By Paul Snelgrove, Professor in the Department of Ocean Sciences and Biology, Memorial University, Newfoundland. The complete version of the article was first presented at the “American Lobster in a Changing Ecosystem” symposium, held on Prince Edward Island in November, 2015.

Anyone working in the North Atlantic recognizes its dynamic nature. For scientists trying to understand lobster biology, the strong seasons and complex life cycle, they must deal with the added challenge in trying to evaluate how ongoing ocean warming, acidification, and other human-induced changes may alter future lobster populations. Changing ocean conditions across the entire range of American lobster could mean nasty neighbors, bad food, and lousy accommodations. In other words, these changes may favor invasive species, alter food supply for lobster, and change environmental conditions.

Because lobster larval have a swimming larval stage, changes on the seafloor as well as in the water above it could be significant: it’s a top-to-bottom problem in the coastal ocean. Indeed, the swimming larval stage lobsters interact with a completely different set of species than in their juvenile and adult stages. Warmer waters, changes in ocean currents, acidification, pollution, and changes in food webs could all affect the swimming larval stages. Similar factors could affect juveniles and adults on the seafloor, but with the added pressure of fishing.

Changes on the seafloor

Lobster are part of a complex, interlinked food web of many species that has changed even within our lifetimes, as cod stocks have declined dramatically with resulting complex effects on their prey. Declines in cod in Canada coincided with increases in lobster to the south and snow crab and shrimp to the north. One study in the New England region shows that the distances over which adult lobster move contract when cod are present. There’s clear evidence of cannibalism in lobster, so even high abundances of lobster have ramifications for lobster survival.

The arrival of invasive species, most noticeably green crab, adds to the mix. Memorial University PhD student Melanie Rossong Barrett found relatively lit-
The year is rolling on to its end and we are entering another holiday season full of feasting, family and friends. It may just be me, but these months seem to rush by ever more quickly than they did in the past. It seems just a few weeks ago when Maine lobstermen were getting their traps ready after an old-fashioned snow-filled winter. The spring and early summer fishing season started out slowly, due to the lingering cold water from winter, but then picked up pace in late July, when the lobsters began their annual shed.

And now here we are at the close of another lobstering year which, by all indications, was a fine one. Lobster stocks remain strong and the price paid to lobstermen has taken a welcome tick upward, which means this winter, whatever the snowfall, will be better than the last.

We offer readers of Landings this month a festive holiday poppouri of stories. Dr. Paul Snelgrove, a researcher and professor at Memorial University in Newfoundland, gives an overview of the possible future of lobster stocks in an ever-warmer Gulf of Maine. His article is drawn from his paper given at the recent “American Lobster in a Changing Ecosystem” science symposium, held on Prince Edward Island.

On a similar note, Landings features a column by Independent Senator Angus King on climate change and fisheries. It’s been clear to lobstermen in the state that the peak lobster abundance has shifted east and north, drawn by cozier water temperatures. Sen. King emphasizes the need for fishermen and government officials to prepare for future changes in water temperature by ensuring that coastal communities can adapt to those changes.

Change is a constant, and as Landings columnist Christina Lemieux points out, that truism also applies to consumer choices. The Millennial generation, those born between 1980 and 2000, is taking a new attitude toward luxury. Lemieux explores the notion of “accessible luxury” popular with young people in the context of the ultimate luxury food item, lobster.

Frank Gotwals, a Stonington lobsterman and chair of the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative, has taken on the role of advocate for Maine new-shell lobster. As this month’s article illustrates, Seaver brings a chef’s creativity and a restaurateur’s calculations to new-shell lobster, which he refers to as a seasonal product. He conveys excitement about the flavor and versatility of new-shell lobster to chefs and food writers, as well as his personal understanding that it is the lobstermen themselves that have sustained the fishery so well.

Landings presents a summary of the annual “Fisheries of the United States” report for 2014. As might be expected, the small Maine fishing port of Stonington, with just over 1,000 residents, continues to top the state in terms of landings value, with over $60 million in 2014. That figure helped Maine to surge ahead of Massachusetts to become the second-highest state in the country in terms of value, surpassed only by Alaska. Health insurance remains in the news and the Maine Lobstermen’s Association’s new health insurance Navigator, Alisha Keezer, explains why Maine’s health insurance plans offered through the Health Insurance Marketplace will see only slight rate increases this year. Maine has seen some changes in coverage and the pricing of existing plans, so those who are re-enrolling should take the time to compare plans and pricing on the exchange to ensure that they are purchasing the best plan.

Finally, Department of Marine Resources marine policy director Deirdre Gilbert travelled in October with Governor LePage’s trade mission to Tokyo and Shanghai. Gilbert presented information about Maine’s lobster fishery to seafood buyers and dealers in the two cities. She also had the opportunity to break away from the bureaucratic meetings and talks to enjoy a place she had long wanted to visit: the world’s largest fish market, the famed Tsukiji market in Tokyo. Gilbert shares her visit with us this month.

We wish you all a happy and peaceful holiday season.

Coastal Outlook

Thoughts from MLCA President Patrice McCarron
GUEST COLUMN: Key to growing demand is telling the story

By Frank Gotwals

“What’s the difference between a new-shell lobster and an old-shell lobster?” I can’t count the number of times I’ve been asked that question over the years. “These are the sweetest lobsters I’ve ever tasted and I didn’t even need to use those crackers to get them open.” I’d heard that statement from more than one visitor when serving them new-shell lobster for dinner after a sunny summer day lobstering with me on Jericho Bay.

I was promoting Maine lobster to one person at a time, explaining our fishery and its strong history of conservation. Every answer I gave brought another question. While I like answering questions, more than once I thought there would be an advantage to our industry in telling our story to a broader audience. Here on the Maine coast we all know about lobster but once you leave the coast that’s not the case.

When I had the opportunity to become a board member of the newly formed Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC) in 2013 I felt we finally had the chance to reach that broader audience, chefs and consumers all over the country. Who better to introduce them to the tasty and easy-to-eat new-shells than lobstermen themselves? We’ve been landing the majority of our lobsters here in Maine as new-shell for as long as I can remember. It seemed to make sense that at least initially our marketing effort would focus on the positive qualities of our summer-caught lobsters.

Lots of time and effort went into the creation of the MLMC. All lobstermen work hard for their dollars and spending them well is important. Learning all I could about creating a brand and how to develop a national marketing program was critical. I spent a good many hours reading and talking to people who knew about marketing on this scale in the hope that I’d make good decisions about how we used our budget. I discovered that turning a lobsterman into a marketer is no easy task! It was clear that the key to the success of the MLMC effort was to find the right executive director and the right agency to help us develop and execute a successful marketing strategy.

I was really surprised by the level of interest from this group of people, also by how limited their specific knowledge about lobster was and how eager they were to learn more.

Fast forward to the Napa Valley and the California Culinary Institute of America (CIA). I went there to represent the MLMC at the CIA Flavor Summit in 2014 and to introduce Maine new-shell lobster to a select group of chefs and buyers for large restaurant and hotel chains. I participated in a cooking presentation with a chef from New York where I introduced myself to the audience as a lobsterman from Maine.

Then the flood of questions began. I spent the rest of my time there answering questions about lobsters and the lobstering industry. Although I was used to general curiosity about lobster, I was really surprised by the level of interest from this group of people, also by how limited their specific knowledge about lobster was and how eager they were to learn more. It was very clear that we had a product that fit in perfectly with current trends in the food world: freshness, sustainability, local sourcing. And there was a certain romance attached to the idea of the independent lobsterman pulling a living from the cold waters of Maine.

I came back from that trip certain that a well-designed marketing effort had great potential to benefit everyone involved with the lobstering industry. The lobstermen have a great story to tell and people wanted to hear it. We have a good record as a sustainable fishery and a highly desirable product. All we needed to do was to find the right marketing agency to help us tell our story to a broader audience. But we have a relatively small budget compared to other national marketing programs. So it was critical that those limited dollars be well spent. Everyone in the industry was contributing to that budget and it was important that everyone’s interests be represented. Would we be able to attract a top agency for our small account?

Continued on page 22
Barton Seaver loves lobster. The renowned chef, author, National Geographic Fellow, director of the Healthy and Sustainable Food Program at Harvard University’s School of Public Health, and the New England Aquarium’s first Sustainability Fellow can’t say enough about lobster and Maine’s lobstering communities.

Seaver and his wife Carrie Anne, a Maine native, moved to South Freeport in 2013. When he speaks about lobsters and food in general, the 37-year-old’s voice rises with excitement. He often ends his sentences with a “Wow!”

