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Maine Lobstermen's Community Alliance

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LOBSTER, TOURISM SUSTAIN THE MIDCOAST MAINE ECONOMY

By Melissa Waterman

The lobster fishery is integrated into the fabric of the Maine coast, giving its small towns and harbors a firm economic and cultural foundation. This wasn’t always true. Once Maine fishermen moved among fisheries based on the season of the year: lobster in the summer and fall, scallops and shrimp in the winter, halibut in the spring, herring in the summer, clam digging year-round. But those options have shrunk and, in some cases such as northern shrimp, vanished entirely. The coast of Maine is in a “gilded trap,” as lobster biologist Robert Steneck wrote in 2011, largely dependent on one lucrative species, the American lobster.

How important is the lobster fishery to the Maine coast? What will be the economic impact of a reduction in the harvest due to regulations or to a changing Gulf of Maine? We continue our three-part series with a look at Midcoast Maine.

Walk the streets of Rockland and there’s little to suggest the economic clout of the lobster fishery in Knox County. Once called “Lobster Capital of the World,” now billed as Maine’s “Art Capital,” Rockland features the Farnsworth Art Museum, the Maine Center for Contemporary Art, and a bevy of restaurants, art galleries, and shops. In the summer months (pre-pandemic) out-of-state vehicles vie for parking spots, line up for the Vinalhaven and North Haven ferries, and dot the parking lots of the city’s B&Bs and hotels. Sailboats hang on moorings in the harbor and vacationers walk along the adjacent boardwalk, admiring the view.

Ten minutes south of town lies tiny Spruce Head Island. Linked to South Thomaston by a small bridge, Spruce Head’s one paved road leads down to the water, past clusters of year-round and summer homes. Jammed next to each other on the island’s west side sit a lobster co-operative, Atwood’s lobster company, and McLoon’s wharf and lobster shack. In the summer, the narrow road grows crowded with tourists hungry for lobster rolls, refrigerated trucks jostling up to the wharves, and lobstermen’s trucks searching for a place to park.

To the casual observer, it’s hard to believe that lobstermen operating out of Spruce Head harvested nearly eight million pounds of lobster in 2020, valued at close to $35 million, according to Department of Marine Resources (DMR) data. The lobster fishery is integrated into the fabric of the Maine coast, giving its small towns and harbors a firm economic and cultural foundation. This wasn’t always true. Once Maine fishermen moved among fisheries based on the season of the year: lobster in the summer and fall, scallops and shrimp in the winter, halibut in the spring, herring in the summer, clam digging year-round. But those options have shrunk and, in some cases such as northern shrimp, vanished entirely. The coast of Maine is in a “gilded trap,” as lobster biologist Robert Steneck wrote in 2011, largely dependent on one lucrative species, the American lobster.

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The Department of Marine Resources (DMR) addressed several of the state’s seven zone councils during January, and will finish this round of meetings in February. Department staff updated zone council members on the status of numerous issues facing the fishery, including legal cases relevant to the whale rules, regulatory changes related to those rules, an increase in trap tag fees, and other matters.

Megan Ware, DMR director of external affairs, provided an overview of conservation measures lobstermen must implement by May 1, 2022 to comply with changes to the federal Whale Plan. Ware explained that as part of this process, the state must update its marine regulations to reflect elements of the whale rule, specifically the trawling up, gear marking and weak points measures. The definition of pocket waters won’t change (they will continue to be treated as state waters) and the ¼-mile exemption around Maine’s islands will remain in place. When the state puts the new trawl minimums required under the Whale Plan into regulation, it must resolve any conflicts with existing state regulations that limit the length of trawls (trawl maximums) in certain areas. The Lobster Management Area 1 (LMA1) closure will be incorporated into state law.

Concerning weak links, Ware explained that NMFS has approved three methods to meet the weak insert requirements in non-exempt waters. These include use of 1700 pound braided sleeve (aka, southshore sleeve), use of manufactured 1700 pound rope, or insertion of a plastic in-line weak link into the buoy line. Ware reported water, past clusters of year-round and summer homes. Jammed next to each other on the island’s west side sit a lobster co-operative, Atwood’s lobster company, and McLoon’s wharf and lobster shack. In the summer, the narrow road grows crowded with tourists hungry for lobster rolls, refrigerated trucks jostling up to the wharves, and lobstermen’s trucks searching for a place to park.

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In February we begin to notice that daylight lasts much longer than it did in January. The sunlight seems just a bit warmer than it did a month ago. While it is still definitely winter, there are a few hints that spring will in fact come again and with it, the ramp up to another fishing season.

This month Landings continues its series on the economic value of the Maine lobster fishery to the state. Midcoast Maine has a robust fishery and also a thriving tourism economy. The two sectors are deeply intertwined. “The lobster fishery is part of the fabric of our region. It’s hard to separate the two,” said Tom Peaco, executive director of the Penobscot Regional Chamber of Commerce. Each year lobstermen land millions of pounds of lobster in small communities like Friendship and Tenants Harbor. The dollars they earn move quickly into local businesses and services. At the same time, tourists visit harbors to see real fisherman at work and eat lobsters at local restaurants. If the lobster fishery declines sharply in future years, what effect would that have on the region’s tourism?

The Department of Marine Resources (DMR) updated several of the lobster zone councils in January on the status of several lawsuits involving the right whale rules as well as other matters related to the lobster fishery. DMR hired a California law firm in September 2021 to represent the agency and successfully petitioned for an intervenor status in two Washington D.C. District Court lawsuits, brought by four environmental organizations and the Maine Lobstermen’s Association (MLA). The two cases and a lawsuit filed by the Maine Lobstering Union on the legality of the LMA1 closure will be moving forward in the next several months.

The cost for lobster trap tags has been increased from 50 cents to 75 cents per tag. The increase reflects the rising cost to manufacture the tags, which first quadrupled in 2018. For the past three years, DMR has juggled funds to pay for staff positions. Last year the department requested new bids to manufacture the trap tags; the two bids received were both higher than the current contract. “I waited as long as I could without doing any increase,” Commissioner Keliber said. “But we are spending a half million more than we are bringing in.”

With all the uncertainty arising from the whale rules and court cases, lobstermen are understandably worried about their future and the future of the next generation of lobstermen. Jeff Putnam, Zone F council chair, reflects on the current situation and reasons to remain optimistic.

Finally, I would like to note the important support that the Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance has received over the years from numerous businesses and individuals. The financial donations you have made have allowed the Alliance to continue its work focused on education, research and charity. Your support makes it possible to produce Landings, which is sent each month to all commercial lobstermen and their families. Content is archived and available online and is widely searched daily.

Our programs change lives.

Lobstermen’s Relief Fund helps lobstermen, their families & children during times of difficulty or tragedy. Our connections make us a resource for anyone in Maine’s lobstering industry experiencing hardship. Funded by businesses and donors, our program handles requests on a case by case basis. For more information, please contact the MLCA office directly.

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The MLCA’s mission is to foster thriving coastal communities and preserve Maine’s lobstering heritage. MLCA is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization which achieves its charitable mission through programs in education, research and charity.

