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LANDINGS

News & Views from Maine's Lobstering Community

June 2022 | Vol. 30, No. 6

LOBSTERMEN FRUSTRATED BY NEW GEAR REGULATION REQUIREMENTS

By Melissa Waterman

Any fisherman will tell you that before heading to sea with new equipment, it's best to test it out. You don't want to be miles from shore when something essential goes bad. Maine lobstermen are using new gear for the first time this year, specifically weak links and weak rope designed to break at 1,700 pounds of pressure.

"I tested five links from Brooks Trap," said South Thomaston lobsterman David Cousens. "I tied each to a tree and pulled it with my truck. Two out of five shattered. Some pieces stayed with the rope and others went flying. One piece dented the tailgate of my brand-new truck."

Matt Gilley of Cundy's Harbor, on the other hand, found that it was the rope, not the link, that gave. "I tied one of the Seaside links to a tree. I used 3/8" rope with the splices. The brand-new rope parted, not the link," he said. "When a rope parts above the water, it whiplashes. That will definitely wake you up, better than a cup of coffee."

Lobstermen are trying their best to comply with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) new right whale protection regulations that went into

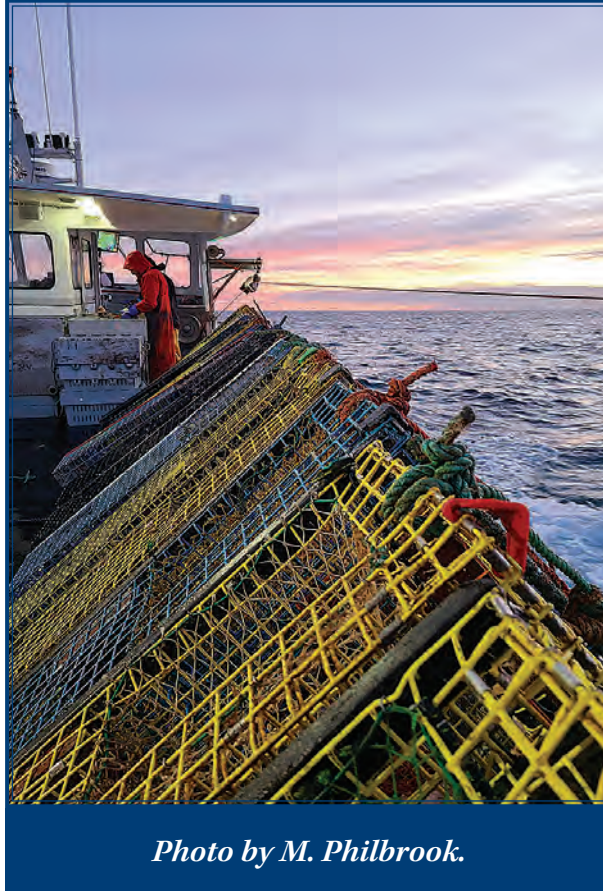


Photo by M. Philbrook.

effect on May 1. But throughout this past month lobstermen still struggled to purchase the weak links; and many who have purchased the available weak rope have expressed disgust with the quality of the products available.

Stephen Brooks at Brooks Trap Mill in Thomaston has been in the thick of the weak link world for some months now. His company partnered with Maine Mold and Machine Company to design and produce a weak link for lobstermen which complies with NMFS's standards.

"We've modified it four times," Brooks said. "In the original link the slot wasn't large enough for a variety of ropes."

Each Maine Mold weak link is imprinted with the word "TOP" to indicate which end of the link should be facing upward. The top end is slightly thinner than the bottom, so that it should break first when encountering 1,700 pounds of pressure. The thicker end should be facing downward, toward the water, so that if the link breaks it drops away from the person at the hauler. And that may give lobstermen a slight safety advantage when the break comes.

Continued on page 5

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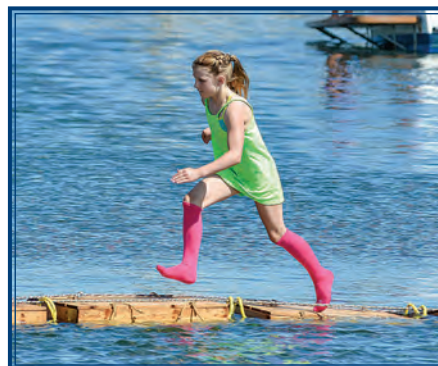
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THE SEASON OF FUN RETURNS TO THE COAST

By MLA staff

This summer, after nearly three years of absence due to the COVID pandemic, Maine's maritime festivals return to the delight of summer visitors and residents alike. The many events showcase the state's traditional and contemporary connections to the Gulf of Maine and to its rich and diverse resources. We highlight here just a few of the festivals coming up during the summer months.



The Great International Lobster Crate Race will happen again this summer in Rockland. MLF photo.

Launch!

Launch! A Maritime Festival will feature fresh local seafood, nautical history, and an array of events at locations throughout Kennebunk, Kennebunkport, and Arundel from June 15 to 19. Organized by the Kennebunk, Kennebunkport, Arundel Chamber of Commerce, a portion of the proceeds raised during a "Claws for a Cause" event on the Kennebunk Green on Saturday, June 18th will be donated to the Maine Lobstermen's Association's "Save Maine Lobstermen" campaign. <https://gokennebunks.com/launch/>

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"We are doing it because we have to."

It's a common refrain among Maine lobstermen as they face a season lobstering with new weak links and weak rope designed to break at 1,700 pounds to allow right whales to free themselves in the rare event the encounter Maine lobster gear. Many lobstermen have had a hard time actually purchasing the new rope and weak links. Others are deeply concerned about the danger the gear poses to them and their crew if the links and rope break unpredictably while hauling. Some have found that the weak links pass through the hauler only to snap and break at the davit. Others have had no difficulty with the new links. In this issue of Landings we ask lobstermen throughout the coast what their experiences have been thus far.

Craig Stewart, a Long Island lobsterman, writes in a letter first published in the *Ellsworth American* that Maine lobstermen have made significant efforts over the years to protect right whales in the Gulf of Maine. Beginning in 1997, when the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan was first implemented, lobstermen have made dramatic changes in how they fish to reduce the chances of any whale being harmed by Maine lobster gear. "These measures have worked," Stewart writes. "There has not been a documented right whale entanglement in Maine lobster gear in nearly 20 years and Maine lobster gear has never been known to kill a right whale." In a fishery that is very diverse in terms of boat sizes, currents and tides, and sea-floor characteristics, the latest round of gear regulations, applied uniformly across the entire Maine coast, will pose safety issues for fishermen, notes Stewart.

On another front, the Bureau of Offshore Energy Management (BOEM) announced late last year that the Gulf of Maine will be the site of offshore lease sales by mid-2024. That announcement, coupled with Governor Janet Mills' intent to construct a wind energy research array in federal waters off southern Maine, has brought wind energy development front and center in lobsterman's minds. In May, BOEM's Gulf of Maine Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force met to discuss the planning process for commercial wind energy leasing in the Gulf of Maine. Prior to the meeting, 18 conservation and environmental groups from Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine signed a letter calling for a rigorous review of the potential effects of offshore wind farms on Gulf of Maine ecosystems and fisheries to be completed before specific wind lease sites are proposed. BOEM will soon publish a Request for Information as its first step in narrowing which areas of the Gulf of Maine will be considered for offshore wind leases.

In a commentary first published in the *Portland Press Herald*, Ben Martens from the Maine Coast Fishermen's Association and Sean Mahoney from the Conservation Law Foundation called on BOEM to do a better job assessing environmental impacts from offshore wind energy projects before deciding upon lease areas. "Waiting to conduct a comprehensive review of the full scope of potential economic and environmental impacts [through the National

Environmental Policy Act, NEPA] is, quite simply, backward," they write.

Also in May, NMFS convened the Take Reduction Team (TRT) to develop recommendations to reduce risk by 90% from gillnet and trap/pot fisheries not included in the May 2022 whale rules. NMFS's risk assessment model, called the Decision Support Tool (DST), originally developed to assess risk to right whales from the Northeast lobster and Jonah crab fisheries, was redesigned to assess the risk of all fixed gear fisheries along the Atlantic coast. During the meeting, however, the DST model was not able to provide consistently reliable risk reduction results, and due to server issues, was limited in the number of risk reduction proposals that could be assessed. Unable to provide TRT members estimates of risk reduction from various management approaches, NMFS now plans to make further refinements to the model and reconvene the TRT to complete this work over the summer. NMFS will then immediately turn its attention to increasing risk reductions from the lobster industry to 90% due to the continued decline of the right whale population.

The net effect of these pressures on the lobster fishery concern many who value the fishery as the foundation of Maine's working waterfront. If the Maine lobster fishery shrinks dramatically, the 25 or so miles of working waterfront left in the state will shrink as well. Jeff White, a York lobsterman, provides his opinion this month on the net effect the new whale rules and the constant erosion of working waterfront properties into residential or commercial uses.

On a different subject, Maine lobstermen are the first to acknowledge that today's fishing involves a lot of plastic, from bait barrels to lobster crates and totes. Where once the traps and buoys were made of wood, now metal and plastic dominate. This summer two aquaculture proprietors will be testing something altogether new — buoys made of mushrooms. The innovative buoys are composed of a material called MycoBond, a strong, lightweight and buoyant substance created by mushroom roots called mycelium. The MycoBond material is noteworthy because it will decompose in a compost pile or garden when no longer needed. Painted with a biodegradable, non-toxic coating, the buoys could be an alternative to the common plastic foam buoys used throughout New England.

Finally, what is summer in Maine without its traditional array of festivals? After a two-year hiatus, many of these fun-filled events are returning with gusto this year. From the new Maine Oyster Festival in Freeport to the 75th Maine Lobster Festival in Rockland, residents and visitors can look forward to enjoying the best of Maine's maritime traditions and delicacies once again this summer.

Thanks for reading and we look forward to your thoughts about next month's issue.