“I’m having fun with new-shells,” said Seaver. “We trade our eggs [they raise heritage chickens] for lobsters down at the Harraseeket [river]. I understand now how cool new-shells are. Lobster, that familiar menu item, is actually a seasonal item. Wow!”

“We are very fortunate to have Barton Seaver serve as an ambassador for Maine lobster,” said Matt Jacobsen, executive director of the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative. “As a chef, he understands how to communicate with the culinary audience and articulate our brand story. He is a thought leader in seafood sustainability, fluent in the future of fish with the ability to advocate for the Maine brand.”

Seaver attended the Culinary Institute of America, in Hyde Park, New York, graduating with honors in 2001. He then traveled to Spain and Morocco, spending months on Morocco’s Atlantic coast in small traditional fishing villages. Returning to his hometown of Washington, D.C., Seaver worked as a chef before graduating with honors in 2001. He then traveled to Spain and Morocco, spending months on Morocco’s Atlantic coast in small traditional fishing villages.

After leaving Hook and suffering a serious health issue, Seaver opened his second D.C. restaurant, Blue Ridge, in 2009; he promptly was named Chef of the Year by Esquire magazine.

He later left that restaurant and his career as a chef to embark on the next chapter of his professional life: as an advocate for the sustainability of food systems and the communities that make them possible.

“I call myself a recovering chef and restaurateur. My interest now is in sustainable food systems. Thriving human communities are no healthier than the environment they live in,” Seaver said. He was selected by then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in 2012 as one of the State Department’s Chef Ambassadors, who promote diplomacy through “culinary engagement.”

Seaver enjoys telling a good story. “It’s all about the names and places behind products,” he said. He referenced a time when he was running Hook. There were several hundred reservations for the evening and Seaver was waiting anxiously for his fisherman to bring in the day’s catch. As it turns out, the day’s catch was lousy. The fisherman instead brought him the flying fish used for bait. Seaver turned the fish into a savory entrée and told his servers to inform diners of the story. The dish quickly sold out. “It’s stories. I sold them flying fish, for god’s sake, by telling the story,” he said.

America has long honored its farmers and farming heritage, Seaver argues. Now it’s time to bring the same appreciation to its fishermen. “Instead of asking fisherman to fish, we should ask what the ocean can provide. We as chefs can tell and sell the story of fishermen as food producers, as we have the story of the farmer and those amber fields of grain. There’s a cultural aspect of fishing that we can talk about with chefs.”

By Melissa Waterman

New England Marine & Industrial

Under the auspices of the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative, Seaver hosted a group of food writers and chefs at his South Freeport home earlier this fall. He conducted a taste-testing of Maine new-shell versus hard-shell lobsters for his guests. The participants learned about the versatile qualities of new-shell lobster and its seasonal availability. “It’s great to watch a chef try this, to see their creative mindset kick in and the wheels turning,” he laughed.

Chefs walk a fine line in developing new dishes. On the one hand, the dish must be interesting, innovative, something that jumps off the menu into the diner’s mind. On the other hand, it must be economical to make and reasonably priced for the consumer. “On the menu you have to have a hook that draws people, particularly now with menus being on-line. But the Caesar salad must be there too, even though no one orders it,” he explained.

According to Seaver, Maine new-shell lobsters have incredible value to a chef. “It gives you much greater culinary adaptability. There’s the brine, as full of flavor as an oyster, then the shell to make a stock, and the meat. Wow! You can use a one-pound new-shell lobster in a creative way and also keep the food cost manageable,” he said. “Creativity really kicks in with chefs. People get excited about cool food that sells. It’s a win for chefs, the community and lobstermen.”

Continued on page 24
Tsukiji is the biggest wholesale fish and seafood market in the world. It handles over 400 types of seafood. Every day, nearly 2,000 metric tons of seafood are sold through the market. Yearly sales approach 700,000 metric tons, compared to around 100,000 at the world’s second-largest, the Fulton Fish Market in New York. For someone with an interest in fisheries and seafood, Tsukiji is a kind of Disneyland.

Tsukiji has a long and storied history, beginning with its founding in 1923 following the destruction of previous Tokyo seafood markets in the Great Kanto earthquake. Its days are numbered in its current location however, as the market is scheduled to move to another site in Tokyo in November 2016. A major impetus for the move is that Tokyo is hosting the summer Olympics in 2020, which requires a new road to pass through the current site. The Japanese government views this as an opportunity to modernize and improve the market, but the coming changes made the chance to see the old Tsukiji that much more enticing.

If you want to see what makes Tsukiji famous, you need to start your day around 3 a.m. Visiting Tsukiji has become a popular tourist activity, and the fresh and frozen tuna auctions are the biggest draw. In order to manage the confluence of sightseeing and commerce, the market limits daily passes to 120, issued to two groups of 60 people between 5:25 and 6:15 a.m. Luckily, we had a special tour arranged that took us further behind the scenes than most tourists are allowed to go. Starting our tour with a short orientation and the distribution of appropriate footwear (short, white rubber boots), we followed our guide through a warren of hallways to emerge at our first stop, the daily urchin auction. As a Mainer, I was excited to see our own product in this global marketplace. There were dozens of tables arrayed with wooden boxes, stacked 10 or so high, with the代表 the name of the buyer is marked on the fish with red paint. It is hard to imagine that this happens nearly every day (except Sundays, and every other Wednesday) and that there are always dozens of tuna to fill the rooms.

The traditional end to a Tsukiji visit is to have “sushi breakfast” in one of the many restaurants that surround the market. It is certainly the freshest fish available. While I tried to welcome raw fish to my diet during my visit to Japan, my open-mindedness did not extend to sushi for breakfast. This was undeniably my loss, as my fellow travelers said it was the best they’d ever had.

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For last month’s State of Maine Trade Mission to Japan and China, Department of Marine Resources (DMR) Commissioner Patrick Keliher offered to sponsor events in Tokyo and Shanghai that would feature Maine lobster. The MITC also said the word “Tsukiji” (pronounced “tskee-gee”) and I was sold. A major impetus for the move is that Tokyo is hosting the summer Olympics in 2020, which requires a new road to pass through the current site. The Japanese government views this as an opportunity to modernize and improve the market, but the coming changes made the chance to see the old Tsukiji that much more enticing.

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MAINE HEALTH INSURANCE RATES REMAIN STEADY, OTHER STATES FACING BIG RATE HIKES

By Alisha Keezer

Open enrollment for the Health Insurance Marketplace began on November 1 and will continue until January 31, 2016. Mainers purchasing health coverage through the Marketplace will see rates increasing only slightly. All three insurance companies in Maine’s exchange have modest rate increases for their plans which are significantly below the national average and much lower than the double-digit increases projected for some cities.

Rates reflect many influences. Significant drivers for 2016 are the basic growth in health care costs; a decrease in funds available through the Monetary Reinsurance Program; and the composition of a risk pool and just how well the pool matches projected costs. Don’t worry, I’ll explain what these mean!

Overall, it’s the simple increase in health care costs that largely drives this year’s rate increases. One of the biggest increases is a growth in prescription drug spending as well as a rise in spending on specialty drugs. Other medical costs will continue to grow as well.

The Monetary Reinsurance Program was established to offset costs to insurers which provide coverage to high-claim enrollees through health insurance plans offered through the Marketplace. Reducing the claim costs for insurers allows them to offer lower overall rates. The funding for this program comes from contributions required by the Affordable Care Act (ACA) from all health plans including individual, small and large group markets and self-insured plans. When availability of these funds decreases, health insurance rates in turn increase.

Health insurance companies form a risk pool in order to buffer the costs they might experience from high-claim customers. The risk pool is created by anticipating who will enroll by gender, age, and health status. The changes to Maine’s risk pool for 2016 are based on data from how enrollees used their coverage in 2015. Maine has one of the highest enrollment rates in the country. Because of this we also have a large number of chronically ill or injured people who are now covered by the ACA which creates Maine’s high risk pool. The increased enrollment of younger, healthier people, however, has helped to control overall rate increases.

Maine’s health insurance rates didn’t rise as steeply as others did across the country. The rates for Community Health Options’ (originally, Maine Community Health Options) 2016 plans have increased by 0.5%. The rates for Anthem’s 2016 plans increased by an average 5%, and Harvard Pilgrim’s rates for 2016 plans will experience an average decrease of 4.8%.

All health insurance rate proposals have to be approved by Maine’s Bureau of Insurance, where they are reviewed, negotiated, and finalized. Some studies have shown that in states where there are health insurance cooperatives, such as Community Health Options, premiums remain lower than in states that do not have a cooperative. The health insurance cooperatives were formed under the ACA as a way to ensure competition with long-established insurance companies. Federal loans were provided to these cooperatives to help get them off the ground. In Maine, Community Health Options received a federal loan that has been mainly used for startup costs and sustaining stability.

