produce and sell electricity?”

“Very early about the state’s investment in the research project, Cunningham said, “The state has not gotten to that level, but the developer will plan, design and construct the project, then connect it to the grid and sell the energy.”

She acknowledged that there have been sharp views, both for and against, the Governor’s proposal. “We’ve heard strong enthusiasm [for the array] as well as strong concerns from the fishing industry. We want to hear what people think and feel about it,” Cunningham said.

“The GEO is the state lead for this project and is consulting with DMR on data analysis for siting,” explained Meredith Mendelson, DMR deputy commissioner. “DMR will also be assisting with outreach to fishing industry members throughout this process, but particularly around siting and identifying broad research priorities during the application’s development.”

Many questions remain. “The MLA has asked over and over again why the state is in a rush to submit its lease application to BOEM and has not gotten a straight answer,” noted McCarron. She says that the MLA does not share the state’s vision for the project and is concerned about inadequate data on where the lobster fishery takes place and the challenges with working with fishermen during the pandemic. “We still don’t understand why this project is being pushed on a such a tight timeline during the pandemic, and before the state has created a plan for offshore wind.”

In the first months of 2021, GEO plans to hold scoping meetings to share information about the proposal and delve deeper into its details. “We will talk about the siting criteria and additional information that people have,” Mendelson said, and how to obtain it. We are looking for ways that work for different people and groups in order to gain a cohesive understanding and make better decisions about the project.” Cunningham said.

“[We are] planning some broad, open meetings and are also hoping to work with smaller groups or individual fishermen who want to discuss various aspects of this process and inform its development. Due to the pandemic, we’re focusing on doing that in remote forums for the time being,” Mendelson said.

The state has not released any details, but GEO Director Dan Burgess told the public that GEO has had many developers contacting the agency about offshore wind development both inshore and offshore. Cunningham did tell a webinar audience that Trident Wind is interested in proposing a large wind project in Maine’s downeast state waters. Director Burgess added that there are not yet any details to discuss because no application has been filed. “We get many developers contacting the state about offshore development inshore and offshore.”

### Offshore Wind Energy “road map”

The GEO hired a program manager in late November to oversee the $2.1 million grant designed to create a “road map” for offshore wind industry growth in Maine. An outreach consultant was due to be hired in December to devise a plan for involving multiple stakeholders in the two-year process.

Anthony Ronzio, deputy director of the Governor’s Office on Policy Innovation and the Future (GOPIF), noted the difficulties in truly engaging with individuals and groups during a period when face-to-face meetings are discouraged. “We want to conduct a robust stakeholder process, to ensure that all participants have an opportunity to be heard,” he said.

McCarron says that Maine’s fishing industry deserves to know the state’s goals for offshore wind and how a research array would fit into that. To create a concise but comprehensive plan to expand the state’s involvement in offshore wind energy development will require input from diverse interest groups, from the state’s colleges and universities to major corporations and fishing organizations. “We want people who have expertise and can give concrete input on the components of the road map itself,” Cunningham said. “Beyond that, it’s an opportunity for information sharing and understanding the concerns of groups and individuals.”

Both Ronzio and Cunningham underscore the back-and-forth nature of the planning process. “It’s definitely not a one-way communication process,” Ronzio said. “It is our intention with this process to have proactive dialogue and hopefully achieve better results.”

A strategy for forming stakeholder groups should be in place in early 2021; a broader outreach plan should be completed by then as well. During a winter when gathering in groups is frowned upon, Cunningham envisions using innovative methods to exchange thoughts and information among a broad sweep of individuals and groups.

“We are open to strong opinions,” Ronzi said. “We are not afraid of that feedback. We have to have these conversations to be able to work together. I hope people come willing to do that as well.”

Many in the fishing industry are hoping for some common sense. “The state needs to do a comprehensive plan. There is no strategy [other than] to send this application in as soon as possible,” Porter said. “The wind isn’t going anywhere,” noted lobsterman Ted Miller. “Take some time before you sacrifice a 200-year-old industry. The wind will still be there tomorrow.”

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The Maine Fishermen's Forum Board of Directors will give out $40,000 in scholarships to students from families involved in Maine’s fishing industry, despite having to cancel the annual 3 day event. Traditionally, the drawing is held at the Forum in March every year, however this year it will be held on Friday, March 5, 2021. Winners will be announced on the Forum website, and on the Forum Facebook page on the same day.

Candidates must complete the Forum application, be in at least their second year of college or a vocational school, and will need to submit a transcript along with the application. (Prior winners are not eligible for this drawing.) Scholarship applications are available online at the Forum website (www.mainefishermensforum.org), or by sending a SASE to Maine Fishermen's Forum, PO Box 288, Bath, ME 04530. Applications can also be requested by calling (207) 442-7700. The deadline for submitting an application is Wednesday, March 3, 2021. If there are any questions, please contact Chilloa Young (coordinator@mainefishermensforum.org).

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**2021 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION**

The Maine Fishermen’s Forum Board of Directors offers a scholarship fund to benefit children or grandchildren or a legal dependent of someone actively involved in Maine’s seafood industry, regardless of financial need or academic achievement. Undergraduates attending a two or four year college who are in at least the second year of their program or students who are in at least the second semester of their Certificate Program will be eligible. Applications will be accepted through March 3, 2021. Scholarships will be awarded by a random drawing to be held on Friday, March 5, 2021.

***You qualify for the scholarship drawing ONLY IF you check all 4 items below.***

**Do you qualify?** *(Both questions must be answered yes to qualify)*

1. __ Are you a sophomore, junior or senior right now? You must be at least a sophomore in college or be in at least the second semester of a Certificate Program to apply.

2. __ Are you a child, grandchild or legal dependent of someone participating in Maine’s seafood industry?

**What is required?** *(Both of these items are required to be a valid candidate)*

3. __ Provide an official transcript or Registrar’s letter of current standing along with the application.

4. __Complete this application and send to the address at the top of this letter.

**Please note that previous winners are not eligible.**

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**STUDENT INFORMATION**

Student Name

Mailing Address__________________________ Home Phone__________________________

City__________________________ State_____ Zip Code________ Email:__________________________

**SCHOOL INFORMATION**

College/University Name__________________________ Expected Year of Graduation:__________________________

Location of College__________________________ Your Major __________________________

**School Standing as of Sept 2020 (circle one)** Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior

**MAINE SEAFOOD INDUSTRY FAMILY MEMBER INFORMATION**

Name__________________________ Relationship__________________________

Street/Mailing Address__________________________ Phone__________________________

City__________________________ State_____ Zip Code________ Email:__________________________

Vessel Name or Commercial License Number__________________________

Describe participation in the Maine seafood industry

__________________________

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MAINE FISHERMEN’S FORUM WILL REMAIN ACTIVE IN 2021

From the Maine Fishermen’s Forum

The Maine Fishermen’s Forum has been serving the commercial fishing community of Maine for over 45 years, and even though they are unable to host a live event this year, the Board of Directors has committed to several virtual events over the next six months. The activities that are planned range from virtual events to radio shows and are designed to occur during the 2021 winter and spring.

Once the schedule is finalized, a listing of events will be posted on the Forum Facebook page, the Forum website (www.mainefishermensforum.org) as well as through media releases and email notifications.

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING SCHEDULE

In response to COVID-19, the MLA has suspended all in-person meetings. The Board is meeting virtually every two weeks.

Maine Lobstermen's Association Update

The Year in Review
I’m not sure that Franklin D. Roosevelt had the Maine lobster industry in mind when he said, "When you reach the end of your rope, tie a knot in it and hang on," but he certainly captured the innate resiliency of Maine lobstermen. 2020 was a year of unprecedented change wraped in all the challenges, fear, anxiety and emotional baggage that comes with adjusting to the unknown. As we bid 2020 goodbye, I can say with certainty that this was also a year that united most lobstermen in a shared fight for the future for our fishery.

The challenges we tackled in 2020 were unlike anything the lobster industry has experienced in the past. The impact of each of these issues on their own — COVID, right whales, trade disputes and tariffs, offshore wind expansion, bait restrictions and a national election — would be significant. Nevertheless lobstermen and coastal communities pulled together to meet each challenge head on.

The past year will forever be associated with the pandemic. Each of us understands how difficult it is to be apart from so many friends and family. It is even harder to see our children separated from friends, and heartbreakingly to have our elderly isolated from loved ones in their time of greatest need. Maine's fishing industry was fortunate to have come together in early March for the Maine Fishermen's Forum, just one week before Governor Mills announced the state's first COVID restrictions.

On top of the pandemic and the significant policy issues that we faced, 2020 also stands out as a year of deep loss. Maine's fishing industry said its final goodbye to too many in 2020, including Chris Anderson, Harlan Billings, Ed Blackmore, Robert Blethen, Tim Flynn, Arnie Gamadge, Andy Gove, Jeff Matthews, Joe Nickerson, Chris Pinkham, Michael Proper, Dave Provencher, Steve Robbins II, Ethan Ward, to name just some of those who passed away. And I know from personal experience that COVID has taken many more of our friends and loved ones.