Patrice

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GUEST COLUMN: *Maine lobstermen deserve credit for two decades of effort*

By Craig Stewart

First published May 6 in the Ellsworth American

In a recent column, "The Maine lobster industry is overlooking weak sleeves" [April 22, 2022], a right whale activist alleged that lobstermen are intentionally ignoring a simple solution to make Maine's lobster fishery safer for right whales. That is simply not true. Just as I wouldn't go to a dentist for back surgery, I urge you not to believe someone who clearly has not taken the time to understand the great lengths lobstermen have gone to help save the endangered right whale. I want to present the other side of the story.

Maine lobstermen have been at the forefront of right whale conservation and research efforts for the last 25 years. We have removed 30,000 miles of rope from the water by taking out buoy lines and using rope that sinks between our traps. We rig our gear so that there is never rope floating on the surface where a right whale might feed, we've added weak links to our buoy lines so whales can break free and added unique marks to our buoy lines so we know if Maine lobster gear is responsible for an entanglement.

These measures have worked. There has not been a documented right whale entanglement in Maine lobster gear in nearly 20 years and Maine lobster gear has never been known to kill a right whale.

Yet, on May 1, the federal government imposed a whole new set of gear changes. Rather than shun responsibility as the author states, Maine lobstermen, the Maine Lobstermen's Association (MLA) and the state of Maine have been working hard to ensure the industry complies with these rules.

In fact, the MLA has been on the front lines of developing whale-safe gear for more than a decade. Maine lobstermen worked with federal scientists to develop the 600-pound weak link, which we have fished below our buoys since 2001. The MLA worked with researchers and lobstermen to test weak rope and

other buoy line modifications beginning in 2005. And the MLA purchased and distributed two sizes of "weak sleeves" to lobstermen in 2018 to test the viability of this gear modification in the Maine lobster fishery.

I personally tested these weak sleeves and suffered some gear loss as a result.

It is important to understand that the Maine lobster fishery is extremely diverse. Our boats, gear and local fishing conditions vary dramatically along the entire coast. One solution will not work for all, and it is imperative that lobstermen are able to choose gear that will allow them to safely and reliably haul their traps and, most important, make it home alive. I can tell you from personal experience that you do not want to be on deck when a buoy line snaps while gear is being hauled. It is up to each lobsterman to decide the safest way to weaken buoy lines — they may choose a plastic weak link, a manufactured weak rope or weak sleeves (which are available for purchase in Maine at Hamilton Marine).

As the federal government itself acknowledged when it recently delayed enforcement of the May 1 rule, "unanticipated supply chain delays are preventing some of the fleet from fully coming into compliance ... New England fishermen have been in the

forefront of efforts to design weak rope and weak inserts. Nearly every weak rope and weak insert that has been approved for use under the new regulations was designed by, or developed in collaboration with, fishermen."

No lobsterman would ever want to harm a whale. Rather than blaming lobstermen for wanting to do what works best for their business, the writer would be better served to work with the industry and to recognize that Maine lobstermen have been stewards of our ocean for more than a century and have done everything the government has asked of us for more than 20 years to successfully reduce our already minimal risk to the right whale.

Craig Stewart fishes from Long Island.



Time and again lobstermen have changed how they fish in order to protect right whales and continue to do so today. MLA photo.

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GUEST COLUMN: *What will the coast feel like if lobstering is gone?*



Jeff White fishes from York. MLA photo.

By Jeff White

What would the coast of Maine look like without the lobster fishery? The answer is not going to be short.

Just to be sure all readers are up to speed, the Maine lobster fishery is under attack. Specifically, it is being forced to pony up millions of dollars to defend its very existence against an arbitrary number, the number Zero.

The North Atlantic right whale population is in trouble. After years of whaling, the population sank. Right now the whale is considered endangered under federal law. The number of right whales that can be harmed by human activities is effectively Zero.

Facing multiple lawsuits, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has insisted that the Northeast lobster industry reduce its RISK of whale entanglements by 98% by 2030.

Here's the rub. During the past 20 years, ever since the Maine lobster fishery was forced to make gear modifications to reduce risk to right whales, there have been no mortalities associated with Maine lobster gear.

The environmental groups are giving lobstermen both barrels, but what is really going on? The shipping industry, which is responsible for multiple right whale deaths, just keeps chugging along. Worse than that, the international energy corporations promoting offshore wind farms actually have both NMFS's and environmental organizations' blessing to harass and harm marine mammals while testing the bottom for appropriate installation sites.

It doesn't make sense to me.

The Maine Coastal Program estimates there's maybe 25 miles of working waterfront left in Maine, most of it associated with the lobster fishery. Those places generate about \$3 billion for Maine's economy. That money moves into the local



The importance of the lobster fishery to the character of Maine's coast cannot be understated. What will be left if the lobstermen are gone? Island Institute photo.

economy as lobstermen buy trucks, food, bait, equipment, pay property taxes and so forth.

Lots of towns, like Boothbay Harbor, Rockland, and York, were looking at waterfront properties flipping from commercial use to residential use even before all the COVID escapees moved to Maine. Now federal regulations are putting more pressure on lobstermen to get out of the fishery altogether and where will that leave the working waterfront?

What will the coast look like if lobstermen disappear? There will be lobsters, you can bet on that. But they will be the products of large corporations, not the product of our diverse fleet of independent fishermen. Here and there up the coast there will be ginormous lobster pounds with guarded gates. The Maine coast will be a wall of condominiums and McMansions stacked one upon another. Think about nearly any other coastal town around the country, all those other "once was" places. That's what we are looking at in the future if the lobster fishery goes.

While writing, it occurred to me it might be good to open a kind of forum as far as what folks would miss most if the worst was to happen.

Here's what I already miss:

1. The smell of a general store.
2. A parking lot full of flatbed ½-ton pickups at daylight full of lobstermen trying to talk themselves in or out of going.
3. Little wooden model fishing boats made by someone local for sale at restaurant gift shops.
4. Salt cod in the soda cooler.
5. That nice lobsterman from Southport who my father talked into taking us out to haul for a day when I was 6. You changed my life.



A familiar sight throughout most of the Maine coast, lobster boats and lobstermen are the foundation of a particular way of life grown scarce in other parts of New England and the country. When the lobstermen disappear, so does that way of life. Photo by R. Barber.

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Weak links continued from page 1

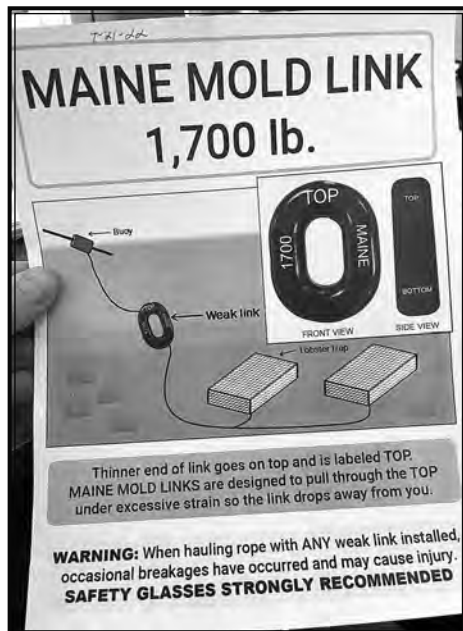
“For every action there’s a reaction,” Brooks said, referring to the great pressure the link experiences before breaking. “With any test I’ve run, the links don’t always break at the same strength every time. When it breaks, you do not want to get hit by it.”

Brooks Trap has taken the weak link safety issue so seriously that the company has printed a poster telling lobstermen that when hauling any weak link, safety glasses are strongly recommended. Stephen Brooks even narrated a video explaining clearly how to use the Maine Mold weak link to minimize possible injuries should the link break.

According to Brooks, the Maine Mold weak link goes through haulers without much trouble. He’s more concerned about what shape the weak link is in at the end of a long season. “We don’t know what kind of wear will happen. We don’t know if it can withstand steady chaffing and not get below 1,700 pounds. No one knows what these things will look like in a year,” he said.

In Cundy’s Harbor, Matt Gilley isn’t too pleased with his weak links. He first rigged 150 traps with the Plante weak links using a lazy man tuck. He estimates it took about 12 hours over two-and-a-half days to get them inserted, only to get news that Plante was recalling those links because imperfections in the material. “So I had to take them all apart and do them again. Probably 30 to 40 hours in total,” he grumbled.

Kennebunk lobsterman Laurin Brooks has tried them all — weak links, rope, and the South Shore sleeve developed in Massachusetts. “I’d say the links are the way to go,” he said. He first used 1,400-pound breaking strength rope and was not happy. “It unlays and chaffs up. It unspins like spaghetti,” Brooks said.



Brooks Trap printed a safety sheet applicable to all weak links. Brooks Trap photo.

“I towed my truck with it and it didn’t break.” He had rigged 25 traps and plans to take the rope out of all of them.

He used the South Shore sleeve in 2021 and found it “horrible.” Brooks inserted the two lines into the sleeve, which acts like a Chinese finger trap. After hauling, he found that the sleeve had stretched and would not stay tight against the lines. He ended up wrapping twine at each sleeve end to tighten it and that too did not work. “Plus the material weakens in the sun really quick. That’s not good if you have your traps sitting out in the sun for long,” he said.




Kennebunk lobsterman Laurin Brooks tried everything before rerigging with weak links. MLA photo.

Now he plans to use either Seaside or Brooks Trap weak links in all his 700 or so traps. “I haven’t had any problem hauling. I put two shims in [his 14” hauler] to get it open a little further, so the line doesn’t kick out. And I’m hauling a little slower,” he said.

Downeast in Jonesport, Jason Mills is patiently doing what he must do to keep fishing. “We don’t have much choice. Whatever we suggest they just do what they want to do,” he said, referring to NMFS. Mills has a 14-inch hauler and plans to use Plante weak links when fishing outside and 5/16” weak rope with a knot inside. He has not re-rigged his traps yet but is certainly concerned about losing traps this season. “There’s a lot of rocks,” he said of the territory where he lobsters.

Michael Hunt, president of the Corea Fisherman’s Co-op, plans to use weak links for one half of his traps this year and 3/8” rope for the other half. Hunt fishes primarily offshore around the Zones A and B boundary line using 11/32” rope now. He noted that in prior years when using the 600-pound breakaways on his endlines the breakaways would stretch and stretch before finally breaking. “I’m wondering, will these links stretch or shatter? I guess we will find out,” he said.