With health insurance premiums holding steady in Maine, be sure to visit the Marketplace at www.healthcare.gov, or call the MLA at 967-4555, to get a quote on 2016 coverage for you and your family.

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MAINE LOBSTERMEN’S ASSOCIATION UPDATE

Happy Holidays to everyone in our MLA family! I honestly cannot believe that 2015 is coming to a close. By nearly all accounts, 2015 will be remembered as a great year for Maine’s lobster industry. I hope we’ve all learned not to take years like this—with strong landings and strong prices—for granted.

I had the opportunity to step outside Maine’s lobster industry recently when I travelled to meetings around New England and Canada. It’s wonderful to take a step back from the day-to-day grind of the issues that we deal with, and over these past months I’ve really been struck by how lucky I feel to work with Maine’s lobstermen and the industry.

Sure, there are the usual struggles that mount up over the days and weeks of the year. We have a lot of issues that we don’t see eye to eye on. It can be tough and it can feel divisive. But that was all put in perspective during my travels. During these meetings, I spent time with people from the New England groundfish industry and Canadian lobster fishery. After more than 15 years working in fisheries, I’m still moved by how much fishermen have in common. It seems that everyone who fishes, regardless of port, species or gear, is truly passionate about making a living on the water. You can feel that strong sense of pride and independence in all fishermen, as well as their frustration with the world in which they now live.

Despite that bond, I was struck by the depth of frustration from fisher men outside of Maine’s lobster fishery. Sure, there’s frustration among Maine fishermen; we hear it from lobstermen all the time. “The whale people are out to get us!”

“The government would be happy if they just shut us all down!” It’s that fundamental lack of trust in the management system and a corresponding feeling of “us versus them.” Believe me, I get it! And yet, after spending time with groundfishermen and Canadian lobstermen, I realized that the frustration we feel is different from theirs. It doesn’t cut as hard or as deep. The gnawing frustration and feelings of disparity are just not here in the same way. And with good reason. Compared to other fisheries, Maine lobstermen have it good!

The issues that groundfishermen have to deal with are tough to wrap your head around. The groundfish industry as many of us know it no longer exists. Access to the fishery has been privatized through the sector allocation system and yet, according to scientists, the stocks aren’t doing well. Scientists just don’t have the tools to understand what fish are doing out there in a rapidly changing ocean.

And now, those few groundfishermen who have managed to hang on over the years are at risk of losing it all. “The whale people are out to get us!”

Among groundfishermen outside of Maine, the frustration we feel is different from theirs. It doesn’t cut as hard or as deep. The gnawing frustration and feelings of disparity are just not here in the same way. And with good reason.

I asked them exactly what they meant, and I was surprised to learn that Canada has cut way back on funding lobster science and does not have any consistent long-term monitoring programs in place. The research that does take place across the many lobster fishing areas varies dramatically, I explained to them that in Maine we have a standardized settlement survey to monitor bait quality, a ventless trap survey to measure juvenile lobsters, a bell buoy survey to measure juvenile to adult lobsters, and a sea sampling program which measures everything in a lobsterman’s trap. I went on to explain that Maine has implemented a program to ensure that our bait supply is disease-free. They were all envious.

I also gained a new appreciation for the state of our industry while spending time with Canadian lobstermen at the lobster science conference on Prince Edward Island in November. We talked about the lobster stock and issues we face in Canada. And now, those few groundfishermen who have managed to hang on over the years are at risk of losing it all.

Sole is for us versus them. Believe me, I get it! And yet, after spending time with groundfishermen and Canadian lobstermen, I realized that the frustration we feel is different from theirs. It doesn’t cut as hard or as deep. The gnawing frustration and feelings of disparity are just not here in the same way. And with good reason.

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I realized how much progress we’ve made in Maine. When Carl Wilson joined DMR in 2000, he was instrumental in expanding our lobster research programs and the models used to help us understand Maine’s lobster stock, which in turn informed lobster management. And Maine lobstermen have been partners in these science efforts from day one. We have evolved into an industry with a suite of monitoring programs in turn informed lobster management. And Maine lobstermen have been partners in these science efforts from day one. We have evolved into an industry with a suite of monitoring programs in place. The research that does take place across the many lobster fishing areas varies dramatically, I explained to them that in Maine we have a standardized settlement survey to monitor bait quality, a ventless trap survey to measure juvenile lobsters, a bell buoy survey to measure juvenile to adult lobsters, and a sea sampling program which measures everything in a lobsterman’s trap. I went on to explain that Maine has implemented a program to ensure that our bait supply is disease-free. They were all envious.

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ONLINE LOBSTER LICENSES

The Department has reported delays in the development of the new online licensing system. The DMR asks fishermen to check the www.maine.gov/dmr Web site for updates or when the online renewal system will be available. Anyone who has not renewed a limited entry license for 2015 (Scallop, Urchin, Lobster, Elver, Sea Cucumber), must do so by December 31, 2015, or risk losing your eligibility to obtain that license in 2016. Applications for 2016 are available on the DMR Web site or can be mailed to you by contacting the Licensing Division at 207-624-6550.

MAINE LEGISLATURE TO DISCUSS LOBSTER LICENSING AND LIMITED ENTRY

On November 19, Maine’s Legislative Council voted to allow the bill on lobster licensing and limited entry to be considered during the second legislative session, which begins in January. At this point, only the title of the bill is known (LR 2423 An Act To Improve Maine’s Lobster Licensing and Limited-entry System). It is sponsored by Marine Resources Committee chairman Walter Kumezia on behalf of the DMR. In early 2016, the bill will be assigned an LD* (legislative document) and the text of the bill will become available.

ZONE C REMAINS OPEN

The Zone C Council met on November 18 to discuss the results of its recent questionnaire on closing the zone. The Zone Council voted not to take action at this time even though lobstermen voted 2:1 in favor of closing the zone on a recent questionnaire.

FEDERAL SEA SAMPLERS

Did you host a federal sea sampler this year? If you did, please take the time to fill out and submit the comment card back to them.

17 MAINE LIGHTHOUSES GOING HIGH-TECH!

The Coast Guard has announced that 17 Maine lighthouses will converted to MRASS (Mariner Activated Sound Signal). This means that mariners will need to activate the lighthouse sound signals by keying a VHF radio five times consecutively on channel 81A. According to the Coast Guard, lighthouses are being converted because the existing VM fog detection system is antiquated, unreliable and inefficient. Spare parts are limited and no longer being manufactured. For more information about the change, contact the Coast Guard’s Northern New England Waterways Management Staff at 207-347-5015.

• Seguin Light, mouth of Kennebec River
• Cape Elizabeth Light, Cape Elizabeth
• Goat Island Light, Cape Porpoise
• Burnt Island Light, Boothbay Harbor
• Portland Head Light, Portland
• Spring Point Light, South Portland
• Dog Island Light, Eastport
• West Quoddy Head Light, Lubec
• Egg Rock Light, Frenchman’s Bay
• Fort Point Light, Stockton Springs
• Heron Neck Light, Vinalhaven
• Goose Rocks Light, North Haven
• Browns Head Light, Vinalhaven
• Owls Head Light, Owls Head
• Two Bush Island Light, Two Bush Channel, Penobscot Bay
• Whitehead Light
• Marshall Point Light

STRUGGLING WITH NEW TRAWLING UP REGULATIONS?

Are you are concerned about your ability to safely comply with the offshore trawling up requirements for your zone required as part of the whale rules? Please call John Higgins, NMFS Gear Specialist, at 207-539-4040 (land line)

MLS Directors meeting summary

MLA Directors met on November 10 in Belfast. Two new staff members were introduced to the Board: Alisha Keezer, MLA’s health insurance Navigator, and Antonina Pelletier, MLA’s membership director. Both started their positions in October.

DMR Commissioner Kelther updated the MLA Directors on his recent round of eight meetings with the lobster industry. He stated that the DMR looked at several options to improve/encourage compliance in trawling up requirements and licenses in order to create some more movement from the waiting list into the commercial fishery. The DMR’s recommendations are to change the exit ratio from tags to licenses in all zones; increase the age that students can obtain a commercial license from 18 to 23; and create a lower-cost license with fewer trap tags.

The Commissioner explained that Governor LePage will not be submitting this bill; instead, it will be a bill from DMR. The Legislative Council rejected the bill in first round, it will be reconsidered in November. [NOTE: The legislative council voted to allow this bill to move forward on November 19.]

The Commissioner has spoken with the two chairs of the Marine Resources Committee and expects to have time to bring the draft of the bill to the Zone Councils before it is debated in the Legislature. The drafting of the bill will begin in December.