If there is any silver lining to the pandemic, it’s the deep recognition that we truly are all in this together. The scale of the pandemic has meant that no one has been left unaffected. The virus, along with many other threats facing our industry, has served to strengthen lobstermen’s resolve to unite. The lobster industry — and the MLA — draw strength from each lobsterman’s independence, contentiousness, and fierce commitment to his and her heritage. Those are the qualities that, in these difficult days, unite, rather than divide us.

While I am forever an optimist, the issues facing the lobster industry are serious. The MLA, along with many others, has worked very hard to avoid serious harm to lobstermen and their communities.

Despite dire predictions in the spring about lobster price in the face of restricted international markets due to tariffs and disappearing domestic markets as the pandemic unfolded, the lobster fishery defied the odds and fared pretty well. Lobstermen took the market limitations to heart and landings were well paced for demand. Lobster dealers and processors successfully grew retail and direct-to-consumer markets. As lobster landings increased throughout the season, the markets proved to be far more stable than anticipated. Lobstermen were also fortunate to be eligible for several COVID relief programs, including Small Business Administration loans and the Paycheck Protection Program, SARBON through NOAA’s Fisheries Disaster Relief Program and $50 million through the USDA’s Seafood Trade Relief Program.

Right whales
Other issues did not fade away during the pandemic, and right whales remained at center stage for MLA in 2020. Federal mandates to protect the whales have the potential to shut down the lobster fishery or significantly alter its traditions and the practices of the sustained fisherman and local communities for centuries.

The MLA has moved heaven and earth to get Maine’s side of the story out to the public, federal agencies and the courts. Data indicate that right whales have become increasingly rare along the Maine coast and there is little evidence confirming right whale entanglement in Maine lobster gear. Known interactions between right whales and any lobster gear have decreased significantly in the U.S. since 2010 while interactions in Canada have increased dramatically over the same time period. The MLA makes these facts publicly known at all right whale meetings with industry, researchers and agencies. The MLA remains a faithful watchdog and industry advocate in all legal, policy and scientific developments related to right whale conservation.

Early in 2020, the Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) submitted its proposal for required right whale rules to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Maine’s proposal was based on lobstermen input through a series of meetings held in 2019. DMR continued its industry outreach in 2020 to give each lobster zone the opportunity to identify “conservation equivalencies” to tweak Maine’s draft whale plan to better fit each zone’s operational and safety needs while meeting the required 60% risk reduction goal. All seven lobster zones have proposed conservation equivalencies.

Since weakened endlines will likely be a requirement in the new whale plan, MLA worked closely with DMR and lobstermen to measure the strain on vertical lines under a variety of conditions to determine safe working loads at sea. They also documented the breaking strength of vertical lines currently fished and identified and tested a variety of ways to incorporate 1700-pound weak points in vertical lines that could be successfully fished under a variety of conditions. Lobstermen stepped up to make this research possible while innovating a variety of methods to weaken endlines in a manner that will allow gear to be safely hauled back.

In April, the federal judge in DC District Court ruled on the legal questions posed in the lawsuit filed in 2018 by four environmental groups seeking more stringent protection for right whales. The judge found that the NMFS had not met its obligations under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), which in turn meant that the lobster fishery was operating in violation of the law. The court’s next action was to decide how to fix that; a question that profoundly worried many in the lobster fishery.

As an intervenor in this case, the MLA and its legal team worked tirelessly to ensure that lobstermen’s interests were represented in court. At risk was the fishery itself. The judge could order the U.S. lobster fishery closed or could institute severe restrictions in its operation to protect right
whales. The MLA made a strong case regarding the lack of evidence linking right whale deaths to the Maine lobster fishery while highlighting the direct evidence of strikes and Canadian fishing gear in recent right whale deaths. MLA also brought information to the court on the extensive whale protections put in place by the lobster industry over the past 20 years as well as the economic devastation that severe restrictions would cause lobstermen and coastal communities.

In August, to our great relief, the judge delayed taking action and instead gave NMFS until May 30, 2021 (rather than February 2021, as requested by the plain-tiff) to finalize the whale rules and related Biological Opinion on the lobster fishery. In doing so, the judge averted a closure of the fishery, acknowledged that the probability of entanglement risk to right whales from the lobster fishery during the fall and winter months is slight, and recognized the importance of allowing NMFS to complete the rulemaking process. He also gave weight to the economic harm that closure of the lobster fishery would cause.

The MLA’s critical influence in this case was only possible through the tremendous outpouring of support from individuals and businesses to its Legal Defense Fund.

Similar legal cases seeking to end the permitting of vertical lines have been filed in Massachusetts and Maine. While the Maine case has been put on hold until May 2021 pending the outcome of the DC District case, the judge in Massachusetts ordered that state to obtain an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) under the ESA to continue to permit vertical lines in its state waters fishery. In response, Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) has proposed rules for its state waters fishery including a seasonal closure from February through April, require all vertical lines break at 1700 pounds, cap the diameter of vertical lines at 3/8” and prohibit the fishing of singles on vessels larger than 29 feet. There is no similar ITP for that state’s ITP which is required for its state waters fishery to continue to operate. These rule changes are expected to be implemented in early 2021 in advance of the federal whale plan.

While the lobster industry awaits the release of the federal proposed whale rules and draft Biological Opinion from NMFS, the environmental community continues to press for more immediate and stringent protections for whales. Two petitions for emergency action were filed with NMFS by environmental groups this year, and there remains a strong push for all fixed gear fisheries to transition to ropeless fishing technologies. The MLA continues to strongly oppose ropeless fishing as a conservation strategy to protect right whales in Maine and remains an important voice of reason in these discussions.

**Offshore Wind Energy**

As if one existential threat to our fishery is not enough, the Maine lobster industry must now face a strong push for offshore wind development in the Gulf of Maine. The Mills administration has been open about its interest in moving forward with offshore wind as part of its aggressive plan to address climate change but, until November, had not gone on the record with its plans. Before the state even begins its $2 million plan on how best to develop Maine’s offshore wind sector, Gov. Mills abruptly announced in November a plan to apply for a lease to develop an 16-square mile offshore wind research array located 20 to 40 miles offshore in southern Maine, much to the dismay and disgruntlement of the MLA and many fishermen.

The MLA expressed its strong disappointment that the Governor chose to move forward with an offshore wind “research” project before fishermen and other stakeholders were provided any opportunity to weigh on how, or if, offshore wind might evolve to benefit Maine. The MLA continues raise questions, demand accountability to the fishing industry, and push the state for a clear strategy that will allow fishermen to voice their thoughts on how to protect our fisheries if offshore wind becomes a reality. This is going to be another uphill battle, but the MLA will not sit idly by and let our livelihoods be traded in for the unknown and unproven potential of offshore wind.

2021 Will be a Challenge

There is no doubt that Maine lobstermen will continue to grapple both with whale rules and with offshore wind proposals in 2021, as the pandemic lingers on. The MLA promises to make its concerns known to policy makers are held accountable by fishermen for promises made to protect our livelihoods and communities.

The MLA could not take on these challenges without the incredible work of our Board of Directors and support from so many lobstermen, businesses and community members. So, thank you all.

As always, stay safe on the water.

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**MLA DIRECTORS MEETINGS**

The MLA Board of Directors met on December 2 via video conference to discuss the emerging issue of offshore wind in Maine. Annie Hawkins, executive director of the Responsible Offshore Development Alliance (RODA), of which MLA is a member, updated the board on RODA’s work over the last few years and what Maine is likely to face after the Governor’s announcement to move forward with an offshore wind research array off southern Maine.

It was a lively discussion about the state’s plan and its potential to negatively impact Maine’s fishing industry. The Governor’s proposal has generated questions while providing few answers. The MLA board is extremely frustrated that 1) Maine’s fishing industry was not consulted before the state made a unilateral decision to make offshore wind a key strategy to meet Maine’s aggressive renewable energy goals; 2) the state is moving forward with an application to ROEM for a research array before it has started its “roadmap” planning process; 3) the state has proposed a “research” project, with no funds allocated to conduct research, which will operate for 20 years; 4) the state has allocated only a few months to conduct outreach with the lobster industry, during a pandemic, before choosing the site for the research array and submitting its application to ROEM; and 5) Maine is now moving forward with two research projects – off Monhegan Island and now offshore - with no explanation of why we need both.

The MLA board and staff will attend the state’s four informational video meetings in December to learn more about this project and will continue to provide feedback and raise concerns as this issue evolves.

**DRAFT WHALE RULES AND BIOLOGICAL OPINION**

As of December 23, there is still no word on when the proposed new whale rules or Biological Opinion will be made public. The proposed rule remains under review at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and it is anticipated that it will not be released until after the change in the Administration. The deadline of May 31, 2021 for adoption of the Final Rule established by Judge Boasberg of DC District court remains in place, so we expect that the comment period will limited to 45 days.