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NOAA RELEASES FISHERIES STATISTICS FOR 2020

By MLA staff

In May NOAA released its *2020 Fisheries of the U.S.* report detailing commercial, recreational and aquaculture landings in the United States. Lobster was once again the nation's second most valuable seafood valued at \$563 million just behind crabs valued at \$584 million. No Maine fishing ports were listed in the nation's top 20 for value of catch or landings.

Total Landings and Value Decline

In 2020, U.S. fishermen at ports in all 50 states landed a combined total of 8.4 billion pounds valued at \$4.8 billion. Landings dropped by 10% compared to 2019 and by 15% in value. While each region of the country saw a drop in landings and value, losses were mainly out of Alaska and Louisiana. Alaska pollock, chum salmon, sockeye salmon and herring all hit a new five-year low. Louisiana saw new five-year lows for both menhaden and shrimp. In New England landings declined 7% and value declined by 21% compared to 2019.

Top Port by Volume

Dutch Harbor, Alaska was the top port by volume for the 24th year in a row, landing 800.1 million pounds of seafood valued at \$186.7 million. Alaska pollock accounted for 92.1% of the volume and 52.2% of the value. Snow crab and king crab accounted for 2.1% of the volume, but 34.6% of the value.

Top Port by Value

New Bedford, Massachusetts was the top port by value for the 21st year. The port landed 115.4 million pounds valued at \$376.6 million. Sea scallops made up 83.6% of the value and 26% of the volume.

Highest Landings Value by Species

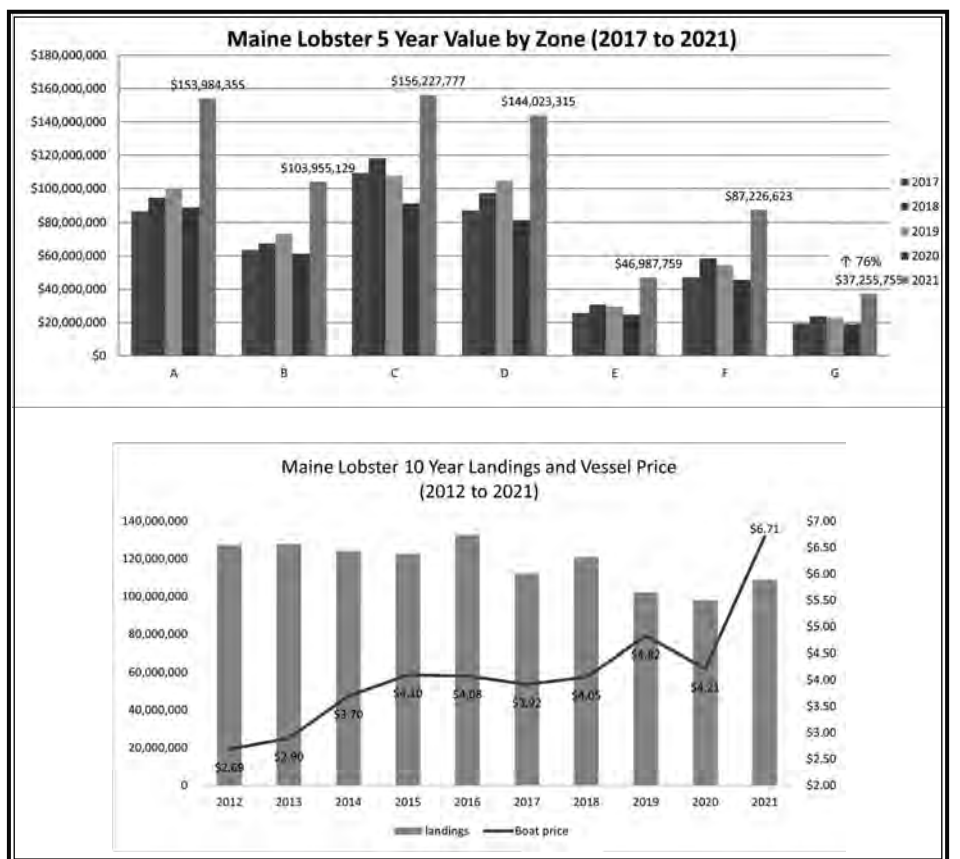
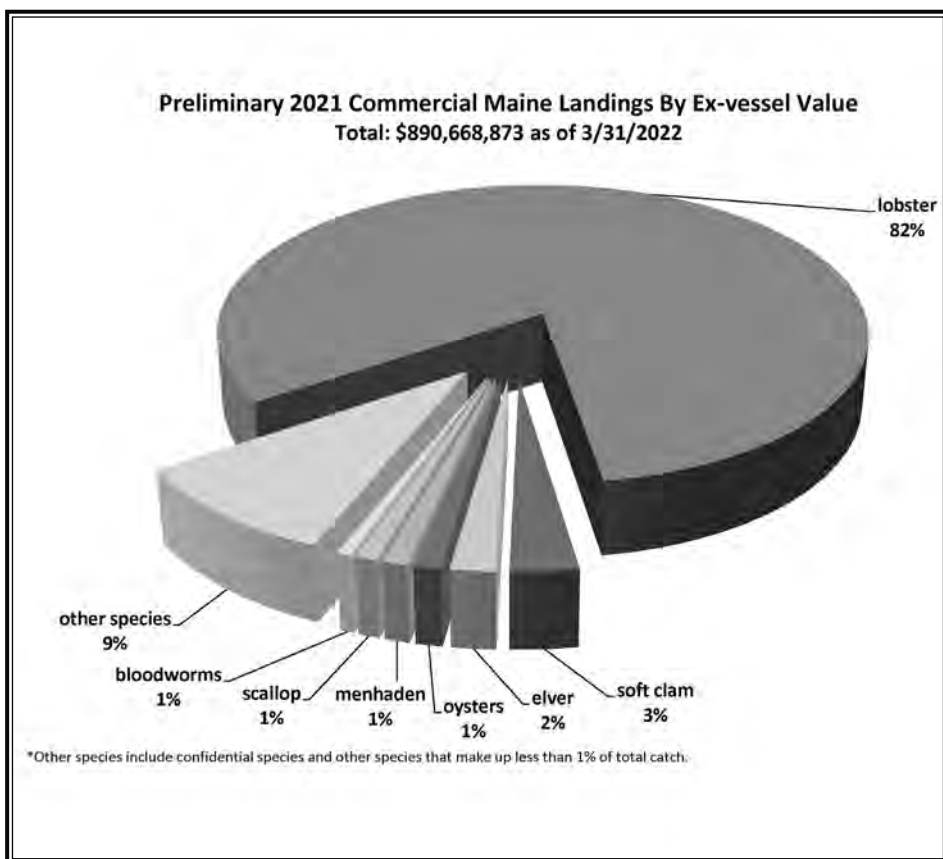
Crabs were the highest value species landed at \$584 million. Lobster landings were worth \$563 million, followed by scallops at \$488 million, salmon at \$478 million, and shrimp at \$435 million.

Exports

Canada (24%), China (16%), Japan (13%), South Korea (9%) and the Netherlands (7%) were the nation's top markets for U.S. seafood exports. According to NOAA, overall U.S. exports of edible seafood products "dropped significantly" in 2020. The U.S. exported 2.4 billion pounds of seafood, which is down 14.9% from 2019. Those exports were valued at \$4.4 billion, down 16.1% from 2019.

The annual *Status of Stocks 2021* was also released in May. The report provides an assessment of the 460 stocks managed by NOAA Fisheries. At the end of 2021, there were 26 stocks on the overfishing list and 51 on the overfished list. NOAA Fisheries conducted a stock assessment in 2021 for one previously unassessed stock, Atlantic blacktip shark. The population was determined to be not subject to overfishing and not overfished.

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MAINE LOBSTERMEN'S ASSOCIATION UPDATE

Maine Lobstermen's Association

Advocating for a sustainable lobster resource and the fishermen and communities that depend on it since 1954.

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STEAMING AHEAD

With so much doom and gloom in the lobster industry, I want to bring you up to speed on the progress the MLA is making in court. As you know, the MLA sued the Secretary of Commerce and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) over the 10-year whale plan developed under the Endangered Species Act. This plan mandates a 98% risk reduction for the lobster fishery by 2030, accomplished through three rounds of rulemaking. NMFS is using the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (whale rules), which falls under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, as the vehicle to implement each round of risk reductions. As a result, the lobster fishery must comply with two different and highly rigorous legal standards as each round of risk reductions is implemented.

The MLA's legal team determined that the lobster fishery had the most to gain by suing over the entire 10-year whale plan rather than the individual rulemakings. If the MLA is successful in arguing that 10-year plan is flawed and therefore NMFS has over-assigned risk to the lobster fishery, then the court can order NMFS to revise the plan based on the best available science.

The MLA filed its complaint in September 2021. The case was assigned to Judge Boasberg in D.C. District Court, who also has jurisdiction over the case filed by environmental groups which claims the 10-year whale plan and current whale rule do not go far enough.

The briefing schedule for MLA's case is nearly complete. MLA filed its opening brief in February; NMFS filed its response in April. MLA then filed its reply to NMFS in May. NMFS's reply to our last brief is due on June 10. All filings in the MLA case will be completed by June 24. Then we will wait to hear from the Judge on how he plans to proceed with the case. All of the filings in the environmental organizations' case were completed in late April.

Suing the federal government has been a heavy lift for a small organization like the MLA. I am so grateful to everyone who has supported us financially because without that support we quite literally wouldn't be where we are today. I can say with confidence that the MLA's legal team is second to none, and I am extremely proud of the work we have accomplished. Hindsight is always 20/20, but I am confident that MLA has put the best arguments forward each step of the way.