The Commissioner also discussed a few ideas to reduce effort latency. Should new licenses be issued under a “use it or lose it” provision? For example, a period of time (i.e. two years) could be set during which the new license holder would have to show landings or the license would be passed on to the next person on the waiting list. He also discussed the option of allowing the zones to keep tags as the currency for the entry-exit ratio, but also to consider the history of the license the retiring tags are associated with. For instance, if a license is retiring with 50 tags, it had averaged 500 tags over the last five or ten years (depending on which time frame is used), the average number of tags would be used for the ratio rather than the amount retired that year.

The group discussed options that would remove incentives for latency. The Commissioner floated an idea raised at a Downeast meeting to allow a lobsterman who has built up to 800 traps (at 100 per year) to be able to purchase fewer tags in one year yet retain the option to go back up to 800 at any time. Or should the tag system have a financial incentive to buy only what you want to fish through a weighted tag system? For example, the first 400 tags could be sold at a low cost, the next 200 at a higher cost, and the final 200 at the highest cost.

The Commissioner has spoken with Senator Collins’ support, to provide the funding authorized as part of the 2010 Coast Guard Reauthorization Act in 2010 but never appropriated. MLA is continuing to explore options to require life raft repacking happen every other year rather than every year.

The Commissioner explained that Governor LePage will not be submitting this bill; instead, it will be a bill from DMR. The Legislative Council rejected the bill in first round, it will be reconsidered in November. [NOTE: The legislative council voted to allow this bill to move forward on November 19.]
TAKE REDUCTION TEAM (TRT) SUMMARY

The TRT met on November 19 via webinar. The meeting included a review of abundance, serious injury/mortality rates, and entanglement numbers from recent years, and a discussion of the status of the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan and potential future plans.

The latest NMFS marine mammal stock assessments estimate the right whale population at 491 whales and Gulf of Maine humpbacks at 823 whales. NMFS is considering changing the methods used to estimate abundance due to the change in right whale distribution, and is working to develop new methods to estimate undetected mortality from entanglement. The humpback stock is expected to be delisted (under the Endangered Species Act) next year which will likely mean that takes will no longer exceed the Permitted Biologic Removal (PBR) rate. NMFS is also working to develop methods to use both visual observations and passive acoustic data to help determine whale numbers and develop new modeling methods.

In 2014, there were 23 new confirmed entanglements: seven right whales (two deceased); nine humpback whales; four minke whales (one deceased); and three finback whales (one deceased). Seven of the 23 whales either no longer carried gear or were partially disentangled, carrying non-life threatening gear or had a non-life threatening entanglement. These seven included one right whale, five humpback whales, and one minke whale.

In 2015, there were 30 new confirmed entanglements (as of November 13, 2015): four right whales; 21 humpback whales (one deceased); four minke whales; and one finback whale. Nineteen of the 30 whales either no longer carried gear or were partially disentangled, carrying non-life threatening gear remaining or had a non-life threatening entanglement. These 19 whales included one right whale, 15 humpback whales, and three minke whales.

With regard to the whale and fishing gear co-occurrence model, NMFS wants to gain a better understanding of and standardize gear location and characteristics, as well as whale distribution using opportunistic and passive acoustic data, and develop options to refocus what the model does. NMFS continues to monitor compliance and enforce regulations, and conduct training and coordination efforts with enforcement partners.

The 2014 Joint Enforcement efforts show a 96% compliance rate with whale rules. Through the 2014 Joint Enforcement Agreement efforts, there were 1,552 at-sea personnel hours, 745 at-sea vessel hours and 34.5 air personnel hours. A total of 723 contacts were made of which 694 were in compliance. Of the 723 contacts, 692 were with lobstermen, 12 with gillnets and 19 with other gear. The majority of compliance checks were in Area 1 (406). Of the 28 violations cited, there were 12 written verbal warnings, 16 written warnings (including one for lack of break in poly ball, two for unmarked buoys and three for wet storage); and five summons (including two for wet storage). All violations were written under state regulations.

TRT meeting information is posted online at www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/protections/whaletrp/trt/meetings/2015NovConf.html.

ASMFC AMERICAN LOBSTER MANAGEMENT BOARD

On November 2, the Lobster Board discussed potential management measures for the Southern New England (SNE) lobster stock. The Board reviewed the management objectives which ranged from stabilizing the lobster stock through reductions in fishing mortality to preserving the fishery infrastructure at the expense of the stock. Discussion also focused on ways to reduce natural mortality, which is believed to be a critical component of the lobster stock decline. In order to gain more information on the SNE stock and options moving forward, the Board charged the Technical Committee to complete several tasks, including a review of preliminary stock projections and a recalculation of reference points.

The Board also discussed three aspects of the Jonah Crab FMP: 1) effort control measures for Jonah crab-only trap fishermen, 2) claw exemptions, and 3) the incidental bycatch limit for non-trap gear. In order to understand the scale of the fishery, the Board tasked the Plan Development Team (PDT) to examine catch and landings records to characterize participants in the Jonah crab-only trap fishery. Similarly, the PDT was asked to review Jonah crab landings given that the number of claw fishermen is greater than expected and the current claw exemption may no longer be appropriate. Finally, following concerns that the incidental bycatch limit does not capture all current participation in the fishery, the Board initiated Addendum I to increase or eliminate the trip limit. The FMP currently prescribes a 200 crabs per calendar day or 500 crabs per trip incidental bycatch limit. Current catch landings are low, accounting for approximately 1% of total landings.

Finally, the Board agreed to continue collaboration on federal and state at-sea observer programs so that agreed-upon changes can be implemented for the 2016 fishing season.

or 207-771-3669 (cell). He can document your safety concerns and meet with you to view the issues specific to your vessel. The bottom line is that we need to get your safety issues and experience in trying to comply with the whale rules documented by NMFS. This step is essential to helping us find a solution that will keep our fleet safe.

COAST GUARD LIFE RAFTS

Effective February 26, 2016, new Coast Guard safety regulations require that vessels fishing outside of three nautical miles must carry survival craft that ensure no part of an individual is immersed in water.

TRAP TAGS CAN BE HOG RINGED

If you are shifting new lobster gear, you can cut trap tags out of traps and hog ring them into the bridge of a different trap. Be sure to cut out your tags in a manner that keeps all of the identifying information intact so it is clear to Marine Patrol that it is a legal 2015 trap tag. Catastrophic losses for replacement tags still need to go through Marine Patrol for reissue. Questions? Call your local Marine Patrol Officer.

CANADIAN LOBSTER SEASON UPDATES

The Upper Bay of Fundy lobster fishery, LFA 35, opened its 2.5-month season on October 14 and will close on December 31. This fishery has a trap limit of 300 traps.

The Southwest and Southeast Nova Scotia lobster fisheries, LFA 33 and 34, opened their six-month season on November 30 and will close at the end of May, 2016. LFA 33 has a trap limit of 250 traps; LFA 34 has a trap limit of 375 and 400 traps and is Canada’s largest lobster fishery.

The New Brunswick Bay of Fundy lobster fisheries, LFA 36 and 37, opened their two-month season on November 10 and will close on January 14, 2016. These fisheries have a trap limit of 300 traps.

The Grand Manan lobster fishery, LFA 38, opened its 7.5-month season on November 10 and will close on June 29, 2016. This fishery has a trap limit of 375 traps.

The Grand Manan lobster fishery around Machias Seal Island, LFA 38B, finished season on November 6 (it opened on June 30). This fishery is limited to 375 traps.

The Gulf of St. Lawrence lobster fishery, from northern New Brunswick across to the southwest side of Prince Edward Island, LFA 25, finished its two-month season on October 10. This fishery has a trap limit of 275 traps.

ATLANTIC HERRING SECTION

On November 2, the Commission's Atlantic Herring Section approved for public comment the Public Hearing Document for Draft Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Herring. Draft Amendment 3 was initiated to strengthen spawning protections in Area 1A (Shoal Gulf of Maine) and address concerns raised by the commercial fishing industry. The Public Hearing Document proposes 1) alternatives to the spawning monitoring program (protocol, default start dates, area boundaries, and length of the closure period); 2) removing the fixed gear set-aside rollover provision; and 3) requiring a vessel’s fish hold to be emptied before leaving on a fishing trip.

Today’s rebuilt herring population is shown a broader range of age classes with older and larger fish compared to the population during overfished conditions. Analysis of the data suggests larger herring spawning first and the timing of the start of spawning varies from year-to-year. Proposed alternatives to the current spawning monitoring program address inter-annual differences and provide additional measures to more adequately protect spawning fish.