NMFS provided an update to the DC District court on November 30. The agency wrote:

> “NMFS is working on a draft Biological Opinion that will analyze the operation of a number of New England and Mid-Atlantic fisheries, including the American lobster fishery... At the North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium meeting held October 27-28, 2020, NMFS scientists presented revised estimates showing lower right whale population numbers than reported in the prior year’s North Atlantic Right Whale Stock Assessment Report. These new estimates are preliminary and will undergo additional analysis and peer review through the process of developing the 2021 North Atlantic Right Whale Stock Assessment Report. That process includes the development of a draft stock assessment for internal and external peer review and discussion in early 2021, a 90-day public comment period on the draft report, resolution of the public comments, and the publication of a final report in late 2021/early 2022.”

> “NMFS does intend to address this new information in the Biological Opinion, but doing so with an understanding that at this point it is still preliminary and subject to review through the Stock Assessment process, while other scientific information that has already been the subject of peer and/or NMFS scientific review will also be relied upon.”

> “In our September 30, 2020, update to the Court, we had reported that we anticipated sharing a draft Biological Opinion with the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils at their December 2020 meetings. Because the proposed rule is still under review with OIA, and because we intend to use the new information on right whale population estimates in the draft Biological Opinion, this will not occur at the December Council meetings. Our current intention is to share the draft Biological Opinion with the New England Fishery Management Council at its January 2021 meeting [Jan 26-28], with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council at its February 2021 meeting [Feb 9-11], and with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission at its February 2021 meeting [Feb 2-4].”

For now we continue to wait; the MLA is ready whenever this Proposed Rule and draft Biological Opinion are made public.

**BACKLOG AT FEDERAL REGISTER MAY SLOW NEW RULES**

On December 1, Regional Administrator of GARFO, Mike Pentony, updated the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) that with the change of administration coming at the end of January, “things get a little weird in Washington, particularly around getting rules published.” Pentony expects that...
there will be a backlog of rules submitted by various agencies for publication, which will complicate GARFO’s ability to get all its rules published on time. GARFO has a priority list of rules that they are working on in order to get the most urgent rules published as soon as possible, but they do not expect that all of those will get published due to the anticipated backlog. Furthermore, after the January 20 transition occurs, Pentony advised, “until we have a Secretary of Commerce we don’t have the authority to publish rules in the Federal Register so there might be a period of time where we are unable to publish things after January 20.”

STATE WATERS SEASONAL CLOSURE PROPOSED IN MASSACHUSETTS

Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) held two virtual public hearings in December on draft regulations “to reduce the risk of endangered right whales becoming entangled in fixed fishing gear and reduce the potential harm posed by fixed fishing gear if a right whale interacts with it.” The proposed measures affect Massachusetts state waters and include a 3-month seasonal closure of the lobster fishery from February through April, capping vertical line diameter at 3/8”, and a provision that all vertical lines permitted by fixed fishing gear if a right whale interacts with it. The proposed rules also ban singles on vessels larger than 29 feet in length allowing for it to break at that point, with a contrivance or multiple contrivances that allows for it to break at that point. The proposed rules also ban singles on vessels larger than 29 feet in length allowing for it to break at that point, with a contrivance or multiple contrivances that allows for it to break at that point. The proposed measures will form part of the state’s Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) which is required to obtain an Incidental Take Permit. Some of the proposed measures are intended to distinguish Massachusetts state waters fishing during periods of time when right whales are known to aggregate in and migrate through these waters.

ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS FILE PETITION AGAINST VERTICAL LINES WITH NMFS

On December 2, four environmental groups filed a petition with NMFS for emergency action to protect right whales. According to the Center for Biological Diversity, “The petition asks the National Marine Fisheries Service to take emergency action to protect right whales. The petition requests that NMFS promulgate emergency regulations under the Endangered Species Act to protect right whales from entanglement with vertical lines used in state waters fishery, pending a review of the regulations under the National Environmental Policy Act.”

OFFSHORE LOBSTER ENFORCEMENT TURNING TO ROVS

In December, Tim Donovan, the Assistant Director of the New England Division of NOAA Law Enforcement (OLE), updated the NEFMC on the agency’s recent pilot effort to use Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs) for enforcement in the offshore lobster fishery. Multiple agencies have expressed the need to improve enforcement, so OLE is looking at emerging technologies to improve its capabilities. OLE enforces both regulations required under the whale plan and the lobster management plan for the offshore lobster fishery.

LOBSTER ELECTRONIC TRACKING PILOT PROGRAM

In February 2018, ASMFC approved a one-year pilot program to test electronic tracking devices on lobster fishing vessels through its adoption of Addendum XXVI. This Addendum also established a mandate for 100% harvester reporting within five years, as well as some incremental improvements to the harvester reporting program to improve spatial resolution of the data collected. The ASMFC formed the Lobster Electronic Tracking Subcommittee to test electronic tracking devices on lobster boats. The Subcommittee reported the results of the pilot program to ASMFC in October. Several systems were tested on federal lobster boats from June 2019 through May 2020, from Southern New England to the Gulf of Maine. A variety of devices, including Succorfish, Rock7, and Pelagic Data Systems, were tested with a goal of obtaining a one-minute ping rate using cellular-based systems were tested with a goal of obtaining a one-minute ping rate using cellular-based systems in 207 feet of water, but future trials would incorporate higher resolution cameras to allow traptag numbers to be read at depth. The project has served as proof of concept by OLE; the NOAA General Counsel supports the use of this approach and the recorded evidence that it can produce. During the October trials, NOAA observed and recorded floating groundline in violation of the whale rules and is pursuing this case with NOAA General Counsel. NOAA OLE plans to use this technology for offshore lobster enforcement in 2021.
of failure was loss of power from the vessel to the device. Some devices had bet-
ter features in terms of integration/interface and add-on hardware.

The research found that a one-minute ping rate is essential to provide adequate
monitoring of the lobster fishery because it allowed for programmatic detection
and quantification of trawls as small as triples. Multiple vendors could meet re-
quirements for high-ping rate vessel monitoring systems in the lobster fishery,
however, installing devices across the fleet would require significant technical
support. There is a significant amount of data integration work that would be
needed to link the vessel tracking data to harvester reports. Finally, further hard-
ware development and testing is needed to incorporate hauler sensors, environ-
mental sensors, and other relevant devices into the system.

13TH MAINE LEGISLATURE

The First Regular Session of the 130th Maine State Legislature convened on
December 2. The statutory adjournment date is June 16, 2021. The deadline for
legislators to submit bill titles was December 18, and it is estimated that more
than 1,000 have been submitted. State agency bill titles were due earlier and
the DMR has put in five bill titles, specifically to reauthorize the Maine Lobster
Marketing Collaborative, address aquaculture leasing and licenses statutes,
amend the procedure for administrative suspension proceedings, add a fee to
the scallop license lottery and make technical changes to existing statutes.

Senator David Miramant of Camden and Representative Jay McCreight of
Harrington will once again serve as co-chairs of the Marine Resources
Committee. Also serving on the committee are Sen. Maxim of Nobleboro and
Sen. Rosen of Bucksport. From the House side the committee includes Rep.

To receive notifications for Marine Resources Committee public hearings and
work sessions email the clerk at MAR@legislature.maine.gov and ask to be
added to the Committee’s email notification list.

CONGRESS PASSES YOUNG FISHERMEN’S DEVELOPMENT ACT

On December 20, Congress passed the Young Fishermen’s Development Act,
establishing the first-ever national program to train, educate, and foster the
next generation of commercial fishermen. Championed by Maine’s delegation
along with colleagues from Alaska, Washington and Massachusetts, this legis-
lation will reduce basic barriers to entry in commercial fisheries through new
grants, training opportunities and apprenticeship programs.

“There’s no doubt we’re going to need more young people ready to take the
wheel to keep the fishing industry strong in our state for years to come,” said
King in a joint statement. “This legislation will help prepare young Mainers for
jobs in the fishing and lobster industries, which will encourage them to stay in
Maine to find work and sustain fishing communities and businesses through-
out our state. We’re proud to work together to pass this bill through Congress
and we urge the President to sign it into law without delay.”

DMR UPDATE ON CARES ACT FUNDS

DMR is in the final stages of approving applications to receive aid as part of the
$20 million CARES Act relief provided to Maine’s seafood industry members
financially affected by COVID-19. Applications from commercial fishing, aq-
uaulture, for-hire and seafood dealer/processor sectors were due November
9. Once the applications are verified, DMR will provide the information to the
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), which is expected to
issue relief checks by the end of the year.

A portion of Maine’s CARES Act funds, $1,000,000, has been allocated to launch
the Seafood Trade Relief Program (STRP) to help prepare young Mainers for
jobs in the fishing and lobster industries, which will encourage them to stay in
Maine to find work and sustain fishing communities and businesses through-
out our state. We’re proud to work together to pass this bill through Congress
and we urge the President to sign it into law without delay.

DMR UPDATE ON CARES ACT FUNDS

The deadline to apply for Seafood Trade Relief Program (STRP) is January 15,
2021. Lobstermen qualify to receive 50 cents per pound for their 2019 lobster
landings. As of December 17, Maine’s Farm Service Agency (FSA)offices have
received 2,939 applications totaling more than $48.3 million. Call your local
FSA office for more information on the application process.