To donate, subscribe, or to learn more, visit us at www.mlcalliance.org
I have always been a naturally optimistic person, looking for the positive in every situation. Ask me what I think the lobster price will be next week and my response usually is "Hopefully it will go up, why wouldn’t it?" But in our line of work, there are harsh realities that even the most upbeat folks have to contend with and adapt to. The market and shipping disruptions following the 9/11 attacks, the financial crisis of 2008 and the early oversupply of lobsters in 2012 have been the biggest challenges to our industry during my time in this business, until recently.

The release of NMFS’s Biological Opinion (Biop) and ten-year conservation plan plus the pending right whale court cases have me questioning what the fishery will look like in five to ten years.

This is not good faith negotiating on the part of NMFS, it is a heavy-handed approach that shows that there is no interest in working together toward a realistic goal.

What is there to be positive about when we are facing these draconian measures to protect a species that we simply are not harming? For starters, I was truly impressed with lobstermen during the development of Maine’s plan which incorporated trawling-up scenarios, conservation equivalencies, gear markings, and vertical line weak points. I have been involved in the zone council and Lobster Advisory Council for many years now and to see us be proactive in this manner was encouraging. Many lobstermen volunteered to install rope load testers on their boats to check breaking strength while hauling. We sent in many rope configurations to the DMR lab for break testing. We showed our load testers on their boats to check breaking strength while hauling. We sent in绳 markers to the DMR lab for testing. We showed our load testers on their boats to check breaking strength while hauling. We sent in rope markers to the DMR lab for testing. We showed our load testers on their boats to check breaking strength while hauling. We sent in rope markers to the DMR lab for testing. We showed our load testers on their boats to check breaking strength while hauling. We sent in rope markers to the DMR lab for testing. We showed our load testers on their boats to check breaking strength while hauling. We sent in rope markers to the DMR lab for testing. We showed our load testers on their boats to check breaking strength while hauling. We sent in rope markers to the DMR lab for testing.

Why did we do all of this? Because we wanted to show NMFS and the environmental groups that we were negotiating in good faith, that we care about the right whales and we want to put this behind us. More on their response later.

DMR Commissioner Kelih has been able to effectively communicate the severity of what the lobstering industry is facing to the Governor, Legislature and federal Congressional delegation. The state has committed major financial resources to protect the lobster fishery and is very involved in the court cases. Our federal representatives have urged the President and Commerce Secretary to oppose rules that would harm lobstermen’s livelihoods.

The Save Maine Lobstermen campaign by the MLA collects donations for the Legal Defense Fund so that we have representation in and knowledge of the court cases. This fundraising effort has had an incredibly successful start. I have taken notice of the many people and businesses that have donated to protect the heart of coastal Maine’s economy. The businesses that donate are the ones that many of us work with every day. The lobstering families that donate understand the importance of this fight for our future. Donations from people who have second-handed ties to the industry are truly appreciated, thank you.

The optimistic me thought that NMFS would be pleased that Maine had gone ahead and done all of the legwork to comply with the risk reduction numbers when it submitted a draft proposal to the whale rule in 2020. Unfortunately, NMFS just took Maine’s plan as starting point and imposed measures in the final whale rule that included a nearly 1000-square-mile closure during a very productive lobstering time. This is not something that we can just adapt to; it is unprecedented in Maine lobstering history. The closure area does not pass the straight face test. Lobsters have not been entangled there and there is no data to suggest this is an area with a high occurrence of right whales and lobster gear. I am afraid that this is the first step in a plan to close other areas to lobstering, which we all know increases gear density nearby and effectively puts a gear “fence” around the closure area. This is

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that supply chain problems have delayed production of manufactured weak rope and in-line weak links. DMR has been told by manufacturers that plastic weak links could be available for purchase in February. Maine DMR submitted options for consideration by NMFS to include the use of knots, however, NMFS not yet ruled on whether these methods will be allowed. NMFS maintains a list of approved weak insert options on its website (https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/new-england-mid-atlantic/marine-mammal-protection/atlantic-large-whale-take-reduction-plan).

DMR plans to approve additional weak insert options for lobster gear fished in Maine's exempt waters. The state will conduct rulemaking to allow the use of a three-foot section of 5/16" line to be used as a weak insert if it is connected to the stronger line on each end with either a fisherman's knot or sheet bend. Alternatively, DMR will allow the top half of the buoy line to be rigged with 5/16" rope that has an overhand knot to meet the weak insert requirement in Maine's exempt waters.


DMR deputy commissioner Meredith Mendelson spoke about the court cases related to the whale rules. The DMR has hired Nossaman LLP, a national legal firm based in Los Angeles, California to represent the Department in two of the pending litigations. In September 2021, the DMR became an intervenor in the Washington D.C. District Court case brought by four national environmental organizations which seeks to have the newest Biological Opinion and Final Rule for the lobster fishery revoked, arguing that it does not do enough, quickly enough, to protect North Atlantic right whales. The department is also an intervenor in the Washington D.C. case brought by four national environmental organizations which seeks to have the newest Biological Opinion and Final Rule for the lobster fishery revoked, arguing that it does not do enough, quickly enough, to protect North Atlantic right whales. The department is also an intervenor in the Washington D.C. case brought by four national environmental organizations which seeks to have the newest Biological Opinion and Final Rule for the lobster fishery revoked, arguing that it does not do enough, quickly enough, to protect North Atlantic right whales. The department is also an intervenor in the Washington D.C. case brought by four national environmental organizations which seeks to have the newest Biological Opinion and Final Rule for the lobster fishery revoked, arguing that it does not do enough, quickly enough, to protect North Atlantic right whales. The department is also an intervenor in the Washington D.C. case brought by four national environmental organizations which seeks to have the newest Biological Opinion and Final Rule for the lobster fishery revoked, arguing that it does not do enough, quickly enough, to protect North Atlantic right whales. The department is also an intervenor in the Washington D.C. case brought by four national environmental organizations which seeks to have the newest Biological Opinion and Final Rule for the lobster fishery revoked, arguing that it does not do enough, quickly enough, to protect North Atlantic right whales. The department is also an intervenor in the Washington D.C. case brought by four national environmental organizations which seeks to have the newest Biological Opinion and Final Rule for the lobster fishery revoked, arguing that it does not do enough, quickly enough, to protect North Atlantic right whales. The department is also an intervenor in the Washington D.C. case brought by four national environmental organizations which seeks to have the newest Biological Opinion and Final Rule for the lobster fishery revoked, arguing that it does not do enough, quickly enough, to protect North Atlantic right whales. The department is also an intervenor in the Washington D.C. case brought by four national environmental organizations which seeks to have the newest Biological Opinion and Final Rule for the lobster fishery revoked, arguing that it does not do enough, quickly enough, to protect North Atlantic right whales. The department is also an intervenor in the Washington D.C. case brought by four national environmental organizations which seeks to have the newest Biological Opinion and Final Rule for the lobster fishery revoked, arguing that it does not do enough, quickly enough, to protect North Atlantic right whales.

The port of Portland has no flexibility to set the standard for weak inserts in Maine's exempt waters, Maine has flexibility to set the standard for weak inserts in Maine's exempt waters.

The southshore sleeve is manufactured by Novabraid and is available at NEMI in New Hampshire. What about the knots developed by lobstermen in partnership with DMR? DMR submitted several options using knots developed by lobstermen, and tested by DMR, to NMFS for approval during the summer 2021. NMFS has convened a panel to review these options. NMFS informed the industry that a decision would be reach in November 2021, however, NMFS has not yet made a determination whether certain knots will be approved for use in non-exempt waters.