At the request of the fishing industry, the Public Hearing Document includes an option to adjust the fixed gear set-aside rollover provision. Currently, the set-aside of 295 metric tons is available to fixed gear fishermen through November 1, after which the remaining set-aside becomes available to the rest of the Area 1A fishery. The November 1 date was set because herring typically have migrated out of the Gulf of Maine by that time. Anecdotal evidence suggests herring are in the Gulf of Maine after November 1, therefore fixed gear fishermen requested the set-aside be made available to them for the remainder of the calendar year.

Members of industry also suggested a requirement for fish holds to be empty of fish prior to trip departures. This provision would allow for full accountability
and encourage less wasteful fishing practices by creating an incentive to catch herring to meet market demands. The New England Fishery Management Council included a complementary provision in its Framework Adjustment 4 to the Federal Atlantic Herring FMP.

ATLANTIC MENHADEN MANAGEMENT BOARD

The Board met to discuss progress on the development of a Draft Amendment including committee recommendations on ecosystem reference points (ERPs), revisiting allocation, and upcoming socioeconomic analysis of the menhaden fishery. The Amendment will consider both ERPs and revisit allocation. As the first step in the amendment process, a Public Information Document will be developed to provide cast net fisheries to be managed under the bycatch allowance provision of Amendment 2 for 2016.

MLMC BOARD MEETING

The Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative Board met on November 10 in Rockland. Representatives from advertising firm Weber Shandwick presented a summary of the past year's accomplishments which include significant improvements in the MLMC Web site, social media campaigns and outreach with influential chefs. The 2016 campaign will be based around the slogan "Make it Maine, Make it New Shell." It will include an expansion of social media, continued participation in annual events such as the Seafood Expo and the Fishermen's Forum and new programming. Focus will be placed on educating chefs and expanding programming geographically. The social media campaign will include a series of videos to showcase several key aspects of the Maine lobster fishery such as sustainability, local culture and community and the lobster from trap to table. The Collaborative is establishing several metrics (earned traditional media, owned social content, earned social discussion, menu presence, and chef awareness) to monitor the effectiveness of its programs. The Director reported that the majority of its budget (85%) went to marketing and only 15% to administration. The MLMC will meet quarterly in 2016, on Feb. 9, June 7, Sept. 13 and Dec. 6.

HERRING UPDATES

The Area 1A fishery had reopened on October 1 with three landing days at the start of the third trimester when all permitted herring vessels, both purse seines and midwater trawls, were allowed to fish this area. It then closed on November 2 because it was estimated that 92% of the quota had been harvested.

Atlantic Herring Landings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Last 2 Weeks Catch</th>
<th>Cumulative Catch</th>
<th>Total Annual Quota</th>
<th>Percent Quota</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29,436</td>
<td>30,290</td>
<td>97.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2,469</td>
<td>3,522</td>
<td>58.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13,119</td>
<td>21,190</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21,272</td>
<td>44,910</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,415</td>
<td>76,708</td>
<td>104,566</td>
<td>73.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Area 3 herring fishery was effectively closed on October 22 when the Atlantic Herring Banks George Incidental Catch Cap for the 2015 fishing year had been harvested. As a result, the herring midwater trawl vessels are prohibited from fishing for or landing more than 2,000 pounds of herring per trip or calendar day from this area. This limit remains in effect until the May 1, 2016. However, herring vessels issued an All Areas or Areas 2/3 Limited Access Herring Permit may land haddock from the Herring Georges Bank Haddock Accountability Measure Area provided they have a Northeast Multispecies permit and are on a declared Northeast Multispecies day-at-sea.

MLA'S NEW MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR

The Maine Lobstermen's Association (MLA) welcomed Antonina (Andi) Pelletier as its new membership director in November. "The MLA has always been a member-driven organization," said MLA director Patrice McCarron. "Consequently having a person dedicated to keeping in touch with our members and enhancing the value of an MLA membership has long been a priority. We are delighted to have Antonina on board."

Pelletier, 46, ran a billing service for individuals involved in the health care and social service professions for 12 years. "My husband was in the Navy. I often had to make calls for insurance claims. Then my mother-in-law, who was a social worker, hired me to make calls to insurers to get claims paid for her clients," Pelletier explained. "It evolved from that."

Dealing with insurance companies called for two qualities that Pelletier has in abundance: patience and persistence. "I love to push on an issue," Pelletier laughed. "I would work like a dog arguing with insurance companies to make them pay claims." After 12 years and the death of her father, who she cared for in his last years, Pelletier decided to close the business. "I loved my clients but after my dad died I realized that I wasn't enjoying it anymore. I needed a change."

Pelletier, who lives with her husband and three children in Yarmouth, had become involved in the annual Yarmouth Clam Festival, which brings approximately 125,000 to 150,000 people to the town for three days each summer. As a volunteer, she worked closely with the festival's board of directors, town officials and local civic groups to coordinate the festival's numerous food booths. Pelletier found she enjoyed being a liaison. "It was very satisfying," Pelletier said. In addition, she served on the Community Advisory Board of the Maine Public Broadcasting Network (MPBN) for nine years, several of them as vice chair. "It was similar to the MLA board. There were 20 people drawn from throughout the state who would meet with the staff and MPBN directors to learn about what they were doing. And we would give them feedback from the public about issues," she said. Some of those issues were significant, such as cutbacks in federal funding, major staff changes, and changes in programming. "It was an incredible experience," Pelletier reflected.

As membership director for the MLA, Pelletier wants to engage with Maine lobstermen to inform them of the benefits of MLA membership. "The whole point is to show the immediate value of a membership, things like health insurance enrollment assistance, the vessel insurance program, lobster price reports and the business discounts. Then there's the larger benefit, of being part of a strong group that speaks at the state and regional levels," she said. Pelletier has a personal link to the world of lobstering; her youngest son, age 15, worked as a sternman for a Yarmouth lobsterman this fall. "He got hooked," she said simply. "He loved it."
Present your MLA membership card at the following businesses and receive generous discounts!

**SW Boatworks**
Custom Boat Building and Repair
358 Douglas Highway
Lamoine, ME 04605
207-461-6081
swboatworks@gmail.com
www.swboatworks.com

- **Accutech Marine Propeller, Inc**
  Dover, NH -- 20% off propeller repair. Discounts vary by manufacturer for new propellers, shafting, and other hardware.
- **Applied Refrigeration Services**
  Windham, ME -- $250 off new installations.
- **Back River Financial Group**
  Farmingdale, ME -- Free initial consultation and review of previous tax returns.
- **Bessy Bait, LLC**
  Seabrook, NH -- $5 discount per drum on multiple drum purchases (must show current MLA card).
- **Coastal Hydraulics**
  Seabrook, NH -- 10% discount on all in stock items for MLA members.
- **Commercial Fisheries News**
  Deer Isle, ME -- Discounted annual subscription rate for $18.75 with MLA membership noted on check.
- **Craig’s All Natural**
  Durham, NH -- 10% discount on all Victoryinox Cutlery.
- **Friendship Trap Company**
  Friendship, ME -- 5% off list price on traps purchased at the Friendship store.
- **Hamilton Marine**
  Searsport, Rockland, Portland, Southwest Harbor, Jonesport, ME -- Discounts available to commercial fishermen.
- **Hews Company, LLC**
  South Portland, ME -- 10% off all hydraulic components and Cable Craft cables in 2015.
- **Law Office of J. Scott Logan, LLC**
  Portland, ME -- 20% discount on foreclosure defense and bankruptcy legal fees.
- **Liferaft Services, LLC**
  York, ME -- 5% off liferaft repack with proof of MLA membership. CAN be combined with other promotions.
- **Maine Camp Outfitters**
  Sunset, ME -- 10% off all apparel and promotional product orders.
- **Maine Lobstermen’s Association**
  Kennebunk, ME -- 10% off MLA merchandise.
- **Maine Maritime Museum**
  Bath, ME -- Free admission to MLA members.
- **McMillan Offshore Survival Training**
  Belfast, ME -- 10% discount on USCG Drill Conductor training.
- **Midcoast Marine Electronics**
  Rockland, ME -- 10% off list price on all marine electronic products.
- **National Fisherman**
  North Hollywood, CA -- Special annual subscription rate.
- **New England Propeller Inc**
  Plymouth, MA -- Discounts on marine propeller, shafting, and related items, sales & repairs.
- **Nicholas H Walsh PA**
  Portland, ME -- 20% off legal services.
- **North Atlantic Power Products**
  Exeter, NH -- 10% discount on parts and service.
- **Penobscot Marine Museum**
  Searsport, ME -- Free admission for MLA members.
- **Richard Stanley Custom Boats**
  Bass Harbor, ME -- 5% off trap list price when you show your MLA card.
- **Smithwick & Mariners Insurance**
  Falmouth, ME -- Discounted vessel insurance plus 5% discount with proof of CG approved Drill Conductor course within the last 5 years.
- **SW Boatworks**
  Lamonie, ME -- $1000 discount for hull or top.
- **Weathervane Seafood Inc**
  Kittery, ME -- 10% off mail order purchases. Just mention you are an MLA member. 1-800-914-1774.
- **Winter Harbor Fishermen’s Coop**
  Winter Harbor, ME -- 10% off picked lobster meat.