Summary Seafood Trade Relief Program for Maine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applications</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Androscoggin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cumberland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hancock</td>
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<tr>
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<td>$237,648</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sagadahoc</td>
<td>$985,135</td>
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<tr>
<td>Waldo</td>
<td>$500,597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>$10,307,993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York</td>
<td>$1,772,208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$48,388,170</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Maine Farm Service Agency

PAYCHECK PROTECTION PROGRAM LOAN PAYBACK

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) is offering a simplified loan for-
givenness application for Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans of $50,000
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The PPP Loan Forgiveness Application Form 3508s is available online at https://
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ARE YOU AT RISK?
MARKETING UPDATES

In 2020, the MLMC generated national awareness of Maine Lobster, increased understanding of our key messages, and drove potential customers to take actions toward purchasing our products. We remained nimble, pivoting our marketing program to highlight products and stories that would inspire home cooks to prepare Maine Lobster, and to protect our brand as we navigated new regulations and threats to our reputation. Our digital marketing and public relations effort resulted in benchmark-beating successes.

- **580,000+** consumers are more likely to buy Maine Lobster after seeing our ads
- **138,000+** wholesale and consumer buyers visited our supplier database
- **1.6 billion** media impressions from 128 unique stories in leading food, lifestyle, and trade media publications

All told, we amplified one collective voice for Maine Lobster, proudly representing an industry made up of thousands of individuals and small businesses nationwide.

www.lobsterfrommaine.com

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34’ Aluminum 12 ton vessel built by Gladding-Hearn Shipbuilding in 1982, in very good condition. Currently rigged for lobstering with a 12” Hydroslave Lobster Hauler, and hydraulic wash down pump, but is a perfect platform for a research vessel, conversion to a private pleasure craft, or any use requiring a sea-worthy study design with large open deck space.

Power is transmitted via a 2” stainless steel shaft and a twin disc transmission, model: MG506. Electronics include: Furuno 1832 radar; Northstar 951 plotter; Furuno FCU-66 color sounder; and 6” Ritchie compass. Safety equipment consists of 24 life jackets and a life ring. Breadth: 12’, depth: 5’, net tons: 8. Propulsion is generated by a 1993 320HP, 8 cylinder CAT 3208T Diesel, with a 150 gallon diesel fuel tank.

Gladding-Hearn Shipbuilding was founded in 1954 and is recognized for its tugboats, pilot boats, fishing vessels, and high-speed catamaran ferries. In 1977, Gladding-Hearn was the first American shipyard to launch a tug equipped with a Z-drive propulsion system, and in 1978 built the first pilot boat to a deep-V hull design by naval architect C. Raymond Hunt that became the industry standard in the years that followed.

Contact: 781.606.7770 | info@knottco.com

Save Maine’s Lobster Industry
The MLA is raising $500,000 for the Legal Defense Fund. We’re very close! Please help us reach our goal.

I’d like to donate:

- $10,000 (Brooks Trap Mill Challenge)
- $5000 (Alec Phippen Challenge)
- $1000 (Jay Smith Challenge)
- $500
- $365 “a dollar a day”
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We’re fighting on multiple fronts to save Maine’s lobster industry. We need your support.

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Philip Wessel
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Heather Lewis
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John Marsh
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Genevieve McDonald
Michael McDonough
Thomas Mclean—for Jay Remot’s High & Tight
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Eben Wilson
Winter Harbor Fishermen's Coop
Brendt Wolff
Donald Young
Jack Young
Leonard Young
Linda Zuke

Gifts $1,000 - $4,999
Jeremy S Alley*
Jeremy Alley*
Awlode Lobster Co
Bangor Savings Bank
Rachel Bishop*
Bilings Marine Service
Bramhall's Wharf Lobster
Jarod Bray*
Bring It Inc
Carter's Lobsters
Larry Coombs*
Bruce Crowley*
Dustin Delano*
Delano Seafood Shack
Wayne Delano*
Jeffrey A Donnell*
Zachary A Donnell*
Philip Doucette*
Dysarts
Eric Emmons*
Elizabeth Fenwick*
First National Bank
Fisherman's Heritage Lobster Co-
Michael Flanigan
Edward N Fooy*
Stephen Galcomb*
Rudi Graf*
Gillespie Marine LLC
Benjamin Heansller*
Michael Hunt*
Sam Hyler*
Bobby Ingalls*
Journey's End Marina
Stephen Lash*
Lee Marine
Nicholas Lemieux*
Jeff Libby*
Lanec Tuxer*

Gifts $5,000 - $9,999
Alec Phippen*
Abraham Philbrick*
Beals-Jonesport Co-op Inc
Corea Lobster Co-op
Hamiton Marine (tee-shirts)
Rockland Lobster Boat Race
Spruce Head Fishermen
Swans Isl. Fishermen's Coop
Western Sea Inc.
York Lobstermen's Assoc.

Gifts $10,000 - $49,999
Bar Harbor Bank & Trust*
Brooks Trap Mill*
Colby & Gale*
Michaels Savings Bank*

Gifts $50,000 & above
Donald Sussman
The Harbor Challenge:
Cape Porpoise Lobstermen: $5300
Cumberland Lobstermen: $1015
York Lobstermen: $4465

Gifts In Memoriam
In Memory of Annie Gamage
Gail Gamage

In honor of David Provenccher
Corn Ewing
Dale Weeks

In memory of Hugh Watts
Shelton Goldthwait Jr

In loving memory of Sherri Cook:
Robin Amorosolo
Antonia Pelletier
Susan Salomon
Jeanne Rapone

In loving memory of Evans A Spear
Wills & Christine Spear
Jedidiah Spear
Olive Spear

January 2021 | LANDINGS | Page 17
MLA Legal Defense Fund: 2 Storrs Rd, Suite 203, Kennebunk, ME 04043 | www.mainelobstermen.org | 207-967-4555
(RODA), have requested changes to the project. In addition, two reports by NOAA Fisheries raised further questions on how the wind projects would affect fisheries in the area, and questioned the draft EIS issued by BOEM in June.

"RODA has done an amazing job highlighting the major flaws of these offshore wind projects. They have successfully organized the fishing industry to work together and argue its case based on facts," said Patrice McCarron, executive director of MLA, which is a RODA member.

"This week's news is a game-changer and it gives us all hope that input from the fishing industry will be heard."

The Vineyard Wind saga is a long one.

The company, part of Spanish utility firm Iberdrola, planned to build the nation's first large offshore wind energy project in federal waters south of Martha's Vineyard. In January 2015, it won a 160,000 square acre lease and announced its intention to construct 84 wind turbines to produce 800 megawatts of electricity. Massachusetts, which has an offshore wind energy goal of 3,200 megawatts by 2035, contracted to buy that energy.

Fishermen were not happy with the proposal from the outset. RODA voiced numerous objections to the project, most recently concerning the location and density of the turbines.

In the meantime, BOEM, which at first appeared eager to move the Vineyard Wind project forward, began to change its approach after the departure of Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke in December 2018. In December 2019, as the company’s final Environmental Impact Statement was about to be released, the new Interior Secretary, David Bernhardt, required Vineyard Wind to produce a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement that focused on the cumulative effects of offshore wind power projects proposed along the East Coast on the ocean environment and fishing industries.

That Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement was due to be published on December 11 but now has been deemed no longer necessary since the project review itself has been terminated. Because it "was framed as part of the Vineyard Wind project review rather than a stand-alone document, this means the SEIS has not been finalized and cannot be used as a basis for future wind projects," explained Annie Hawkins, RODA executive director, in an email.

In another positive development for fishermen, the Department of Interior’s chief lawyer on December 15 declared that the department should follow a stricter standard when considering whether to permit offshore wind farms where they might “interfere” with fishermen and other ocean users. Secretary Bernhardt requested clarification of language in the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act that requires “prevention of interference with reasonable uses of the exclusive economic zone, the high seas, and the territorial seas” when considering renewable energy.

