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By MLA staff

Two major announcements related to North Atlantic right whales and the U.S. lobster fishery were made by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) as 2020 ended and 2021 began.

On December 31, NMFS released its long-awaited draft whale rules, published as a Proposed Rule under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). The Proposed Rule would modify the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP) to achieve a 60% reduction in risk to right whales from the northeast lobster fishery.

In early January, NMFS published its draft Biological Opinion, under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), on the impact of ten fisheries, including American lobster and Jonah crab, on the survival and recovery of North Atlantic right whales. NMFS is seeking public comment on both of these documents. The Biological Opinion finds that the lobster and crab fisheries do not jeopardize the right whale population only because of planned implementation of a stringent and likely impossible new risk reduction framework resulting in reductions of 88% to 98% over ten years.


The MMPA and ESA have similar objectives and work together to protect and aid the recovery of North Atlantic right whales; however, they have different mandates. NMFS recognizes that MMPA measures, such as the Proposed Rule amending the ALWTRP, contribute toward ESA goals. Accordingly, the draft biological opinion incorporates the Proposed Rule as the first of four steps necessary to permit federal fisheries in a manner that will not jeopardize right whale recovery.

This may seem like good news for the lobster community – the fishery will not get shut down, at least in the short-term. The draft biological opinion determined that the lobster fishery is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of North Atlantic right whales as long as the Proposed Rule and additional whale conservation measures, which mandate an 88% to 98% cumulative risk reduction by 2030, are implemented in federal waters fisheries. Those additional measures are outlined in the draft biological opinion.

INDUSTRY INCREASINGLY CONCERNED OVER STATE’S WIND PLAN

Due to the speed with which the state of Maine was pushing an application to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management for an offshore lease in order to construct a wind energy research array in waters off southern Maine, six fishing industry organizations and more than 300 individual fishermen joined with the Responsible Offshore Development Association to send a letter in early January to Governor Mills expressing their profound concern. The text of the letter follows.

January 7, 2021

Dear Governor Mills,

Maine’s fishing community maintains serious concerns about current offshore wind energy (OSW) efforts envisioned for the Gulf of Maine (GOM). To begin constructive dialogue, the fishing community supports the creation of an inclusive planning process and research program over the rapid implementation of commercial-scale OSW facilities. The industry strongly urges you to prioritize a thorough review of Maine’s OSW statutes and regulations as a more measured first step to ensure the state has the tools in place to minimize potential harms and maximize the benefits of OSW to the people of Maine.

On April 14th, 2020, approximately 50 GOM fishing industry and community leaders submitted a letter to you, Governor Sununu, and Governor Baker regarding GOM OSW development, and we

2021 brings beauty but also unwelcome news to Maine lobstermen. Photo by M. Philbrook.

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IN THE NEWS

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Although it may seem during February that the Maine coast is quiet and still, waiting for the start of spring to come to life again, much in fact is happening. As we recount in this issue of Landings, this winter has seen burgeoning interest in offshore wind energy possibility in the Gulf of Maine. A proposal by Governor Janet Mills to apply for a lease in federal waters off southern Maine to construct a research wind farm is moving forward rapidly. New Hampshire is considering a bill that would require 600 megawatts of power from offshore wind. Private wind developers are contemplating possible projects in the Gulf of Maine as well.

The Responsible Offshore Development Association (RODA), a membership-based organization of fishermen and fishing groups, quickly organized a letter to Governor Mills on behalf of six fishery organizations challenging the abbreviated schedule for the lease application and the lack of opportunity for fishermen to fully be part of the process. “We are troubled that the timeline for the state's proposed research array allows for neither adequate planning nor engagement with the fishing community. We ask you to consider adjusting your approach to ensure the timeline and research plans will support meaningful fishing community collaboration,” stated the more than 300 fishermen and fishing companies who signed the letter.

In response, the Governor reaffirmed the state’s commitment to moving forward with offshore wind development. The Governor wrote to fishermen that she will submit legislation to create a 10-year moratorium on any new state waters wind development and will order a review the state’s authorities related to leasing state waters for energy projects. Concerning the fishing communities’ concerns on the timeline for the research array, she delayed her deadline to submit a lease application by a few months while acknowledging that she was not willing to push the timeline off as far as some would like. “Make no mistake about it, offshore wind is coming to the Gulf of Maine, even without my support,” she wrote.

Jack Merrill, an Islesford lobsterman and member of the Responsible Offshore Development Association, proposed a abbreviated schedule for the lease area, which essentially is doing research to open the door for ownership of hundreds of thousands of ocean acres to private corporations, is foolhardy.”

On a different and equally contentious topic, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) released in December 2020 its draft modifications to the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan, generally known as “the whale rules.” The draft measures include familiar changes, such as requiring longer intervals, weakening vertical lines and expanding gear marking. But NMFS’s proposed modifications also call for two new seasonal restricted areas open only to ropeless fishing; one off southern Maine and the other south of Nantucket Island. In addition, areas now closed to lobstering due to the presence of whales could be opened to those fishermen who agree to use ropeless fishing gear. NMFS is required by an August 2020 court ruling to finalize the new whale rules by May 31, 2021.

Then in early January NMFS released a draft of the much-anticipated Biological Opinion on the American lobster and Jonah crab fisheries. The Biological Opinion (required under the Endangered Species Act) determines if the continued permitting of the fisheries jeopardizes the recovery or survival of the right whale population. The draft Biological Opinion sets out a ten-year framework to reduce deaths and serious injury to right whales to less than one per year (0.11). Based on the assumption that the draft whale rules published in December will be in force later this year and the full framework will be implemented over the next 10 years, the Biological Opinion found that the two fisheries do not jeopardize right whales. The provisions of the ten-year framework, however, will prevent tremendous challenges to lobstermen.

Marianne LaCroix, executive director of the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative, provides an update on the activities planned by the Collaborative in 2021. The emphasis in this second year of the pandemic is to find ways to accelerate purchases of Maine lobster by home cooks. To do that the Collaborative will help develop new products that consumers can find in their local grocery stores as well as promote the versatility and ease of use of lobster for home cooks. The Collaborative’s dealer directory allows companies interested in sourcing Maine lobster to connect directly with those who sell it.

The 130th Legislature is also in session and will be doing much of its work through virtual meetings. Much of the Legislature’s work will be focused on COVID and the economy. The Joint Committee on Marine Resources membership is a mix of new and familiar faces. The Committee has fewer bills than usual to consider in this session. Bills to be discussed include a review of Maine’s aquaculture laws and the reauthorization of the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative.

Sadly, Maine’s fishing community will not be able to gather in March for the annual Maine Fishermen’s Forum, a disappointment for so many who look forward to the yearly opportunity to catch up with friends and fishing colleagues. The Forum instead will be hosting many virtual events online in coming months. Chilloa Young, Forum coordinator, offers us a preview of activities planned for the coming months. I hope you are keeping warm and safe for the remainder of this winter, and that you enjoy this issue of Landings. We welcome your feedback.
The new year is bringing many changes, so the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative is prepared to remain flexible and pivot as needed to take advantage of market conditions. We are starting the year with a continued focus on promoting Maine lobster to home cooks. Our public relations team is working with journalists to place Maine lobster stories in consumer publications so that we have a flow of positive stories throughout the year. We are also planning a digital advertising campaign to educate people about the ease of preparing Maine lobster at home. We will capitalize on holidays to increase awareness of lobster as a desirable, premium and accessible meal solution. We also have influencers — social media users who have built up a reputation for expertise on culinary issues — developing and sharing accessible Maine lobster recipes and tips.

Product Innovation

Seafood is the fastest-growing supermarket food category, but most lobster options are limited to the seafood counter with familiar products like live lobster and tails. Value-added products (like burgers, cook-in-a-bag, jerky, and meal kits) are experiencing the biggest growth spurt, with seafood offering more value-added options than any other protein.

We want to insert Maine lobster into this value-added pipeline by leveraging the versatility of lobster to the target audience. We will also make it easy for customers to source Maine lobster for new product development through our dealer database. The Collaborative will work with processors and dealers, supermarket chains and food manufacturers throughout the process.

Issues Management

Issues such as new right whale regulations and offshore wind energy projects are on the minds of many involved in the fishery. While industry organizations focus on the regulatory impacts of these issues, the Collaborative works on protecting the reputation of Maine lobster among buyers and consumers. Our priority is ensuring that customers have confidence in purchasing Maine lobster. One way we do that is by surveying people to determine customer sentiment. This helps guide our communications strategy. For example, we learned that most consumers are unaware of any connection between right whales and the lobster fishery, and purchases weren’t impacted even among those who were aware. With this information we developed fact sheets and social media content, such as videos and graphics, that we distributed to a targeted audience. We continue to monitor customer sentiment and have developed more communications materials that we can release if media coverage warrants it.

The Collaborative is able to provide media training and message development on many issues for industry spokesmen, as well as media outreach and promotional pieces that share the industry’s perspective.

Supply Chain Marketing

We are continuing to educate wholesale customers about Maine lobster with tactics including public relations outreach, webinars, social media and advertising. We are ready to exhibit at the Seafood Expo in Boston if it takes place.
appreciate your April 29th response. Since the time of that correspondence, the
State of Maine announced its plan to pursue a floating OSW "research array" and held four informational webinars about the project from December 15-22, 2020. Maine's fishing community members raised many questions during the informational meetings and unfortunately, received too few answers.

We are troubled that the timeline for the state's proposed research array allows for neither adequate planning nor engagement with the fishing community. We ask you to consider adjusting your approach to ensure the timeline and research plans will support meaningful fishing community collaboration. We are willing to work, in good faith, with the state on the research array to consider outcomes that may minimize impacts to fishing practices and provide much-needed socioeconomic and environmental data. However, this is only possible if we have a reasonable timeline and planning process to complete this work.

In December, the Department of the Interior (DOI) clarified its policy prioritizing the requirement to minimize OSW impacts to fishing operations through a legislative process. The DOI states that "[n]owhere does the statute indicate that the Secretary is only to prevent interference with the legal right to navigate or fish in an area. It is the Secretary's job to provide for the prevention of interference with those uses" (emphases added). In practice, this means that OSW projects cannot be approved unless they do not unreasonably interfere with fishing activity. As pointed out during all four informational webinars, given the significant fishing occurring in the GOM, and the relative lack of fine-scale spatial data, the risk of unreasonable interference would greatly increase if a project is rushed and does not include close coordination with fishing experts. Given our concerns, we respectfully offer the following requests.

The state should start with a review and update its statutes and regulations for OSW development and use its CZMA authority

If Maine truly intends to take "a measured, deliberate approach that allows the State to engage the fishing community expertise to minimize potential harms and maximize the benefits to Maine people from offshore wind" as expressed in the state's OSW announcement, we believe the State has the most to gain from a prompt and thorough review of Maine's OSW statutes and regulations to ensure that they reflect Maine's values, prioritize research, and protect Maine's world-renowned fishing industry. Would it be possible for the Governor's Energy Office to conduct this work as a first step in its Maine Offshore Wind Roadmap plan? This information is critical to ensure that Maine has the tools in place that it will need to ensure that any OSW developments occur in a manner that benefits Maine's economy, climate goals, culture, and heritage.

Maine's OSW Research Array Timeline Must be Sufficient to Meaningfully Engage the Fishing Community

With regard to the research array, we are concerned with the extremely abbreviated timeline Maine has announced for preparation of its project application to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM). A previous letter from the fishing community detailed the significant amount of time required to work collaboratively with fishermen to develop project design and data collection if impacts to Maine coastal communities and sustainable seafood production are to be effectively minimized. Your response stated that the Maine Offshore Wind Initiative "entails a thoughtful approach to development" that "emphasizes compatibility . . . to inform offshore wind siting considerations and to minimize any impact on Maine's commercial fishing and maritime industries." Simply put, the State's announced goal of submitting a full project application in a few short months falls far short of affording the time necessary to meet this commitment.