Our most recent brief filed in May did a fantastic job distilling our arguments. The MLA's case addresses NMFS's overly pessimistic assumptions about right whales and its refusal to consider its own observed data to inform those assumptions. The MLA's brief states,

"NMFS decided to split its allocation of unobserved right whale mortality 50/50 between the U.S. and Canada, ignoring its own data showing that over 80% of observed mortalities confirmed to a country and fishery from 2010 to 2019 occurred in Canada (as well as 100% of the observed mortalities since 2016). It decided to allocate 100% of right whale mortality from U.S. entanglements with unknown gear to the trap/pot fishery despite NMFS's observed data showing that non-trap/pot gear entangles and kills right whales. It decided that 0% of right whales die from natural causes despite NMFS's own information (and common

sense) suggesting that right whales die from things in nature, such as predators. NMFS decided that mitigation measures enacted in Canada would have zero benefits despite expressing its belief that "measures taken by the Government of Canada are benefiting right whales." NMFS decided to assume a 0% increase in calving rates from U.S. "risk reduction" measures despite finding that "higher calving rates" would result from such measures. NMFS then compounded the effects of all of these implausible assumptions by projecting this "worst case scenario" (as described by NMFS) out for 50 years."

"These are not "highly technical" decisions. They are overly simplistic, Solomonic, and all-or-nothing choices. When faced with a range of available data, NMFS simply chose to split the baby (50/50), attribute 100%, or attribute 0%. These choices are arbitrary because they contradict record evidence that tells a more nuanced story than the stark, "worst case" assumptions used by NMFS."

Our brief points out that "NMFS further tries to whitewash its arbitrary choices by claiming that it "did not use 'worst-case scenarios' or make 'unduly conservative modeling assumptions.' NMFS plainly did use a worst-case scenario.

It created a hypothetical (worst-case) scenario, assumed that worst-case scenario would persist for 50 years, and imposed a 98% risk reduction on the American Lobster Fishery to offset the hypothetical impact..."

"By baking multiple pessimistic and worst-case assumptions into a 50-year analysis, NMFS created a long-shot scenario more like the odds of winning the trifecta at a horse race than something that is 'reasonably certain to occur' as required by the ESA..."

"Although NMFS shrugs off MLA's serious concerns

about the future of the fishery as 'overblown,' the agency's inability to appreciate the real-world consequences of its actions is cold comfort to the hard-working people who, as the undisputed evidence shows, are affected by those actions..."

NMFS had a choice, and it chose to use assumptions, data and modelling that would support its contention that the lobster fishery was the root cause of right whales' decline. For example, NMFS used the nine worst years of calving data on record in the population projection model and concluded the whales would continue to decline no matter measure the lobster industry adopts, including the 98% risk reduction. NMFS also ran the model using a longer time series of calving data and showed that the whale population would increase no matter what we do.

It ignored the latter in favor of a worst case scenario, and now we are stuck with a 98% risk reduction. NMFS's actions were arbitrary and capricious.... and we hope that Judge Boasberg agrees.

I know you are all anxious and worried, and I am too. Tomorrow is promised to no one, yet I can promise you that the MLA is fighting for this industry with all that we've got. I'm really proud of the work we've done thus far and I trust that you are as well.

As always, stay safe on the water.

Patrice



The MLA is fighting in court for all Maine lobstermen and we won't give up. Photo by T. Yoder, Maine Center for Coastal Fisheries.



MAINE LOBSTERMEN'S ASSOCIATION UPDATE

MLA DIRECTORS MEETING

The MLA Board met via Zoom on May 5. Patrice McCarron provided updates on staffing; Andi Pelletier updated the Board on the launch of MLA's new membership software and website. Kevin Kelley reported that the Save Maine Lobstermen campaign continues to gain momentum; he will continue to ramp up support during the summer. The MLA will be hosting several fundraising events this summer. John and Brendan Ready each donated \$100,000 and are helping the MLA encourage donations to the Legal Defense Fund. The MLA has also received generous support from several towns and co-ops. Lobstermen continue to generously support the fund.

Governor Mills signed *LD 1916* into law, creating a 'legal defense fund' (at \$380,000) for the lobster industry. The fund is not supported with state revenue but is instead funded with 20% of the fees collected for the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative. It will exist for one year; the money can be split between MLA and Maine Lobstering Union to reimburse legal costs from challenges to the federal whale rules. *LD 1898*, which was intended to provide \$30 million in state aid to lobstermen to reimburse the cost of implementing the whale rules, was not funded.

The MLA's lawsuit is nearing its final phase during which briefs and replies are filed. The MLA filed its complaint in September 2021, the opening brief in February 2022 and its reply to defendants on May 13. The defendants' final reply is due June 10, with all filings complete by the end of June. All filings in the case brought against NMFS by the environmental organizations were complete at the end of April. The Maine Lobstering Union case is still at the Appeals Court.

The online Take Reduction Team (TRT) meeting is scheduled May 9 to 13. The agenda is largely dedicated to identifying recommendations to reduce risk from Atlantic coast gillnets and trap/pot gear (other than Northeast lobster) by 90%. NMFS also plans to discuss next steps to increase the risk reduction from the Northeast lobster fishery from 60% to 90%. Jeff Putnam has replaced Mike Sargent on the TRT and Grant Moore from Atlantic Offshore Lobstermen's Association has replaced John Williams.

Several board members reported that lobstermen continue to experience issues with weak inserts. There are reports of weak rope that unlays, gets chicken-necked, or has parted off during hauling or while gear is setting. The new batches of plastic weak links seem to be working better. Everson received approval from NMFS for a weak rope in April but that rope has not yet made it to stores.

A few board members expressed frustration that the lobster fishery has lost sight of the need to take proactive steps on simple issues to keep the industry strong. Everyone has been so consumed by the whale rules, offshore wind development and the pandemic that no one is talking about how to improve the industry and continue to advance stewardship practices. There is still a need to reduce litter at sea, including frozen bait packaging. Others noted that there are many harbors that organize coastal clean ups, but there is also a need to develop best practices among lobstermen to reduce ocean litter. The MLA Annual Meeting will be held June 4, 3 to 5 pm, at the Hutchinson Center in Belfast. MLA's legal team will be there to address members.

BOEM PREPARES FOR GOM COMMERCIAL WIND LEASES

The Bureau of Offshore Energy Management (BOEM) Gulf of Maine Task Force met on May 19 to discuss next steps in BOEM's of shore wind energy leasing process for the Gulf of Maine and for Maine's offshore wind research lease application.

BOEM's offshore wind leasing strategy for 2021-2025 includes the goal of holding a commercial lease sale within the Gulf of Maine in 2024. To achieve this goal, BOEM will issue a Request for Interest (RFI) to gauge interest from commercial wind developers to construct offshore wind facilities in the Gulf of Maine. As a precursor to this process, BOEM has issued a "development framework" that identifies the potential area of wind development called the "Gulf of Maine Planning Area," which is the entire Gulf of Maine. BOEM then solicits public input to identify "incompatible areas" where offshore wind development cannot occur to narrow down the size of the area that may be leased, and to request information on a variety of topics from interested or affected parties.

During the BOEM Gulf of Maine Task Force meeting, NMFS gave an informative presentation on the highly productive Gulf of Maine ecosystem which supports extensive, important commercial and recreational fisheries. NMFS also discussed the many unique and sensitive habitats, protected areas, and at-risk species that depend on the Gulf of Maine. According to NMFS, the majority of the Gulf of Maine either supports fisheries or is comprised of sensitive or protected habitats. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also described many unique features of the Gulf of Maine and raised a number of concerns regarding how offshore wind development could harm a variety of unique bird and seabird populations.

BOEM presented its timeline for leasing in the Gulf of Maine. This includes publishing the "Request for Interest" in the third quarter of 2022, followed by a "Call for Information and Nominations" in early 2023, the designation of "Wind Energy Areas" in the third quarter 2023, issuing the "Proposed Sale Notice" in late 2023, with lease areas to be auctioned in third quarter of 2024.

BOEM is developing an "engagement approach" to solicit feedback from Gulf of Maine stakeholders, including the BOEM Task Force, throughout this process. During the Request for Interest phase, BOEM stated that it plans to hold one outreach meeting in each state. However, they received feedback that more extensive outreach would be needed.

BOEM explained that Maine's research lease application is a separate consideration from BOEM's commercial offshore wind lease process in the Gulf of Maine. Maine's proposal will be reviewed on its own. As part of the application's review, BOEM will issue a "Request for Competitive Interest" for the area that Maine is proposing to develop. If another offshore wind developer expresses interest in developing this area, then Maine's lease proposal would go through a longer competitive lease process rather than moving forward as a stand-alone research application.



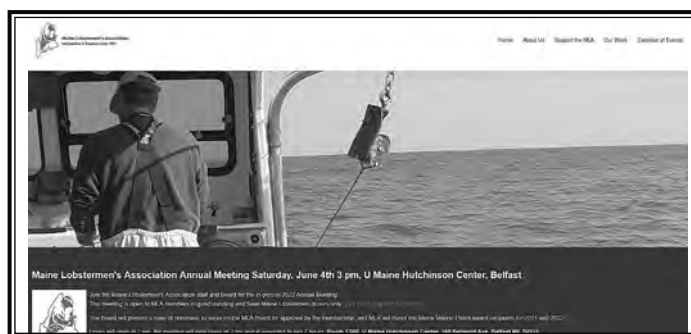
Photo courtesy of the Providence Journal.

MLA introduces new membership software

This spring the Maine Lobstermen's Association launched new membership software to support staff and streamline the membership process as well as offer better services to members.

"Increased demands on office resources have over extended staff making it harder for us to respond to member's needs" explained Andi Pelletier, MLA's membership director. The new system integrates a website, email function, payment processing, and a member interface. It is intended to eliminate redundant data entry, reduce errors, and give members direct access to their membership features.

Members can now create a user name and password to log in from the www.maine lobstermen.org website. From there, members may view and update their personal information when necessary and renew with a click of a button. It also gives them access to member-only tools such as discount codes for certain businesses. New payment processing allows the MLA to step away from Pay Pal which some members were unhappy with. The new system also has an "auto renew" option for those who would like to "set their membership and forget it." Email reminders will notify members several weeks before their membership expires, allowing members to print a renewal form or log in to make a



payment from their Member Home Page.

The software includes a website which features improvements such as the Business Directory and calendar, and the organization hopes to offer community forums and networking as well. Members and the public can easily donate to "Save Maine Lobstermen" or shop for MLA gear in the brand-new online store.

The new software is an exciting step forward for MLA, but members should be prepared to experience a few hiccups during this implementation phase. MLA members should not hesitate to call with questions — especially when logging in for the first time.

For MLA members who are not internet or email savvy, please know that you will not be forgotten! The MLA will continue to communicate by mail and process membership renewals by check and credit card. "We are aware that not every has, or wants to use a computer. The new system is meant to improve member's online experience and to simplify data entry for staff. We definitely don't want anyone to feel excluded," Pelletier said.

Please call 207-967-4555 or email andi@mainelobstermen.org with questions, problems or to renew or join.



MAINE LOBSTERMEN'S ASSOCIATION UPDATE

NMFS CONTINUES ITS PLAN FOR 90% RISK REDUCTION FOR GILLNET, THEN THE LOBSTER FISHERY

NMFS convened the Take Reduction Team (TRT) for a week-long online meeting May 9 through 13 with the primary objective of developing recommendations for Phase 2 of its 10-year whale plan to achieve a 90% risk reduction to right whales in all Atlantic gillnet gear and trap/pot gear not regulated in Phase 1. NMFS also began discussions to prepare for Phase 3 to address the remaining risk posed by the Northeast lobster fishery by developing additional measures to increase the risk reduction from 60% to 90%, which it will move forward ahead of the original 2025 deadline.

Under the NMFS 10-year whale plan, all U.S. Atlantic coast trap/pot and gillnet gear fisheries must achieve a 98% risk reduction by 2030, implemented through four phases. The Northeast lobster fishery achieved its first 60% risk reduction in Phase 1, which was fully implemented in May 2022. However, shortly after the Phase 1 Final Rule was published, NMFS announced a "revised and challenging risk reduction target" of 90%. It determined that lobster industry's recent measures fall short of that goal.

According to NMFS, the current risk reduction target was increased to 90% because "preliminary updates to the right whale population estimate, continued high mortality rates, and low number of calves suggest we still must considerably reduce annual mortality for the species to recover."

Progress towards the risk reduction goals is measured by a NMFS computer model called the Decision Support Tool (DST). The DST assesses risk from specific fisheries based on whale presence, gear density and the threat of gear based on vertical line strength. The model can assess risk as a whole or by specific gear types, fisheries, areas, or months. The earlier versions of the DST used to develop Phase 1 risk reduction measures considered only the lobster and Jonah crab fisheries in the Northeast.

In order to assess risk from all Atlantic coast fixed gear fisheries (gillnet and trap/pot), NMFS greatly expanded and redesigned the DST. This means that NMFS is no longer using the earlier versions of the DST developed to analyze risk reduction in the lobster fishery for Phase 1. The updated DST is still being refined as NMFS resolves issues with baseline fishing effort data, whale data, and other modelling refinements.

Despite the fact that the revised DST is still a work in progress, NMFS nevertheless put extreme pressure on the TRT to recommend a suite of measures to achieve a 90% risk reduction for Phase 2 fisheries. At the same time, the agency was unable to successfully assess many of the risk reduction proposals drafted by the TRT during the meeting. Those that the agency could assess using the DST provided questionable results. One example was a proposed seasonal fixed gear closure in an area of high right whale density. The initial model run predicted a small increase in risk to right whales. After TRT members questioned this result, NMFS identified a file matching glitch in the model. Staff ultimately determined that the proposed closure would reduce risk by over 75%. NMFS attributed these problems to its server crashing, issues with some of the assumptions built into the model, and problems with the model properly matching its data files to draft risk reduction scenarios.

TRT members continually expressed frustration over being pressured to recommend a suit of measures to achieve a coastwide 90% risk reduction without adequate, reliable information from the DST to understand the potential credit of various approaches. These concerns fell on deaf ears, with both NMFS and the facilitators continuing to pressure TRT members for recommendations.

It was not until the last day of the meeting that NMFS finally acknowledged that it was unreasonable to continue to push the TRT to vote on recommendations to achieve the 90% risk reduction given the agency's inability to assess many of the proposals and the lack of confidence in some of the modeled results. NMFS plans to address these issues and reconvene the TRT later to complete this work.

Throughout the meeting TRT members from the environmental groups continually expressed frustration that NMFS was not including the lobster fishery as part of the Phase 2 risk reductions. However, given its significant revisions of the DST, NMFS does not yet have an accurate assessment of the risk reduction achieved through Phase 1 measures. Ultimately, the TRT approved a list of "data and analysis needs" for NMFS to address so that it is able to accurately calculate remaining risk from the lobster fishery. This list includes consideration of improvements to the whale data, refining time periods to more accurately account for recent distribution shifts, general recommendations to improve the DST, the need to establish a final DST model to use so that risk reduction projections to do not change as rulemaking progresses, and the need to improve monitoring. NMFS expects to reconvene the TRT within two months.

WHERE ARE THE RIGHT WHALES?

The website that tracks right whale sightings has changed! The interactive right whale sightings website is now called Whale Insight (not Whale Map) and is located at <https://gisp.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/apps/WhaleInsight/eng/?locale=en>. You can choose a date range and zoom in on various regions.

TED WILLIAMS SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The Ted Williams Memorial Scholarship Fund provides financial assistance for advanced safety training. The scholarship helps commercial fishermen attend a course that supports professional maritime and safety skill training. Awards, not to exceed \$500, are limited to one per person per year and are paid directly to the course provider. To be eligible, you must make the majority of your income from commercial fishing, be at least 18 years old, and fish from boats homeported in any state from Maine to North Carolina. Family members of eligible fishermen who are pursuing commercial fishing or maritime careers are also eligible. Visit <https://fishingpartnership.org/ted-williams-memorial-scholarship-fund> for more information.

FISHERMEN'S PERSPECTIVE RESTORED IN S-K GRANT PROCESS

On May 13, President Biden signed into law the "American Fisheries Advisory Committee Act" which restores an American Fisheries Advisory Committee to support the long-term vitality of American-caught seafood through Saltonstall-Kennedy grant awards.

The Saltonstall-Kennedy program provides funding for fisheries marketing, research, and development. The program is funded by a permanent appropriation of 30% of the previous calendar year's customs receipts from imports of fish products. These funds have grown steadily to \$182.8 million in 2020, although much of the funding remains within NMFS. In 2021, only \$11 million was left for grants to support the fishing industry. The American Fisheries Advisory Committee Act reestablishes a board of experts, with members chosen regionally and across all sectors of the fishing industry, to bring fishermen back into the process of identifying needs and funding priorities.

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

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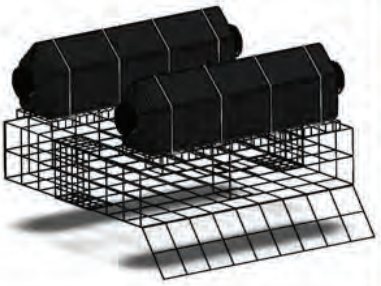
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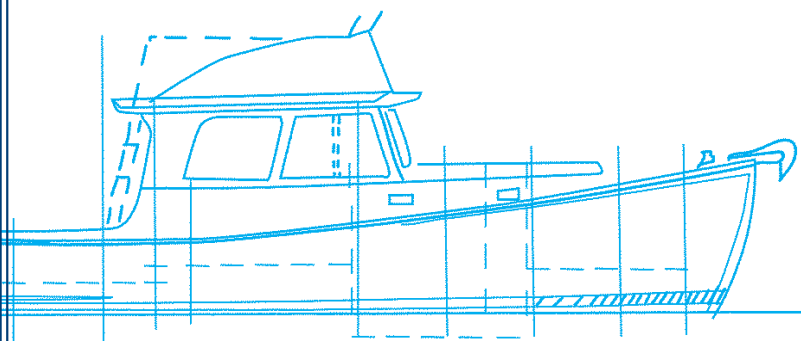
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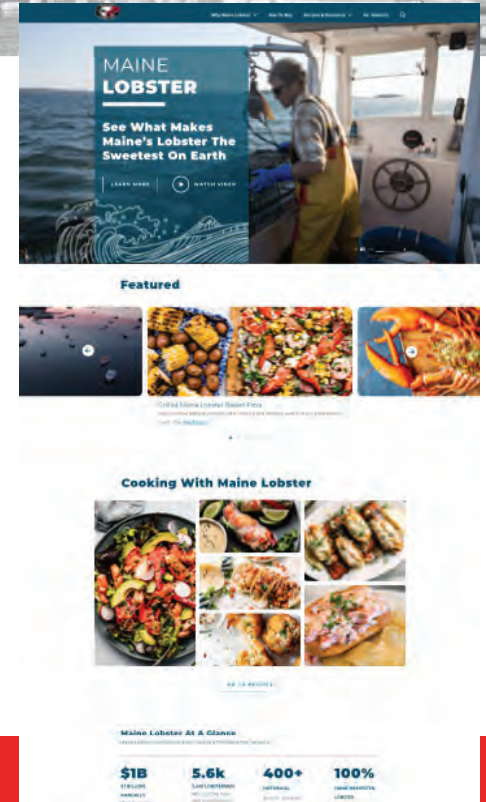


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- Relevant and refreshed content highlighting harvesters, dealers and processors and emphasizing campaigns and storytelling



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18 JUNE * Boothbay Harbor Ashlee Lowery (207) 808-9230	2 JULY * Moosabec Reach, Beals Island/Jonesport Roy Fagonde (207) 610-4607	24 JULY Harpwell Amanda Peacock (207) 756-3104 Kristina York (207) 449-7571	20 AUGUST * Long Island Lisa Kimball (207) 332-3968 Amy Tierney (207) 317-1576	15 OCTOBER Annual Meeting/Awards Banquet Robinson's Wharf, Southport Jon Johansen (207)-223-8846
19 JUNE Rockland Nick O'Hara (207) 542-4348 Mike Mayo (207) 542-1879	10 JULY * Stonington Cory McDonald (207) 664-4525	13 AUGUST * Winter Harbor Chris Byers (207) 963-7139	21 AUGUST Portland Katie Werner (207) 807-1832	All Races: Sign-up 8 to 9 AM Races Start 10 AM
26 JUNE Bass Harbor Colyn Rich (207) 479-7288	17 JULY Friendship Robin Reed (207) 975-9821	14 AUGUST Merritt Bracket, Pemaquid Brent Fogg (207) 563-6720 Sheila McLain (207) 677-2100	The MLA will be at the races marked with an *	Exception: Long Island: Sign up 10 to 11 AM, Start 12 PM.



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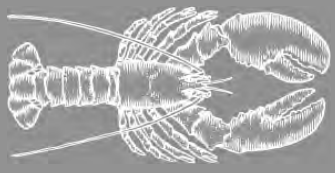
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TO YOUR HEALTH: *Sunshine can hurt you, protect your skin!*

By *Melissa Waterman*

Like many who live in the northern latitudes, Maine residents look forward to the summer months when they can peel off the wool and fleece and let their skin enjoy the warmth of the sun. For fishermen, the summer means something else: long days exposed to the sun's rays pouring from the sky and bouncing off the water. All that sunshine can cause serious harm to exposed skin and eyes. Proper protection, begun early in the season, can go a long way toward preventing long-term damage.

When you get a sunburn, you have been burned by radiation. Sunshine is made up of three kinds of ultraviolet radiation — UVA, UVB, and UVC. The earth's atmosphere soaks up most of the UVC radiation, but UVA and B reach the ground. Those radiation waves bounce around within the upper layer of skin cells, damaging the cells' DNA. The human body has ways of repairing damaged DNA but as you expose your skin to sunlight more and more often, the probability increases that some damage will escape repair. The damaged DNA may eventually lead to skin cancer.

Any exposed part of your body, including your earlobes, scalp, and lips, can get sunburned. If you wear clothes with a loose weave, ultraviolet light can pass through and toast your skin. Your eyeballs are extremely sensitive to sunlight and, believe it or not, can also become sunburned.

One way that the body protects itself from the sun's radiation is through the production of melanin. Melanin is a substance in your body that causes hair, eye, and skin pigmentation. The more melanin you produce, the darker your eyes, hair and skin will be. Melanin absorbs UV radiation. It protects the skin cells' DNA by mostly dispersing the harmful UV rays. But melanin alone isn't enough to protect your skin from sun damage. That's why it's so important to wear sunscreen and appropriate clothing whenever you're outside.



Exposure to the sun is more than an occasional sunburn. Over time it can do significant damage to your skin's DNA. V. Wadleigh photo.

A sunburn can happen on cool or cloudy days. Snow, sand, water, and other surfaces reflect UV rays and can cause the skin to burn too. Sunburns in childhood and adolescence may increase your risk of developing melanoma later in life.

Melanoma, the most serious type of skin cancer, develops in the cells that produce melanin. Melanoma can also form in your eyes. Fortunately, it can be treated successfully if it is detected early.

There are several very simple steps you can take to prevent damaging your skin during the fishing season.

Cover up

When outside wear a wide-brimmed hat and clothing that covers you completely. Dark colors offer more protection, as do tightly woven fabrics. Consider using outdoor gear specially designed to provide sun protection. Check the label for its ultraviolet protection factor (UPF), which indicates how well a fabric blocks sunlight. The higher the UPF number, the better.

Use sunscreen frequently and generously

Apply water-resistant sunscreen and lip balm with an SPF of 30 or greater and broad-spectrum protection against UVA and UVB rays. Sunscreen should be generously applied about 15 to 30 minutes before heading out. Put on more sunscreen every two hours

and after swimming or sweating heavily.

Wear sunglasses when outdoors

Choose sunglasses with UVA and UVB protection. Check the UV rating on the label when buying sunglasses. Darker lenses are not necessarily better at blocking UV rays. Wear sunglasses that fit close to your face or have wraparound frames.

For more information on protecting your skin and the warning signs of skin cancer, visit the Mayo Clinic website, <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/melanoma/symptoms-causes/syc-20374884>.

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DMR AQUACULTURE LEASE APPLICATION STATUS FOR MAY (as of 05/19/22)

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
Click **INTERACTIVE DATA TABLE** at the top of the list.

Experimental Lease Applications

Name of Applicant/Company	Site	Town	Size	Product	Duration	Status
Norumbega Oyster Inc.	Wadsworth Cove, Damartiscotta River	Boothbay	3 acres	Shellfish	3 yrs	Appl. Rec'd 5/19/22, commnets due 6/18/22
Summit Point LLC	300ft N of Lower Basket Ledge	Chebeague	4 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App rec'd (2/17/22); comments due (3/19/22)
Summit Point LLC	1000ft N of Lower Basket Ledge	Chebeague	4 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App rec'd (2/17/22); comments due (3/19/22)
Jordan, John	E side of Bangs Island, Casco Bay	Chebeague Isl	3.98 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App rec'd 5/9/22; comments due 6/4/22
Putnam, Beth	NE of Great Chebeague	Chebeague Isl	3.9 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	Application rec'd 3/11/22
Putnam, Jeff	E of Great Chebeague	Chebeague Isl	3.9 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	Application rec'd 3/11/22
Nappi, Brent	East of Sturdivant Island	Cumberland	4 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App. Rec'd 4/14/22; comments due 5/14/22
Muscongus Bay Aquaculture	NW of Glidden Ledge, Damariscotta Rvr	Edgecomb	3.93 acres	Shellfish	3 yrs	site review complete 1/22/2022
Martin, Thomas	E of Brothers Islands, Casco Bay	Falmouth	0.15 acres	Shellfish	3 yrs	App rec'd (2/11/22); 30 day public comment
Nappi, Brent	S of Clapboard Island	Falmouth	4 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App. Rec'd 4/14/22; comments due 5/14/22
Stuart Ryan	SW side of Williams Island, Casco Bay	Freeport	2.4 acres	Shellfish/algae	3 yrs	App rec'd (2/11/22); 30 day comment
Green, Christopher	Near White Island, Middle Bay	Harpwell	4 acres	Shellfish	3 yrs	App rec'd 2/18/22; comments due (3/20/22)
Whisky Stones, LLC	E of Dogs Head, Harpswell Sound	Harpwell	0.48 acres	Shellfish	3 yrs	App rec'd, comments due 3/3/21
Wilson, David	SE of Doughty Pt, Long Reach	Harpwell	4 Acres	Shellfish	3 yrs	App rec'd, Comments due 3/15/22
Wilson, David	Wilson Cove, Middle Bay	Harpwell	4 acres	Shellfish	3 yrs	Appl rec'd 5/6/22. comments due 6/5/22
Nautical Farms, LLC	N of Roque Island, Shorey Cove	Jonesport	4 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App rec'd (2/3/22); 30 day public comment
Hutchins II, Edward	NE of Cape Porpoise Harbor	Kennebunkport	4 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App rec'd 5/5/22; comments due 6/4/22
Doyle, Victor	E of Barlett Isl, Blue Hill Bay	Mount Desert	1 acre	Shellfish	3 yrs	Pub Hearing 6/15/22 6 pm Mt Desert Bldg
Smith, Peter	Upper Dodge Cove, Damariscotta Rvr	Newcastle	3.96 acres	Shellfish	3 yrs	App rec'd (1/7/22); 30 day public comment
Bracy L, and Lombardo, P	N of Coombs Cove, Pemaquid River	Pemaquid	1.6 acres	Shellfish	3 yrs	App rec'd 7/19, comments due 8/21/21
Restorative Aquaculture LLC	WSW of Mackworth Island, Casco Bay	Portland	3.38 acres	Shellfish/algae	3 yrs	30 day public comment period (3/26/22)
Johnson, Ezra et al.	NE part of Burt Coat Harbor	Swans Island	1.6 acres	Shellfish	3 yrs	App rec'd 5/24/21; comments due 6/26/21
Ocean Resources, Inc	Jordan River in Lemoine and	Trenton	2.96 acres	Shellfish	3 yrs	Site Review Complete 9/3/2021
T Bennett & A Simmons	N of Haystack Island, Medomak River	Waldoboro	2.52 acres	Shellfish	3 yrs	App rec'd (3/3/22); comments due (4/2/22)
Hunt, Stewart	Upper Basket Island Ledge, Casco Bay	Yarmouth	3.9 acres	Shellfish/algae	3 yrs	App rec'd 5/24/21; comments due 6/26/21
So ME Sustainable Shellfish, LLC	West of Sewall's Bridge, York River	York	0.97 acres	Shellfish	3 yrs	30 day public comment period (4/23/22)