"This is a new principle that is highly favorable to fishermen's interests," wrote Hawkins in an email. "The new legal guidance says it can only approve wind projects if they do not unreasonably interfere with fishing operations, that fishermen’s perspectives are what determine whether interference is unreasonable, that such interference is considered on a cumulative instead of project-specific level, and if in question they must err on the side of less interference rather than more.'"
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vessel Insurance</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fishing, Marine &amp; Industrial</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton Marine</td>
<td>Jonesport, Kittery, Portland, Rockland, Searsport, Southwest Harbor, ME. Discounts available to commercial fishermen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampton Inn, Ellsworth</td>
<td>(Ellsworth, ME)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampton Inn, Downtown-Waterfront</td>
<td>(Portland, ME)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampton Inn, Rockland/Thomaston</td>
<td>(Rockland, ME)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence Inn by Marriott</td>
<td>(Scarborough, ME)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discount: Special rates for MLA members and Business Supporters. Please contact the MLA for booking information, or mention MLA when booking.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hotels</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hampton Inn, Ellsworth</strong></td>
<td>(Ellsworth, ME)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hampton Inn, Downtown-Waterfront</strong></td>
<td>(Portland, ME)</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Residence Inn by Marriott</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Discount: Special rates for MLA members and Business Supporters. Please contact the MLA for booking information, or mention MLA when booking.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Museums &amp; Entertainment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penobscot Marine Museum</td>
<td>Searsport, ME -- Free admission for MLA members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine Maritime Museum</td>
<td>Bath, ME -- Free admission to MLA members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Desert Oceanarium</td>
<td>Bar Harbor, ME -- Free admission to commercial fishermen and their families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cross Insurance Arena</strong></td>
<td>Special discounts to shows at the Cross Arena in Portland! Use promo code GFRIEND at checkout. Orderby phone, online, or in person at the box office. Info at <a href="http://www.mainelobstermen.org">www.mainelobstermen.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lobster &amp; Seafood</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Porpoise Lobster</td>
<td>Cape Porpoise Lobster, ME -- 10% off picked lobster meat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter Harbor Fishermen's Coop</td>
<td>Winter Harbor, ME -- 10% off picked lobster meat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Newspapers</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Fisheries News</td>
<td>Deer Isle, ME -- Discounted annual subscription rate for $18.75 with MLA membership noted on check.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Propellers</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England Propeller Inc</td>
<td>Plymouth, MA -- Discounts on marine propeller, shafting, and related items, sales &amp; repairs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nautilus Marine Fabrication, Inc.</td>
<td>Trenton, ME -- 5% Discount on propeller reconditioning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Refrigeration Services</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Safety Training &amp; Equipment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liferaft Services, LLC</td>
<td>York, ME -- 5% off liferaft repack with proof of MLA membership. CAN be combined with other promotions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McMillan Offshore Survival Training</td>
<td>Belfast, ME -- 25% discount on USCG Drill Conductor training.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Trap Builders, Stock &amp; Supplies</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea Rose Trap Co</td>
<td>S. Portland -- 5% off list price on traps. Must show MLA card.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gifts</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine Camp Outfitters</td>
<td>Sunset, ME -- 10% off all apparel and promotional product orders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine Lobstermen's Association</td>
<td>Kennebunk, ME -- 10% off all apparel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hydraulics</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coastal Hydraulics</td>
<td>Seabrook, NH -- 10% discount on all in stock items for MLA members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hews Company, LLC</td>
<td>South Portland, ME -- 10% off hydraulic components &amp; Cable Craft cables.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) to support recovery efforts.

In December 2019, $1.6 million in federal funds were re-appropriated to the ASMFC’s American Lobster Management Plan (ALWTRP) measures, which are due to be finalized in May 2021. The lobster fishery in adapting to the new Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP) measures, which are due to be finalized in May 2021. The Department of Marine Resources (DMR) received notice in November that it had been awarded $600,000 by the ASMFC to support harvester reporting efforts and $250,000 to help with adoption of ALWTRP measures. “Increased harvester reporting will close these data gaps and provide a complete picture of activity in the Maine lobster fishery. It will also allow for the effectiveness of implemented regulations to be assessed, particularly for the reduction of vertical lines in the fishery,” explained Caitlin Starks, ASMFC lobster fishery management plan coordinator.

In January 2020, the DMR submitted the state’s right whale plan to NMFS, which included 100% harvester reporting as a conservation measure. Under the ASMFC’s American Lobster Management Plan Addendum XXVI, the Maine lobster fishery must move to 100% harvester reporting by January 1, 2024. This Addendum also established a one-year pilot program to test electronic tracking devices on federal lobster fishing vessels, which is separate from the harvester reporting program.

Currently 10% of Maine lobster license holders are randomly selected each year to complete harvester reporting. While this level of reporting is enough to obtain general estimates of lobster catch, it does not provide much information on fishing effort or location, which has proved a critical deficiency in discussions about new right whale rules. The number of vertical lines used by lobstermen and their location has only been estimated from this reporting, which is separate from the harvester reporting program.

Without outsider state funding, Maine lobstermen might have to assume these costs. Based on approximately 6,000 current license holders, each lobsterman would face an annual charge of roughly $100. “Using a portion of the funds set aside to assist the lobster fishery in adapting to the impacts of new right whale management measures mitigates this upcoming cost to industry,” Stark said. It also provides critical interim funding as DMR works to secure a long-term funding source to avoid any annual cost to lobstermen. Even with electronic harvester reporting, managing that much data will be a daunting task for the agency, the Maine lobster fishery comprises roughly 40% of all Atlantic coast commercial fishing trips taken each year. One hundred percent harvester reporting will require staff to provide technical support, process and analyze a massive amount of data, and be ready to address licensing issues. The $600,000 grant will help DMR support six of the ten positions necessary to manage 100% reporting, which the agency believes can begin in 2023. “Given DMR included the transition of the lobster fishery to 100% harvester reporting in its whale proposal to NMFS, these represent real costs associated with implementing regulations pertaining to right whale conservation and risk reduction,” Starks noted. The allocated funds will be sufficient to support the positions until late 2023.

Funds Help Maine Transition to 100% Harvester Reporting

By Melissa Waterman

In December 2019, $1.6 million in federal funds were re-appropriated to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) to support recovery actions for the North Atlantic right whale. The funds are intended to assist the lobster fishery in adapting to the new Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP) measures, which are due to be finalized in May 2021. The Department of Marine Resources (DMR) received notice in November that it had been awarded $600,000 by the ASMFC to support harvester reporting efforts and $250,000 to help with adoption of ALWTRP measures. “Increased harvester reporting will close these data gaps and provide a complete picture of activity in the Maine lobster fishery. It will also allow for the effectiveness of implemented regulations to be assessed, particularly for the reduction of vertical lines in the fishery,” explained Caitlin Starks, ASMFC lobster fishery management plan coordinator.