This is especially true considering the ongoing emergency associated with COVID-19. Despite the assurance that your office will work with us to "ensure that we organize a stakeholder process that is mindful of immediate health and business impacts from COVID-19," we have received no roadmap for how the State intends to develop partnerships with the industry that are cognizant of the significant current limitations on meetings, unusual time demands, and economic demands fishermen currently face as essential workers providing food to the nation.

It is unclear what benefit such a short timeline would provide, and no satisfactory answer was given during the webinars. While the BOEM review process takes time, and floating OSW technology is changing quickly and years away from being ready for rapid deployment at the scale envisioned by even this research project, it is imperative to make good decisions early in the project (siting and process) to lessen time and money wasted. This decision will have a significant and long-lasting impact on the fishing community as it commits the state to a specific site and 20-year operation of a commercial wind farm.

The Research Array Must be Part of a Larger Planning Effort

The state has characterized the proposed research array as a stand-alone project to inform future OSW development. As such, the state marginalizes the reality that other OSW developers may also submit successful commercial lease applications for this region in the near-term. Moving forward with an application for a research array in the absence of any fundamental planning work to determine how the GOM may be developed for OSW is short-sighted. This approach does not allow the fishing industry to understand how the research array might fit into a larger OSW development or how to minimize the cumulative impacts of multiple such developments. Moving the research array forward without the necessary context will lead to poor decisions on siting, cable sizing and placement, and is likely to increase the cumulative impacts on both the environment and fishing communities.

In addition, the fishing community has many questions about the costs and benefits of OSW in the GOM when compared to other renewable energy sources, the potential for new jobs created versus the loss of fishing jobs, the cost of power, and many more. In the absence of this information, it is very difficult to expect fishermen to work with the state on siting an array or provide comments.

The Proposed Research Array Must Include Robust Research Plan

The fishing community is dismayed at the characterization of the State's OSW development as a research facility without any clear plans to fund or conduct research cooperatively with the fishing fleet. A full research proposal should be drafted collaboratively with fishing experts and made available to the public. The fiscal proposal must outline the data types and methods for collection, the analysis to be completed, full timeline, and the benefits to the people of Maine. It is unclear whether this basic information will be provided before a project application is submitted; if not, fishermen and the public cannot be expected to provide reasonable and informative comments.

Construction of a wind energy facility will result in direct spatial conflicts with fishing, which merits a full socio-economic analysis prior to project planning. A European Parliament report recently found a "clear gap of economic and socio-cultural impact assessments" on OSW's impacts to fishing, so such analysis will require robust scientific expertise. The State should also be transparent about the location of the planned research proposal. Based on the information in the webinars, limited locations within the area of consideration are suitable for array deployment. Additionally, site-specific research questions may also be investigated depending on the local characteristics of the research site.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests so we can preserve Maine's commercial fisheries and ensure they remain an important part of Maine's economy, culture and heritage in years to come.

Maine Lobstermen's Association
Patrice McCarron
Patrice McCarron
Maine Coast Fishermen's Association
Ben Martens
Ben Martens
Maine Lobster Dealers Association
Annie Tselskos
Annie Tselskos
Responsible Offshore Development Alliance
Annie Hawkins
Annies Hawkins

Maine Lobstermen's Association
Maine Lobstermen's Union Local 207
Rocky Alley

Maine Coast Fishermen's Association
Ben Martens
Paul Anderson

Maine Lobster Dealers Association
Annie Tselskos
Shelia Dassatt

and 300 individual fishermen and businesses
In response to concerns about wind development in the Gulf of Maine from Maine's fishing industry expressed in a January 7 letter, Governor Janet Mills responded in a letter to the industry, which follows below.

January 22, 2021

To Maine fishermen and fishing organizations,

I wanted you to hear from me directly regarding my administration's proposal for a floating offshore wind research array in the Gulf of Maine. I am keenly aware that offshore wind (OSW) is a concern for some of you. However, I feel strongly that Maine must be committed to the development of clean energy, to the fight against climate change, and to the pursuit of innovation to create economic opportunity for our people.

We are all seeing the results of climate change firsthand - warming temperatures, violent weather events, rising and warming ocean waters. Make no mistake about it, OSW is coming to the Gulf of Maine, even without my support. It would be irresponsible for me to ignore both the potential benefit of offshore wind as part of Maine's clean energy portfolio, and the possible impacts it may have on Maine's natural resources and heritage industries such as fishing which are a vital part of our economy and our cultural identity.

The economic and job creation opportunities were reaffirmed in 2019 with the passage of the Maine Aqua Ventus legislation and recent state economic reports. States across the country are racing to lead in OSW technology, job creation, and port development. This industry is also growing rapidly in other parts of the world, leading to new opportunities in sectors from boat building to construction to engineers. Maine is approaching OSW development in a way that maximizes good paying jobs for Maine people and economic benefits for our state while seeking to minimize impacts through a phased approach.

As you have pointed out, we need to work with the fishing industry to find creative, innovative solutions to help our communities and economies thrive. We have the opportunity to work proactively to learn how best offshore wind can coexist with fishing and other existing uses. If Maine doesn’t take the lead, I believe we — the state, and the fishing industry in particular — will be at a great disadvantage in the future. I remain steadfast in my commitment to work with the fishing industry to find creative, innovative solutions to help our communities and economies thrive.

Governor

Janet T. Mills
opinion’s “North Atlantic Right Whale Conservation Framework.”

“It is clear that NMFS has heard MLA’s concerns that shutting down the lobster fishery would be devastating for Maine and our coastal communities,” said Patrice McCarron, executive director of the Maine lobstermen’s Association. “NMFS has provided a path to keep the fishery going for another five years. Beyond that, however, it is inconceivable how our fisheries would survive a 98% cumulative risk reduction by 2030.”

The proposed rule amending the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan

The first step in the draft biological opinion’s Conservation Framework is adoption of NMFS’s Proposed Rule in 2021. The Proposed Rule, which was presented to the public at four virtual meetings in January, results in at least a 60% reduction of entanglement risk of right whales by the lobster and Jonah crab fishery.

NMFS has stated that it will reconvene the Take Reduction Team to address the risk of whale entanglement from the gillnet fishery and other Atlantic trap/pot fisheries in 2021 in order to fulfill Phase 2 of the Conservation Framework.

The Proposed Rule includes a variety of whale conservation measures, the majority of which were put forward by the states and Area 3 fishermen. For Maine lobstermen most of the measures, such as modifications in gear marking, trawling up and the use of weak points in vertical lines, were proposed to NMFS by the Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) and have been discussed at length. A seasonal closure in the offshore waters of Area 1 and a push toward ropeless fishing, however, are new proposals and are of grave concern to many Maine fishermen.

DMR’s proposal for whale rules also included a provision for “conservation equivalencies.” Such measures would be commensurate with the management approaches included in the Proposed Rule. DMR held a series of zone council meetings last fall to finalize conservation equivalency proposals for each lobster zone. While the allowance of conservation equivalencies is not referenced directly in the Proposed Rule, Colleen Coogan, NMFS Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan Coordinator, told an audience of nearly 100 during a January virtual information meeting on the rules that she expects to receive conservation equivalency proposals from DMR in its comments. NMFS is optimistic that such proposals can be reviewed for possible inclusion in the Final Rule.

What is in the Proposed Rule

For Maine, the draft whale rules, which apply to lobster gear fished in all non-exempt waters (seaward of the exemption line), include new measures for gear marking, trawling up based on distance from shore, weak points in vertical lines and seasonal restricted areas in which ropeless fishing is allowed.

Whale protection measures for lobstermen fishing in Maine’s exempt state waters (from the exemption line to the shore) would require the addition of one weak point half-way down the vertical line, and continuation of the new gear marking implemented by Maine in September 2020. These measures would be implemented by the state of Maine rather than through the federal whale plan and are necessary for Maine to reach its 60% risk reduction goal.

For Area 1 lobstermen (Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts) fishing non-exempt waters, the draft rules propose to increase the number of traps per trawl based on distance from shore. Lobstermen operating from the exemption line to 3 nautical miles (nm), or the sliver, would increase from two traps per trawl to three. Those fishing from 3 to 6 nautical miles would increase from three traps per trawl to eight; from 6 to 12 miles would increase from 10 trap trawls to 15; and outside of 12 miles would increase from 15 to 20-trap trawls to 25-trap trawls. Area 3 fishermen would increase from 20 to 45-trap trawls.

Maine’s proposal to allow lobstermen to split trawls in half using only one endline is not included in the federal proposal.

Area 1 lobstermen fishing in non-exempt waters would also be required to add weak points in all vertical lines. Lobstermen setting gear from the exemption line to 12 nm would add two weak points, at one quarter and halfway down the line; lobstermen fishing outside of 12 miles would add one weak point one-third of the way down the line. Area 3 lobstermen would be required to fish one weak endline per trawl comprised of 77% weak rope.

Two new restricted areas would be created, open only to fishermen using ropeless gear. The Gulf of Maine Area 1 restricted area would lie offshore along the Area 1 line, spanning the length of zones C, D, and E from October to January. The second restricted area lies south of Nantucket Island, from February and March, when large groups of right whales have gathered there in recent years. The Proposed Rule also makes changes to existing seasonal closures. Lobstermen who have been prohibited from setting gear in the Massachusetts Restricted Area and the Great South Channel Area would be allowed to lobster in those areas using ropeless gear.

Finally, the Proposed Rule includes a new state-specific gear marking proposal that requires lobstermen in non-exempt waters to mark their vertical lines with a 3-foot state-specific color within two fathoms of the buoys and with three 12-inch marks at the top, middle and bottom of the line. In addition, there must be a 6-inch green mark within 12 inches of the 3-foot mark. Under this proposal Maine gear would be marked with purple, New Hampshire with yellow, Rhode

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**Summary of Conservation Equivalency Proposals for Maine Lobster Zones as of October 28, 2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance from shore</th>
<th>Status Quo Implemented</th>
<th>DMR Proposal Submitted</th>
<th>Zone A East</th>
<th>Zone A West</th>
<th>Zone B</th>
<th>Zone C</th>
<th>Zone D</th>
<th>Zone E</th>
<th>Zone F</th>
<th>Zone G</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ex. line to 3 miles</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>status quo</td>
<td>status quo</td>
<td>status quo</td>
<td>status quo</td>
<td>status quo</td>
<td>status quo</td>
<td>status quo</td>
<td>status quo</td>
<td>status quo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 6 miles</td>
<td>2's</td>
<td>3's</td>
<td>3's</td>
<td>3's</td>
<td>3's</td>
<td>2's</td>
<td>2's</td>
<td>3's</td>
<td>3's</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 12 miles</td>
<td>5's (A,B,C)</td>
<td>10's (D,E,F)</td>
<td>8's/15's</td>
<td>10's/20's</td>
<td>8's/15's</td>
<td>5's/10's</td>
<td>5's/10's</td>
<td>5's/10's</td>
<td>5's/10's</td>
<td>5's/10's</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Where two trawling up options are listed, the first (lower number) is limited to one endline, the second (higher number) may have two endlines.*

**Weak Points in Buoy Lines**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shore to 3 miles</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>1 point ½ way down</th>
<th>1 point ½ way down</th>
<th>1 point ½ way down</th>
<th>1 point ½ way down</th>
<th>1 point ½ way down</th>
<th>1 point ½ way down</th>
<th>1 point ½ way down</th>
<th>1 point ½ way down</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 to 12 miles</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2 points ½ &amp; ½ way down</td>
<td>1 point 1/3 way down</td>
<td>2 points ½ &amp; ½ way down</td>
<td>2 points ½ &amp; ½ way down</td>
<td>2 points ½ &amp; ½ way down</td>
<td>2 points ½ &amp; ½ way down</td>
<td>1 point 1/3 way down</td>
<td>1 point 1/3 way down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12+ miles</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1 point 1/3 way down</td>
<td>1 point 1/3 way down</td>
<td>1 point 1/3 way down</td>
<td>2 points ½ &amp; ½ way down</td>
<td>2 points ½ &amp; ½ way down</td>
<td>2 points ½ &amp; ½ way down</td>
<td>1 point 1/3 way down</td>
<td>Endline 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Two new restricted areas would be created, open only to fishermen using ropeless gear. The Gulf of Maine Area 1 restricted area would lie offshore along the Area 1 line, spanning the length of zones C, D, and E from October to January. The second restricted area lies south of Nantucket Island, from February and March, when large groups of right whales have gathered there in recent years. The Proposed Rule also makes changes to existing seasonal closures. Lobstermen who have been prohibited from setting gear in the Massachusetts Restricted Area and the Great South Channel Area would be allowed to lobster in those areas using ropeless gear.