NMFS will post updates to approved weak insert options on its website: www.fisheries.noaa.gov/new-england-mid-atlantic/marine-mammal-protection/approved-weak-inserts-and-line-atlantic-large. Additional options for weak inserts in Exempt Waters The state will adopt the new federal whale rules into state regulations. While NMFS has sole authority to set standards for weak inserts in non-exempt waters, Maine has flexibility to set the standard for weak inserts in Maine's exempt waters.

DMR determined that 5/16" rope on its own does not consistently break below 1700 pounds. However, if fished with an overhand knot in the line, or connecting a section of 5/16" rope to stronger line with a fisherman's knot or sheet bend, it does meet the 1,700 pound standard.

Maine will be proposing the use of 5/16" rope with a knot to meet the weak insert requirement in Maine's EXEMPT waters.
STEAMING AHEAD

The new year is off to a very busy start, and 2022 will likely prove to be the busiest and most eventful year ever for the MLA. While the MLA is consumed by litigation over the whale rules, lobstermen are rightfully focused on the looming May deadline to comply with the most recent changes to the whale plan. There’s a lot of work involved in re-arranging more traps per trawl, adding weak inserts to buoy lines, and re-marking vertical lines again (for federal permit holders). The May deadline would be hard to meet during normal times when marine supply shops are fully stocked. But as you are painfully aware, that is not the case this year. To make matters worse, NMFS has approved a very limited number of options for weak inserts, none of which are available for purchase right now. Hopefully the manufactured plastic in-line weak inserts will make it to stores in February, but these days, who knows?

Please don’t let the stress of converting all your gear to comply with the new rules distract you from the real threat. Our industry is facing two additional risk reductions to comply with NMFS’s 10-year whale plan: another 60% risk reduction in 2025 and an additional 87% risk reduction in 2030! As I’ve said before, I’m extremely worried that there is no way for our industry to actually achieve these reductions and still have a viable fishery.

That is why the MLA has sued NMFS.

I have heard the state characterize the lawsuit filed by the four environmental groups (eNGOs) as the most important lawsuit pending right now. While I agree that case is extremely important — which is why the MLA intervened in it four years ago, in 2018 — I disagree that it is the most important litigation right now. The eNGO case only allows the lobster industry to play defense. It is past time for us to go on offense, which is why MLA’s lawsuit is so critical.

Court cases are incredibly complicated. To begin with, the legal claims pursued by the plaintiff establish the parameters of what can be argued in court. The plaintiff asserts which actions they believe have violated the law and why. Parties that enter the case as intervenors can only weigh in on the legal issues raised by the plaintiff. As an intervenor, your role is to ensure that the court understands your perspective on each issue. But if your key issues are not raised by the plaintiff, the judge has no jurisdiction to decide them. Period. So there are limits on what you can achieve as an intervenor in another party’s lawsuit.

In the eNGO court case, intervenors representing the lobster industry are trying to avoid a shutdown of the fishery on the legal grounds raised by the eNGOs — that is, NMFS failed to issue an incidental take statement. MLA’s involvement was critical in avoiding that outcome when the court issued its ruling in 2019 to give NMFS an extra six months to complete the Biological Opinion, which was finalized in May 2021.

Not surprisingly, the eNGOs are not satisfied with the new Biological Opinion and are once again looking to shut down the lobster fishery, this time going after both state and federal waters. This is a very big deal. The MLA is extremely grateful that the state obtained outside counsel and joined us as an intervenor in this case in 2021. But the eNGOs raise a narrow legal issue that can be decided by the judge without fixing the fundamental flaws in the science underlying the Biological Opinion. It is the Biological Opinion that is driving NMFS’s draconian risk reductions by lobstermen.

That is why the MLA’s case is crucial to preserving a future for Maine’s lobster fishery.

The MLA’s lawsuit seeks to expose the many scientific flaws in NMFS’s Biological Opinion and asks the judge to require NMFS to get the science right before it implements a ten-year whale plan that will wreak havoc on our industry without saving the right whale population. Our lawsuit is aimed at making sure that Maine lobstermen are only required to reach risk reduction goals that match up with the scientifically-documented risk posed by our fishery. It also demands accountability from an agency that has accepted, in spite of contrary scientific evidence, the eNGOs’ false claim that vertical lines in Maine water pose a “deadly threat” to right whales that only ropeless fishing can fix.

It is frustrating that the environmental groups continue to herald management measures recently implemented in Canada and somehow ignore the fact that ten right whales died in Canada in 2019 while these measures were in place. Through the MLA’s lawsuit, we have made it clear that we will not allow the U.S. government to hold Maine lobstermen accountable for right whales that we know are not being killed by our fishery.

I wish we could make this all go away, but that is not possible. Given the dire status of the right whale population and the continued occurrence of serious entanglements that cannot be traced to a fishery, commercial fisheries will remain in the crosshairs of authorities.

It is unrealistic to think we could change the Endangered Species Act (ESA) or the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). But through the courts, we can change how NMFS implements these laws. We must demand that NMFS meet the legal requirements in the ESA and the MMPA that call for it to use the best science available.

The science that shows Maine lobster gear has never been known to kill a right whale or even entangle a whale since 2004. The science which shows that over the last five years U.S. vessels have killed two whales while U.S. commercial fisheries have not killed any. The science that shows Canadian fishing gear continues, by far, to be the predominant gear removed from entangled whales. The science that shows right whales are moving away from where Maine lobstermen fish and will move even further away by 2050. The science that shows right whales are adapting to a shifting climate and are once again successfully foraging and producing young. The science that shows right whale whales do perish from natural causes like shark predation.

And the science that shows right whales are showing up in unexpected places like Europe and the Gulf of Mexico, indicating that potentially important habitats are not being surveyed and that these animals should not be considered dead because they may have migrated away from their prior range. For more than a decade, MLA has exhausted every avenue in seeking fair treatment for Maine’s lobster industry and accountability from NMFS in how and where it targets whale conservation measures. After door after door was slammed in our face, our only recourse was to go on the offense and take this to court.

The MLA will continue to invest significant resources in the eNGO case to help the court understand that shutting down the Maine lobster fishery will not save the right whale population. And we will continue to push for accountability and conservation plans based on sound science so that Maine lobstermen and future generations can continue our proud heritage.

The court cases are moving forward right now. If we are to continue to fight this draconian whale plan and go head-to-head with the environmental groups, we need your support. MLA has the clout and the legal expertise to make a difference, but we can only be successful if we have the funds to do so. Our Save Maine Lobstermen campaign is critical to making this happen. We would be honored to have your support.

As always, stay safe on the water.
The MLA's Advancement Director Kevin Kelley thanked Board members for claims that commercial fisheries are known to kill and seriously injure whales. He explained that NMFS is issuing Incidental Harassment Authorizations (IHA), a chance to protect lobster spawning stock biomass in order to increase the resiliency of the lobster fishery. MLA reiterated the Maine fishing industry's opposition to offshore wind, stressed the need to develop baseline environmental and fisheries data before moving forward with offshore wind, and emphasized the need to develop a framework to ensure wind developers are held accountable for their actions.

The MLA reviewed the status of four ongoing lawsuits concerning the North Atlantic right whale. The MLA's lawsuit challenges the federal government's 10-year long-term protection plan, which creates mandates for additional gear marking and gear modification. The judge has set a schedule for all of the cases, with the first round of briefs due in February.