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### Experimental Lease Applications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Applicant/Company</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Downeast Institute</td>
<td>Joan’s Pound, Black Duck Cove, Eastern Bay</td>
<td>Seals</td>
<td>3.84 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Appl. submitted, comments due 9/11/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downeast Institute</td>
<td>Joan’s Pound, Black Duck Cove, Eastern Bay</td>
<td>Seals</td>
<td>3.14 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Appl. submitted, comments due 10/2/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferda Farms LLC</td>
<td>E. Lower Coombs Isl, New Meadows River</td>
<td>Brunswick</td>
<td>3.86 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Site Review Complete 9/9/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea Ran Fisheries &amp; Habitat</td>
<td>E of Western Head &amp; Ld Rivr, Cutler Hbr</td>
<td>Cutler</td>
<td>4 acres</td>
<td>Finfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Site Review Complete 3/20/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffin, Chad</td>
<td>W of Moore Pt, NE of Pound of Tea, Harraseulet River</td>
<td>Freeport</td>
<td>1.62 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Appl submittedComments due 12/12/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doyle, Victor</td>
<td>E of Barlett Isl, Blue Hill Bay</td>
<td>Mount Desert</td>
<td>1 acre</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Public Hearing Postponed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mussel Round Inc.</td>
<td>Barlett Narrows, Blue Hill Bay</td>
<td>Mount Desert</td>
<td>3.35 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Public Hearing Postponed as of 11/1/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dirigo Marine Resources, LLC</td>
<td>E of Wold’s neck, Recompanse Bay</td>
<td>So Freeport</td>
<td>3.85 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Appl. rec'd, comment period closed 8/2/20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Standard Lease Applications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Applicant/Company</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pemaquid Mussel Farms LLC</td>
<td>ME Desert narrows, E of Googins Ledge</td>
<td>Bar Harbor</td>
<td>32 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Scoping Session sched 11/19/20 5 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Bay Oyster Co.</td>
<td>o/old House Cove, Western Bay, Spruce Pk</td>
<td>Bar Harbor</td>
<td>3.36 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Public hearing scheduled 10/13/20 2 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tightrope Farms</td>
<td>south of Carlton Island, Salt Pond</td>
<td>Blue Hill</td>
<td>7.25</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Site Review complete 6/23/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson, Timothy</td>
<td>SE of Barnes Pt, Middle Bay</td>
<td>Brunswick</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Scoping Session 12/7/20 6 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nice Oyster Company, LLC</td>
<td>E of Woodward Pk, New Meadows River</td>
<td>Brunswick</td>
<td>4.49 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>10 yrs</td>
<td>Scoping Session sched 10/19/20 7 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shearwater Ventures LLC</td>
<td>E of Ll Chebeague, Casco Bay: Long Island</td>
<td>Chebeague Isl</td>
<td>3.79 acres</td>
<td>Marine Algae</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Site Review complete 4/29/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summit Point LLC</td>
<td>N of Lower Basket Ledge</td>
<td>Chebeague Isl</td>
<td>53.38 acres</td>
<td>Marine Algae</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Site Review Complete 11/12/20 6 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schoodic Seafarm LLC</td>
<td>off Long Mill Cove, Gouldsboro Bay</td>
<td>Corea</td>
<td>2.2 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>App rec’d 9/24/20, site review scheduled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summit Point LLC</td>
<td>NE of Clapboard Isl, Casco Bay, Falmouth &amp; Cumberland</td>
<td>100 acres</td>
<td>Marine Algae</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Site Review pending as of 12/1/19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summit Point LLC</td>
<td>S Lower Basket Ledge</td>
<td>Cumberland</td>
<td>see above</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Stone Point Oysters LLC</td>
<td>Damariscotta River</td>
<td>Damariscotta</td>
<td>12.98 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Public Hearing: 10/20/20 3 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dickenson, Christopher</td>
<td>609 SW Hog Island, Damariscotta River</td>
<td>Damariscotta</td>
<td>1 acre</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Site Review complete as of June 18, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spinney Creek Shellfish, Inc.</td>
<td>NW of Bt 95 Bridge, Spinney Creek</td>
<td>Hiot</td>
<td>2.75 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Site Review complete 3/18/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffin, Bailey</td>
<td>W of Sow &amp; Pigs Isl, Casco Bay</td>
<td>Freeport</td>
<td>6.84 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Scoping Session 12/22/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harraseulet Oyster Co.</td>
<td>S of Bowman Isl &amp; Stockbridge Pt, Casco Bay</td>
<td>Freeport</td>
<td>7 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Site Review complete 9/4/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love Point Oysters, LLC</td>
<td>SE of Winslow Park, Casco Bay</td>
<td>Freeport</td>
<td>4.78 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Site Review complete 9/11/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Love Point Oysters, LLC</td>
<td>S of Crab island, Casco Bay</td>
<td>Freeport</td>
<td>4.15 acres</td>
<td>Oysters</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Site review Pending as of 2/20/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islesboro Marine Enterprises, Inc.</td>
<td>NE of Flat Island, Penobscot Bay</td>
<td>Islesboro</td>
<td>6 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Scoping Session 12/27/20 6 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glidden Point Oyster Co.</td>
<td>West shore, S of Jacks Pt, Damariscotta River</td>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>5.5 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>10 yrs</td>
<td>Public Hearing 10/27/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hermit Island Oyster Co. LLC</td>
<td>HermitIsl, Small Pts, New Meadows River</td>
<td>Phippsburg</td>
<td>3.56 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Scoping Session 11/30/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine Fresh Sea Farms LLC</td>
<td>Clark Cove, Damariscotta River</td>
<td>So. Bristol</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Marine Algae</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Site Review 11/09/20 6 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frenchman Bay Oyster Co.</td>
<td>W &amp; S of Ingalls Isl, Sullivan Harbor</td>
<td>Sorento</td>
<td>3.85 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Site Review pending as of 10/17/19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dewey’s Shellfish, LLC</td>
<td>NW of Peters Island, Damariscotta River</td>
<td>South Bristol</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Scoping Session sched 11/18/20 4 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mook Sea Farms Inc.</td>
<td>S of Wiley Pt &amp; N of Fitch Pt, Damaris. River</td>
<td>South Bristol</td>
<td>3 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Hearing scheduled 11/16/20, 3 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brewer, Robert</td>
<td>E of Penobscot Bay SW of Andrews Island</td>
<td>Stonington</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Scoping Session 12/21/20 4 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harvey, Brian</td>
<td>W of Havens Pt, Goose Cove, Western Bay</td>
<td>Trenton</td>
<td>6 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Site Review Pending as of 3/27/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butterfield, Keith</td>
<td>SE of Little Mosher Island</td>
<td>Yarmouth</td>
<td>2.72 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish/ algae</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Scoping Session 11/16/20 3 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henninger, Thomas</td>
<td>Broad Cove, Casco Bay</td>
<td>Yarmouth</td>
<td>5.9 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Application submitted 7/9/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine Source Seafood</td>
<td>S of Lane’s Isl, Casco Bay</td>
<td>Yarmouth</td>
<td>3.48 acres</td>
<td>Oysters</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Site Review Complete as of 4/2/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moezer, Amanda</td>
<td>S of Lanes Isl, Inner Casco Bay</td>
<td>Yarmouth</td>
<td>9 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Site Review Complete 8/3/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolfe Neck Oyster Co. LLC</td>
<td>SE of Lanes Island, Casco Bay</td>
<td>Yarmouth</td>
<td>8 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>10 yrs</td>
<td>Site Review complete 9/22/20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Experimental Lease: up to 3 years, 4 acres and is non-renewable Standard Lease: term is up to 20 years, size is up to 20 acres and is renewable**

**For more information, visit the DMR website**

www.maine.gov/dmr/aquaculture and select “Map & Lease Inventory (pending & current)"

The MLA recommends you sign up for email alerts about aquaculture by selecting the big red email button at the bottom of their aquaculture page.

**Understand the process! You can make a difference!**
DMR recently announced the latest winners of the state’s scallop license lottery. Ten individuals won eligibility to apply for a drug license and four were awarded a chance to apply for a dive license. Each has been notified and is responsible for applying for a license within 30 days of notification. The new licenses are the result of a limited entry system established by the legislature and implemented through regulation in June 2018.

Recently the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission made some adjustments in its striped bass Fishery Management Plan (FMP) that dealt with the use of circle hooks. Circle hooks have been required when fishing with bait for striped bass and bluefish in Maine for seven years. We added an exemption many years ago that allowed worms to be used on a J hook associated with a tube and worm rig. Maine continued to ask for this exemption, but it was caught up in a much larger issue analysis. Not only is this a problematic issue for many charter boat captains, it could impact sales of marine worms dug in Maine. We will continue to work on this issue to make sure this poor conservation tool doesn’t have unintended consequences with the worm industry.

As you are likely aware Governor Mills has supported an offshore wind initiative for the Gulf of Maine that involves the state applying for a research lease. DMR recently announced the launch of the Maine Seafood branding and promotion initiative on December 9th. The new 42’ Calvin Beal will be stationed in Boothbay Harbor and we hope to commission the new platform into service this coming Spring. The new 42’ patrol vessel is currently in production at Farrin’s Boat Shop in Walpole and we hope to commission the new platform into service this coming Spring.

Lobstermen young and old faced a long, tough year with their traditional resiliency. MLA photos.

The Bureau of Marine Patrol recently received an FDA grant award of more than $15,000 to cover law enforcement certification training costs. This funding provides vital support for the tuition costs associated with required Maine Criminal Justice Academy training as well as required annual Officer training. Employment background investigations for three potential new hires are ongoing and expected to be completed before the new year.

MMP currently has an open application process to begin filling eight vacant officer positions along the state’s coast. Most of our vacant positions are in the Eastern Maine region and it is critically important to both our service model and our operational readiness that we prioritize the hiring and training of new officers. If you know of any interested candidates, they can review employment information on our website at the following location: https://www.maine.gov/dmr/marine/patrol/employment/marine-employment.html.

A new 42’ patrol vessel is currently in production at Farrin’s Boat Shop in Walpole and we hope to commission the new platform into service this coming Spring. The new 42’ Calvin Beal will be stationed in Boothbay Harbor and replace the recently decommissioned D/V Monitor. MMP has also ordered two new small vessel assets and anticipate their arrival at some point next Summer.

As if 2020 wasn’t enough of a challenge, we sadly responded to an unusually high number of maritime fatalities this year. I want to once again express my condolences to the families and friends who lost loved ones at sea this year.

This has been a long, tough year. Let’s hope 2021 brings some positive change for us all. Wishing you all a Merry Christmas, Happy Holiday and a Happy New Year.
DMR STRUGGLING WITH AQUACULTURE APPLICATION BACKLOG

By Anne Berleant
First published by the Ellsworth American and reprinted with permission

Like nearly every facet of life, the pandemic has affected the state aquaculture industry, the Maine Aquaculture Advisory Council made clear in a virtual meeting on Dec. 7.

Aquaculture lease applications are backlog because hearings stopped, which is "a huge concern for the aquaculture industry," Council member Briana Warner said. In addition, 2021 funding for the state aquaculture program is unknown. Proposed legislation set for a vote in the 129th Legislature special session, after approval from the Marine Resources Committee, never happened when the Legislature did not reconvene. "We have to start from scratch," Department of Marine Resources Director of Policy Deirdre Gilbert said.

Advisory Council members are chosen from the aquaculture industry and currently are Warner, of Ocean Approved in Falmouth; Chris Davis, of Pemaquid Oyster Co. in Waldoboro; Fiona de Koning, of Acadia Aqua Farms in Bar Harbor; and Greg Lambert, of Cooke Aquaculture in Fairfield, plus the DMR commissioner or the commissioner's designee as an ex-officio, non-voting member.

Staff from the DMR Aquaculture Division attended the meeting, as did Deputy Commissioner Meredith Mendelson and, for the second hour, Commissioner Patrick Keliher.

Marcy Nelson, acting director of the Aquaculture Division, said the backlog of applications is significant. While pre-application meetings took place virtually and in parking lots, 40 lease applications arrived in 2020, as the division was still working through the 60 applications from 2019. Meanwhile, the division has lost three of its six staff members, two full-time and one part-time, since May.

Mendelson noted that staff can handle about two hearings a month on average, including the reports they issue from the hearings. "There's no way we're going to keep up," she said. And, adding new staff positions is unlikely with the current budget constraints. "The agency has invested heavily in aquaculture," Mendelson said, but that funding can’t be sustained.