Finally, the Proposed Rule includes a new state-specific gear marking proposal that requires lobstermen in non-exempt waters to mark their vertical lines with a 3-foot state-specific color within two fathoms of the buoys and with three 12-inch marks at the top, middle and bottom of the line. In addition, there must be a 6-inch green mark within 12 inches of the 3-foot mark. Under this proposal Maine gear would be marked with purple, New Hampshire with yellow, Rhode
The draft Biological Opinion

Section 7 of the ESA prevents NMFS from authorizing any federal action, such as permitting a fishery, that is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered or threatened species. Due to the sharp population decline in right whales, NMFS conducted a Section 7 consultation reviewing ten federal fisheries for their effects on North Atlantic right whales as well as other ESA-listed species. The resulting "Batched Fisheries Biological Opinion" evaluates interactions between NMFS-authorized fishing activities and ESA-listed species. Its goal is to reduce those interactions and minimize any resulting impacts.

The Conservation Framework included in the draft biological opinion sets a strategy to reduce risk to right whales by phasing in risk reductions in federal fisheries over ten years while those fisheries continue to operate. The framework specifically addresses the American lobster and Jonah crab fisheries, U.S. gillnet fisheries, and other U.S. Atlantic trap/pot fisheries.

The draft biological opinion recognizes that right whales face myriad threats which, cumulatively, put the species at "high risk of extinction." However, NMFS considers these many threats — such as climate change, small population size, limited genetic diversity, low reproduction, interactions with U.S. and Canadian ships and Canadian fisheries, and entanglement taking place in U.S. state waters’ fisheries — as part of the baseline of current conditions negatively impacting right whales. The agency considers whether the continuation of federal fisheries, in addition to these activities, will threaten the survival and recovery of right whales.

The role of Canadian fisheries, vessel strikes

The draft biological opinion is clear that "Canadian fisheries and vessel strikes are outlined in the draft biological opinion’s ten-year Conservation Framework." Deaths of approximately an annual average of 2.2 right whales that, without further action, the federal fisheries are anticipated to result in the death of right whales in Canada, ten of which happened in 2019 after the implementation of Canadian mitigation measures. The model predicts that when both countries take equivalent action, the right whale population will increase.

Removal or PBR) of 0.8 annually. NMFS determined in 2019 that the risk of extinction. Since NMFS declared an Unusual Mortality Event (UME) for right whales in 2017, 31 right whales have died (as of October 2020). Twenty-one deaths occurred in Canada, ten of which happened in 2019 after the implementation of Canadian mitigation measures.

In assessing the impacts of U.S. federal fisheries on right whales, NMFS assumes that the estimated number of right whale M/SIs due to vessel strike and entanglement that occurred in Canada between 2010 and 2019 continue to occur in the future…[and] also that M/SI resulting from vessel strikes in U.S. waters continue to occur.

"This Conservation Framework takes a conservative approach and plans as if the Canadian measures are not benefi ting the right whale population. As more information becomes available on risk reductions in Canadian waters and from other U.S. sources (vessel strikes and state fisheries), the Conservation Framework may be modifi ed to reduce the degree to which additional measures are needed."

Deep cuts for U.S. federal fisheries phased in over ten years

NMFS estimates that "entanglements in the U.S. federal fisheries…seriously injure or result in the death an average of approximately five right whales each year," a fi gure much greater than the allowed death rate (Potential Biological Removal or PBR) of 0.8 annually. NMFS determined in 2019 that the risk of entanglement to the whales from U.S. fishing gear must be reduced by 60% to 80% through the federal whale plan.

Those reductions fall far short of what is needed, according to the draft biological opinion. "Once the ALWTRP measures are implemented, NMFS estimates that, without further action, the federal fisheries are anticipated to result in the death of approximately an annual average of 2.2 right whales (22 right whales over a 10-year period)."

Additional measures “to ensure the fi sheries will not appreciably reduce the likelihood of the survival and recovery of the species as required by the ESA” are outlined in the draft biological opinion’s ten-year Conservation Framework.

- Phase 1 requires the implementation of the draft Proposed Rule to further reduce risk to right whales from the northeast lobster and Jonah crab fisheries by at least 60% in 2021.
- Phase 2 requires rulemaking to reduce mortality and serious injury (M/Sl) in federal gillnet and other Atlantic coast trap/pot fisheries by 60% in 2023.
- Phase 3 seeks an additional 60% risk reduction in all federal fi shed gear fi sheries in 2025.
- Phase 4, if necessary, seeks up to an additional 87% risk reduction in all federal fi shed gear fi sheries in 2030.

Where did these new risk reduction mandates come from? NMFS has created a new right whale population model to assess the impact of the continued operation of U.S. federal fi sheries. According to this model, the long-term recovery prospects for right whales over the next 50 years are grim. The model considered three scenarios. Under the fi rst scenario, NMFS assumes that all U.S. federal and fi sheries, and reproduction remains low.

Scenario two predicts the loss of 69 females from the population over 50 years. Under the second scenario, NMFS assumes that federal fixed gear fi sheries continue to operate under the constraints of the Conservation Framework. The model predicts that the right whale population will decline slightly more than it would with a full shutdown of those fisheries. Scenario three predicts the loss of 69 females from the population over 50 years.

NMFS concludes that the federal fi xed gear fi sheries can continue to operate with the Conservation Framework in place because a full shut down of the fi shery will result in only minimal gains to the right whale population. The proposed action [implementation of Conservation Framework] will result in a loss of approximately 13 right whales (5 females) compared to the no federal fisheries scenario over a 50-year time period.

"Given all of the available data, it is logical to conclude that right whale entanglements due to the operation of the federal fi sheries does not represent an appreciable reduction in the likelihood of survival and recovery of North Atlantic right whales compared to the no federal fi shery scenario. Therefore, we believe that the proposed action, including the implementation of the Framework, is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of North Atlantic right whales'.

Can right whales be saved?

According to NMFS, right whale recovery is possible. Despite the current challenges facing right whales, the population grew from 162 right whales (63 females) in 1980 to a peak of 481 (200 females) in 2011.

U.S. fishermen cannot recover the species on their own. Right whales can only recover if all human threats to right whales, particularly vessel strikes and Canadian fisheries, are reduced.

NMFS considered a third modelling scenario which assumes that both the U.S. and Canada implement the Conservation Framework. The model predicts that when both countries take equivalent action, the right whale population will increase. Scenario three predicts an increase of 24 females to the population over 50 years.

| Framework actions and associated reductions in M/Sl (mortality or serious injury) Table 79, draft Batched Fisheries Biological Opinion |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Action | M/Sl reductions in federal fisheries | M/Sl in federal fisheries prior to the action, | M/Sl in federal fisheries after the action, |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Phase 1 (Current TRT rulemaking Action) | Reduce M/Sl in pot/trap gear by 56.8% | 4.82 (4.82 in pot/trap and 0.125 in gillnet) | 2.2 (2.08 in pot/trap and 0.125 in gillnet) |
| Phase 2 | Reduce M/Sl in gillnet gear by 60% | 2.2 (2.08 in pot/trap and 0.125 in gillnet) | 2.13 (2.08 in pot/trap and 0.05 in gillnet) |
| Phase 3 | Reduce M/Sl in fixed gear fisheries by 60% | 2.13 (across the gillnet and pot/trap fisheries) | 0.85 (across the gillnet and pot/trap fisheries) |
| Phase 4 | Reduce M/Sl in fixed gear fisheries by 87% | 0.85 (across the gillnet and pot/trap fisheries) | 0.11 (across the gillnet and pot/trap fisheries) |
I looked forward to turning the calendar on 2020. 2021 of course would be better; how can it not be?

The lobster industry has plenty of reason to feel hopeful. The lobster resource remains healthy, the fishery is sustainable, and markets did not collapse during the pandemic. Lobstermen qualified for several pandemic aid programs to help make up for the softening of lobster prices. Most importantly, Maine lobstermen got to be at sea and do what they love.

The Maine lobster fishery has faced its fair share of obstacles over the years, but always seems to land on its feet. Maine’s sustainable lobster practices have gone a long way in providing a safety net for lobstermen in the face of so many environmental and regulatory changes. Maine’s lobster dealers have remained nimble despite trade wars and unstable markets. They have developed new markets and product innovations to ensure our highly perishable product makes it to consumers. Bait suppliers have come through as well. In the face of historic declines in the herring population, Maine lobstermen have retained access to a steady bait supply. Overcoming any of these issues would have seemed impossible a decade ago. Yet we have made it through.

The MLA has been there through it all, fighting to keep Maine lobstermen fishing and our coastal communities strong. There is a resiliency to this industry that brings us together to pull through the hard times. Enter 2021. A year of new opportunities. I hope. A year of unprecedented challenges. I know.

What has me so worried? The two Ws — wind and whales. Both of these issues pose an existential threat to our industry.

Why I am worried about offshore wind energy development? Because there is an implicit assumption and belief that offshore wind farms will provide an affordable source of renewable energy while creating new green jobs in harmony with the state’s fishing economy. I’ve learned just enough about offshore wind development in the past few years to be dangerous, and I truly believe that we are being sold a bill of goods from large international corporations.

As I said in a recent press statement, the state should be cautious optimistic that reason would prevail at the MLA has suspended three additional phases, each with its own risk reduction target, to be implemented over a 10-year period. It will require gillnetters and other trap/pot fishermen to make their own 60% risk reductions in 2023 (phase 2). After that, all federal fixed gear fisheries will go through a second round of 60% risk reduction in 2025 (phase 3), and then a final 87% risk reduction in 2030 (phase 4). This equates to a 98% risk reduction for the lobster fishery, as well as the gillnet and other trap/pot fisheries!

So what’s the point of all this? And what are the long-term ramifications for Maine’s lobstermen and their communities if the sequential phases of the draft Biological Opinion slowly suffocates a sustainable fishery for which little evidence exists of its harming right whales? Who will ensure that, before the last lobsterman brings his boat to the beach, the Canadian federal government puts in place regulations to protect right whales that are at least as stringent as ours?

NMFS’s computer model presents a threat like no other to Maine lobstermen. Photo courtesy of Maine Coast Fishermen’s Association.

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NMFS’s computer model presents a threat like no other to Maine lobstermen. Photo courtesy of Maine Coast Fishermen’s Association.
The board is concerned that NMFS has poorly understood the impacts of the proposed management measures on Maine fishermen, particularly a planned offshore closure area. The board stressed the need to push NMFS to keep the rules as flexible as possible to allow fishing operations to choose the most feasible methods to achieve the conservation goals. NMFS is holding information meetings on the whale rules in January and four online public hearings in February. Comments are due by March 1.

The board continues to monitor offshore wind developments in the Gulf of Maine, including the Governor Mills’s proposal to build a wind research array and the New England AquaVentus project off Monhegan Island which would be connected to shore. The MLA is working with a coalition of Maine fishing groups to ensure the state’s fishing industries have a united, strong and credible voice in this process. The group send a letter to Governor Mills in January outlining its concerns with regard to offshore wind. The MLA board is scheduled to continue discussions at its next meeting scheduled for January 27.