The Take Reduction Team (TRT) was scheduled to meet in December, but the meetings have been pushed back to spring. NMFS is holding a meeting of the Gear Advisory Panel on January 27. The TRT has been getting questions from lobstermen concerned about NMFS's authorizing incidental takes of right whales around wind farms. Patrice explained that the first round of briefs is due in February. The judge has set a schedule for all of the cases, with the first round of briefs due in February.

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The ASFMC held two online public hearings in January to update stakeholders on herring landings. There were no fishermen who spoke in favor of requiring vessel tracking on vessels in lobster and Jonah crab fisheries with commercial trap gear permits. After accepting the 2020 Benchmark Stock Assessment for American lobster, the Board initiated work on the draft addendum in February 2021, with a focus on developing a trigger mechanism that would automatically implement management measures to improve protection of the Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank (GOM/GBK) stock.

ASMFCONSIDERS INCREASING MINIMUM SIZE FOR AREA 1 LOBSTER FISHERY

The ASFMC Lobster Board held a meeting on January 25 and approved a proposal to increase the minimum size for lobster fishing in Area 1 from 2-1/16" (52mm) to 2-5/16" (84mm). The draft addendum considers modifications to standardize measures across lobster management areas and develops either (1) a trigger mechanism or (2) a predetermined schedule to implement increases to the minimum gauge for lobster management Area 1. Gauge increases under consideration for LMA 1 include incremental increases in the minimum gauge from 3-1/4" to 3-5/16" (84 mm), and then to 3-3/8" (86 mm).

A few of the options would also require Area 3 to reduce its minimum size as well as standardize V-notch requirements. The goal of the draft addendum is to protect lobster spawning stock biomass in order to increase the resiliency of the stock. A series of public hearings will be held in March. If this addendum is approved, the earliest implementation date would be May 2023.

During the meeting, the MLA asked the Lobster Board if this draft addendum is necessary, given scope of changes currently facing the lobster industry. The MLA urged the Board to wait until the next round of risk reductions under the full committee. The MLA also urged AFSCM to hold a lot of public hearings to ensure lobstermen have ample opportunity to weigh in on this proposal.

RIGHT WHALE CALVES SO FAR

Right whales are off to a good start for the 2022 calving season, which runs December through March. Researchers closely monitor the southeastern Atlantic coast for right whale mother/calf pairs. As of January 20, 12 calves have been identified. After a historic low in 2018 when zero calves were born, right whale calving rates have been improving, with seven identified in 2019, 10 in 2020 and 20 in 2021. According to NMFS, 20 newborns in a calving season is considered a relatively productive year, though they estimate higher rates are needed to recover the population.

OFFSHORE WIND DEVELOPMENT

The Maine Offshore Wind Fisheries Working Group (FWG) met twice during January to continue drafting recommendations to establish a robust baseline monitoring program for the proposed research array before construction begins. Pre-construction recommendations include conducting extensive pre-construction baseline survey work, autonomous navigation, and bottom mapping, in addition to documenting historic and existing commercial and recreational fishing use within and beyond the proposed lease area. The FWG has also prepared a list of recommendations to improve pre-construction monitoring and communications with the fishing industry to inform the state's Roadmap to Offshore Wind planning process. The FWG has stressed the need to ensure that offshore wind developers are held accountable and that effective communications plans are developed. The recommendation is driven by the fishing industry's continued frustration with the lack of accountability regarding the development of the Monhegan wind project. The FWG is also considering a recommendation that offshore wind be sited offshore Maine's most important fishing grounds. The group is reviewing fishing maps and considering options to recommend wind projects to be sited at least 55, 65 or 75 miles from shore.

2022 HERRING UPDATES

In January, NMFS announced that the 2022 Atlantic herring quota will be reduced to account for catch overages and carryover of unharvested catch (i.e. undercompensation) from 2020. They recently completed their final catch accounting for 2020 and with that in mind, the annual catch limit in 2022 was reduced because herring landings in Areas 2 and 3 exceeded the quota set in 2020.

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ASMFCSCHEDULES VESSEL TRACKING MEETINGS

The ASFM held two online public hearings in January to update stakeholders and take public comment on the Commission's proposal (Addendum 29) to require electronic tracking for federally permitted vessels in the American lobster and Jonah crab fisheries. Option A maintains the status quo and would not require vessel tracking. Option B requires electronic tracking on federally permit- ted vessels in lobster and Jonah crab fisheries with commercial trap gear permits. According to the ASFMC, the implementation of electronic vessel tracking could improve the information available to fishery managers and stock assessment scientists. The data from these systems would provide fine-scale spatial-temporal data on lobster fishing effort which could inform offshore wind siting and future right whale conservation measures, and improve offshore enforcement.

There were no fishermen who spoke in favor of requiring vessel tracking on
federally permitted lobster boats. Fishermen supported maintaining the status quo and raised concerns. Questions included whether a vessel could go fishing if its tracker system malfunctioned, the cost of the units, whether existing VMS or AIS could be used instead, how this data would benefit fishermen, and why fishermen will be required to pay for this program. Several commenters believed that this data will not be used to help them, but instead will be used against them as a way to identify new closure areas and to enforce them. Written comments were due January 31.

TIMELINE OF RIGHT WHALE COURT CASES

There are currently three important court cases moving forward: two in D.C. District Court (CBD vs Ross, and MLA vs NMFS) and one in Bangor District Court (MLU vs Commerce). There is also an appeal pending in the MLU case.

CBD vs Ross was filed by several environmental groups in 2018 in DC District Court. The judge determined that NMFS’s authorization of the lobster fishery violates the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and ordered NMFS to issue a new Biological Opinion and Final Whale Rule. The judge upheld the ESA and the timber and the whale measures should apply to both state and federal waters.

MLA vs NMFS was filed by the Maine Lobstermen’s Association in September 2021 in DC District Court. The complaint challenges the federal government’s flawed 10-year whale protection plan (part of the Biological Opinion), arguing that it will erode the Maine lobster fishery but fail to save endangered right whales if it is not corrected.

MLU vs Commerce was filed by the Maine Lobstering Union in September 2021 in Bangor District Court. The MLU alleges that the LMA 1 closure is illegal because it is not based on best available science. The court granted a preliminary injunction which delayed the closure, however, this was overruled by the Appeals Court and the closure was implemented.

Schedule for Whale-Lobster Industry Court Cases

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LOBSTER BILLS – 130TH LEGISLATURE, 2ND SESSION

LD 1759 An Act To Extend the Legal Hours for Harvesting Lobster in the Month of September (Emergency), sponsored by Rep. Genevieve McDonald. This bill proposes to change the legal start time for lobster fishing to 4:00 AM in the month of September. An online public hearing has been scheduled for February 1.

LD 1742 An Act To Ensure Compliance with the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster, sponsored by Senator David Miramant. This bill proposes to allow the DMR Commissioner to adopt routine technical rules to amend the minimum and maximum lobster size and the dimensions of vents in lobster traps when necessary to comply with changes to the AEMC management plan for American Lobster. An online public hearing has been scheduled for February 1.

LD 1988 An Act To Address the Economic Impact of Federal Closures on Maine’s Fixed Gear Fishing Industry, sponsored by Rep. Holly Stover of Boothbay. This bill proposes to establish the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan Impact Fund, funded at $3 million and administered by the Department of Marine Resources, to mitigate negative financial impacts incurred by individuals and businesses engaged in Maine’s fixed gear fishing industry. An online public hearing has been scheduled for February 1.

LD 1980 An Act To Limit Eligibility for Commercial Menhaden Fishing Licenses, sponsored by Rep. Genevieve McDonald of Stonington. This bill proposes to limit eligibility for commercial menhaden fishing licenses beginning in 2023 to individuals under certain conditions. This includes individuals who held a license to fish commercially for menhaden in any year from 2016-2021 and landed 25,000 pounds or more of menhaden in at least one of those years. It also provides that the Commissioner may not issue a commercial menhaden license to any individual in any year subsequent to 2023 unless said individual possessed the license in the previous calendar year. An online public hearing has been scheduled for February 8.

LD 1916 An Act To Create a Legal Defense Fund for the Maine Lobster Industry, sponsored by Rep. Billy Bob Faulkingham of Winter Harbor. This bill proposes to establish the Legal Defense Fund for the Maine Lobster Industry and a commission to administer the fund. The commission would have 7 members, including 4 legislators from the Marine Resources Committee, the Senate chair and House chair, and 3 licensed commercial lobstermen. The commission would be charged with reviewing current and proposed laws, rules, and regulations, both federal and state, concerning the lobster industry, determining the best course of action, including a response involving the legal system, and using the money in the Legal Defense Fund for the Maine Lobster Industry to carry out that course of action as appropriate. This would be funded by 20¢ from the sale of each trap tag and 20% of the license surcharge for the State’s lobster marketing. The laws governing the commission and the fund would be repealed in 2032. An online public hearing has been scheduled for February 8.

LD 1796 An Act To Coordinate Marine Port Development, sponsored by Rep. Roland Martin. This bill proposes changes to the governance of marine port terminal facility development including expanding the scope of the Maine Port Terminal Facilities Marketing Program. Other changes include requiring the Maine Port Authority to hire an executive director and certain other employees. An online public hearing has been scheduled for February 1.

Bills submitted but not yet published:


LR 2289 An Act To Create the Office of Federal Liaison for Maine’s Heritage Lobster Industry, sponsored by President Troy Jackson of Aroostook.

LR 2166 An Act To Establish the Lobster Roll as the Maine State Sandwich, sponsored by Senator Eloise Vitelli of Sagadahoc.
data. Those dollars were quickly spent at local businesses in Rockland and other towns of the Midcoast.

And that is the nature of Midcoast Maine: a constantly changing dance between the tourism industry and the lobster fishery. "The lobster fishery is part of the fabric of our region," acknowledged Tom Peaco, executive director of the Penobscot Regional Chamber of Commerce. "It's hard to separate the two."

The Maine Office of Tourism understands this connection well. The Office produces The Maine Quarterly, a glossy online magazine promoting the state through its food, outdoors, and culture. Not an issue goes by without an article referencing Maine's commercial fisheries — the people, the harbors, the boats and the traditions. The coast of Maine sells, and a recognized part of that allure is the lobster fishery.

"It’s hard to measure [the impact] of the fishery, but it’s very significant," Peaco said. "You can see how much tourism lobster draws. People come here looking for it. This region has a positive reputation as a hub for lobster fishing."

In recent years, however, Knox County, once the leader in lobster landings along the coast, has moved to second place, trailing Hancock County. While lobster landings increased steadily in Knox county in the previous decades and surged steadily upward in the past decade. This reflects a shift of the location of the peak lobster abundance in response to warming ocean temperatures (see chart). Still, the volume of lobster being landed in Vinalhaven and smaller Knox County harbors such as Spruce Head remains high.

"If you look at landings, the increase is in Downeast Maine. There's been no significant drop in the Midcoast," said Sam Belknap, senior community development officer at the Island Institute in Rockland. "The long-term effects of climate change and regulatory issues are more cause for immediate concern.

Lobstermen are aware that their environment is changing. Many are venturing into other ocean-based businesses as a hedge against a long anticipated downward shift in landings, ventures for which Belknap provides assistance. "The lobster fishery is the key to providing the infrastructure for folks to branch out into kelp or oyster farming as secondary businesses," he explained. "Without the fishing infrastructure in place, it would be a challenge to get into the sector."

Belknap also recognizes that the lobster fishery helps boost tourism, both in the Midcoast and throughout the coast. "Lobstering is the core and essence of the cultural heritage that draws people here. They want to experience the sense of community in a fishing harbor," he said. The key is to continue to support lobstermen and their towns by protecting working waterfront properties and ensuring adequate access to the ocean. "Commercial fishing involves capital and time and investment," he said. "You can see how much tourism lobster draws. People come here looking for it. This region has a positive reputation as a hub for lobster fishing."

The balance between lobstering as a way of life and tourism continues to be a delicate one, according to Peaco. "Lobstering has a major effect on the local economy. It ripples to the car dealers, the grocery stores, everything. Lobstermen are making purchases locally. We all thrive by their success," he said.

In Thomaston, Brooks Trap Mill sprawls across several acres of land. The company, begun as a trap stock mill in 1946, provides commercial fishing and aquaculture products at seven locations in Maine and Rhode Island. Stephen Brooks, co-owner of the company, sounded anxious during a January telephone conversation. Since the pandemic began, they have struggled to find enough workers and adequate supplies to meet the many trap and supply orders coming in. Before the pandemic, Brooks Trap Mill employed more than 100 local people as well as an additional 30 to 50 individual subcontractors. Currently nearly 40 openings at the company remain unfilled.

While Brooks Trap has diversified its products over the years, branching out into aquaculture supplies and other items, approximately 70% of the company's revenue comes from lobstermen. "If lobster-related sales really dropped off, we would have to cut our overhead as quickly as possible. That means employees, inventory, possibly locations," Brooks said.

The company's customers come from throughout the coast, many second or third generation patrons. Brooks finds it hard to believe that a fishery so long tied to his family's business and to Maine's culture could ultimately disappear. "Can you imagine what the state of Maine would look like with no lobstering? Think of the money lobstermen bring in. Can you imagine the impact to the state?" he said.
**Burdensome Federal Regulations Threaten to End Maine’s Lobster Industry. The threat is real.**

New federal rules have set a course to eliminate the Maine lobster fishery.

**The Maine Lobstermen’s Association (MLA) is fighting back!**

We must raise $10 million over the next three years to fight the 10-year whale plan and protect our lobster industry for future generations and the thousands of families that rely on it.

We need your support.

**What will funding support?**

Funding will directly support legal efforts to challenge flawed federal regulations through

- Lawsuits
- Regulatory processes
- Development of innovative gear solutions
- Education to save Maine lobstermen AND right whales.

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In this 10-year battle to save our industry, we are so grateful to all who donated in 2021.

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Merry Christmas Cap’t K Glover!
Matt Wiley

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Lee Osgood

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Patricia Doherty
Linda Hopper
Rosalyn Pachter
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In Memory of Ted Spurling
Richard Alley Jr & Serena Spurling

In Memory Of Orlando Wallace
Keith Wallace

In Memory Of Ernest Wallace
Keith Wallace

In Memory Of Richard Wallace
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Thank you to our 2022 Donors!

Our industry thanks you!

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“Stand strong!”

“Thank you [MLA] for all the hard work. Keep fighting the good fight.”

“We support your cause.”
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  ☐ $500
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 www.savemainelobstermen.org  207-967-4555
MARKETING UPDATES

Videos are an important marketing tool for sharing the industry’s perspective on different issues. The MLMC is planning a new video series in 2022 to showcase the Maine Lobster fishery as a steward of the environment and a leader in sustainability.

The videos will show:

- Scientists working with fishermen to gather data around climate and sustainability
- Industry members proactively addressing concerns such as ghost gear, product waste and carbon footprint
- The industry’s longstanding and ongoing commitment to protecting right whales

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Donations to the Lobstermen’s Relief Fund
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Sara Schwister, in memory of J. Croft III
Kerry & Mike Wentworth

Donations to the MLCA benefit programs in education, charity and scientific research as well as leadership and conservation.

We are grateful to those who share our affinity for Maine’s historic lobster fishery and its people.

For information on our programs or on how you can donate, please visit us at

www.mlcalliance.org
or call 207-967-6221
The Maine Fishermen’s Forum Board of Directors offers a scholarship fund to benefit children or grandchildren of a fisherman or a legal dependent of someone actively involved in the harvesting of seafood in Maine or a Maine-based resource (e.g., refiners, processors, etc.) in an effort to ensure the sustainability of the industry. Scholarships will be awarded based on financial need and academic achievement.

Applications will be accepted through March 3, 2022. Scholarships will be awarded by random drawing to be held on Friday, March 4, 2022.

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 in College now, a sophomore, junior or senior? 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?

3. What is required? (Both of these item are required to be a valid candidate)

4. Did you provide an official transcript or Registrar’s letter of current standing?

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.

STUDENT INFORMATION

Student Name: ________________________________________________________________

Making Address: _____________________________________________ Home Phone: ________

City____________________________________ State____ Zip Code________

SCHOOL INFORMATION (High School Seniors are not eligible)

Address: ________________________________________________________________

College/University Name: ____________________________________________

City______________________________ State_____ Zip Code________ Email: _____________________________________

Expected Year of Graduation: ____________

Location of College: ________________________________________________

Your Major: ________________________________________________________________

**COLLEGE Standings as of Sept 2021** (Circle one) Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior

MAINE SEAFOOD INDUSTRY FAMILY MEMBER INFORMATION

Name: ________________________________________________________________

Vessel Name or Commercial License Number __________________________________________________________________

Student Name__________________________________________________________________________________________________

STUDENT INFORMATION

Undergraduates attending a two or four year college who are in at least the second year of their program

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

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

3. __   Did you provide an official transcript or Registrar’s letter of current standing?

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- **Nor’east Bait LLC**  
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- **Durabrite Lights**  
  Garden City, NY  --  Free Shipping for MLA members 201-915-0555

- **Navtronics, LLC**  
  York, ME  --  5% off of purchases. 207-363-1150

#### Vessel Insurance
- **Hamilton Marine**  
  Jonesport, Kittery, Portland, Rockland, Searsport, Southwest Harbor, ME  --  Discounts available to commercial fishermen.

#### Fuel & Electricity
- **Midcoast Solar, LLC**  
  New Harbor, ME  --  20% off Community solar electricity for fishermen, lobstermen, aquaculture businesses, and 18% off Community Solar residential electricity for fishermen, lobstermen, and aquaculturists from the Bristol Community Solar Farm. Subscribers also receive a $100 local Gift card of their choice, and an invitation to learning tour and celebration party at Pemaquid Beach in the summer of 2022. 207-677-0037

- **Maine Camp Outfitters**  
  Sunset, ME  --  10% off all apparel and promotional product orders. 800-560-6090

- **Maine Lobstermen’s Association**  
  Kennebunk, ME  --  10% off all apparel 207-967-4555

#### Gifts
- **Hampton Inn, Ellsworth**  
  (Ellsworth, ME)  
  Hampton Inn, Downtown-Waterfront  
  Portland, ME  
  Hampton Inn, Rockland/Thomaston  
  Rockland, ME  
  Residence Inn by Marriott  
  Scarborough, ME  

- **Coastal Hydraulics**  
  Seabrook, NH  --  10% discount on all in stock items for MLA members. 603-474-1914

- **Hews Company, LLC**  
  South Portland, ME  --  10% off hydraulic components & Cable Craft cables. 207-767-2136

#### Hydraulics
- **Liferaft Services, LLC**  
  Cape Porpoise, ME  --  15% off iced lobster meat. 800-959-5073

- **Winter Harbor Fishermen’s Coop**  
  Winter Harbor, ME  --  10% off iced lobster meat. 207-963-5857

#### Lobster & Seafood
- **Cape Porpoise Lobster**  
  Cape Porpoise, ME  --  10% off iced lobster meat. 800-967-4268

- **Midcoast Solar, LLC**  
  New Harbor, ME  --  20% off Community solar electricity for fishermen, lobstermen, aquaculture businesses, and 18% off Community Solar residential electricity for fishermen, lobstermen, and aquaculturists from the Bristol Community Solar Farm. Subscribers also receive a $100 local Gift card of their choice, and an invitation to learning tour and celebration party at Pemaquid Beach in the summer of 2022. 207-677-0037

- **Maine Camp Outfitters**  
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- **Maine Lobstermen’s Association**  
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#### Hotels
- **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

#### Newspapers
- **New England Propeller Inc**  
  Plymouth, MA  --  Discounts on marine propeller, shafting, and related items, sales & repairs. 508-746-8804

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

#### Propellers
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- **Maine Camp Outfitters**  
  Sunset, ME  --  10% off all apparel and promotional product orders. 800-560-6090

- **Maine Lobstermen’s Association**  
  Kennebunk, ME  --  10% off all apparel 207-967-4555

#### Refrigeration Services
- **Liferaft Services, LLC**  
  York, ME  --  5% off liferaft repack with proof of MLA membership. CAN be combined with other promotions. 207-363-0220

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- **Cape Porpoise Lobster**  
  Cape Porpoise, ME  --  10% off iced lobster meat. 800-959-5073

- **Winter Harbor Fishermen’s Coop**  
  Winter Harbor, ME  --  10% off iced lobster meat. 207-963-5857

- **Applied Refrigeration Services**  
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#### Museums & Entertainment
- **Penobscot Marine Museum**  
  Searsport, ME  --  Free admission for MLA members.

- **Cross Insurance Arena**  
  Portland, ME  --  Special discounts to shows at the Cross Arena in Portland! Use promo code GRIEND at checkout. Order by phone, online, or in person at the box office. Info at www.mainelobstermen.org

- **Seacoast Tours of Freeport**  
  Freeport, ME  --  15% off tours for MLA members. Must show MLA card. 207-798-2001

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Show your MLA card to receive great discounts at these fine businesses!
WHERE DO THE LOBSTER TRAP TAG FEES GO?

By Jeff Nichols, DMR communications director

As many of you know, the Department of Marine Resources has had to increase the cost of trap tags. Commissioner Keliher avoided implementing this increase for as long as possible, but after reviewing different scenarios he concluded that without a cost increase, critically important work and department positions funded by the fees would be in jeopardy.

The Lobster Management Fund (LMF), which derives its revenue from trap tags, is the primary funding source for the Lobster Monitoring and Assessment. This position oversees the lobster monitoring and assessment programs to advance lobster science, and initiating collaborative research with members of the lobster fishery. This position also represents the department at state, interstate and federal lobster science and assessment meetings.

Other Science Bureau positions funded by the LMF include the lobster sea sampling and ventless trap programs, a field sampling position for the lobster sea sampling and ventless trap surveys, and a Landings Program position that monitors dealer and harvester licenses, and contacts dealers and harvesters to assist them with their reporting obligations.

Two Office Associate positions in the Landings Program are also funded by the LMF, including one that serves as the first point of contact for harvesters in need of assistance with their mandatory reporting and one whose primary responsibility is to enter landings data (submitted via paper) by harvesters and dealers who have mandatory reporting obligations.

Marine Patrol

The LMF also supports critically important enforcement of the state’s marine resource laws. The Fund supports six positions within the Bureau of Marine Patrol including three Marine Patrol Officers, two Boat Specialists, and one administrative support position.

The Department has been able to do this work since 2009 without an increase in trap tags. But there are only two companies that we have found to be able to produce tags; their costs have skyrocketed over the last several years and DMR cannot afford to absorb those costs. We hope for continued support by the Legislature for the important work outlined here so that we won’t have to consider a tag increase for many more years.

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For an interactive source of pending lease applications, please see DMR’s new "Table of Lease Applications Under Review" where you can find maps and documentation with just one click. Go to: www.maine.gov/dmr/aquaculture/leases/pending.html and click INTERACTIVE DATA TABLE at the top of the list.

### 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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oceanus Fisheries, LLC</td>
<td>10 acres</td>
<td>Southport</td>
<td>4.5 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Application submitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea Run Fisheries &amp; Habitat</td>
<td>S of Western Head, W of Little River</td>
<td>Cutler</td>
<td>4.0 acres</td>
<td>Finfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Application withdrawn (12/13/2021)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acadian Shrimp, LLC</td>
<td>E of Green Island, Frenchman Bay</td>
<td>Damariscotta</td>
<td>46 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Public Hearing Postponed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine Oyster Company, LLC</td>
<td>E of Dennett Point, Deer Isle</td>
<td>Cutler</td>
<td>1.8 acres</td>
<td>Marine Algae</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Application received (1/21/22), 30 day public comment</td>
</tr>
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<td>Johnson, Jason</td>
<td>E of Dennett Point, Deer Isle</td>
<td>Cutler</td>
<td>1.6 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Application received (3/24/21), comments due 6/26/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunt, Stewart</td>
<td>S of Deer Isle, Casco Bay</td>
<td>Yarmouth</td>
<td>3.9 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Application received (1/24/21), comments due 6/26/21</td>
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### 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maine Mussel Farms LLC</td>
<td>E of Prospect Bay, W of West Penobscot Bay</td>
<td>Rockland</td>
<td>3.5 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Application withdrawn (1/31/22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love Point Oysters, LLC</td>
<td>E of嫩 tear Point, Deer Isle</td>
<td>Cutler</td>
<td>4.79 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Application received (1/24/21), comments due 6/26/21</td>
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<td>Maine Mussel Farms LLC</td>
<td>S of Crabs Island, Casco Bay</td>
<td>Yarmouth</td>
<td>4.15 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Application withdrawal (12/20/2021)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restorative Aquaculture LLC</td>
<td>E of Scrag Island</td>
<td>Port Clyde</td>
<td>9.98 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Application received (2/15/22), site review TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maine Mussel Farms LLC</td>
<td>Off E of Peak Island</td>
<td>Rockland</td>
<td>8.78 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
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<tr>
<td>George Faux Inc</td>
<td>S of Great Salt Bay, Upper Damariscotta River</td>
<td>Rockland</td>
<td>1.8 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Public Hearing News 11/8/2021, 4pm, SW Harbor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maine Mussel Farms LLC</td>
<td>E of Long Island, Upper Sheepscot River</td>
<td>Rockland</td>
<td>14.1 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Application withdrawn (12/20/2021)</td>
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<td>Adam and Michelle Campbell</td>
<td>Pulpit Harbor Mill Stream</td>
<td>North Haven</td>
<td>2.53 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Application approved (1/13/22), 30 day comment period</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hermit Island Oyster Co, LLC</td>
<td>Hermit Island, Small Pt Hbr, New Meadows River</td>
<td>Rockland</td>
<td>2.56 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Application withdrawn (12/26/2021)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maine Sea Farms LLC</td>
<td>Clark Cove, Damariscotta River</td>
<td>South Bristol</td>
<td>3.6 acres</td>
<td>Marine Algae</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Application withdrawn (3/2/2021)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dewey's Shellfish, LLC</td>
<td>NW of Peters Island, Damariscotta River</td>
<td>South Bristol</td>
<td>0.58 acre</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heron Island Oyster Company</td>
<td>Damariscotta River</td>
<td>South Bristol</td>
<td>1 acre</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Application received (2/6/21), site review TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morning Star Fisheries, LLC</td>
<td>Sheepscot River, W of Boscawen Island</td>
<td>Southport</td>
<td>4.5 acres</td>
<td>Marine Algae</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Application withdrawn (12/26/2021)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brewer, Robert</td>
<td>E of Sheepscot Bay SW of Andrews Island</td>
<td>Stonington</td>
<td>3.26 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harvey, Brian</td>
<td>W of Haynes Pt, Goose Cove, Western Bay</td>
<td>Tremont</td>
<td>6 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Site Review Pending as of 5/27/2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barents, Robert &amp; Cole</td>
<td>W of Island, E of Monticello, S of Class Ledges</td>
<td>Mainer Terra</td>
<td>0.33 acres</td>
<td>Marine Algae</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Application withdrawn (1/10/21), site review TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butterfield, Keith</td>
<td>East of Little Musorean Island, Casco Bay</td>
<td>Yarmouth</td>
<td>2.72 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish/algae</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Lease amendment (1/12/21), comments due (12/24)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hennington, Thomas</td>
<td>Broad Cove, Casco Bay</td>
<td>Yarmouth</td>
<td>5.9 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Application submitted 7/9/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maine Source Seafood</td>
<td>E of Lake's Island, Casco Bay</td>
<td>Yarmouth</td>
<td>3.48 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Public Hearing 3/14/2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nickerson, Travis</td>
<td>E of Panst Point</td>
<td>Yarmouth</td>
<td>2.80 acres</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Application withdrawn (10/6/21), site review TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Understand the process! You can make a difference!

DMR AQUACULTURE LEASE APPLICATION STATUS FOR FEBRUARY
(as of 01/19/22)
TO YOUR HEALTH:  

By Melissa Waterman

It’s not easy to accept, but lobstering involves pain. For the young, the pain may be fleeting, something to shake off with a hot shower and some rest. For others, the daily repetition of hauling extended over years results in chronic and sometimes acute pain. All too often fishermen turn to prescribed painkillers or surgery to deal with the toll lobstering takes on their bodies.

Like massage, acupuncture is another type of treatment that can help relieve chronic and acute pain. Acupuncture has been a part of traditional Chinese medicine for many centuries and has gained acceptance in the Western world in recent decades.

‘Acupuncture is one of the tools in Chinese medicine for helping bring the body back into balance,’ explained acupuncturist Eileen Murray of Rockland.

Acupuncture uses specific techniques, including insertion of very thin solid needles into the body, to rebalance the body’s energy. According to Johns Hopkins Medicine in Maryland, traditional Chinese medicine practitioners believe that the human body has more than 2,000 acupuncture points connected by pathways or meridians. The body’s energy flows through these pathways. When that energy is blocked or disrupted, disease can occur.

The acupuncture points are believed to stimulate the central nervous system. This, in turn, releases chemicals into the muscles, spinal cord, and brain. These biochemical changes may stimulate the body’s natural healing abilities and promote physical and emotional well-being. Individuals use acupuncture to address many physical problems, from migraine headaches to the after-effects of chemotherapy.

The process of finding the specific acupuncture points to address a particular individual’s pain begins with talking.

“The practitioner will first ask you questions about your complaint and then do certain diagnostic techniques, like feeling your pulse and touching parts of the body to detect areas of too much or too little energy,” Murray explained. “Then using different tools, they will help move what is stuck or build up what is empty.”

Murray treats many lobstermen suffering from chronic or acute pain. One of the elements that causes such pain is the cold and damp conditions in which lobstermen work. “We call it a pathogenic factor. It penetrates and slows movement of the blood and body fluids in the tissue,” she said. To warm the tissue, Murray may use an infrared lamp, Asian body work, or other means to deeply warm the affected area.

Murray emphasized that the needles used in acupuncture are extremely thin and are made to move through the tissues, not to cut them. “Many people don’t feel the needle but do feel an energy sensation,” she said. The result for most patients is a feeling of relaxation, cessation of pain, and a looser muscular-skeletal system.

How often one undergoes acupuncture depends largely on how acute the pain is. “If it’s a chronic pain that you’ve had for 40 years, it may take a longer time. I have long-time patient, a lobsterman, who just comes when he can because he lives on an island. But it’s important to him,” she said.

To practice acupuncture in Maine, one must hold a state license from the Board of Complementary Health Care Providers. The Maine Acupuncture Society (ww.maaom.org) features more information about acupuncture and a selected list of licensed practitioners.
NEW DOCUMENTARY SERIES ON CHALLENGES FACING MAINE LOBSTER INDUSTRY

Maine native Andrew Joyce has produced the first segment in a new documentary series explaining the threats to Maine's lobster heritage from the ten-year whale plan and offshore wind development. The first installment, available on Joyce's YouTube channel "The Maine Reset," tells this story through the eyes of the fishing industry. Joyce says that the series "scrutinizes plans to industrialize the Gulf of Maine and highlights the perspectives of the Mainers most affected. At the foreground of the conversation are Maine lobstermen. In later episodes, scientists and ecologists also weigh in. The result is a thought-provoking primer on an issue that could result in the fundamental transformation of the State of Maine." Joyce is the son of Maine lobsterman Jason Joyce of Swans Island. You can view the video at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqYzBWJjczcOUZLqyFWV2Q.

HUGE OFFSHORE LEASE AUCTION TAKES PLACE THIS MONTH

On February 23, the federal Bureau of Offshore Energy Management (BOEM) will hold its first-ever offshore wind lease sale, auctioning a record of more than 480,000 acres offshore New York and New Jersey. The auction will allow offshore wind developers to bid on six lease areas in an area known as the New York Bight. Leases offered could result in 5.6 to 7 gigawatts of offshore wind energy. The New York Bight offshore wind auction will include several innovative lease stipulations, such as incentives to source major components domestically and project labor agreements to ensure projects are union-built. Currently, BOEM has 18 commercial offshore wind leases on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf, and it recently announced plans to hold up to seven new offshore wind lease sales by 2025.

LOBSTER EXPORTS TO CHINA INCREASE

American exporters sold more than 13.2 million pounds of lobster to China during the first 11 months of 2021. That was about 6% more than the same period the previous year. Shipments were complicated by the fact that a seafood company can't send lobsters directly to Beijing because of COVID-19 restrictions so businesses used other airports, such as Shenzhen, to move product into the country. While the lobster industry is still performing well in the current market, the value of exports will likely not reach the same levels as in 2018 when exports totaled more than $100 million, which set a record for the industry.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE BUYS MORE GROUNDFISH

The U.S. Department of Agriculture will purchase $25 million in Atlantic groundfish products for distribution to food banks and other community assistance, another round of buying for the Northeast seafood industry that had been historically left out of USDA's Section 32 nutrition program. The federal government's Covid-19 response during 2020 included big USDA buys of seafood like Alaska pollock, and New England lawmakers pushed for the same with their hard-hit fleets. The agency announced another round of $25 million aimed at the Northeast in funding Dec. 22.

MAINE FISHERMEN’S FORUM SCHEDULES ONLINE SEMINARS

Although the Maine Fishermen’s Forum scheduled for next month has been cancelled amid coronavirus concerns, the Forum Board has scheduled several online seminars for this year. The first will be on February 17, an afternoon seminar on changes to the Northern Gulf of Maine federal scallop fishery. The second will be an open forum with NOAA Fisheries leadership, to be held in March. The final seminar will focus on careers related to the ocean at date yet to be announced. In addition, an anonymous donor has contributed $15,000 to the annual Forum Scholarship Fund this year (deadline for application is March 3). The Forum Board has pledged to raise a total of $40,000 for student scholarships which will be awarded in a drawing on March 4.
Putnam continued from page 3

not good faith negotiating on the part of NMFS, it is a heavy-handed approach that shows that there is no interest in working together toward a realistic goal. The Biop ten-year conservation plan is the dark cloud headed our way on a sunny summer afternoon. Maine lobstermen have been willing to go above and beyond to reduce risk to the right whale. The plan aims for an undue level of risk reduction compared to the risk that we actually present. It is common knowledge that the risk posed by Maine lobster gear pales in comparison to the cruise ship industry or the global cargo shipping industry. It cannot be stated enough that without modifications to the ten-year plan the future of the lobster industry is in grave danger.

For generations Maine lobstermen have been stewards of the lobster resource. We throw back short, V-notched and oversize lobsters for one reason — we want the next generation to have a chance to make a living catching lobsters and continue Maine’s fishing heritage. Lobstermen now have to go outside of our comfort zone and realize that the future doesn’t only depend on a healthy lobster resource, it also depends on us staying engaged in the whale plan and court cases by speaking up and supporting the defense of our fishery.

There was a lot to be pleased with in 2021; the lobster price was fair, landings were solid, and the weather was generally cooperative. I am, as usual, optimistic about the current year and hoping for a continuation of the strong demand for our seafood. I just have to remind myself not to become complacent. We have some seriously stiff headwinds to steam into coming up.
COBSCOOK BAY SCALLOP SEASON UNDERWAY

The boats aren’t large, nothing like the giant steel vessels that search for scallops from southern ports like New Bedford. Cobscook Bay’s scallop fishermen go to sea throughout the winter, facing the dual threats of staggering currents and bitter cold during Maine’s scallop season, which begins in December. Rotational closures and state surveys have rebuilt the fishery from its lows in the early 2000s. Today the scallop fishery is one of the most lucrative in the state, valued at $6,777,000 in 2020. High prices in 2022 have taken many by surprise, hitting $30 or more per pound in January.

Photos by Tessa Chaffey Ptoerek.