The DMR set a $715,000 budget for aquaculture in 2020 and received $177,000 in application and license fees. The remaining $541,000 came from the DMR ($100,000); the General Fund ($105,000); indirect DMR funds ($287,000); a Coastal Zone Management (CZM) grant ($31,463); and the Opportunity Fund ($116,995). Some of that funding, particularly from the General Fund and indirect DMR funds, will likely not be available in 2021.

"Because of COVID, we're in a real spot, which frankly leaves the industry in a tight spot," Commissioner Keliher said, noting that the DMR allocated the indirect DMR funds to aquaculture because of anticipated growth in that area. "We've all seen that growth," he said. "We've not been able to keep up with that growth." While Keliher said he has heard that state revenues in 2021 will be better than expected and that relief may come from Congress, he concluded, "Hope is not a plan."

On the legislative side, Gilbert said the 2020 bill proposal An Act to Amend Maine's Aquaculture Leasing and Licensing Statutes will be resubmitted, with revisions.

The most substantive change requires the holder of a limited-purpose aquaculture (LPA) license to directly supervise all activities on the lease site. The additions to the proposed bill would recoup costs the DMR pays to publish public notices, which run about $30,000 a year, and limit the times when LPA applications will be accepted.

"We have [LPA] applications coming in throughout the year," Mendelson said. And, when lease renewals start flooding in at the end of the year, "it's incredibly busy."

Other proposed amendments in the bill are:
- Notification — The Department of Environmental Protection need only be notified if an application involves activities that have a discharge.
- Revocation — A lease may be revoked if activities are being conducted in "a manner substantially injurious to the public health."
- Renewals — Applications must be submitted within 30 days prior to expiration of a lease, reduced from 90 days.
- Transfers — The fee to transfer a lease to a new leaseholder must be paid at the time the application is submitted instead of when the transfer is executed.
- Expansions — A leaseholder may not apply for an expansion of a lease until the person has held the lease for two years, whereas now there is no time limit; the applicant is responsible for providing public notice, not DMR; and the DMR notifies riparian landowners, not the applicant.
- Fees — The DMR may establish fees for testing or location-specific studies to ensure a leaseholder's products are safe for human consumption, when requested by the applicant.
- Changes in Operation — Language is broadened in allowing changes to leases, and the DMR will establish a fee for lease changes.
- Limited Purpose Aquaculture — The fee for residents would increase from $50 to $100, and from $300 to $400 for nonresidents; the license holder must supervise lease activities; and removes the commissioner's rule-making authority regarding LPA leases.

To stay informed on upcoming aquaculture meetings, go to www.maine.gov/dmr/aquaculture/meetinglist.html.
Lobstermen use their hands and wrists more intensively than workers in many other jobs. The actions of hauling traps, removing the lobsters, measuring, banding, tossing back undersized lobsters, rebaiting, closing the trap and resetting involve the hands and wrists.

So it is not a surprise that for lobstermen the hands and wrists are the leading location for acute injuries, such as cuts. In terms of general long-lasting pain, the hands and wrists are the third-most common location for pain and discomfort. Only the low back and the right shoulder area are more commonly mentioned as locations for chronic pain.

In a sample of 395 lobstermen interviewed about aches, pain, and discomfort, 1 out of 5 had experienced pain in the hand/wrist area caused by work in the three months prior to their interview. Half of them experienced the pain in both hands. Only about 1 in 20 of those who experienced pain in at least one hand, however, received treatment for these pains according to the study by the Northeast Center for Occupational Safety and Health.

In a similar survey of 286 captains interviewed every three months for four years, 200 reported acute injuries in the hand/wrist area. Of those 200, 56 acute hand/wrist injuries were severe enough to affect the normal work process. Cuts and sprains were the most common injuries. Broken bones, amputations, and burns were relatively rare events.

Typical items that increase the risk for acute injury include sharp edges of knives, trap wire, bait irons, lobster claws, etc., as well as pinching or being caught in between heavy objects. Risk factors for acute or cumulative trauma to the hand/wrist generally include muscle exhaustion, awkward joint angles caught in between heavy objects. Without proper rest, recovery, and return to normal strength, the muscles and soft tissue in the hand/wrist area can be seriously and forceful exertion. Simply repeating the same motions day-after-day can cause injury to the hands and wrists. Photo courtesy of NIH.gov.

People like to try their own ideas to reduce exposure to risk of injury, and lobstermen are no exception. They often devise “fixes” that reduce their risks. For example, they might try different gloves. The right kind of glove is partially a matter of comfort, strength and durability. Last spring, a project conducted by high school students in the Eastern Maine Skippers Program and in the North Haven Community School examined this issue and presented their findings at the 2020 Maine Fishermen’s Forum. Not surprisingly, they reported that it was difficult to purchase comfortable, protective gloves that would fit under the rubber gloves worn by lobstermen.

Research indicates that commercial fishermen prefer ideas that have been proven, and, more importantly, ideas that they can adapt in their own way. Locating tools (knives, gauges, banders, etc.) in easily accessible locations, for example, can reduce unnecessary movement, save time, and reduce awkward postures. Simply repeating the same motions day-after-day can cause injury to the hands and wrists.

In closing, if you have hand/wrist pain, review your movements and activities to figure out which ones are causing pain. Does the pain come from gripping and grasping, or from movement you repeat over and over, or from a tool that requires a non-neutral angle between the wrist and hand or that puts pressure on your palm? When not fishing, try to avoid activities that cause the same pain. Think about changing your hand movements or your tools. Perhaps add comfortable, warm gloves to your routine. And remember that your indoor winter activities, such as working with rope or sanding buoys, could contribute to hand/wrist pain. Finally, consider consulting a physician about the pain you are experiencing to address the issue before it becomes a serious or hard-to-treat condition.

By Scott Palmer, ScD and Ann Backus, MS

Lobster Bands
We carry:
Printed and Non Printed
Snedder
Standard
Cold Water Snedder
Jumbo

Rain Gear:
Guy Cotton
Grundens
Helly Hansen
NEMI Rain Gear

Boots:
Guy Cotton
Xtratuff
Muck Boots
Servus
Grundens

BUOYS:
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The Center for Biological Diversity, Conservation Law Foundation, Defenders of Wildlife and the Humane Society of the United States petitioned the Department of Commerce to make an emergency declaration that groundfish and lobster fisheries poses an immediate threat to the survival of the endangered North Atlantic right whale. The petition calls for the immediate closure of areas off southern New England and seasonal closures of areas where lobster and crab fishermen operate. The petition specifically calls on the Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross to designate a year-round gear closure south of Martha’s Vineyard and Nantucket, and three seasonal offshore closures in the Gulf of Maine, when the use of vertical lines by lobster and Jonah crab fisheries will be prohibited. In response, the Maine delegation, led by Congressman Jared Golden, Senators Susan Collins and Angus King, and Congresswoman Chellie Pingree pushed the Department of Commerce to reject a petition looking to create emergency fishery regulations in order to protect North Atlantic right whales. The delegation noted that the petition “would bypass the established regulatory process and could set a dangerous precedent that could needlessly close lobster fisheries throughout New England.”

**MSC SAYS CANADA LOBSTER FISHING POSES LOW RISK TO RIGHT WHALES**

Inshore lobster fishing in Canada’s Maritime provinces poses a low risk to critically endangered right whales, according to the latest assessment prepared for the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). One of the key tests used by the MSC to evaluate all trap fisheries on the Eastern Seaboard is their impact on right whales. To keep the blue MSC eco-label for another five years the inshore lobster fleets will have to develop an action plan to protect and conserve right whales. A draft MSC assessment released said the risk of entanglement in the Maritimes is not zero, but “the probability of interaction with North Atlantic right whales is very low,” based on where and when the traps are set.

**LOWER CATCH ESTIMATE PROJECTED FOR 2021 SCALLOP SEASON**

The New England Fishery Management Council announced that the Atlantic sea scallop projection for the 2021 fishing year would be 40 million pounds of scallops. That is about 23% lower than the 52-million-pound projection for the 2020 season. The 2021 projection would make the season’s catch the lowest since 2015, when 36.9 million pounds were harvested. From 2016 through 2020, landings have been above the 42-million-pound range. The Council noted that the fishery has landed about 36.5 million pounds to date for scallops [mid-December] and that the landing prediction for 2020 was an overestimate. Several years of excellent fishing have been due to scallops coming up in the 2012 and 2013 class years that are now reaching peak growth potential.

**MASSACHUSETTS LOBSTERMEN FACING NEW RULES**

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries is proposing multiple amendments to current rules regulating fixed gear fisheries in an effort to protect North Atlantic right whales. One of the key amendments would expand the existing large whale seasonal trap gear closure, which runs from February 1 to April 30, to all waters under the jurisdiction of the state. The Division would also have the authority to extend trap gear closures if right whales remain present after April 30. Other proposed regulation changes include lowering commercial lobstermen’s maximum buoy line diameter to 3/8” and requiring all gear to be rigged with buoy lines that break when exposed to 1,700 pounds of tension. Research indicates that this breakaway strength could reduce the number of life-threatening entanglements for large whales by at least 72%.

**FEDERAL STIMULUS BILL PROVIDES ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR FISHERIES SECTOR**

In the federal stimulus bill, passed in late December, additional money was allocated to the Fisheries Disaster Assistance program which, earlier in the year, had provided $20 million in relief to the Maine fishing sector. The bill provided $300 million to that program, to be made available until September 30, 2021. Of that amount, $30 million is designated for tribal fishery participants and $15 million is for fisheries and aquaculture ventures taking place around the Great Lakes.

The federal relief package also includes more than $11 billion for agriculture and nutrition programs, which includes seafood and aquaculture. Specifically, there are funds to purchase food products for people in need and for grants and loans to small or mid-sized food processors or distributors.

Finally, the bill includes $125 billion in small business relief which provides an additional $284 billion for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which includes special programs for small businesses with 10 or fewer employees, simplifies the forgiveness program for loans of $150,000 or less, and repeals the requirement to deduct an Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) advance from the PPP forgiveness amount. The EIDL program also received $20 billion for small businesses operating in low income communities.

**DMR JOINS WHITE SHARK RESEARCH EFFORT**

The Department of Marine Resources joined forces with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, the Atlantic White Shark Conservancy, the Center for Coastal Studies, the New Hampshire Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, the University of Massachusetts Amherst, the New England Aquarium, the University of Connecticut, the University of Maine, the Atlantic Shark Institute, the NOAA Fisheries Apex Predators Program, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada in a collaborative effort to study white sharks within the Northwest Atlantic Ocean. The research will involve hundreds of acoustic receivers throughout the north-east to detect white shark movements from Rhode Island to Canada. Research will also be conducted on multiple life stages using new and innovative tagging technologies, such as acoustic transmitters, data loggers, and satellite-linked tags, as well as tissue analysis.
VITAL GULF PHYTOPLANKTON SURVEY RESUMES

By AILA staff

A new agreement between NOAA's Northeast Fisheries Science Center, the Marine Biological Association in Plymouth, England and the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, announced in October, will allow a long-running plankton survey in the Gulf of Maine to resume. The survey was originally conducted across the Gulf of Maine from 1961 to 2017.

"Continuing a long-term time series like the Continuous Plankton Recorder Survey is essential to understanding the impact of climate change to marine ecosystems," said Chris Melrose, a research oceanographer at the Northeast Fisheries Science Center's laboratory in Narragansett, Rhode Island and NOAA representative on the agreement.

"Many marine species are shifting their distributions as ocean waters warm. Because plankton are an important food source for many species, including the endangered North Atlantic right whale, knowing about changes in the plankton helps us to understand other changes we see in the ecosystem."

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) will provide funding for the survey through the NOAA Cooperative Institute for the North Atlantic Region, hosted by the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. The Marine Biological Association in England manages merchant vessel-based plankton surveys around the world. The association will run and maintain the resumed Gulf of Maine survey through 2024 under this agreement.

The survey uses a continuous plankton recorder (CPR), a sampling device that is about 3 feet long. In this survey, it is towed from so-called "ships of opportunity," such as merchant vessels. These vessels ply the same routes between ports from year to year. Scientists refer to the routes as survey transects. The recorder stays at a depth of roughly 33 feet. It filters and collects plankton from the water over long distances. The plankton samples are stored on silk mesh in a cartridge inside the instrument and are analyzed later in a laboratory. Methods of sampling and plankton analysis have not changed since 1958, resulting in an important baseline of data against which change can be measured.

"The value of sampling in an area accumulates each subsequent year, building a dataset of evidence and insight that we can use to understand recent changes in the marine ecosystem of the Gulf of Maine," said David Johns, head of the CPR Survey at the Marine Biological Association. In 1961, cooperating commercial vessels began towing CPRs in the Gulf of Maine during their routine transits between ports. NOAA's Northeast Fisheries Science Center assisted with those efforts, and in 1974 inherited the route between Boston, Massachusetts and Halifax, Nova Scotia. The center began a second route in 1971 across the Mid-Atlantic Bight between New York and New Jersey and Bermuda.

Between 1961 and May 2013, there were 446 successful CPR tows on commercial vessels along the Gulf of Maine transect. At the time, the CPR survey in the Northwest Atlantic was the second longest running CPR program, after the original in England. It was also the longest running plankton time-series in the Northwest Atlantic.

The Fisheries Science Center discontinued the two transects in 2013, but the CPR Survey in England picked up the routes and continued sampling in the Northwest Atlantic until 2017. Data from the CPR tows surveys in the Gulf of Maine have been analyzed by the Gulf of Maine Research Institute, a partner in the NOAA Cooperative Institute for the North Atlantic Region.

"The Gulf of Maine is changing quickly and the CPR is our best tool for seeing the impact on the base of the food web," said Andy Pershing, former chief scientific officer at the Gulf of Maine Research Institute. "This view is essential for understanding how climate change will impact commercial species like cod, herring and haddock, and protected species like right whales."

DMR BEGINS MAINE SEAFOOD PROMOTION CAMPAIGN

By Melissa Waterman

In December, the Department of Marine Resources (DMR) launched a branding and promotion initiative to promote Maine seafood to consumers, many of whom are preparing meals at home. Retail seafood sales are up 35% compared to last year, according to market research company Information Resources, Inc.

"Like producers across the globe, Maine's seafood industry continues to face the challenge of rapidly changing markets," said DMR Commissioner Patrick Keliher in a press release. "But this challenge also presents an opportunity. The Gulf of Maine's cool, clean water is home to a wide variety of premium seafood products that are easy to prepare. The Maine Seafood branding and promotion initiative will help consumers learn about, find, and prepare Maine Seafood in their own kitchens."

The Maine Seafood branding and promotion initiative has a $1 million budget, which is part of the $20 million CARES Act relief funds awarded to Maine this fall. The money has been awarded to Weber Shandwick, a public relations firm which also conducts the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative's marketing campaign.

"The funds will be used to raise consumer awareness about Maine seafood and develop a unified brand," said Jeff Nichols, DMR director of communications, who is overseeing the initiative. "The goal is to help consumers find and prepare Maine seafood at home."

Nichols pointed out that the closure of many traditional markets for Maine seafood due to the coronavirus pandemic also presents an opportunity due to the fact that consumer purchases of seafood have taken such a sharp upturn. "There is clearly an increased interest in seafood. [Development of] a unified brand will connect consumers with suppliers of Maine seafood."

The initiative focuses on the attributes that distinguish Maine seafood, including the premium nature of the products, the pristine marine environment of the Atlantic Ocean, and the industry's passion for quality. The initiative's emphasis will be on the variety of Maine seafood products that are available to consumers and the ease with which they can be prepared at home.

The Maine Seafood website (https://seafoodfrommaine.com/) features a directory of Maine Seafood suppliers, listing companies alphabetically, as well as grocery stores and wholesalers. The site specifically highlights Atlantic salmon, clams, lobster and crab, groundfish, mussels, oysters, scallops and seaweeds. The initiative's Instagram account posts an array of recipes suitable for the home cook.

"We will also use traditional and social media to conduct broad and targeted outreach," Nichols said. "We will be rolling out a Pinterest account after the first of the year."

DMR's contract with Weber Shandwick concludes in July 2021. Nichols said that discussions are underway concerning future funding for the initiative after that date.
Andy Gove of Stonington was a life-long lobsterman. He was also many other things — a halibut fisherman, a herring spotter, a record-breaking lobster boat racer. And now, posthumously (Gove died in June at age 90), he is an author. The Life of a Maine Lobsterman, published by Penobscot Books, is a collection of Andy’s tales, stories of life long ago and the ways in which he and other fishermen made a living from the sea.

Gove has a storyteller’s knack for addressing his readers as if they were in the room with him. From his opening sentence — “How would you like to read a book on the life of a lobsterman?” — one is drawn into his world.

Gove was born in Stonington in 1930 but grew up on Eagle Island with his grandparents, Earl and Laura Brown and his great-grandfather, George Brown. He recounts a childhood focused on simple things, like horsing around with his best friend Johnny Quinn, and planting seeds with his grandfather for the family vegetable garden.

Some of the stories have a sweetly innocent tone, such as the one about the hen Gove encountered as a very young boy: “…one day when I was about two years old, [Grampa] was repairing the hen yard fence and I had to pee. One old red hen was walking by looking for worms. I can’t remember why, but I took aim for the hen. Grampa hollered, ‘Don’t do that!’ but he was too late. The hen thought she had a worm and I can still see her flapping her wings trying to pull me through the fence. I guess I howled and Gram rocked me the rest of the day, but I learned to listen and what ‘no’ meant.”

Living on Eagle Island was hard work for the few families that made their homes there. Gove recounts digging clams in the winter — “They would be awful good to help keep the gas out of your empty stomach” — smoking and salting fish, canning mackerel and herring and anything that grew in the garden. Gove’s grandfather taught him the skills of a fisherman. Earl Brown converted a fourteen-foot sailboat owned by Dorothy Sawyer into Gove’s first power boat. “Grampa hollered, ‘Don’t do that!’ but he was too late. The hen thought she had a worm and I can still see her flapping her wings trying to pull me through the fence. I guess I howled and Gram rocked me the rest of the day, but I learned to listen and what ‘no’ meant.”

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