PROPOSED WHALE RULE CONSERVATION MEASURES

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) has launched a project to assess ‘ropeless’ fishing gear in the New England lobster fishery. Dozens of fishermen, technologists, policy experts, and scientists will be interviewed to fully evaluate the challenges and opportunities of the new gear. The project is funded in part by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation in partnership with NOAA.

‘Ropeless’ gear uses high-tech alternatives to the traditional buoy line equipment used in lobster, crab, fish pot and some groundfish fisheries. Most types of ropeless gear are designed to prevent entanglements with marine mammals by using submerged buoys activated by time-release mechanisms or signals transmitted from the surface. Prior research on ropeless gear has focused on the mitigation of risk to endangered marine species, however there is still much to learn about the technological, legal, and regulatory aspects of ropeless gear as well as operational and economic features. This project will produce a set of recommendations for future policy development and possible implementation.

MASSACHUSETTS LAUNCHES ‘ROPELESS’ FISHING GEAR FEASIBILITY STUDY

Four environmental groups have once again joined forces to sue NMFS for failing to respond to two rulemaking petitions, filed in 2012 and 2020, to protect right whales from being run over and killed by ships and boats in U.S. waters. The lawsuit, filed under the Administrative Procedures Act in Washington, D.C., federal district court, calls for more speed limits to reduce the number of vessel strikes. The petitioners ask NMFS to expand the areas and times when its existing 10-knot speed-limit rule applies, to make all voluntary vessel-speed restrictions mandatory, and to apply the rule to small vessels (shorter than 65 feet) as well as large ones to avoid collisions that kill and injure right whales. The existing speed rule applies only to vessels 65 feet and greater and sets seasonal speed limits off Massachusetts, the mid-Atlantic and the whales’ calving grounds in Georgia and Florida. It also establishes a voluntary, dynamic management system whereby vessel operators are asked, but not required, to slow to 10 knots or less when a group of three or more right whales is seen in an area.

Just over half of known or suspected right whale deaths since 2017 have been attributed to vessel strikes. In just the past year, two of only 10 right whales calves born were killed by vessel strikes off the coasts of Florida and New Jersey.

MAINE OFFSHORE WIND UPDATES

The MLA has teamed up with several fishing industry associations to ensure that Maine’s fishing community speaks with a united voice regarding the development of offshore wind. The group sent a letter to Governor Mills in January outlining its worry that offshore wind will harm Maine’s fishing industries and requesting that the Governor slow the pace of the research project, review Maine’s statutes regulating the development of offshore wind, and focus more attention on ensuring adequate research and stakeholder input on these projects.

MAINE LOBSTERMEN’S ASSOCIATION UPDATE

On January 15, NMFS released its draft Biological Opinion, required under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. The good news is that NMFS concluded that with the implementation of the Conservation Framework, the continuation of the lobster fishery does not jeopardize the survival or recovery of right whales.

As part of that Conservation Framework, the lobster fishery would be required to implement NMFS’s Proposed whale rules in 2021. No additional measures are anticipated before 2025. The bad news is that the Conservation Framework is a strict 10-year plan that would require all U.S. fixed gear fisheries to reduce risk by 60% (lobster in 2021, gillnet and other U.S. trap/pot fisheries in 2023), followed by another 60% risk reduction in 2025, and another 87% risk reduction in 2030. To make matters worse, NMFS has concluded that the right whale population will continue to decline even if all federal fixed gear fisheries were shut down. NMFS’s model shows that the only way for the right whale population to rebound would be for the U.S. and Canada to implement the same Conservation Framework for fixed gear fisheries in both countries.

NMFS will be soliciting feedback on the Biological Opinion from the New England Fishery Management Council on January 28 and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission on February 2. The draft Biological Opinion is available for review until February 19, 2021. Comments and relevant information and feedback can be provided to nmsf.gar.fisheriesbiopfeedback@noaa.gov.

14 RIGHT WHALE CALVES SEEN ALREADY

The year is off to a good start for North Atlantic right whales with the birth of 14 calves reported as of January 21. The mother/calf pairs have been sighted in waters off Florida and Georgia. According to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, more than 65 North Atlantic right whale calves have been sighted from North Carolina to Florida so far this winter, including the newborns. Researchers spotted 10 calves during the 2020 season and seven in 2019. The right whale’s calving season begins in mid-November and runs through mid-April.

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ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS SUE OVER VESSEL STRIKES

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The first regular session of the 130th Legislature convened in December and must complete its work by June 16, 2021. The Senate is led by President Troy Jackson and the House of Representatives by Speaker Ryan Fecteau. The House consists of 151 members (80 Democrats, 66 Republicans, 6 Independents, and 4 Independents and 1 Libertarian). The Senate consists of 35 members (21 Democrats and 13 Republicans and 1 vacancy).

Maine’s Marine Resources Committee is chaired by Senator David Miramant of Camden and Representative Jay McCreight of Harpswell. The Committee is composed of 13 members; eight served on the committee during the previous session and five are new. Ten members are from coastal areas and four are fishermen.

Due to COVID, the state Capitol complex is not holding in-person meetings; all public hearings will be conducted electronically. Committee meetings may be heard at www.mainelegislature.org or viewed at www.youtube.com/mainestatelegislature. You must register in advance to provide public testimony. To provide oral testimony, register no later than 30 minutes prior to the posted start time of the meeting; registrations received after that time will be accepted at the discretion of the committee chairs. You can register by emailing or calling the committee clerk. The Marine Resources Committee clerk is Linda Lacroix, 287-1338 or MAR@legislature.maine.gov.

A list of bill titles is available. However, the majority have not yet been printed so the text of these bills is not yet available. Bills that have been printed begin with “LD.”

**LD 106, An Act To Amend Maine’s Aquaculture Leasing and Licensing Statutes (DMR bill)**

**LD 77, An Act To Authorize the Department of Marine Resources To Charge an Application Fee for Entering a Lottery for a Scallop License (DMR bill)**


**LD 90, An Act To Amend the Law Governing the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (DMR bill)**

**LD 91, An Act To Allow the Participation of Marine Patrol Officers in Proceedings for Administrative Suspension of a License or Certificate (DMR bill)**

**LD 225, An Act To Allow Commercial Lobster License Holders To Engage in Collaborative (DMR bill)**


**LD 1262, An Act To Protect Maine’s Waters (Rep. Alley of Beals)**


**LD 1979, An Act To Amend the Laws Regarding Marine Resources (Rep. McCreight Harpswell)**

**LD 1567, An Act To Encourage Research To Support the Maine Offshore Wind Industry (Sen. Lawrence York)**


The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) re-opened in January. According to the Small Business Administration (SBA), this round of the PPP continues to prioritize millions of Americans employed by small businesses by authorizing up to $284 billion toward job retention and certain other expenses through March 31, 2021, and by allowing certain existing PPP borrowers to apply for a Second Draw PPP Loan.

Key updates to the program include:

- PPP borrowers can set their PPP loan’s covered period to be any length between 8 and 24 weeks to best meet their business needs;
- PPP loans will cover additional expenses, including operations expenditures, property damage costs, supplier costs, and worker protection expenditures;
- The Program’s eligibility is expanded to include 501(c)(6)s, housing cooperatives, destination marketing organizations, among other types of organizations;
- The PPP provides greater flexibility for seasonal employees;
- Certain existing PPP borrowers can request to modify their First Draw PPP Loan amount; and
- Certain existing PPP borrowers are now eligible to apply for a Second Draw PPP Loan.

A borrower is generally eligible for a Second Draw PPP Loan if the borrower:

- Previously received a First Draw PPP Loan and will or has used the full amount only for authorized uses;
- Has no more than 300 employees; and
- Can demonstrate at least a 25% reduction in gross receipts between comparable quarters in 2019 and 2020.

**ROUND 2 - PAYCHECK PROTECTION PROGRAM**

**Many thanks to these fine businesses, the MLA’s Keeper members!**

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The Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance offers kudos to the Maine Lobstermen’s Association for their determined efforts against unfair whale regulations.

The MLCA would also like to express appreciation to all the harvesters, businesses and community members who donated so generously to the MLA’s Legal Defense Fund.

---

1 IN 3 ADULTS HAS PREDIABETES.

You Can Prevent Type 2 Diabetes

If you’re overweight, physically inactive, or 45+ years old, you may be at risk for this silent killer. As an MLA member, you can delay or even reverse the onset of diabetes with The Preventive Plan, a wellness program we’re making 100% free to you... Space is limited, so find out if you are at risk, and reserve your seat today: https://www.uspm.com/dpp.

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DMR Ventless Lobster Trap Study
Collaborative Fisheries Research

Study Goal
The Ventless Lobster Trap Study, conducted by the Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) every year from June to August since 2006, is a collaborative research effort between industry and scientists in which juvenile lobster data are collected to be used in the stock assessment.

Project Objectives
1) Characterize juvenile lobster relative abundance & size-distribution,
2) Determine which environmental factors may influence lobster distribution,
3) Promote collaboration between fishermen and DMR scientists,
4) Encourage industry participation in the lobster stock assessment process.

Study Design
The Gulf of Maine is divided into three federal statistical areas. Sites are randomly selected in each area and 3 ventless traps will be deployed at each of the 276 total sites. Survey gear is tended by contracted lobstermen who are selected by competitive bid. All survey gear will have bright orange poly buoys marked with DMR contact information. This is a fishery independent study and DMR staff will be onboard each trip to measure lobsters. All lobsters will be discarded.

Questions? Contact:
Matthew Davis
Survey Coordinator
Matthew.M.Davis@Maine.gov
Cell: (207) 592-2339

Kathleen Reardon
Senior Lobster Biologist
Kathleen.Reardon@Maine.gov
Cell: (207) 350-7440

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State of Maine

Gulf of Maine

513

OPEN FOR BID

Canadian Border - Addison

Addison - MDI
Capt Joe Locurto
F/V Jasmine Marie

mdr - Isle au Haut
Capt’s Elijah & Joshua Joyce
F/V Atonement

OPEN FOR BID

N. Penobscot Bay
Capt Ladd Olson
F/V Mary Margaret

S. Penobscot Bay
Capt Mike Dawson
F/V Lisabeth Ann

Muscongus Bay
Capt Terry Lagasse
F/V Bossy Lady II

Pemaquid - Casco Bay
Capt Terry Lagasse
F/V Bossy Lady II

Casco Bay
Capt Justin Papkee
F/V Pull N Pray

Cape Elizabeth - NH Border

OPEN FOR BID

A research collaboration between DMR and GOMLF
Save Maine’s Lobster Fishery

One of the world’s most sustainable fisheries could be shut down and we cannot let that happen. Right Whales are not dying in Maine lobster gear.

Patrice McCarron, executive director
Maine Lobstermen’s Association

With your help the MLA is fighting to save Maine’s lobster industry.

The federal government has violated the Endangered Species Act.
The Maine lobster fishery could be shut down.
This could mean the end of the lobstering tradition for our children.

The MLA’s first goal is to raise $500,000 to support our efforts to save Maine’s lobster fishery

HOW YOU DONATED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harvester &amp; community</td>
<td>51%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Support</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jay Smith Challenge</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<td>Offshore Challenge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Fundraisers</td>
<td>6%</td>
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Maine Lobstermen’s Association Legal Defense Fund
Please see the list of 2020 contributors on the following pages. If you’re missing from the list, please let us know. If you would like to join this group of leaders, make your contribution today.

$500,000 & above

Robert T. Watkinson

$299 cont’d

$999

$9,999

Michael Hunt

Rudi Graf

Stephen Gatcomb

Frenchboro Lobstermen

Edward N Foye

Michael Flanigan

Co Fisherman

First National Bank

Karen Emmons

Donnie Farr

Holly Farless

Danny Farlin

Andrea Farkas

Drew Farber

Eric Fahey

Gloria Egan

Peter & Susan Nitze*

Dr. George Ellsworth

$100 - $299 cont’d

Charles Amos

Lawrence Ames

Herman Anderson Jr.

George P Andrews

Michael Arsenault

Ellaine Dembowski

Atmospheric Design

John Bacon

Andrew Balser

Michael Balser

William Banfield

Larry Barker

Foster Bartovics

Derrick L Beal

Farrell Beal

Glenda Beal

Oscaar Beal

Robert L Beal

Walter Bell

John Bennett

Glenn Billings

Arthur Billings

Timothy Black

Blaine E Blackmore

Scott Blackmore

James Bourque

Philip Boozerner

Hugh Bowen

Kent Bradstreet

Eric Brazer

Amy Brazer

Peter W Brewer

Foy W Brown

Robert Brown

Norman Burns

Stephen Burns

Greg Bryer and Gerri Patterson

Peter W Brewer

Wayne Canning

John W Chipman

John Clinton

Daniel Slough

Jeffrey Cockburn

Wesley Coffin

Philip P Condon

Jocelyne Coombs

Riley Coombs

Walter Coombs

Dennis Davis

Eric Davis

Walter Day

Alex De Koning

Fiona De Koning

Elaine Dembowski

Charles Dillon

Charles Dodge

Benjamin A Dobler

Jerry Doughty

Forrest Dow

Downeast Fishing Gear

Edgar Drew

Jordan Drouin

Earth and Water Group

Anne Eggers

Betsy Eggers

Peter Emerson

Kyle Emmons

Michael Emmons

Doris Ewing

Nathan FAGone

A. Michael Faulkingham

$299 cont’d

$999 cont’d

$9,999 cont’d

$4,999 cont’d

Moody

Cont’d on the next page

Page 16 | LANDINGS | February 2021

$299 cont’d

$999

$9,999

Gifts $5,000 - $9,999

Alex Pippens*

Abraham Phillbrook*

Beals-Jonesport Co-op Inc

Cap Porpise Lobstermen

Cork Lobster Co-op

Hampton Marine (tee shirts)

Rockland Lobster Boat Races

Spruce Head Fisheries Co-op

Swans Isl. Fishermen's Co-op

Western Sea Inc

York Lobstermen’s Assoc.

Gifts $1,000 - $4,999

Jeremy S Alley

Jeremy Alley*

Ahwood Lobster Co

Bangor Savings Bank

Rachel Bishop*

Billings Marine Service

Bangor Savings Bank

Atwood Lobster Co

Jeremy S Alley

Jeremy Alley*

Ahwood Lobster Co

Bangor Savings Bank

Rachel Bishop*

General Mills Service

Bramhall’s Lobster Wharf

Jared Bray*

Bring It In.

Carter’s Lobsters

Larry Coombs*

Bruce Crowley*

Dustin Delano*

Delano Seaford Shack

Wayne Delano*

Jeffrey A Donnell

Zachary R Donnell

Philip Doucette

Doucette’s Bay Boat

Eric Emmons*

Elizabeth Fenwick*

First National Bank

Fisherman’s Heritage Lobster Co-op

Michael Flanagan*

Edward N Foye*

Frenchboro Lobstermen

Stephen Galcomb*

Rudi Graf*

Gillespie Marine LLC

Benjamin Heanders*

Michael Hunt*

Sam Hylre*

Bob Ingalls*

Journey’s End Marina

Stephen Lash*

Lee Marine

Nicholas Lemeux*

Jeff Libby*

Ian Lussier*

Maine Coast Fishermen’s Assoc.

Jack Merrill III*

Jim Merriman*

Midcoast Marine Supply

Tad Miller*

Mary Olsen – Moody’s Gifts

Navroc Marine Electronics

Gifts $1,000 - $4,999 cont’d

NE Marine & Industrial Inc

NH Commercial Fishermen’s Assoc.

Pete & Susan Nitze*

Matthew Nowell*

Alfred Osgood*

Justin Osgood

Jay & Lynn Perrotta (haircut)

Peter Philbrook*

Josh Polk*

Harold Polo*

James Polo*

Kristan L Porter

Royal River Boat Repair, Inc

Tristan Salmon

Mark Sewall*

Jeremy Simmons*

Jay Smith Jr*

Smithwick & Mariners Ins.

So Bristol Fishermen’s Co-op

Soetto Seafood

The Spear Family

John Stanley*

Starlight Inc.

Stonington Lobster Co-op

Town of Stonington

David A Thomas*

Alex Todd*

Vessel Services Inc.

Southern Maine Lobstermen’s Association

Richard Wall*

Keith Wallace*

Ronald T Watsonkinson*

Ted Weber*

Willard Webster*

Thomas Werner*

Jeff White*

John and Judy Williams*

Bob Williams*

Gregg Walton*

York Harbor Lobstermen

Justin J Wright*

Julian Zuke*

$500 - $999 cont’d

Advertising Adventure of Maine (tee-shirt sales)

Brian Alley

Joshua Ames

David Barker

Rex Benner

Mark Bennett

Randall Betts

Joel Billings

Brian Billings

David Black

Gordon Bok

W. Kennedy Boone III

Steve Budrow

Dwight Carver

China Hill Restaurant & Bar

Jason Chipman

Herman Coombs

David Cousins

Laure Crane

CSM, Inc.

John Daggett

George Dow

Michael Tripp

Jim Tripp

Travis Doughty

John Druin

Robert L Donnell

James Ellsworth

Bruce W Fernald

Green Flash Fisheries

Edward D Grant

Bill Grindle

Chris Guilford

Earl Hamilton

Eugene Harrington

Eric Harju

Joshua Hatch

Andrew Hauke

Nicholas Hauke

Shawn Howard

Richard Howland

David Hunt & Jane Richardson

Bobby Ingalls

Charles Ingalls

Alan Interio

Island Fishermen’s Wife

Michael Jennings

Stuart Jones

Mark Jones

Clayton Joyce

Kennedy Marine, Inc

J Edward Knight Insurance

Agency

Michael Karp

Keith Lane

Craig Lazaro

Joseph C Locunto

Travis Lunt

Douglas McMullen

Johnny McCarthy

Joshua Miller

Midcoast Diesel Performance

Midcoast Marine Supply

Moody’s Gifts (tee-shirts)

New Harbor Lobster Co-op

Northeast Marine Survey

Cody Nunan

Christopher Nunan

Ladd Olsen

Tara Perez

Luke Philbrook

Micah Philbrook

Mike Philbrook

Woodbury & Post

Prien Fish & Lobster

Michael S Prior

Vessel Services and Shellsf, LLC

Sam Rosen

Rugged Seas, Inc.

Matt Samuels

Ryan & Laurie Schoppee

John Sieders

Joseph Staples

Spruce Head Marine

David A Sullivan

David Tarr

Tranzon Auction House

Brian Tripp

John J Tripp

Continued on the next page

2020 Donors - as of 12/31/20

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Andrew Balser

Michael Balser

William Banfield

Larry Barker

Foster Bartovics

Derrick L Beal

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Walter Bell

John Bennett

Glenn Billings

Arthur Billings

Timothy Black

Blaine E Blackmore

Scott Blackmore

James Bourque

Philip Boozerner

Hugh Bowen

Kent Bradstreet

Eric Brazer

Amy Brazer

Peter W Brewer

Foy W Brown

Robert Brown

Norman Burns

Stephen Burns

Greg Bryer and Gerri Patterson

Peter W Brewer

Wayne Canning

John W Chipman

John Clinton

Daniel Slough

Jeffrey Cockburn

Wesley Coffin

Philip P Condon

Jocelyne Coombs

Riley Coombs

Walter Coombs

Dennis Davis

Eric Davis

Walter Day

Alex De Koning

Fiona De Koning

Elaine Dembowski

Charles Dillon

Charles Dodge

Benjamin A Dobler

Jerry Doughty

Forrest Dow

Downeast Fishing Gear

Edgar Drew

Jordan Drouin

Earth and Water Group

Anne Eggers

Betsy Eggers

Peter Emerson

Kyle Emmons

Michael Emmons

Doris Ewing

Nathan FAGone

A. Michael Faulkingham

Brooks Trap Mill $10,000 Challenge

Alec Pippens $5,000 Offshore Challenge

Jay Smith $1,000 challenge

MLA Defense Legal Fund

250 Water Street, Suite 307, Stonington, ME 04688

Phone: 207-633-4043 • E-mail: info@mla.org

MLA Legal Defense Fund

Continued on the next page
Where are we now?

Maine’s lobstermen and fishing communities have contributed nearly 86% of the funds necessary to enable us to fight to save Maine lobstermen.

The MLA has successfully intervened in two court cases and our legal team made strong arguments highlighting:

- A lack of evidence of right whale deaths linked to the Maine lobster fishery.
- Lobstermen’s 20-year history of extensive whale protection.
- A closure would cause economic and cultural devastation.

The judge delayed an immediate fishery closure giving NMFS until May 30, 2021 to finalize new whale rules. This is a critical reprieve, but the fight is not over!

The MLA will continue to represent the industry’s interests in court, in policy making, and in the media. This takes a tremendous amount of time, legal resources, and sound scientific data gathering.

When you contribute to the Legal Defense Fund, you are supporting the work the MLA does in these critical areas. Whether the issue is whale rules or another threat to the viability of Maine’s lobster industry, the MLA will be there taking the lead.

#SaveMaineLobstermen

The MLA is fighting for:

- Government Accountability – Keep the importance of the fishery and its cultural heritage central to policy decisions.
- Sound Science – Demand policy based on science not scare tactics
- Shared responsibility -- Maine lobstermen will continue to do their share but cannot do this alone.

Save Maine’s Lobster Industry

Please help the MLA fight to protect our historic industry.

Name:__________________________________________

Business Name:________________________________

Address:_______________________________________

City: __________________________________________

State: ___________ Zip: _____________

Phone:________________________________________

Email:________________________________________

I’d like to donate:

☐ $10,000 (Brooks Trap Mill Challenge)

☐ $5,000 (Alec Phippen Challenge)

☐ $1,000 (Jay Smith Challenge)

☐ $500

☐ $365 “$1 a day”

☐ $100

☐ Other: ________
# MLA Member Discount Directory

## Automotive

**Atlantic Edge Lobster**  
Boothbay Harbor, ME -- Fuel discount for MLA members. 207-633-2300

**Atlantic Bug Bait**  
Machias, ME -- $1 off bucket of hog hide. $40 off a pallet. 207-255-5955

**Old School Pig Hide Bait**  
Cutler, ME -- $1 off per bucket (must show current MLA card). 207-812-5211

### Boat Builders/Repairs

**Lamonic, ME**  
Discount for hull or top on a 38’ CB or 44’ CB. 207-667-7427

**Nautilus Marine Fabrication, Inc.**  
Trenton, ME -- 5% Discount on propeller reconditioning. 207-667-1119

**Deckhand Electronic Logbook**  
Bellingham WA -- Discounts & Specials for MLA members. Call for more info. 888-210-3117

## Fishing, Marine & Industrial

**Applied Refrigeration Services**  
Windham, ME -- $250 off new installations. 207-893-0145

**McMillan Offshore Survival Training**  
Belfast, ME -- 25% discount on USCG Drill Conductor training. 207-338-1603

**Penobscot Marine Museum**  
Bar Harbor, ME -- Free admission to commercial fishermen and their families.

**Cross Insurance Arena**  
Special discounts to shows at the Cross Arena in Portland! Use promo code GFRiEND at checkout. Order by phone, online, or in person at the box office.

## Hotels

**Hampton Inn, Ellsworth**  
(Ellsworth, ME)

**Hampton Inn, Downtown-Waterfront**  
(Portland, ME)

**Residence Inn by Marriott**  
(Scarborough, ME)

## Museums & Entertainment

**Maine Maritime Museum**  
Bath, ME -- Free admission to MLA members.

**Mount Desert Oceanarium**  
Bar Harbor, ME -- Free admission to commercial fishermen.

## Vessel Insurance

**Vessel Insurance**  
Discount available to commercial fishermen.

**Vessel Insurance**  
Discount to MLA members.

## Hydraulics

**Coastal Hydraulics**  
Scarborough, ME -- 10% discount on all hydraulic components & Cable Craft cables. 207-767-2136

## Libraries

**Maine Lobstermen’s Association**  
Kennebunk, ME -- 10% off all apparel and promotional product orders. 800-560-6090

## Newspapers

**Commercial Fisheries News**  
Deer Isle, ME -- Discounted annual subscription rate for $18.75 with MLA membership noted on check. 800-989-5253

## Show your MLA card to receive great discounts at these fine businesses!

**Old School PigHide Bait:** Cutler, ME -- $1 off per bucket (must show current MLA card). 207-812-3211

**Atlantic Bug Bait:** Machias, ME -- $1 off bucket of hog hide. $40 off a pallet. 207-255-5955

**Atlantic Edge Lobster:** Boothbay Harbor, ME -- Fuel discount for MLA members. 207-633-2300

**At Rest:** Flat Rock, ME -- 10% off all apparel and prom products. 800-560-6090

**Maine Shipwrights’ Guild:** Rockland, ME -- 10% off all apparel and promotional product orders. 800-989-5253
HELPING THE HUNGRY AND MAINER FISHERMEN AS WELL

By Melissa Waterman

The hardship endured by many during the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the fact that all members of our society are in the same boat, so to speak. In addition to the challenges of social isolation and fears of falling ill with COVID, some of us suffer from hunger while others from a decline in income. In response, one Maine organization launched a program last fall to ensure that neither sector suffered alone.

The Maine Coast Fishermen’s Association (MCFA) began the Fishermen Feeding Mainers program to provide fishermen with a buyer for their catches and Maine food banks and state residents with healthy, fresh seafood. The program started with an anonymous donation of $160,000 and $200,000 in pandemic relief funds and individual donations. The program buys directly from fishermen, then has local processors package the fish for community organizations. Photo courtesy of the Portland Fish Exchange.

Maine groundfishermen weren’t exactly thriving before the pandemic hit. The groundfish fleet has seen its revenues declined sharply in recent years. When restaurants and other buyers of Maine seafood closed in the spring, groundfishermen took a major hit. The value of groundfish sank by 73% this year compared to the five-year average. At the same time, Maine residents were facing increased uncertainty about access to food as so many lost their jobs or had their working hours reduced.

MCFA decided to buy fish directly from fishermen in order to provide them with steady revenue. Local processors then cut, packaged, and froze the fish which were donated to the Good Shepherd Food Bank, Cooking for Community, local schools, and other community organizations. By the end of 2020, Fishermen Feeding Mainers had bought and donated 150,000 meals worth of fresh protein from the Gulf of Maine, outpacing early goals.

“It’s been extremely impactful, both for the working waterfront and for folks in need,” said MCFA executive director Ben Martin in a January interview in Sunrise Guide. “We have more community organizations reaching out to us every week. And we have a bunch of fishermen who are only fishing because of this program, because we have largely lost the restaurant market.”

A study conducted by Rutgers University and published in late December 2020 indicated that two-fifths of commercial fishermen operating in the region from Maine to North Carolina did not go fishing at all in the first half of the year. The study was based on a survey of 258 fishermen conducted from March to June 2020. Of those who did fish, nearly all said that their income had dropped compared to previous years.

The study also looked at landings of commercial species. The landings for some species, such as squid and scallops, decreased compared with previous years. The landings for species such as black sea bass and haddock were comparable to or higher than previous years. The data suggest that fishermen may have landed as many pounds this year as they had before the pandemic hit but were paid less.

The spread of the virus caused U.S. restaurants, where nearly 70% of seafood is traditionally consumed, to shut down, which then caused ripples within the seafood supply chain. While sales of seafood in grocery stores did increase during the early months of the pandemic, the price paid to fishermen largely did not.

The study found that fishermen adopted a number of strategies to adapt to the pandemic. Strategies included selling their catch directly to consumers, participating in residential delivery programs and community-supported fishery programs or switching the species of fish they target.

The Rutgers study notes that “While we found that many fishermen kept fishing in the short-term, it will be necessary to study the longer-term impacts of the pandemic on the industry to understand whether this trend will continue.”

A broader report, issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in January, reviewed the pandemic’s effect on the entire country’s commercial fishing and recreational charter boat sectors from January to July 2020. The data show that landings revenue fell in all areas of the country. Revenue from species such as tuna, salmon, and lobster fell between 30% and 80%. The report noted that grocery store sales of frozen and shelf-stable seafood products grew in the spring, but the increase had little impact on overall revenue to fishermen.

In the northeast, nearly every commercial fishery was affected. The report states, “Calendar year 2020 revenues exceeded baseline revenue during January and February but have been below baseline March to June for a cumulative difference of -$126 million. The majority of the cumulative reduction in 2020 revenues occurred in April and May (70%) of which $79 million was associated with reduced revenue from American lobster ($21 million) and sea scallops ($58 million).”

New England lobstermen experienced a sharp decrease in price paid for their harvests, according to the NMFS report. “...[L]obster prices were initially 13% above baseline average prices in January but declined by 39.6% to $4.82 per pound in March 2020 compared to an average of $7.99 per pound during March, 2015-2019. In June 2020 the average price per pound fell to $3.82 from a 2015-2019 June price of $5.29 per pound. Only surf clams and ocean quahog prices remained at or slightly above the 2015-2019 baseline prices.
The Maine Fishermen's Forum is taking a different approach this year in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The Forum board will provide learning opportunities online through collaborative efforts with other marine organizations. Partnerships have included recent Zoom sessions on offshore wind energy projects and the Northeast Aquaculture Conference & Exposition, a two-day virtual trade show which was held on January 12 and 13.

Upcoming events include an online open forum with NMFS GARFO leadership on February 17. In late February or early March, the Forum will host its traditional Shellfish Day via radio show or online. On March 5 the popular Seafood Cooking demonstrations will take place online.

The Forum board is working on additional online events which may include a Young Fishermen's Event, Lobster Science, Coast Guard Safety Session and a Virtual Aquaculture Farm Tour. Updates will be available at www.mainefishermenforum.org, or on the Forum's Facebook and Instagram.

By Chilloa Young, Maine Fishermen's Forum coordinator

FISHERMEN'S FORUM PLANS VIRTUAL EVENTS THROUGHOUT 2021

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.

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_____________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________________

By Chilloa Young, Maine Fishermen's Forum coordinator
### 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>Beals</td>
<td>0.84 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Appl. submitted, comments due 11/11/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downeast Institute</td>
<td>Elmer’s Pound, Black Duck Cove, Eastern Bay</td>
<td>Beals</td>
<td>1.14 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Appl. submitted, comments due 10/2/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferda Farms LLC</td>
<td>E Lower Coombs Isd, New Meadows River</td>
<td>Brunswick</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Site Review Complete 9/9/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea Run Fisheries &amp; Habitat</td>
<td>E of Western Head &amp; Lt1 Rvr Isd, Cutler Hbr</td>
<td>Cutler</td>
<td>4 acres</td>
<td>Finfish</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Site Review Complete 3/20/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffin, Chad</td>
<td>W of Moon Pt, NE of Pound of Tea, Harraseketch Rvr</td>
<td>Freeport</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>appl. submitted, Comments due 12/10/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doyle, Victor</td>
<td>E of Barlett Isd, Blue Hill Bay</td>
<td>Mount Desert</td>
<td>1.55 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Public Hearing Postponed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mussel Bound Inc.</td>
<td>Barlett Narrows, Blue Hill Bay</td>
<td>Mount Desert</td>
<td>1.55 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Publ Hearing Postponed as of 11/13/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dirigo Marine Resources, LLC</td>
<td>E of Wolfe’s neck, Reconference Bay</td>
<td>So Freeport</td>
<td>1.85 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>appl. rec’d, comment period closes 8/2/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norumbega Oyster, Inc</td>
<td>South of Merry Island, Damarciscotta River</td>
<td>South Bristol</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Comments due 2/6/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francis, Arnold</td>
<td>East of Birch Point, Dyer Bay</td>
<td>Steuben</td>
<td>2.86 acres</td>
<td>shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Comments due by 2/6/2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Francis, Arnold</td>
<td>Smelt Brook, Dyer Bay</td>
<td>Steuben</td>
<td>3.7 acres</td>
<td>shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Comments due by 2/6/2021</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Standard Lease Applications

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<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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acadia Aqua Farms LLC</td>
<td>NE of Sunken Ledge, Frenchmen Bay</td>
<td>Bar Harbor</td>
<td>68.3 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Scoping Session sched. For 2/21/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pemaquid Mussel Farms LLC</td>
<td>Mt Desert narrows, E of Gooongia 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>off Old House Cove, Western Bay, Spruce Pt</td>
<td>Bar Harbor</td>
<td>3.36 acres</td>
<td>shellfish</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Public hearing sched 10/13/20 2 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tightfrope Farms</td>
<td>South of Carlton Island, Salt Pond</td>
<td>Blue Hill</td>
<td>7.25 acres</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 acres</td>
<td>shellfish</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Scoping Session 12/7/20 p pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nice Oyster Company, LLC</td>
<td>E of Woodward Pt, New Meadows River</td>
<td>Brunswick</td>
<td>4.49 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>10 yrs</td>
<td>Scoping Session 10/19/20 7 pm</td>
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<td>Shearwater Ventures LLC</td>
<td>E of Lt1 Chebeague, Casco Bay, Long Isd and</td>
<td>Chebeague Isd</td>
<td>3.79 acres</td>
<td>Marine Algae</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Site Review complete 4/29/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summit Point LLC</td>
<td>N of Lower Basket ledge</td>
<td>Chebeague Isd</td>
<td>53.38 acres</td>
<td>Marine Algae</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Scoping Session 11/12/20 6 pm</td>
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<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 sched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summit Point LLC</td>
<td>NE of Clapboard Isd, Casco Bay, Falmouth &amp;</td>
<td>Cumberland</td>
<td>100 acres</td>
<td>Marine Algae</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Site Review pending as of 12/19/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black Stone Point Oyste rs LLC</td>
<td>Damariscotta River</td>
<td>Damariscotta</td>
<td>12.99 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Lease Granted 1/7/2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dickenson, Christopher</td>
<td>80 ft 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 6/18/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spinney Creek Shellfish, Inc.</td>
<td>NW of R 95 Bridge, Spinney Creek</td>
<td>Elliot</td>
<td>2.75 acres</td>
<td>shellfish</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Site Review complete 3/18/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coffin, Bailey</td>
<td>W of Sow &amp; Pigs Isd, Casco Bay</td>
<td>Freeport</td>
<td>6.84 acres</td>
<td>shellfish</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Scoping Session 12/2/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harraseketch Oyster Co.</td>
<td>S of Bowman Isd &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>
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<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 9/11/2020</td>
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<td>Love Point Oysters, LLC</td>
<td>S of Crab island, Casco Cove</td>
<td>Freeport</td>
<td>4.15 acres</td>
<td>Oysters</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Site review pending as of 2/20/2020</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 12/7/20 p pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gildlend Point Oyster Co.</td>
<td>West shore, S of Jacks Pt, Damarciscotta River</td>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>5.5 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>10 yrs</td>
<td>Public Hearing 10/27/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hermit Island Oyster Co., LLC</td>
<td>Hermit Isd, Sm Pt Hbr, New Meadows River</td>
<td>Phippsburg</td>
<td>2.56 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, Damarciscotta River</td>
<td>So. Bristol</td>
<td>3.6 acres</td>
<td>Marine Algae</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Scoping Session 11/09/20 6 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frenchman Bay Oyster Co.</td>
<td>W &amp; S of Ingalis Island, Sullivan Harbor</td>
<td>Sorrento</td>
<td>3.85 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Site Review pending as of 10/17/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dewey’s Shellfish, LLC</td>
<td>NW of Peters Island, Damarciscotta River</td>
<td>South Bristol</td>
<td>0.45 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Scoping Session sched 11/19/20 6 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosk Sea Farms Inc.</td>
<td>S of Wiley Pt &amp; N of Frich Pt, Damarcis. 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 acres</td>
<td>shellfish</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Scoping Session 12/21/20 4 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvey, Brian</td>
<td>W of Haynes 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 2/27/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butterfield, Keith</td>
<td>SE of Little Musquash Island</td>
<td>Yarmouth</td>
<td>2.72 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish/algae</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Scoping Session 11/16/20 5 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henniger, Thomas</td>
<td>Broad Cove, Casco Bay</td>
<td>Yarmouth</td>
<td>3.9 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Application submitted 7/9/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine Source Seafood</td>
<td>E of Lane’s Isd, Casco Bay</td>
<td>Yarmouth</td>
<td>3.48 acres</td>
<td>Oysters</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Public Hearing 2/9/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mouser, Amanda</td>
<td>S of Lanes Isd, Inner Casco Bay</td>
<td>Yarmouth</td>
<td>9 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
<td>Site Review complete 5/8/20</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 5/22/20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Scoping Session

**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!**
OFFSHORE WIND FARMS AN UNEQUIVOCAL ‘NO’

By Jack Merrill, Islesford lobsterman and MLA board member

For more than 50 years I have understood that humans need to reduce their fossil fuel consumption, and that green technology, giving us solar, hydro, and wind power, are great alternative options. Through my association with the Lobster Institute, I have been part of multiple research projects and backed others with financial support. At the Cranberry Isles Fisherman’s Co-op, in 2019, we invested in and installed on all our buildings solar roof panels. I’m a supporter of green energy. I believe in the potential of wind power.

Why then am I appalled by proposed wind platforms off of Maine’s coast? I had to ask myself is this simply a “not in my backyard” knee-jerk reaction? The answer is unequivocally no. While wind power itself (with improved technology) could be a positive future project for coastal communities. In fact, they would have a negative impact on all three of Maine’s coastal economic engines. The uniqueness of Maine’s coast brings millions of tourists every year. A blow to the lobster industry would be a serious blow to that uniqueness. For the summer resident yachting population (large taxpayers) who now enjoy the freedom of today’s open oceans, the hundreds of platforms we are now being told are coming (“you can’t stop them”) will be an eyesore and pose serious hazards to navigation.

We are living in difficult and unusual times. Today Maine’s economy is suffering. Where would we have been in 2020 without the fisheries, our summer tourism, and population?

They pose a threat to endangered right whales

This dramatic increase in traffic can only increase the risk to these slow-moving mammals, who rightfully everyone is trying to protect. Ships strikes were reportedly responsible for 14 right whale deaths from 2010-2019. The acoustic vibrations associated with laying and maintaining cables and anchors could negatively affect both marine mammal and fish species.

They pose a threat to migrating birds

According to Bob Duchesne, citing the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, one out of every four birds have disappeared over North America in the last 50 years. That is 2.9 billion birds (Bangor Daily News, 11/15/2019). Needless to say, the primary causes for this extreme decline, as far as he could ascertain, are related to human activities. While he says wind power “gets a disproportionate amount of blame,” I doubt he was aware of the possibility of many hundreds of wind turbines off our coast. Multiple studies have shown that wind turbines are harmful to birds. One of the last places left on this planet where birds have their freedom is over open water. They migrate by the millions over Gulf of Maine waters. These aren’t just waterfowl, but also everyday songbirds. Some of the species are approaching endangered status. The required illumination of these platforms at night, and conditions of poor visibility during the day, only increase the risk of collision.

They pose a threat to marine corals and bottom-dwelling sea life

How many miles of cable will be laid? Given that we are being told the cables will be buried, how can anyone say that no environmental damage will take place? If you are displacing mud, you are displacing and killing marine organisms: tube worms, boroers, quahogs, clams, lobsters, shrimp, and flat fish like skates, flounders, halibut, and much more. If you are displacing rock, you are blasting sea anemones, coral, kelp, barnacles, varieties of starfish, crabs, krill, mussels, scallops, sponges, and varieties of fish like cod, cusk, haddock and hake, just to name a few species. The diversity of ocean life is amazing and critical to its health.

They could contribute to warming ocean waters

Today’s underwater power cables emit heat. We are already seeing the effects of global warming, but as it continues, conditions could get worse in the Gulf of Maine. Will the hurricanes that ravage the Southeastern states shift further north? We have been lucky to have experienced hardly any hurricane force winds over the years, but even gale force winds fighting with our tides raise havoc. The ocean becomes a powerful force. Does the engineering capability exist to keep floating platforms intact in the face of such power? What is the cost of trying to maintain these miles-long cables when the sea bottom turns over? In Europe, there have already been instances of cables being damaged. Is it really green energy?

How much fossil fuel energy is needed to create and maintain these floating platforms, miles of electrical cables, the ships and barges, and onshore infrastructure needs? On the surface (no pun intended) it seems like an awful lot. The turbines themselves use oil to run efficiently. Will it really provide affordable energy?

For individuals, towns, politicians, and scientists, the temptation of research money will be great. Large energy companies are willing to spend perhaps billions of dollars (now tax write-offs) for control of the electrical grid. If they get the leases and the control, they will expect to be paid back more billions of dollars. You have to ask, how can the energy provided by offshore wind platforms ever be affordable?

Could it pose a threat to national security?

Floating platforms are sitting ducks. WWIII is ancient history, but one thing one was clear: control of the oceans was extremely difficult and also absolutely critical to winning the war. Honestly, I don’t know if our electrical grid is any safer on shore, but it definitely is not secure coming from offshore platforms. Is the technology already a dinosaur?

While windmills conjure up romantic Dutch images, today’s technology and the ability to capture wind and produce energy is evolving at warp-speed. One of the reasons that Maine’s lobster industry is now considered the most successful fishery in the world is that we sacrificed immediate profits for long-term sustainability. Is the money that energy companies are contemplating spending going to create a sustainable result? It seems likely that in the near future, far less intrusive, more efficient ways of capturing wind will be developed. Shouldn’t Maine’s engineering efforts be focused on new technology?

Ask yourself, why are we trying to capture wind offshore? If the federal government and Maine are interested in supporting wind energy initiatives, then why aren’t wind turbines being discussed for placement in our national parks? Higher altitudes create higher wind velocities. Wind velocities coming off Cadillac Mountain and the mountains of Acadia often exceed ocean velocities.

In conclusion, it is clear that while wind power has a future, offshore wind platforms certainly have serious flaws and a divisive and short-term future. I’m not asking for wind turbines to be placed in our National Parks. Maine should pursue new wind technologies and support smaller initiatives as they have with solar power.

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Americans are typically larger than the residents of many other countries. With that size comes the need for stronger back muscles. The larger your torso, the more force the muscles of the low back need to generate to maintain your posture. An overweight lobsterman’s back will have to work harder than the average person’s, even without the everyday repetitive lifting of traps and other gear. Add the cumulative effect of this work with the effort required to maintain posture and balance, and it is no surprise that back pain is such a common experience among lobstermen.

Numbers
In a sample of 395 lobstermen interviewed as part of a Northeast Center for Occupational Health and Safety study at the University of Massachusetts at Lowell about aches, pains and discomforts, half reported low back pain occurring within the last three months. Relatively few lobstermen sought treatment for the pain. While other locations of pain were not reported as often, lobstermen were more likely to get treatment for those other locations. Why? It may be that the experience of back pain is so common that lobstermen know too well that it is difficult to treat and that after treatment, they will go back to potentially painful work again.

What can you do?
In a similar survey of 286 captains interviewed every three months for four years (2012-2016), new acute low back injuries that affected a lobsterman’s routine work occurred at a rate of about 5 per 100 lobstermen per year. The rate did not change over those four years. In the construction industry, by contrast, back injuries occur at a rate of about 0.2 per 100 workers. This means that new low back pain injuries occur 25 times more often in lobstermen than in construction workers.

Exposure
Repetitive motion, bending and twisting your torso, and forceful exertion are all risk factors for low back pain, all of which occur regularly while lobstering.

Dealing with lower back pain

Without proper rest, recovery, and conditioning, the muscles and soft tissue in the low back area can be hurt, even debilitated. Unfortunately, the demands of keeping up with traps coming up on the rail may not always allow time for proper rest and recovery.

So what can you do?
Brief rest periods may be enough for some muscle recovery, such as sitting while the boat is steaming, or between strings. Back stretches while steaming can help to loosen soft tissue and prevent strain. A physical therapist should be able to advise lobstermen on appropriate stretches.

Some lobstermen have found inversion tables help them by enabling them to suspend themselves upside-down. Inversion tables work by reversing the effect of gravity on the spine, thus enabling the spine to decompress.

The task of breaking a trap down onto the washboard is not too complicated. If you look carefully at a lot of different boats, you may note differences in the relative height and horizontal distances of the hauler, block, and washboard. There may be trade-offs between optimal heights and distances. For example, a lower block height to help reduce shoulder extension might require more back bending, which is not ideal. The key to increasing the biomechanical advantage when breaking the trap down is to handle it as close to your hips as possible without bending or twisting.

Ideally, your equipment and techniques suit your capabilities as well as fit the boat. The force of the hauler can be used to guide the trap, palms down, onto the washboard, rather than bending, grasping, and lifting the trap onto the washboard with minimal assistance from the hauler. When breaking a trap down, some people handle traps with palms down, some to the side, and some with palms up. This technique might be a factor of how fast your hauler can pull in the trap, and if it comes up without getting tangled or stuck on a toe rail as it comes out of the water. Wind, tide direction, and tangled lines make handling forces more complicated. Reducing the width of the washboard under the block can help bring the trap closer to the hips without increasing effort. Some lobstermen have cut a semi-circle out of the rail under the hauler to reduce the distance from below the block to the hauler and therefore increase their closeness to the incoming trap.

Research indicates that commercial fishermen prefer ideas that have been proven, and, more importantly, they prefer ideas they can adopt and adapt in their own way. Adaptation may be a gradual process. It may take years to make a boat feel right. In the meantime, the work must be done. It may help to know that many others have suffered similar pain and attempted different solutions. Spreading good ideas may help prevent back pain and keep lobstermen in good health longer.

What is your experience?
In this tough situation, simple solutions don’t come easily. Lobstermen protect their skills and knowledge to maintain a competitive edge for survival. At the same time, the best knowledge about how to reduce exposure to risk of pain and injury comes from those with years of experience. This knowledge may or may not get spread around. A forum where lobstermen could share these lessons about how to work smarter and not harder could help others think about how to help themselves. Because low back pain is so common, we are interested in hearing the different ways people deal with it. Do you take medicine? Do you stretch and exercise? Do you have a story to tell about how to arrange equipment in a certain way to prevent awkward posture and unnecessary movement?

If you experience pain, tingling or loss of strength in your legs, your back pain could be more than stress on muscles and soft tissues. It could signal involvement of nerves, such as compression of nerves. This situation suggests the need for a professional diagnosis of the back pain. Also, if back pain keeps you awake at night, you probably start the day more fatigued than usual, which puts you at risk for injury. Again some professional help might be in order.

To share your pain experiences, you may contact Scott Fulmer at scott_fulmer@uml.edu or Ann Backus at abackus@hsph.harvard.edu.
STIMULUS INCLUDES NEW AID FOR THE SEAFOOD INDUSTRY

By Melissa Waterman

Small businesses hurt by the pandemic can access more loans and grant money in the $900 billion stimulus bill passed by Congress in late December 2020. The new round of stimulus money again includes $300 million for fisheries assistance. It is not yet clear how much each state will receive from the new allocation other than $30 million set aside for tribal fishing communities. In addition to the fisheries assistance program, the stimulus program includes grants and loans to food processors that have invested in new equipment and processes to protect workers from the coronavirus.

Under a separate provision, seafood is included as eligible for U.S. Department of Agriculture food purchases. The Paycheck Protection Program, which reopened on January 19 under more stringent qualifying standards, is funded at $284 billion. While key changes will make it easier for small businesses to apply, unlike the last round, they must show a gross revenue loss of 25% during one quarter of 2020 compared to the same quarter in 2019. New borrowers, which can have 500 employees or fewer, can request up to $10 million. The program will also allow accounts receivable debt as a forgivable expense.

For those who have already received a PPP loan and are seeking additional money, the application requirements are stricter. Businesses can only have 300 or fewer employees, and the maximum loan amount is $2 million. Businesses also must have spent all the money from their first loan before applying for the second.

To have the money forgiven a business must use at least 60% of the money for payroll expenses. Businesses with loans of $150,000 or less qualify to use a simplified forgiveness application. Most eligible businesses get a maximum loan that is 2.5 times their average monthly payroll costs, meaning the loan would fund two-and-a-half months of payroll expenses. Restaurants, bars and hotels can qualify for loans worth up to 3.5 times their average monthly payroll costs.

Another key change is that the period the loans will cover is now 8 to 24 weeks. The first iteration of the PPP only permitted loans that covered either 8 weeks or 24 weeks. The new date range gives businesses that couldn’t rehire staff because of pandemic restrictions more flexibility to meet the 60% payroll requirement for loan forgiveness.

The Economic Injury Disaster Loan program (EIDL) was due to end on December 31, 2020 but has been extended until the end of 2021. More than 10,400 EIDL loans were approved for Maine businesses as of November 2020 totaling more than $597 million. The 30-year loan is not forgivable, but the interest rates are comparatively low (2.75% for a nonprofit organization and 3.75% for a small business). Loan payments are deferred for one year.

The Maine Small Business Development Centers have resources to help small businesses navigate these programs. For more information, visit https://www.mainsbdc.org/.
Landings February 2021

**ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS SUE TO SLOW SHIPS TO PROTECT WHALES**

In January, the Defenders of Wildlife, Whale and Dolphin Conservation, Conservation Law Foundation and Center for Biological Diversity filed an injunction in a Washington, D.C., court asking the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to expand its efforts to protect right whales and their calves from being hit by ships. In their court brief, the groups complained that the fisheries service had failed to respond to a petition filed in 2012 asking that the service make seasonal protections in southern waters from 20 miles and other sightings. A second petition was filed in August of 2020 and incorporated all the requests from the 2012 petition. The conservation organizations want NMFS to broaden seasonal protections in southern waters from 20 miles offshore to 30 miles. They also want the agency to make speed limits mandatory instead of voluntary in all restricted areas, and to include vessels shorter than 65 feet in these regulations.

**TOO DARN HOT**

Ocean temperatures around the globe continued to rise in 2020. A new study, authored by 20 scientists from 13 institutes around the world, reported the highest ocean temperatures since 1955 from surface level to a depth of 2,000 meters. The research was published in the journal Advances in Atmospheric Sciences. Ninety percent of the heat trapped by carbon emissions is absorbed by the oceans. Estimates by scientists say oceans are now heating faster than at any other time in 2,000 years. This heat has increased extreme weather impacts from climate change. “The fact the oceans reached yet another new record level of warmth in 2020, despite a record drop in global carbon emissions, drives home the fact that the planet will continue to warm up as long as we emit carbon into the atmosphere,” said Michael Mann, Penn State University professor and one of the study team.

**MAINE CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION PUSHES FOR TRUCKING EXEMPTION FOR LOBSTER**

U.S. Senators Susan Collins and Angus King and U.S. Representatives Chellie Pingree and Jared Golden sent a letter to the Department of Transportation and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to advocate for a change to an Interim Final Rule that would make it easier for lobsters to be transported to market. This clarifying language will ensure that lobster and other shellfish from Maine are included under limited exemptions to the Hours of Service rules for truck drivers. With this change, truck drivers would be able to drive live lobster shipments from Down East to other key domestic markets like Boston and New York without having to make long stops on the way.

**EU LOBSTER TARIFFS REMOVED**

The European Union finalized an agreement to eliminate tariffs on live and frozen U.S. lobsters, retroactive to August 1. The deal should substantially boost sales of Maine lobster to European markets. The agreement is expected to last for five years, with the EU taking steps to make it permanent. “This is a step in the right direction for U.S. lobster businesses,” said Annie Tselikis, executive director of the Maine Lobster Dealers Association. In 2017, the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement was implemented between Canada and the European Union, reducing tariffs to zero on live Canadian lobsters and eliminating tariffs over a period of several years on frozen and processed Canadian lobsters. That agreement put American lobster exporters at a serious disadvantage because they were facing tariffs of between 8% and 30% to sell into the 27-nation union.

**WIND FARMS OFF LONG ISLAND TO INCREASE IN SIZE**

In January, the state of New York announced its decision to award two offshore wind power contracts to Norwegian energy giant Equinor. The contracts will more than double the size of a planned wind farm off the coast of Long Island. The plan, announced by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo in early January would bring the number of turbines expected to be operating by 2027 to around 170, encompassing some 80,000 acres from Jones Beach to Islip. New York has a goal of 9,000 megawatts of wind power by 2035 in order to displace non-renewable energy plants. Bonnie Brady, executive director of the Long Island Commercial Fishing Association, said she remains opposed to the projects because “putting the turbines in those areas not only destroys the ability of several states’ fishermen to fish, it takes away from national food security.”

**PLASTIC WASTE MITIGATION BILL PASSED INTO LAW**

The Save Our Seas 2.0 Act, sponsored by Senator Susan Collins and Senator Angus King, was signed into law in January. The bipartisan bill, introduced in June, seeks to tackle the problem of plastic waste on a global scale by spurring innovation and finding uses for existing plastic waste to keep it from entering the oceans. The legislation builds on progress made through the Save Our Seas Act of 2018. Roughly eight million metric tons of mismanaged plastic waste from land enters the oceans each year. Ninety percent of this plastic enters the oceans from ten rivers, eight of which are in Asia. The plastic breaks down into tiny pieces that can enter the marine food chain and harm fish and wildlife and wash ashore on even the most isolated stretches of coastline. Plastic has been found in areas as remote as the Mariana Trench, the deepest known point in the ocean.

**EUROPEAN UNION FISHING CHARTERS TO遂RENCE NEW BASE CAMPS FROM CLIMATE CHANGE**

Europe’s fishing fleets will move from U.S. Atlantic waters to European waters, according to the European Parliament. The European Parliament approved a resolution on U.S. fishing in European waters, which was presented by a group of MEPs from the EPP, ECR and ECRG groups. The resolution seeks to ensure that European fishermen have access to U.S. Atlantic waters, which are currently closed to European fishing vessels due to overfishing and environmental concerns.
A team of researchers, aquaculture production specialists and educators in Maine, Rhode Island and New Hampshire will be working to help transform a the sea urchin fishery by supporting green sea urchin aquaculture efforts in New England.

The team — which includes Steve Eddy and Luz Kogson at the University of Maine, Dana Morse with Maine Sea Grant, project lead Coleen Suckling at the University of Rhode Island and Larry Harris at the University of New Hampshire — received a $100,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Northeast Regional Aquaculture Center to improve hatchery production of the green sea urchin and engage prospective urchin farmers on growout possibilities in the Gulf of Maine and coastal northern New England.

“There is a strong international demand for sea urchins, mostly driven by the Asian market, yet this demand is poorly met by North American suppliers, largely due to declining natural stocks and increased stock regulation,” said Suckling.

Maine’s sea urchin fishery, which was primarily wild harvest, was worth $35.6 million with 34 million pounds landed in 1995, according to Maine’s Department of Marine Resources. Then the stocks collapsed, and the wild harvest fishery did not recover to the same level. Over the past five years, the stocks have been fairly stable, said Eddy, director of UMaine’s Center for Cooperative Aquaculture Research. In 2019, the fishery was worth $5.8 million, and 1.7 million pounds were landed.

“There is substantial potential for aquaculture growth of urchins, and interest to grow sea urchins in New England is expanding, which our new project will help support by providing seed and technical advice at no cost,” said Suckling.

Recent advances in technology, techniques and feeds at urchin farms around the world will enable the team to study how to adapt these advances to local hatchery and nursery culture.

“Urchin farming has generated a lot of interest in Maine, but nobody’s really nailed it down yet to where urchins are a profitable crop to grow,” said Morse, a marine extension associate at Maine Sea Grant. “To allow us to take advantage of the creativity and ingenuity that prospective growers have — our best chance for developing economically viable systems — they need access to seedstock, and that’s where we are starting.”

The research team will also engage regulatory agencies and prospective urchin producers in the Northeast to communicate developments in the availability of urchin seed stock and understand the interests and needs for producers and regulators. In addition, growth trials at Maine aquaculture sites will be conducted to track growth and survival, assess different feeds, and understand husbandry considerations.

“We think Maine is the perfect place to grow sea urchins and we’re hoping some of our neighbor states to the south will give it a try as well,” said Eddy. “This project should help us produce more urchin seed than ever before and help us encourage new sea urchin farmers to try it. We already have several growers we are working with, and we’re looking to sign up more. We believe sea urchins are a natural fit with kelp aquaculture and oyster farms.”

NEW LAW GIVES FUNDING TO TRAIN YOUNG FISHERMEN

The Young Fishermen’s Development Act, signed into law in early January, will establish $2,000,000 in yearly grant funding to support educational and training programs for young individuals who want to get into commercial fishing. The bill was sponsored by U.S. Reps. Don Young (R-Alaska) and Jared Golden (D-Maine), with U.S. Reps. Seth Moulton (D-Mass.) and Aumua Amata (R-American Samoa) signing on as initial cosponsors.

Organizations at the federal, state and local level are eligible for funding. The program was initially proposed in 2015 by the Fishing Communities Coalition, an association representing fishermen from Alaska to Maine. Eligible organizations could receive funding to pair beginners with retiring vessel captains through mentorship programs or teach them in a shoreside setting on topics such as seamanship, navigation, entrepreneurship, regulations, permitting, finance, vessel maintenance and repair, and sustainable fishing practices.

In a statement Rep. Golden noted that the average age of lobstermen and scallop fishermen is over 50. “The future of the fishing industry depends on young people learning the ropes right now,” he said. “The Young Fishermen’s Development Act takes important action to help young Mainers get ready for fulfilling careers in fishing and lobstering so they can stay in Maine, build our economy, and support our communities. I’m proud that this bipartisan bill is now law.”

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in July as scheduled. We also have projects planned to add value to the Collaborative’s marketing activities as well as those of individuals and companies marketing Maine lobster. These include an advisory council report that will provide information on foodservice and retail industry trends as well as a research initiative designed to provide information on consumers most likely to eat more lobster.

For any questions or concerns about the marketing program, contact me at the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative at 207-541-9310 or mlacroix@lobsterfrommaine.com
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**MLA 67TH ANNUAL MEETING**

Friday, March 5, 2021
Time: 3pm to 5pm via Zoom

**Notice of Annual Meeting of the Members of the Maine Lobstermen’s Association, Inc.**

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of the members of the Maine Lobstermen’s Association, Inc. will be held on March 5th at 3pm via Zoom.

**Current Officers:**
Kristan Porter, President
John Williams, Vice President
Dustin Delano, Secretary/Treasurer

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