**Sw Boatworks is now taking orders for new Calvin Beal 42’ Hull/Top packages for 2016.** The 42’ Calvin Beal design is similar to the 38’ Calvin Beal, but with more length to accommodate both commercial and sports fishing demands and a width of 15’. This design has been approved by Calvin Beal and Captain Stewart Workman. Production of the 42’ hulls and tops will begin January 1, 2016. Demand for the boats has been great which means only nine production spots remain for 2016. Call now to reserve yours!
Health Insurance 101

The health insurance world can be very confusing, but don’t let that stop you from getting health insurance! The MLA is here to help!

There are three months for Open Enrollment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOVEMBER 2015</th>
<th>DECEMBER 2015</th>
<th>JANUARY 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov 1: first day of enrollment.</td>
<td>Dec 15: last day to enroll for coverage to start Jan 1.</td>
<td>Jan 31: Last day of enrollment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are three insurance companies on the Marketplace

- **Anthem BlueCross BlueShield**
  - Website: www.anthem.com
  - Phone number: 1-877-315-5389

- **Harvard Pilgrim HealthCare**
  - Website: www.harvardpilgrim.org
  - Phone number: 1-888-333-4742

- **Community Health Options**
  - Website: www.healthoptions.org
  - Phone: 1-855-624-6463

The MLA has a trained Navigator on staff to answer your questions!
Alisha Keezer, 207-967-4555 or alisha@mainelobstermen.org
WHEN YOUR ENGINE MEANS BUSINESS, MILTON CAT MEANS MORE.

Milton CAT is the Northeast and upstate New York Caterpillar dealer. Our complete range of marine power systems solutions is backed by a team with exceptional knowledge and experience.

- More engine choices.
- More fully equipped and staffed locations.
- More support for your commercial fishing vessel, ferry, tug, or pleasure craft.
- More ordering and delivery options for unparalleled part availability.

Contacts:
(in ME, NH, VT) Stewart Tuttle, 207-885-8082, Stewart_Tuttle@miltoncat.com
(in MA, RI) Kevin Hampson, 508-634-5503, Kevin_Hampson@miltoncat.com

BROOKS TRAP MILL & MARINE SUPPLIES

Working to make 2015 your best season ever!

~ The one stop shop for your lobster & commercial fishing needs! ~

Visit us online at: www.brookstrapmill.com
To create demand for the industries abundant supply of Maine Lobster Tails, the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative initiated a “tail”gating program to coincide with football season.

We shared Maine Lobster “tail”gating recipes with media and consumers and football-themed social imagery to engage our fans.
Cousens added that he expects the value of Maine's lobster fishery to be even higher for 2015. He said that he and other fishermen have been getting more than $4 per pound for their catch throughout the summer and fall. If that price holds up for the entire calendar year, it will be the first time Maine lobstermen have earned an average of more than $4 per pound since 2007, before the recession hit. "I would guess we’re going to have between $520 million and $530 million worth of lobsters landings this year," Cousens said.

Maine has been ranked directly behind Massachusetts for 14 straight years, according to federal fisheries data. From 1995 to 2003, Maine and Massachusetts each had a total dockside fisheries value less than Louisiana, which fell from second place to fourth in 2004, when it was surpassed by the two New England states.

The report also ranks individual ports, both for volume and dockside value of landings for all fisheries, which in Maine include lobster, softshell clams, scallops and groundfish, to name a few. Stonington, which has a large lobstering community, was the highest ranked Maine port in terms of value, placing 18th nationwide with $60 million in landings. In 2013, the Hancock County port had the 21st highest fisheries landings value in the country at $49 million. The island port of Vinalhaven ranked 34th nationwide in value last year with landings for all fisheries worth $36 million while Portland ranked 40th at $32 million.

Portland was the top Maine port in terms of volume with 57 million pounds of multiple species — a decrease of 5 million pounds from 2013 — for a U.S. rank of 25th. Rockland placed 29th at 41 million pounds, and Stonington came in 37th with 25 million pounds.

Cousens added that he expects the value of Maine’s lobster fishery to be even higher for 2015. He said that he and other fishermen have been getting more than $4 per pound for their catch throughout the summer and fall. If that price holds up for the entire calendar year, it will be the first time Maine lobstermen have earned an average of more than $4 per pound since 2007, before the recession hit. "I would guess we’re going to have between $520 million and $530 million worth of lobsters landings this year," Cousens said.

Maine has been ranked directly behind Massachusetts for 14 straight years, according to federal fisheries data. From 1995 to 2003, Maine and Massachusetts each had a total dockside fisheries value less than Louisiana, which fell from second place to fourth in 2004, when it was surpassed by the two New England states.

The report also ranks individual ports, both for volume and dockside value of landings for all fisheries, which in Maine include lobster, softshell clams, scallops and groundfish, to name a few. Stonington, which has a large lobstering community, was the highest ranked Maine port in terms of value, placing 18th nationwide with $60 million in landings. In 2013, the Hancock County port had the 21st highest fisheries landings value in the country at $49 million. The island port of Vinalhaven ranked 34th nationwide in value last year with landings for all fisheries worth $36 million while Portland ranked 40th at $32 million.

Portland was the top Maine port in terms of volume with 57 million pounds of multiple species — a decrease of 5 million pounds from 2013 — for a U.S. rank of 25th. Rockland placed 29th at 41 million pounds, and Stonington came in 37th with 25 million pounds.

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Changes above the seafloor with poorly understood consequences for future populations. We do know that most larvae die, and stomach contents of schooling fish show they feed on larval lobster. We know almost nothing about what larval lobster eat. A few studies point to small crustaceans as their preferred food, mostly based on laboratory observations. Some evidence also suggests that diet may change as larvae develop. But we really have no idea howorous neighbors and bad food might become a problem for larval stage lobsters.

Changes above the seafloor

We know even less about what happens during the lobster larval stages or even whether those larval stages occur. We do know that most larvae die, and stomach contents of schooling fish show they feed on larval lobster. We know almost nothing about what larval lobster eat. A few studies point to small crustaceans as their preferred food, mostly based on laboratory observations. Some evidence also suggests that diet may change as larvae develop. But we really have no idea howous neighbors and bad food might become a problem for larval stage lobsters.

What can we do about changing oceans?

The short answer on changing oceans is that we cannot do much as individuals other than try to ensure robust lobster populations and minimize human impacts, including recognizing and trying to do our bit to slow climate change. But we can work to mitigate the impacts of forthcoming changes through better planning and better understanding. In coastal Newfoundland, lobstermen in the town of Eastport developed their own Marine Protected Area for lobster, where local fishermen agreed to set aside some small areas where nobody could fish. Such efforts can potentially create a buffer to change by maintaining a healthy, reproductive subset of the population that could potentially seed adjacent areas and enhance the catch.

Another important strategy in preparing for change is to understand what really matters for lobster. Despite impressive new science tools to study ocean environments, numerous important gaps remain for lobster. What do larval lobster eat, and are they fussy? Who eats larval lobsters and how do these predators contribute to fisheries production? Are some population sources for lobster recruits more important than others? How can we develop better habitat maps for different life stages of lobster? The North Atlantic and other oceans are changing, and predicting what these changes will mean for the lobster fishery of tomorrow remains a great challenge. Nonetheless, we do have tools to increase understanding and to minimize that change. Application of those tools to address the lobster fishery of tomorrow will require cooperation and exchange of ideas.

Our knowledge gaps on where larvae actually live complicate the question of the effect of changing “accommodations” because the water, ocean currents, temperature and food all contribute to what defines larval habitat. Memorial University PhD student Ryan Stanley found significant differences in the swimming behavior of larvae spawned from different geographic regions as a function of water temperature. Using models of ocean circulation he also found that the timing and location of spawning had the greatest effect on where larvae were transported, but once again these findings must be set against a backdrop of potential changes in water temperature and circulation as warming continues. Though not well studied, evidence to date suggests that ocean acidification will delay larval development, which could increase dispersal and exposure of vulnerable larval stages to predators.
I will continue to advocate for policies that promote cleaner, renewable energy sources, and to urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to develop meaningful legislation that both addresses climate change and spurs economic growth in our coastal communities.