Standard Lease Applications

Name of Applicant/Company	Site	Town	Size	Product	Duration	Status
Acadia Aqua Farms, LLC	Frenchman Bay	Bar Harbor	68.3 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	Site Review TBD
Pemaquid Mussel Farms LLC	Mt Desert narrows, E of Googins Ledge	Bar Harbor	32 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	Application rec'd 5/7/21, site review TBD
Acadia Aqua Farms, LLC	SW of Googins Ledge, Frenchman Bay	Bay Harbor	48 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	Hearing scheduled 3/28/22, 5pm, remote
Pleasant Cove Oyster Farm, LLC	Pleasant Cove, Damariscotta River	Boothbay	6.26 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	Site Review Complete 5/20/2021
Ferda Farms LLC	E of Lower Coombs Isl, New Meadows Rvr	Brunswick	2.33 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	Application rec'd 2/28/22; site visit TBD
Johnson, Timothy	SE of Barnes Pt, Middle Bay	Brunswick	17 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	Application rec'd 3/15/21, site review TBD
Nice Oyster Company, LLC	E of Woodward Pt, New Meadows River	Brunswick	4.49 acres	Shellfish	10 yrs	Application rec'd 4/21/21; site review TBD
Great Ledge Cove Seafood LLC	NE L'il Chebeague Isl, Wstrn Chandlers Cove	Chebeague Isl	6.85 Acres	Marine Algae	20 yrs	Application rec'd 11/24/21, site visit TBD
Summit Point LLC	NE of Clapboard Isl, Casco Bay; Falmouth &	Cumberland	100 acres	Marine Algae	20 yrs	Site review complete (3/18/21)
Dodge Cove Marine Farm	SE of Dodge Pt	Damariscotta	12.26 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	App rec'd 7/15/21; site review TBD
Coffin, Bailey	W of Sow & Pigs Isl, Casco Bay	Freeport	6.84 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	App rec'd 6/16/21 - site review TBD
Sparta, Kenneth Curtis	West of Crab Island, Casco Bay	Freeport	8.25 acres	Shellfish/algae	20 yrs	App rec'd 3/25/22, site review TBD
Gaffney, Michael & Mark	N of Phoebe Isl, Robinshood Cove	Georgetown	7 acres	Shellfish	20 Yrs	Application rec'd 11/24/21, site visit TBD
Butterfield, Keith	Casco Bay, southwest of Lower Goose Island	Harpwell	25 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	Scoping session at Harpswell (1/14/22)
Love Point Oysters, LLC	Middle Bay, Southeast of Upper Goose Island	Harpwell	3.20 acres	Shellfish/algae	20 yrs	Application rec'd (2/15/22), site review TBD
Restorative Aquaculture LLC	Middle Bay, E of Scragg Island	Harpwell	9.89 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	App. rec'd 10/20/21; site review TBD
Wilson Cove LLC	Middle Bay, Wilson Cove	Harpwell	3.21 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	Scoping session at Harpswell (4/25/2022)
Islesboro Marine Enterprises, Inc	NE of Flat Island, Penobscot Bay	Islesboro	6 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	Application rec'd 4/1/21, site review TBD
George Faux, Inc.	S of Great Salt Bay, Upper Damariscotta Rvr	Newcastle	1.8 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	Application rec'd (2/15/22), site review TBD
Maine Oyster Inc.	E and S of Lehman Isl. Upper Sheepscoot Rvr	Newcastle	10 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	Application rec'd 6/17/21, site review TBD
Hermit Island Oyster Co, LLC	Hermit Isl, Small Pt Hbr, New Meadows Rivr	Phippsburg	2.56 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	Application rec'd 5/26/21; site review TBD
Hermit Island Oyster Co, LLC	The Branch, New Meadows River	Phippsburg	0.62 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	Appl Rec'ds 5/26/21, Site Review TBD
Maine Fresh Sea Farms LLC	Clark Cove, Damariscotta River	So. Bristol	3.6 acres	Marine Algae	10 yrs	Application rec'd 5/4/21, site review TBD
Dewey's Shellfish, LLC	NW of Peters Island, Damariscotta River	South Bristol	0.58 acre	Shellfish	20 yrs	Application rec'd 8/16/21, site review TBD
Heron Island Oyster Company	Fitch Cove, at Glidden Ledge, E Damr. Rvr	South Bristol	1 acre	Shellfish	20 yrs	Application rec'd 10/4/21; site review TBD
Morning Star Fisheries, LLC	Sheepscoot River, W of Boston Island	Southport	4.5 acres	Marine Algae	20 yrs	Application rec'd 11/24/21, site visit TBD
Brewer, Robert	E of Penobscot Bay SW of Andrews Island	Stonington	3.26 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	App rec'd 10/20/21; site review TBD
Harvey, Brian	W of Haynes Pt, Goose Cove, Western Bay	Trenton	6 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	Public hearing 4/12/22, 5pm, Trenton
Baines, Robert & Cole	W Penob. Bay, WHewitt Isl, S of Clam Ledges	Unorg. Terr.	7.33 acres	Marine Algae	20 yrs	App rec'd 1/6/22; site visit TBD
Henninger, Thomas	E of Mouth of Broad Cove, Casco Bay	Yarmouth	5.9 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	Hearing scheduled 3/8/22, 5pm, Yarmouth
Nickerson, Travis	E of Blaney Pt	Yarmouth	2.80 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	Application rec'd 10/4/21; site review TBD

Experimental Lease: up to 3 years, 4 acres and is non-renewable: Standard Lease: term up to 20 years, size is up to 100 acres and is renewable



GUEST COLUMN: *Environmental impact must be determined before wind leases*

By Ben Martens, Maine Coast Fishermen's Association, and Sean Mahoney, Conservation Law Foundation. First published in the Portland Press Herald.

The Maine Coast Fishermen's Association and Conservation Law Foundation may disagree on a few things, but we both recognize the urgency of the climate

crisis. If it isn't addressed, warming waters and a changing environment will undoubtedly continue to disrupt fisheries, wildlife and marine habitat, with the potential to forever change the fishing communities along Maine's coast. The Gulf of Maine's importance to the local food system, coastal economy, and culture demands not only that we develop solutions to reduce warming emissions, but also that we do so in an equitable, thoughtful, inclusive and transparent manner.

Harnessing the energy of the wind has been identified as a key part of the plan for future energy production. Late last year, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, the federal agency responsible for overseeing offshore wind development, announced plans to lease areas in the Gulf of Maine for offshore wind projects. The bureau will hold a meeting Thursday to begin identifying lease areas for development.

The process for locating offshore wind development is critical if we wish to protect the Gulf of Maine ecosystem and New England's coastal communities. Unfortunately, the current process for assessing and granting lease areas does not do enough to protect the Gulf of Maine ecosystem and fishing communities and must be improved before any areas are identified for leasing in the Gulf of Maine.

We are asking for the bureau to change how it evaluates and identifies areas suitable for development to ensure that the process is based on a thorough environmental analysis and includes extensive stakeholder input.

The bureau conducts a full environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act — a 50-year-old law that requires federal agencies to take a hard look at the environmental and economic impacts of the federal action — only after potential wind energy development areas are identified and leased.

Waiting to conduct a comprehensive review of the full scope of potential economic and environmental impacts is, quite simply, backward. Delaying the assessment runs the risk of selecting wind energy development areas that have significant impacts on marine mammals and fish, existing fishing activity and ocean habitat. The current process falls far short of being inclusive of stakeholders and the public.

To address this issue, the bureau must first conduct a programmatic environmental impact statement under the National Environmental Policy Act before designating locations as wind energy areas. This process would provide the robust analysis necessary to ensure that the areas selected for eventual offshore

wind development avoid and reduce environmental and economic impacts, as well as potential conflicts with ocean users, to the greatest extent possible. It would also provide stakeholders, including fishermen, a meaningful seat at the table in making siting decisions. By providing greater analysis and explanation

for the bureau's decision-making, this process also would increase transparency, which would help build public confidence in how these areas are chosen.

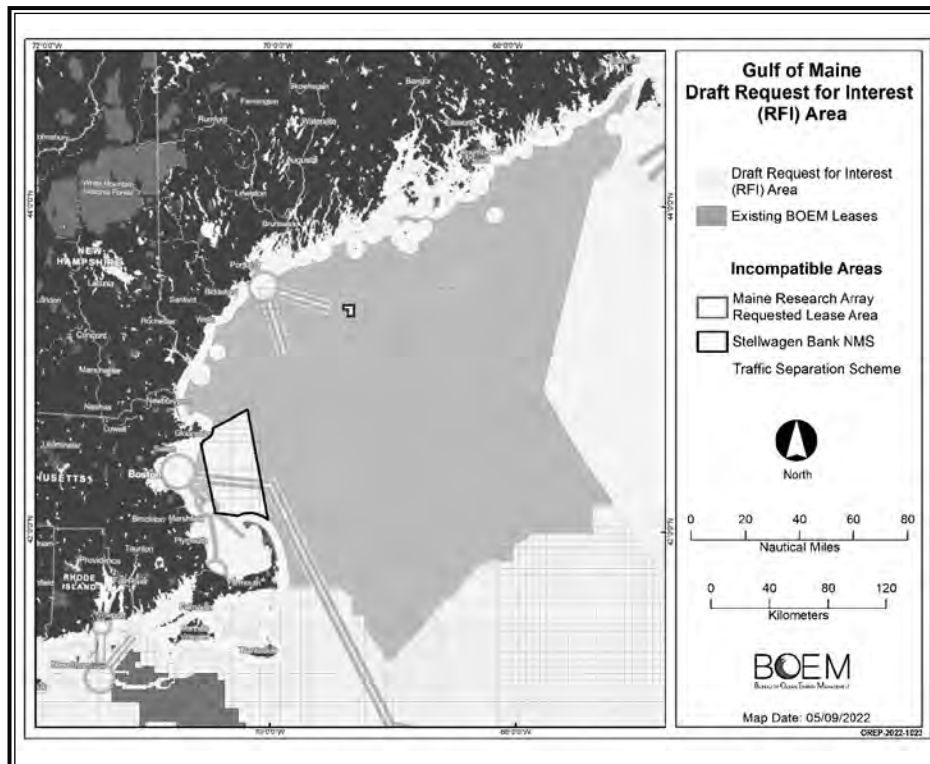
The Gulf of Maine is recognized as one of the most productive ecosystems in the world and plays a major role in our state's culture and heritage. Moreover, it also provides the foundation for a coastal economy characterized by commercial and recreational fishing, aquaculture, recreational boating, shipping and tourism.

We must address the climate crisis, but we must also ensure that new development does not come at the expense of the Gulf of Maine ocean ecosystem, and Maine's fishing communities. Federal officials haven't yet outlined what process they plan to follow for determining the wind energy areas in the Gulf of Maine, so there is still time to get this right.

We must ensure that this vitally important ecosystem is protected. That means the bureau needs to conduct a

full environmental review and consider input from stakeholders before choosing areas for any offshore development.

We owe it to our coastal communities, fishermen and the wildlife that call the Gulf of Maine home to do everything we can to make sure offshore wind is built responsibly.



At a meeting in May, BOEM stated that the entire Gulf of Maine is considered the "Gulf of Maine Planning Area", which it will narrow down for wind energy leases. BOEM graphic.

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In the NEWS

COD LANDINGS LOWEST EVER

One of the oldest fishing industries in the U.S. sank to a new low in catch last year. New England fishermen have caught Atlantic cod for centuries, but the catch has dwindled over the last decade due to overfishing, restrictive fishing quotas, and environmental changes. The vast majority of the fish come to the docks in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine. Maine fishermen brought fewer cod to the docks in 2021 than any other in recorded history, according to Department of Marine Resources data. The state's catch, which was more than 20 million pounds in the early 1990s, was less than 50,000 pounds last year.



Photo courtesy of R. Michelson.

ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS CALL FOR IMPACT STATEMENT ON OFFSHORE WIND FARMS

A wide coalition of New England conservation groups is calling on federal regulators for a rigorous review of the potential effects of offshore wind farms on Gulf of Maine ecosystems and fisheries. They want the review completed before specific wind sites are proposed, which was not done for wind lease areas in southern New England. Eighteen groups from Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine signed on to the effort, ranging from the New England Aquarium to the Natural Resources Council of Maine, as well as national organizations like the Audubon Society. They are calling for a "Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement" — a comprehensive up-front review of the all the Gulf's ecosystems, before any consideration of where the best wind lease sites might be.

HERRING INDUSTRY WILL RECEIVE FEDERAL MONEY

The federal government will provide \$11 million to commercial herring fishermen and shore-side processors in four states this year. A scientific assessment in 2020 found that herring are overfished and quotas for the fish were reduced dramatically. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) declared a "fishery disaster" in November 2021, clearing the way for financial assistance. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo said that the herring industry in Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island will get the assistance. More than \$7 million is allocated for Maine.

CANADA EXTENDS GEORGES BANK DRILLING BAN

The Canadian ban on drilling for oil and gas on Georges Bank has been extended again until the end of 2032. The moratorium was set to expire at the end of the year. Official notice of the extension was posted in May.

The joint federal-provincial moratorium prohibits "the exploration and drilling for and the production, conservation and processing of petroleum" from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2032.

ISLAND INSTITUTE AIMS TO ELECTRIFY THE COAST

The Island Institute in Rockland is working to electrify Maine's working waterfront by electrifying the boats, wharves, and businesses. The non-profit organization calls the project a climate adaptation strategy that will reduce operating costs of fishing and lobstering over time. Among the project's goals are to put at least 100 electric outboard motors on fishermen and aquaculturists' skiffs by 2025; install solar-powered charging stations on docks and wharves; provide grants to fund clean energy projects for fishermen, marine-based businesses, and businesses critical to sustaining the working waterfront.

HEAD OF MARINE PATROL TO STEP DOWN

Colonel Jay Carroll, a 23-year veteran of the Maine Marine Patrol, will be retiring from the bureau soon. Colonel Carroll took his position as the head of Marine Patrol in 2019, replacing Jon Cornish in the position.

Carroll served as Lieutenant of Division II since 2014 and before that served for thirteen years as a field Sergeant in Hancock and Washington Counties, one year as a Boat Captain in Knox County, and four years as an Officer in the Port Clyde patrol area.

Carroll has a lifelong connection to Marine Patrol. His father, Jim, was also a Lieutenant in Division II. His uncle John Carroll and cousin Richard LaHaye Jr. both served as Marine Patrol Lieutenants, and his cousin Tim Carroll, currently the Sheriff of Knox County, also served in the Marine Patrol.











Col. Carroll with a photo of his father Jim behind. DMR photo.

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Events Calendar

More details on all of these events can be found online at www.mainelobstermen.org

June 1

Lobster Advisory Council, 4 p.m., Maine Department of Marine Resources, Augusta. FMI: www.maine.gov/dmr.

June 4

68th annual meeting of the Maine Lobstermen's Association, 3-5 p.m., University of Maine Hutchinson Center, Belfast. Doors open at 2 p.m. FMI, call Andi at 207-967-4555.

June 14

"Competing for the Commons along Maine's Coast," talk by MCCF director Paul Anderson, 7 p.m., online and in-person, Schoodic Institute, Winter Harbor. FMI: <https://coastalfisheries.org/events>.

June 18

Launch! Claws for Cause Lobster Festival, noon- 4 p.m., Kennebunkport FMI: www.gokennebunks.com/launch.

MLA at Boothbay Harbor lobster boat races, 8-10 a.m.

June 24-26

Maine Oyster Festival, Freeport. FMI: <https://www.visitfreeport.com/themaineoysterfestival>.

June 26-July 2

Boothbay Harbor's 60th Annual Windjammer Days. FMI: www.boothbayharborwindjammer-days.org.

June 28-30

New England Fishery Management Council meeting, Holiday Inn by the Bay, Portland, ME. FMI: www.nefmc.org.

July 2

MLA at Moosabec Reach Lobster Boat Races, 8 a.m.-3 p.m.

July 10

MLA at Stonington Lobster Boat Races, 8-10 a.m.

July 15-17

Yarmouth Clam Festival, Yarmouth. FMI: www.clamfestival.com.

July 20

Maine Offshore Wind Roadmap Advisory Committee Meeting, virtual, 9 a.m.-noon. To register: <https://www.maineoffshorewind.org>.

August 3-7

75th Maine Lobster Festival, Rockland. FMI: www.mainelobsterfestival.com.

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SHARE WHAT THE LOBSTER INDUSTRY MEANS TO YOU – AND WIN!

No one cares more about the sustainability and protection of the Gulf of Maine than Maine lobstermen. In fact, lobstermen have been excellent stewards of the ocean for more than a century. We know that the future of our industry and our way of life relies on the preservation of this fishery.

Now the Maine Lobstermen's Association (MLA) and Rugged Seas want to hear from the next generation of Maine lobstermen. In a brief paragraph or two tell us what this fishery means to you. Why is it important to protect and preserve the lobster fishery? What are you doing to be responsible stewards of the ocean? This contest is open to those who are relatively new to the industry and who will be responsible for ensuring its future.

One winning entry will be chosen and will receive all-new boots from XTRATUF and bibs from Guy Cotten, as well as Rugged Seas gear.

Entries should be mailed to:

Rugged Seas Contest
c/o MLA
2 Storer Street, Suite 203
Kennebunk, ME 04043

or they can be emailed to andi@mainelobstermen.org.

Essays will be collected until August 1 and a winner will be announced in September. Entries may also be featured in upcoming editions of *Landings*.

Maine lobstermen symbolize the spirit of our state and are working to ensure their heritage can continue to be passed down from generation to generation.

Please share your story so that others can understand the passion, dedication, and sustainable practices of Maine lobstermen.

Rugged Seas, based in Portland, operates a Bib Drop Program and has 11 barrels to collect old bibs throughout New England. The old gear is recycled into handmade bags and other retail products.

Recently, the Port Clyde Fishermen's Co-op donated the most old gear of the eleven sites, with one boat and its crew thus getting a new fishing outfit. The Co-op has decided to donate that gear to the winner of this contest.

To learn more about the Rugged Seas Bib Drop Program, or to encourage your co-op or buying station to participate, visit: <https://www.ruggedseas.com/bibdrop-program>.



The young men and women of Maine's lobster fishery know better than most what it means to care for the ocean and to make a living from its resources. We want to hear from you: what does the fishery mean to you? What do you do to protect and conserve the Gulf of Maine? MLA photo.

Festivals continued from page 1

The Maine Oyster Festival

The Maine Oyster Festival will take place in Freeport on June 24 to 26. The festival showcases the thriving oyster aquaculture industry in the state, which includes more than 150 oyster farms operating from Downeast Maine to Ogunquit. The Maine Oyster Festival will be the first oyster festival in Maine celebrating oysters and the people who farm them, according to the festival web site.

During the two-day event, dozens of oyster growers will be shucking and serving oysters while a group of industry experts will be blind-tasting oysters and awarding an Oyster of the Year Award. There will be oyster shucking competitions and tours of local oyster farms leaving from South Freeport. Children can enjoy hands-on crafts and educational activities related to the marine environment. And there will be oyster cooking demonstrations by Maine chefs to tempt the novice and expert alike. In the evening there will be live music, craft beer and other beverages, and food. <https://www.visitfreeport.com/themaineoysterfestival>

Windjammer Days

Boothbay Harbor's 60th Annual Windjammer Days happens from June 26 to



The annual Blessing of the Fleet. Photo courtesy of Windjammer Days.

July 2. The festival is organized by Friends of Windjammers, a nonprofit community organization of volunteers. It will feature an antique boat parade and pier party, boat tours with local companies, sailboat races for children and adults, a crab cake cook-off, and more. The traditional Blessing of the Fishing Fleet takes place on Sunday, June 26, at 1:30 p.m. after the

outdoor memorial service at Fisherman's Memorial Park. This year shipwright Ross Branch will give a talk at 4 p.m. on June 28 on the fishing vessel. She was built in 1894 and carried fishermen to the Grand Banks, Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland for many decades. She is currently being restored at Bristol Marine. <https://www.boothbayharborwindjammerdays.org>

Yarmouth Clam Festival

The 55th annual Yarmouth Clam Festival returns from July 15-17 with a parade, classic car show, and the ever-popular clam shucking contest. There will be a

craft show, carnival, more than 40 live musical acts, a pie eating contest, a kid's fun run, a firefighter's competition, K9 demonstration, professional bike race and fireworks. Organized by the Yarmouth Chamber of Commerce, the festival usually draws over 100,000 people from throughout the country and Maine, many of whom come to eat. The festival food booths are all run by Yarmouth-based, non-profit organizations which typically serve more than 6,000 pounds of clams, 6,000 lobster rolls, 2,500 pancake breakfasts, 2,000 shore dinners, 400 homemade pies, and 6,000 strawberry shortcakes. The proceeds of the festival support local nonprofits that include Yarmouth Scouts, Royal River Chorus and the Yarmouth Lions Club. www.clamfestival.com

Maine Lobster Festival

The 75th Maine Lobster Festival returns to Rockland this summer. It runs from August 3 to August 7 and, this year, admission is free!

The Maine Lobster Festival attracts tens of thousands of visitors to Rockland each summer to enjoy lobster dinners, renowned entertainers, and Maine crafts and art. The lobster cooking contest returns as does the Maine Sea Goddess contest and Great International Lobster Crate Race. While there will be no carnival this year, the festival has added two large playsets for children, a larger tent for children's activities, a rock climbing wall and an arcade.

To celebrate its 75th anniversary, the festival has created its own cookbook featuring lobster or other local Maine ingredients, such as seafood, vegetables and fruits, which will be on sale throughout the event. www.maine lobster festival.com

Winter Harbor Lobster Festival

Winter Harbor Lobster Festival, Craft Fair, and Boat Races are scheduled to be held on Saturday, August 13. The Winter Harbor Lobster Festival includes an all day lobster extravaganza with food, crafts, and the famous lobster boat races. <https://schoodicchamber.com/craft-fair-boat-races>



The Maine Sea Goddess and King Neptune return to Rockland this year. MLF photo.



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