While we have already begun to see the local impacts of climate change, the issue is really one of a global nature that will require global solutions. That’s why I’m encouraged that international leaders will be gathering this month at the United Nations Conference on Climate Change in Paris. This conference will include representatives from 195 countries and will focus on ways to mitigate climate change. The discussions present an opportunity for the global community to work on policy measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions worldwide, encourage the development of renewable energies, and support lower-emission transportation — among many other things. Though large in scope, this conference can have a direct impact in small towns up and down Maine’s coast. It is only through this type of international discourse that we can truly begin to combat climate change and ensure that the long-term environmental and economic interests of Maine, the United States, and the world are protected for future generations.

The philosopher Voltaire once said, “Men argue, nature acts.” In the case of climate change, the time for argument is over and the time for collaboration has begun. Your industry helps drive Maine’s economy and each of you embodies the strength of character of Maine people. We must do everything we can in Congress to support you, and I pledge to you that I will always have your back.
In 1985, the Maine Lobstermen’s Association (MLA) began collecting data on the number of V-notched lobsters present in traps to measure the impact of this conservation program on the lobster population. In 2002, lobstermen from Massachusetts and New Hampshire were invited to join this data collection effort.

The survey takes place in early October each year; this year the survey was held during the week of October 12. The fall was chosen because there has historically been a good run of egg-bearing and V-notched lobsters at a time when the weather is still good enough to haul regularly.

During any two days of the survey week, lobstermen record the number of females, eggers, V-notch, short and oversize females on a data card. The results from this survey are used as a tool to track the effectiveness of V-notching as a conservation measure to protect lobster brood stock in the Gulf of Maine. The data are kept by the MLA and are available to scientists and managers.

Unfortunately, participation in the survey has reached an all-time low with just over 25 cards mailed back. Despite the low number of participants, the survey had still captured some of the major trends in the lobster fishery. For example, the pounds of lobster per trap hauled has increased significantly, tracking the dramatic increase in lobster abundance and landings over the past 30 years.

What connection does V-notching have to lobster abundance? “V-notching allows lobsters a chance to molt and reproduce [resulting in more lobsters],” explained Kathleen Reardon, lead lobster biologist at the Department of Marine Resources. “V-notching is making a difference.”

In recent years, the DMR has reported that sea sampling data show a reduction in V-notch rates. The DMR has raised concerns that lobstermen are less enthusiastic about notching female lobsters with visible eggs and conversations with lobstermen have confirmed this. This trend is also reflected in the MLA V-notch survey data. The percent of egged lobsters and no V-notch per trap hauled was 8.1% for 2015 compared to just 1.4% in 1985. This year’s data show an improvement over 2010 which saw the highest percent of egged lobsters hauled at 15.7%. The percent of female lobsters with eggs hauled during the survey was held during the week of October 12 reached more than 60% in three of the survey years, 2006, 2010, and 2015.

The MLA survey is also capturing the increase in short lobsters carrying eggs. This data point was added to the survey in 2005. Since that time, the data from the V-notch survey show that the percentage of short lobsters with eggs hauled during the MLA survey to be between 40% and 50%, and reached more than 60% in three of the survey years, 2006, 2010, and 2015.

To ensure a continued healthy population of lobsters, V-notching remains essential. A mature female lobster may carry up to 100,000 fertilized eggs upon her abdomen and while not all of those eggs will survive to maturity, they do lead to more lobsters in the Gulf of Maine.
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Photo by Bob Dennis

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Photo by Bob Dennis
If you know a little bit about the history of lobster, you likely know that lobster has not always been considered a luxury item. Back in the 1600s, lobsters were so abundant they would wash up on beaches. Considered to be "poor man’s food," lobster was often fed to prisoners and indentured servants by European colonists. As summed up by visiting historian William Wood in 1654, "their plenty [made] them little esteemed..." It was not until the late 1800s, when Maine became linked to the rest of America by railroad tracks, that well-heeled urbanites developed a true taste for lobster and elevated its status to a luxury item.

Though lobster has done well to hold its position as a coveted cuisine over the last two centuries, the recent boom in the Atlantic lobster supply coupled with economic instability has caused some to question lobster’s luxury status. When lobster is removed from a white-tablecloth environment, is it still a status symbol? Did the eight-dollar McLobster roll signal the end of lobster as a coveted cuisine? If the laws of scarcity and affordability no longer apply, can lobster still be considered a luxury item?

I currently work as a strategist at the luxury and lifestyle division of a global advertising agency, Leo Burnett. Part of my job is to understand consumers’ attitudes towards luxury items and how cultural shifts and perceptions of value are continually changing the definition of luxury. As we ready ourselves to step into the second half of this decade, I wanted to share some insights from a "Future of Luxury" seminar I attended this fall, run by the British consulting firm The Future Laboratory. It left me feeling confident that Maine lobster is well positioned to remain a valuable luxury item for the foreseeable future.

Number One: As the average age of luxury shoppers decreases, the desire for “accessible luxury” increases. In a previous article I touched on the Millennial generation—a segment of the population born roughly between the years 1980 and 2000. Millennials now make up 45% of luxury shoppers, according to the Shullman Research Center. They have come of age in a challenging economic environment and this is shaping how they experience luxury. For example, many Millennials enjoy accessing luxury products without owning them. Audi’s Unite car share program, which allows a group of friends to share the costs and care of a single Audi through an app which keeps tabs on the car’s usage, is a great example of an “access rather than ownership” approach to luxury. When Millennials do buy luxury products, those products are more likely to be “accessible” or entry-level luxury products – e.g., Chanel sunglasses vs. a designer dress. Overall, Millennials are less obsessed with exclusive status symbols than previous generations. Implications: The upsurge in landings means Maine lobster is perfectly positioned to be a go-to food for Millennials in search of “accessible luxury.” Serving lobster in accessible forms, from lobster rolls to innovative appetizers, is an excellent way to reinforce lobster’s accessible luxury status.

Number Two: To resonate with tomorrow’s luxury consumers, luxury brands should demonstrate “cathedral thinking.” Not only are Millennials changing the luxury value equation about price and exclusivity, they also are seeking luxury brands with clear values. Luxury consumers are increasingly interested in brands that look beyond short-term profits and have a long-term vision for leaving the world a better place. This approach is sometimes called “cathedral thinking” as it requires the type of planning commonplace in previous centuries when the construction of iconic buildings, such as cathedrals, took centuries. The architects and artisans of these buildings had a far-reaching vision and the project was handed down from generation and generation, with each leaving a legacy for the next. Implications: The Maine lobster industry is a wonderful example of cathedral thinking. Because many fishermen pass on their livelihood to their children and grandchildren, they have a vision for the lobster industry that extends beyond their own career and a vested interest in managing the resource so it will reap rewards for future generations. Thus it’s important we not only promote our product’s sustainability but also highlight the legacy today’s fishermen are determined to ensure for their descendants.

Number Three: As luxury consumers focus on their wellbeing, chefs will present luxury foods in fresher, healthier ways. The desire to feel healthier and good about oneself is a growing trend among luxury consumers, especially Baby Boomers, and it is driving some of the latest developments in the food industry. Restaurants are focusing on sourcing cleaner, healthier foods and serving foods in purer forms. As part of the “Future of Luxury” seminar, I had the privilege of being served a premier London chef’s interpretation of “the future of lobster” as a luxury food. The lobster dish that chef Martyn Nail presented me was freshly steamed lobster served in a salad of raw vegetables including turnips, beetroot and samphire. His vision for the future of lobster, as he explained in a follow-up e-mail, is that it “has to be healthy, fresh, honest, delicate [and] easy to eat.” The dish was all of those things plus delicious. It reinforced the healthy living trend covered in that afternoon’s luxury seminar. Implications: Not only should lobster’s fantastic health credentials be part of the Maine lobster story, the chefs and entrepreneurs we partner with should be encouraged to explore healthy forms for serving this super food.

As culture evolves and new trends emerge, how consumers perceive and consume lobster will continue to change. But as summed up by chef Martyn Nail, “...lobster will always be a luxury ingredient.” Be it lobster thermidor at a Michelin Star restaurant or lobster rolls at a roadside shack, “It rains decadence in any form.”
NEW RAIN GEAR TAILED FOR FEMALE FISHERMEN

Grundéns has unveiled its new 2016 Sedna Jacket and Sedna Bibs—the company’s first commercial-grade rain gear designed specifically for women. The new foul-weather apparel is built to the same rugged standards as all Grundéns professional gear, but features an all-new cut and fit created with input and assistance from prominent female fishermen across the country.

These two products will be the first in a complete Grundéns Women’s Collection that will include outer-, mid- and base-layer garments developed especially for professional and recreational female anglers. The new Sedna Bib is also designed to comfortably conform to women’s body shapes and sizes. It provides complete protection against rain, spray, scales, slime and more, while allowing for natural, comfortable movement on deck. Tailored for an active fit from durable, 100% waterproof PVC-coated polyester/cotton blend material, the Sedna Bib features heavy-duty suspenders with quick release clips, sturdy eyelets for attachment of fishing tools and reflective striping on the leg cuffs for increased visibility and safety.

MONHEGAN WIND POWER PROJECT RECEIVES GRANT

The DeepCWind consortium, led by the University of Maine, received a $3.7 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) in November. The money will allow the consortium to compete for a $40 million federal grant to install two six-megawatt wind turbines in deep water off Monhegan.

The new federal money is in addition to funds awarded in 2014 to the Maine Aqua Ventus pilot project when it was named as an alternate to offshore projects in New Jersey, Virginia and Oregon. With the renewed funding, the consortium will accelerate development of its semi-submersible offshore wind turbine platform, which uses a lower-cost concrete foundation in addition to a lighter-weight composite tower which researchers contend will be higher performing, more efficient and cheaper to build than traditional platforms. Aqua Ventus will have until May 1, 2016, to meet additional milestones set by the DOE. The federal agency then will decide on May 31 which pilot offshore wind projects will receive additional funding under the federal Offshore Wind Advanced Technology Demonstration Project.

RESEARCHERS WORRY ABOUT GREEN CRAB PARASITES

New research is raising more concerns about the potential transfer of diseases from infected green crabs to lobsters in Nova Scotia waters. Dalhousie University research scientist Fraser Clark released a study earlier this year showing that high levels of a parasite found in green crabs are being seen off southern Nova Scotia where the crab has been introduced as a lobster bait.

Clark said a bacteria lethal to lobsters has now been found in green crab along the province’s Northumberland Strait, the presence of which was only recently confirmed by genomic testing. Feeding trials are the next step to establish whether in fact infected green crab are passing diseases to lobsters. He noted that the connection remains unproven but that it justifies caution in using green crab as lobster bait. Lobsters with high loads of green crab parasites have a higher metabolism causing them to burn fat much faster, perhaps decreasing their ability to survive in holding tanks.

CANADIAN RESEARCH FINDS LOBSTER STOCKS GENETICALLY DIVERSE

The Canadian Fisheries Research Network, a collaboration between academic researchers, the fishing industry and government, wrapped up several research projects that began in 2010. One of those projects included an exhaustive look at lobster stocks in 17 locations from Newfoundland all the way to Rhode Island. There were five components to the research, including a genetic study — the first of its kind in the world — in which researchers sequenced more than 10,000 little stretches of DNA from lobsters from each of the 17 locations. They found 11 distinct variations of lobster, findings that contradict a previous study which concluded that there were only two distinct groupings of lobster, those in the Gulf of Maine and Bay of Fundy region and those from the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Scientists expressed surprise at the varied genetic differences across the region. The five-year research project involved five provinces, 17 fishermen’s associations, five Department of Fisheries and Oceans offices, the Prince Edward Island Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, and five universities.

GREENHEAD LOBSTER CO. EXPANDING

Buoyed by this year’s strong lobster season, high prices and increased Chinese demand for live lobster, Greenhead Lobster of Stonington is considering entry into processing to expand its business, Dan Phillips, a Greenhead salesman, said that the company is pursuing plans to create a small operation to cook lobster meat amid growing demand for lobster rolls in the U.S. market.

Greenhead Lobster anticipates completion of a 20,000 square-foot processing and shipping plant in Seabrook, New Hampshire, by January, 2016. The processing venture would be an extension of that venture, Phillips said. The New Hampshire facility, located 30 minutes from Boston’s Logan International Airport, will make it easier to ship live lobsters worldwide, including to China, where demand for lobster continues to grow. The company’s sales into the China market currently focus on sending live lobsters to major cities such as Shanghai and Beijing as well as smaller eastern cities like Qingdao.

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That question was quickly answered when we started our agency search. We attracted serious interest from a large number of top names in the marketing world. Turns out they were also truly attracted to our story and the opportunity it represented for a successful marketing effort. After much hard work by board members and our team at MLMC we finally selected Weber Shandwick as the best agency to help us get the word out about Maine lobster. They went to work immediately and it’s been gratifying to see our marketing efforts produce positive results so quickly. We’ve moved from answering questions about lobsters and lobstering person by person on the boat to telling our story at a national level to an audience of people already very curious about our industry. We at the MLMC are looking forward to 2016 when even more people will discover all the good things about Maine’s new-shell lobsters.
December 1-3

December 2
MLA board of directors meeting, 5 p.m., Darby’s restaurant, Belfast. FMI: 967-4555.

December 3
Zone D Lobster council meeting, 6 p.m., Rockland Ferry Terminal.

December 7
ASMFC Northern Shrimp Advisory Panel and Section meetings, 9:30 a.m., Portsmouth, NH.

December 9
Zone F Lobster council meeting, 6 p.m., Merrill Memorial Library, Yarmouth.

December 10
“The Future of Fish,” 7 p.m., Gulf of Maine Research Institute, Portland. FMI: 228-1699.

December 14
Zone E Lobster council meeting, 6 p.m., Lincoln County communications center, Wiscasset.

December 16
Zone B Lobster council meeting, 6 p.m., Mount Desert High School library, Bar Harbor.

December 17
Zone A Lobster council meeting, 5 p.m., Washington Academy Library, East Machias.

December 25
Christmas Day!

Upcoming
January 7
Sea Urchin Zone Council meeting, time to be announced, DMR offices, Augusta.

January 12
Shellfish Advisory Council, 10 a.m., DMR offices, Augusta.

January 26-28
New England Fisheries Management Council meeting, Portsmouth, NH.

Seaver has an unusual view of the lobster fishery for a professional in the food world. He recognizes that the ocean is not the industry, the lobstermen are. “To stand on a dock and look out to sea is not the same as seeing the fishing industry. The fishing industry is what you see when you look behind you, at the houses, the mortgages, the kids who want to follow in their father’s footsteps. It’s by human effort that the ocean becomes seafood,” he said.

Wearing his various hats, Seaver has traveled and cooked all over the world. Now, living in Maine, he finds himself an ambassador of a centuries-old fishery. “I consider myself an envoy of the lobster industry and the individual operators who have an exemplary sustainable fishery. This is a story that needs to be told. I’m working with my peers to take to them stories of my neighbors,” he said. “I’m flattered and honored that this community, which has been here for so long, is accepting of me and is allowing me to represent them. I truly appreciate that.”

For the 34th year, Santa and Mrs. Claus once again make their way to Kennebunkport’s annual Christmas Prelude Celebration via lobster boat. For the past few years lobsterman Mark White (left hand) of the Leona 14 has escorted Santa and Mrs. Claus to the Matthew Lanigan Memorial Bridge where they are dropped off to meet and greet children. The jolly journey takes place on December 6 this year. S. Wigglesworth photo.
SAVORY MAINE LOBSTER DISHES TO WARM THE WINTER MONTHS

Baked Maine Lobster Pie
From the Eddy Lobster Company

Ingredients
Maine lobsters, 2 (1.5 pound) cooked
Butter, 2 tbsp.
Sherry, 1/4 cup
Lemon juice, 1 tbsp
Butter, 3 tbsp.
1 tablespoon flour
Cream, thin, 3/4 cup
Egg yolks, 2

Directions

Pie Topping
Cracker meal, 1/4 cup
Paprika, 1/4 tsp.
Potato chips, finely crushed, 1 tbsp.
Parmesan cheese, 1 1/2 tsp.
Butter, melted, 2 tbsp.

Maine Lobster Benedict
From Ben Pollinger, Executive Chef at Oceana Restaurant, NYC

Ingredients
Lobster Potato Cakes
1¼ lb. cooked grated potato
¾ lb. cooked sliced Maine lobster meat
8 eggs

Sauce
1 tbsp. butter
1 tbsp. flour
1 c. lobster stock
1 c. cream

Directions
Mix grated potato and Maine lobster meat well. Form into patties. Brown over medium heat in a pan, flip, heat through. Poach eggs in water for about one minute until whites are cooked and yolks are semi-set but still runny. In a separate pot, melt butter, add flour. Cook two minutes over medium heat. Whisk in stock and cream. Simmer 40 minutes, until reduced to 1 cup. Place cakes on plate, place eggs on cakes, spoon sauce over and around eggs and cakes.

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The new “lobster chopper” is medically equipped to save coastal and island lives on the way to the hospital, or right on the spot if needed, when you call 911 for a fast and sure rescue.

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Recipes courtesy of the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative.