By Dana Morse, Maine Sea Grant Extension

Scallop farming in Japan is big business and a prime reason why the working waterfront there is so busy. Aquaculturists from Maine are trying to learn from that success and traveled recently to Aomori Prefecture for a deep dive into the machinery, environmental factors, scientific and management support, and husbandry techniques that have made the industry so strong.

The trip follows several delegations that have traveled back and forth between Maine and Aomori, and had its roots in the Maine-Aomori sister-state relationship, which in turn grew from the wreck of the Bath-built Chesborough off the coast of Shariki in 1889. This most recent delegation was led by Don Hudson, Maine chair of the Maine-Aomori Sister-State Advisory Council, and Hugh Cowperthwaite, director of the Fisheries Project at Coastal Enterprises, Inc.

Aomori Prefecture surrounds Mutsu Bay, a nearly-enclosed body of water that

Continued on page 16
COASTAL OUTLOOK

Thoughts from MLCA President Patrice McCarron

December is a busy month in the world of Maine lobster—it is the period when Maine’s lobster companies must meet a world-wide holiday demand for our state’s signature product. While we enjoy lobster primarily during the summer months or for special occasions during the winter, in countries like France, Italy and England, lobster is the centerpiece of Christmas and New Year’s Eve banquets. That’s why December is the time when it’s “all hands on deck” for Maine’s seafood companies.

As this issue of Landings notes, Maine lobstermen will see a few regulatory changes when they put next season’s traps in the water. The Department of Marine Resources’ (DMR) Advisory Council approved new regulations that will require all lobstermen to add a second zone tag to traps fished outside their declared zone by June of 2017. Currently all lobster traps must bear a tag which identifies the trap owner and the zone in which the lobsterman fishes. Lobstermen in four of the state’s seven zones already double-tag their traps, meaning the traps bear the tag of the lobsterman’s primary zone and an adjacent one; now the remaining three zones must follow suit. The new regulation will allow the department to better enforce the “49/51” rule which states that lobstermen may set up to 49% of their traps in an adjacent zone.

DMR also is finalizing a new system to allow licensed lobstermen to move into a different lobster zone. The change was mandated by the state Legislature this past spring. Formerly lobstermen who wanted to fish in a different lobster zone would put their names on the zone’s waiting list. That in turn made the waiting period for everyone on the list even longer. The Legislature believed that this was detracting from fishing opportunities for new entrants. As a result, DMR was instructed to devise an equitable way to ensure that already licensed lobstermen could transfer among the zones through a process that is separate from the Apprentice waiting list. The new system will be in place by next spring.

Not everything on the Maine coast revolves around lobster. The state has a growing scallop aquaculture sector where small businesses take advantage of the fertile, cold waters of the Gulf of Maine. Several people involved in Maine aquaculture visited Aomori, Japan this fall to learn more about the nuts and bolts of large-scale scallop cultivation there. Landings features a report on that trip by Sea Grant Extension staff person Dana Morse.

This month Landings also features columns from the executive director of the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative and a Downeast lobsterman who serves as a board member about the organization’s efforts to boost demand for Maine lobster. Matt Jacobson reflects on the past year’s successes while board member Sonny Real gives a lobsterman’s view of how lobster and lobstermen are regarded by culinary professionals.

December is the mid-point of the annual open enrollment period for Affordable Care Act health insurance. Maine is one of the leading states in the country for health insurance enrollment. The Maine Lobstermen’s Association health insurance Navigators have been instrumental in helping fishermen and their families obtain affordable health insurance, often for the first time. Health insurance Navigator Alisha Keezer offers her advice on how to make sure you get signed up before the enrollment period ends on January 31, 2017.

Brenda Yorke Goodale grew up at a time when the waters around Kennebunk were full of different types of fishing vessels. She draws on those memories in her new, self-published children’s book, The Pride of Perkins Cove. The tale features some of the people, living and dead, and landmarks of Perkins Cove with illustrations by Goodale’s childhood friend Bunny Poulson. This month Goodale recounts how the book came about.

As the Maine winter settles upon us, I hope you enjoy special time with your family and friends over the holidays. And I hope you enjoy this issue of Landings. As always, we welcome your ideas and feedback.

Patrice
As the 2016 Maine new-shell lobster season ends, there seems to be consensus that this was a good year. Prices have stayed high at the dock and wholesale prices—the price a chef pays a local distributor for lobster—were at a 10-year high in August. Lobstermen and dealers are reporting that they are pleased with the industry’s position heading into winter.

There has been a lot of speculation, from both the press and some in our industry, about the cause of these good numbers. Some credit more processing capacity. Others claim that the proliferation of lobster trucks is responsible. Still others have suggested that increased sales efforts by Maine processors in Asia are fueling these price levels. Certainly, all of those factors contribute. The Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC) efforts to increase demand not only support these activities, but also create interest throughout all levels of the supply chain which in turn make dealers’ sales efforts more effective. Demand drives sales and the marketing push creates demand.

As I have mentioned in previous columns, the MLMC decided to focus its resources on the months when we catch most of our product, July through November. We focused on the live market and specifically on upscale restaurants and influential chefs. We marketed Maine new-shell lobster as a way to introduce the notion of seasonality to this community. We have been telling the story of how the Maine lobstermen do it right—sustaining the resource and their communities. And it is working!

In the third quarter of 2016, we celebrated peak season by hosting three “Maine After Midnight” events in Atlanta, Washington, D.C., and New York City. Bringing together more than 315 guests including acclaimed chefs, culinary stars, and influential food writers, these monthly gatherings coincided with key media deadlines to introduce the notion of seasonality to the community. We have been telling the story of how the Maine lobstermen do it right—sustaining the resource and their communities. And it is working!

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National Lobster Day is an important opportunity for us to attract media attention around the country. We worked to put Maine new-shell lobster in front of as many people as possible. This year we sent lobster rolls to the “Morning Joe” show on MSNBC and they ate them live on air! Our work for National Lobster Day and our ongoing media efforts garnered more than 739 million impressions and 952 placements. Said another way, in July, August and September, 739 million people in the U.S. had an opportunity to read 952 stories that we got placed in newspapers and magazines around the country.

But we didn’t stop there. As you know, we now have a robust online presence. In the same quarter, we reached more than 3.6 million people on Facebook alone. Our video content scored well across social media platforms with more than 1.5 million people viewing our videos. Not only did consumers view our videos, but also media used them extensively in stories on television and online.

More than a quarter-million unique people visited our website. They viewed nearly 400,000 pages, and searched on live, frozen and how to buy lobster. Site visits increased by 106%, and page views increased by 76% over the same quarter last year. In fact, nearly 7,000 people clicked on the links to dealers’ sites looking to buy Maine lobster. We also track mentions of Maine lobster that happen by themselves and not as a result of the content we place online. Online mentions of “Maine lobster” increased by 114% over the third quarter in 2015. People were talking about the sustainability and culinary versatility of Maine new-shell. Maine lobster recipes drove the conversation.

MLMC events, National Lobster Day, media outreach, and our online presence all create interest in and demand for Maine lobster. The reason prices are up across the supply chain is because demand is up across the country and the world. While MLMC focuses on the live restaurant sector in North America, we have made our content available to every dealer and processor anywhere. We’ve worked with several to customize photos and videos for their specific sales efforts. One even subtitled our videos for use in several Asian countries.

There are many factors that influence lobster prices on the menu. But having a robust, focused, and professional marketing effort only helps the industry’s

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Guest Column: Strong numbers reflect a good year for Maine lobster

By Matt Jacobson

Matt Jacobson is the executive director of the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative.
GUEST COLUMN: The public wants to know the story of Maine lobsters

By Sonny Beal

When I was asked to write a short column for Landings about the global lobster market I thought, I have no idea about the global lobster market and I damn sure am no writer, but I can talk, so I figured why not? I’m a 40-year-old third-generation lobster fisherman from Beals Island, I’m a proud member of the MLA and on the board of directors of the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC). My father was president of the MLA from 1967 to 1974. My two sons, age 9 and 11, are both members as well and proud owners of their first boat. I started fishing with my dad as soon as I was old enough to put on a pair of boots, so you could say lobstering is in my blood.

If there’s one thing I’ve learned throughout the years it is that this is not a ‘go haul your traps and collect your check’ fishery anymore. From the rules and regulations that have been forced on us to the rising cost of turning the key on the boat, this isn’t the same lobster industry our past generations built for...

...we need to make a conscious effort to take good care of our lobsters. I know it’s hard to do sometimes.

us. That’s why when the opportunity came up to be on the board of the MLMC I jumped on it. I don’t know a thing about marketing lobster so I should be perfect. I’d admit I was skeptical at first, but I’ve got to tell you, I’m not anymore. The crew at the head of the MLMC combined with the marketing firm of Weber-Shandwick really have things dialed in. This day and age everything is social media-driven. It’s a cheap and easy way to get information out and for people to spread it around.

I could sit here and bore you with numbers about the number of times Maine lobster turns up on menus and impressions and clicks and likes, but the bottom line is that most people don’t have a clue about Maine lobster. They think lobster is lobster and most of it comes from Maine and that’s it. Getting lobster into more restaurants isn’t the only answer to increasing demand. More and more Maine lobsters are being shipped overseas. The only problem with this is that we all know that the new-shells don’t ship well. This is where lobstermen come into this big circle of lobster life. I’ve had the privilege of hearing the lobster veterinarian Jean Lavallée talk about the intricate workings of lobster anatomy and how best to handle them. There’s a nerve cord and a blood vessel running under a lobster’s tail and if either of those get peeled by another lobster that lobster is pretty much a goner. Did you know that if you leave a bleeding lobster out of water for a few minutes it will clot faster? That goes against what my father told me. He always said “put it in a bucket of water.” Jean is right, however, I’ve tested it.

What I’m saying is we need to make a conscious effort to take good care of our lobsters. I know it’s hard to do sometimes. It’s a fast-paced job and if we handled them all like eggs we’d be hauling until midnight every day. I’ve found myself being rough on them when it’s choppy or when the traps are “right to the doors” and we’re all fired up. But it’s one of those things that if we all do a little better then it will make a difference. The more lobsters that make it to market alive the better our product will be. A better product, in my opinion, will eventually help the price.

Here in Downeast Maine we don’t have any processing plants. Most of what we catch goes to Canada to be processed and then some of it is shipped back to the U.S. Knuckle and claw meat is going for around $15 per pound [in early November]. Tail meat is close to $30 per pound. Now I’m no math genius, but when a lobsterman gets paid, let’s say $3.50 per pound, and someone else sells it for $30 per pound, it’s clear that we’re losing money. If we had more processing plants we would have more jobs and I believe we would have a better price. Processed meat is vacuum-packed and frozen and then can be shipped anywhere.

The lobster industry is growing, both on and off the water. The people at the MLMC have done a great job so far to promote lobster, but we can’t leave it all up to someone else. People will always want lobster and we need to make sure that it’s high-quality Maine lobster they’re getting. We need to see it on more menus and in more markets. So step up and do whatever you can to promote our lobsters. I talked about lobster on the plane to D.C. to different people who were interested in the Maine lobster industry, and I could see the public wants to know the story of Maine lobster. Th ey all, and I mean all, loved it and loved it a lot more than old-shell. They were amazed at the difference in taste and amazed at how we catch it. They were really impressed by the measures we’ve taken to make our fishery sustainable.

This just shows that we need to get the story out there and educate people about new-shell lobster because that’s what we mainly catch and now we’re catching so much more than in the past. So if we can get more new-shell lobsters featured in restaurants and on menus, the more demand we’ll have for our product.

After “Midnight” event for chefs in Washington, D.C., and this really opened my eyes as to how bad it is. Nobody had a clue about new-shell lobster. When we explained it, the people there couldn’t believe the difference. They all, and I mean all, loved it and loved it a lot more than old-shell. They were amazed at the difference in taste and amazed at how we catch it. They were really impressed by the measures we’ve taken to make our fishery sustainable.

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<th>Factory Repair Station for All Makes and Types of Propellers</th>
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<tr>
<td>Top 10 Distributor for Michigan Wheel</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Factory Repair Station for All Makes and Types of Propellers</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Top 10 Distributor for Michigan Wheel</strong></td>
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<td>Michigan II Blade Dyno-Jets</td>
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The North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium (NARWC), a coalition of more than 100 organizations and government agencies in the United States and Canada, released its 2016 Right Whale Report Card which covers activities from November, 2015, through October, 2016. The report card, which has been issued each year since 2004, includes updates on the status of the cataloged population of right whales, mortality and entanglement events, and a summary of current management and research efforts that have occurred during the previous twelve months.

The right whale population remained flat over the past year, with the most recent estimate at 524 whales. There were 14 new calves born in 2016, but one was lost, and four first-time mothers. There were seven entanglements observed, of which six were new, and two resulted in mortality. There was one new vessel strike which was lethal. Four right whale died during this period, as noted; two were from entanglement, one from vessel strike, and one was of unknown cause.

### Right Whale Population Status

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Best Estimate*</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New calves</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First time mothers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg calving interval</td>
<td>6.6 years</td>
<td>5.54 years</td>
<td>4.4 years</td>
<td>3.3 years</td>
<td>3.2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortalities</td>
<td>4 (1 F, 1 M, 2 unk)</td>
<td>3 (2 female, 1 unk)</td>
<td>3 (1 male, 2 unk)</td>
<td>5 (2 male, 3 unk)</td>
<td>5 (2 female, 1 male, 1 unk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vessel strikes</td>
<td>1 (lethal)</td>
<td>3 (1 dead, 2 entangled, 2 gear free; 1 unknown status)</td>
<td>8 (5 new; 6 still entangled w/ 1 in poor condition; 2 gear free)</td>
<td>10 (7 new; 2 deaths)</td>
<td>6 (4 new)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entanglements</td>
<td>7 (6 new)</td>
<td>8 (5 new; 6 still entangled w/ 1 in poor condition; 2 gear free)</td>
<td>10 (17 new; 2 deaths)</td>
<td>6 (4 new)</td>
<td>11 (4 new)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Year of Report Card; population estimated for previous year

The 2016 Report Card notes continued dramatic shifts in right whale distribution and habitat use during the past several years which has resulted in researchers sighting fewer right whales. For example, there were only 94 sightings in the Gulf of Maine and one in Roseway Basin, while 768 were sighted in Cape Cod Bay and 110 around the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The NARWC recommends prioritizing identification of potential new habitats and critical habitats and developing alternative survey effort strategies.

### Year Sightings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sightings (unique whales)</th>
<th>Survey Effort (1,000km)</th>
<th>% population observed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>3,085 (245)</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>3,398 (360)</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>3,224 (428)</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>1,906 (280)</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2,389 (361)</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>1,766 (230)</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Since 1954, the Maine Lobstermen’s Association (MLA) has pursued its mission to advocate for a sustainable lobster resource and the fishermen and communities that depend on it since 1954.

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Alisha Keezer
Alisha@mainelobstermen.org

The MLA at the Maine Legislature

The MLA continued its active role in Maine’s legislative process, interacting regularly with the Marine Resources Committee and state legislators. In 2016, the Legislature enacted historic legislation to reform the lobster license limited-entry system, changed the pay scale for Maine’s Marine Patrol officers and made lobster the Official Crustacean of Maine. The MLA solicited feedback from its members, attended public hearings, provided official comments and kept the industry updated throughout the legislative session. The MLA was at every public hearing and work session, providing input and guidance to the Legislature.

Bait

Maintaining a steady and affordable bait supply was a huge challenge in 2016. The MLA remained closely involved in the management of bait species at both the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). While both the herring and the menhaden stocks are considered rebuilt (neither are overfished and overfishing is not occurring), there has been a lot of contention about how best to manage these species.

How best to manage the inshore herring stock (Area 1A) to supply the lobster bait market sparked significant debate in 2016. Pressure on the Area 1A inshore fishery was tremendous and the DMR feared that this level of fishing pressure would lead to its closure in July. With minimal landings from the offshore fishery expected, the DMR implemented emergency measures to pace Area 1A landings to last until September. The MLA supported this approach since most lobstermen wanted to have fresh herring land- ed during August and September. As a result, bait supplies were limited and prices skyrocketed. The lesson from this summer’s herring crisis is that lobstermen and state managers must strategize together on how best to manage the inshore herring fishery in future years.

The MLA also supported the small increase in the overall menhaden quota for 2017 approved by ASMFC. The MLA will follow closely discussions of menhaden quota allocations, and push for a larger menhaden allocation to the bait fish-ery, which will take place through Amendment 3 to the ASMFC Menhaden Plan.

Menhaden appeared in large numbers in Maine in 2016. The state, however, receives a very small ASMFC allocation of menhaden. The MLA supported DMR’s efforts to get portions of the episodic menhaden quota allocated to Maine. MLA also supported the small increase in the overall men- hadnaden quota for 2017 approved by ASMFC. The MLA will follow closely discussions of menhaden quota allocations, and push for a larger menhaden allocation to the bait fish-ery, which will take place through Amendment 3 to the ASMFC Menhaden Plan.

MLA also closely monitored two management actions underway through the NEFMC. Amendment 8 will address how the herring quota is allocated for both the herring fishery and its role as a forage species. MLA has participated in the Council’s herring workshops and consistently stressed the importance of herring as bait for Maine lob-
stermen and the need to maintain an adequate quota for the commercial fishery. NEFMC is also working on Amendment 5 to the herring management plan to address haddock bycatch in the Area 3 herring fishery. Fortunately, the haddock bycatch limit has been raised and the Council continues to work on other solutions which would allow the full Area 3 herring quota to be landed. MLA also supported Amendment 3 to the ASMFC Herring Plan which put in place new strategies to monitor spawning herring and better manage spawning closures.

Wind Energy Development

The MLA is monitoring the University of Maine and Maine Aqua Ventus’ offshore wind project off Monhegan Island and their efforts to find a suitable location to connect its electrical power to the mainland, as well as the community’s and local lobstermen’s actions to negotiate community benefits from the project. The MLA continues to monitor the Maine Green Line project which seeks to lay an underwater cable to transmit renewable energy generated from Maine windfarms to the metro areas of New England.

Whale Rules

The full Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP) is in place. The sinking line rule has been in effect since 2009 and the vertical line rule since 2015. Maine was proactive in proposing protection measures that would work for the Maine lobster fishery and thus avoided more extreme measures such as the winter closures implemented in Massachusetts. The whale plan is now in its monitoring phase. This year marked the first full year of monitoring the effectiveness of the whale rules. The MLA participates in the Monitoring Working Group.

The effectiveness of the whale plan is monitored by examining many factors such as the number of entanglements and corresponding serious injuries or deaths; analyses of fishing gear removed from whales; whale population growth trends; changes in oceanic conditions and other information. To date, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has not issued an update on the performance of the whale rules under the monitoring strategy. NMFS has stated that it will take at least five years to understand how well the whale plan is working.

The scientific community has weighed in with their opinion on the plan, suggesting a link between fishing gear entanglements and the recent decline in right whale reproduction rates. The MLA published an editorial challenging this conclusion, instead suggesting that climate change is the most likely culprit for the recent downturn in reproduction. The MLA remains engaged in all aspects of large whale research and management, attending the annual North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium annual meeting and commenting on stock assessments and other research efforts.

In late January, 2016, NOAA expanded the critical habitat designations for endangered North Atlantic right whales to encompass the entire Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank and the southeast calving grounds from North Carolina to Florida. Although the MLA strongly opposed this expansion, NOAA stated that the new designations would not affect commercial fishermen.

NOAA implemented a rule to ban the import of seafood from countries that do not meet U.S. marine mammal protection standards, effective January 1, 2017. Under this rule, the fisheries products of fisheries which do not meet U.S. marine mammal protection standards cannot be imported into the United States. The program has a five-year phase-in period.

Sweden’s Proposed Ban on American Lobster

The MLA partnered with the Maine Lobster Dealers’ Association, the Massachusetts Lobstermen’s Association, the Maine Congressional delegation and other regional organizations to object to Sweden’s petition to ban live lobster exports to the European Union. Sweden claimed that Maine lobster was an invasive species after finding several dozen American lobsters in its waters. In October, the European Union denied the Swedish petition.

Predicting the Lobster Shed

The MLA voiced strong concerns to the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI) that its lobster season forecast this spring resulted in negative press and hurt the lobster markets. The MLA and representatives from the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC) and the Maine Lobster Dealers’ Association met with GMRI staff to urge GMRI to be more cautious in communicating its predictions in the future.

Penobscot Bay Hydrographic Survey

The MLA worked closely with the NOAA contractor on the hydrographic survey of Penobscot Bay during the summer of 2016. The MLA organized a meeting with local lobstermen to discuss strategies to minimize the loss of lobster gear during the project. The project utilized both airplanes and two jet-drive boats to conduct the survey and avoid lobster gear. The MLA helped to keep the industry updated on the survey as it progressed, resulting in minimal interaction with lobster gear and boats.

Penobscot River Closure

The MLA supported the expansion of the Penobscot River closure based on data collected by DMR which corroborated the previous court findings and provided additional data on mercury levels in the area. The results from the crab samples, however, did not show contamination levels that would justify a closure. The MLA continues to advocate for additional testing and analysis of crab data and for re-opening the crab fishery as soon as possible.

Coral Zones

The MLA has been tracking the development of the NEFMC Coral Amendment. The Council has designated two coral zones in Downeast Maine, located near the Outer Schoodic Ridge and Mount Desert Rock, that, if closed, could negatively impact lobstermen. The MLA is working with DMR to document the economic importance of these fishing grounds to Maine lobstermen and to seek an exemption for lobster trap gear.

Pesticides and Lobster

The MLA continues to monitor the Board of Pesticides Control (BPC) study to understand how the use of pesticides along the coast is impacting lobster. The MLA is also working closely with the BPC and Forest Service to monitor the recent upsurge in the brown tail moth population and ensure that pesticides used to control these moths do not harm the lobster resource. The MLA successfully lobbied for strict controls on how these pesticide are used within 250 feet of high tide.

National Monument and Federal Observers

The MLA and several other regional fishing associations opposed designation of a National Monument in the Atlantic. Unfortunately, President Obama declared the northeast offshore canyons and seamounts as a Marine National Monument, banning commercial fishing in these areas (the offshore lobster and red crab fishery have seven years to phase out). Fortunately, Cashes Ledge, which had also been proposed for the National Monument status, was not included.

Many of Maine’s federal permit holders had to host federal observers aboard their lobster vessels in 2015-2016 during which nearly 200 trips were assigned to the northeast lobster fishery. The MLA worked with DMR and Maine lobstermen to document concerns regarding federal observers, such as how lobsters were handled on deck and redundancy with the Maine sea sampling program, and provided feedback to NMFS. In 2016-2017, the northeast lobster fishery has been assigned only 14 trips.

Climate Change

During 2016, a lot of voices expressed concern about climate change and its potential impacts on commercial fisheries. While recent research seems to di-
minish worries about the impact of ocean acidification on lobsters, it did raise concerns about the impact that rising ocean temperatures may have on the development of lobster larvae. This fall also saw an unprecedented bloom of phytoplankton that produce domoic acid. This toxin shut down Maine’s shellfish industry this fall, and it has had a dire economic impact on West Coast crab fisheries in recent years. The MLA will continue to call for research to better understand the potential impacts of domoic acid on the lobster fishery.

MLA Remains the Industry Leader

There was certainly a lot going on along the waterfront in 2016. The MLA believes that Maine lobstermen support the organization because of its vigilance, and the pride we put into representing lobstermen’s interests on this array of complex issues. Understanding our members’ diverse opinions is essential and informs all of our efforts on your behalf during this past year. See you at the Annual Meeting in March! Without our members, there is no MLA.

It’s a sign of the value that the MLA holds in Maine’s lobstering communities that the organization has been in business for more than 60 years. It’s a further sign of the dedication of MLA’s board of directors and staff that so much can be accomplished in a single year with so few paid employees. I hope that you take pride in your Association’s success for helping to keep MLA strong!

Later the full MLA Board continued this discussion with Commissioner Keliher. The Commissioner provided an overview of the state’s administrative suspension process. The administrative process operates in addition to the traditional judicial system and often results in license suspension. Approximately 50 marine resource licenses have been suspended in 2016 and approximately 135 licenses since the program began; one lifetime license suspension has been made. Board members asked whether violations that occur in federal waters are run through the state or the federal system. Col. Cornish explained that the violation is written up as both a state and a federal violation if the laws at each level are violated. However, the case can only progress through one system (state or federal). Typically, lobster violations are run through the state system and end up going through the administrative suspension process.

The Commissioner explained that ASMFC was exploring the potential to require VMS on all federal lobster vessels. The Commissioner said that the current VMS system is not appropriate for lobster vessels. It is too expensive, does not ping frequently enough, and the system would need to be tied into the hauler to track traps. The board then listened to an update on legislation put forward by the LePage Administration.

• A “technical changes” bill which is a catch-all bill to clarify existing laws.
• Marine harvester demonstration license seeking to allow lobster boat tours, which are limited to 25 traps and cannot sell the catch, to haul on Sunday. They would remain subject to all other Maine lobster laws.
• Marine patrol bill to add language to clarify that a marine license holder consents to search if there is probable cause.
• Marine debris bill to make it illegal to bring aboard a vessel the cardboard and plastic from frozen bait in order to prevent this trash from entering the ocean.

MLA Seeks Nominations from Members for Board of Directors

Don’t miss your opportunity to set the course for the future of your industry

Annual Meeting Nomination will be held Friday, March 3, 2017 at 9am

Did you know?
• MLA Directors are elected for a 3-year term
• MLA Directors meet monthly, except August, in Belfast.
• Board members expected to attend at least 4 meetings/yr.
• Maximum # of Board members: 21
• Current Board: 21 members
• # Directors with Terms expiring: 7
• Average age of MLA Board: 52
• Youngest MLA Board member: 26
• Oldest MLA Board member: 68
• Number of Board members representing islands: 4

MLA Board representation by lobster zone:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zone</th>
<th>Lobstermen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>3 (1 expiring)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3 (2 expiring)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>6 (3 expiring)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>3 (1 expiring)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2017 Board Recruitment priorities

• Zone G representation
• Young lobstermen
• Dedicated lobstermen who care about the future of the industry
• Lobstermen who reflect industry’s needs and priorities

Nomination Requirements

• To make a nomination, you must be an MLA member in good standing.
• All nominees must hold a valid commercial lobster license and be an MLA member in good standing.
• Deadline for nominations: January 30, 2017
• Feel free to nominate yourself, or someone else.

Thank you for helping to keep the MLA strong!

MLA Director Nomination Form (detach and return)

Nominee Information
Name:
Fishing Port:
Zone: Town of residence:

Please let us know how this nominee could contribute to the MLA Board:

Nominator Information
Name:
Lobster Lic. 

Mail your nomination to the MLA office: MLA, 2 Storer St, Ste 203, Kennebunk, ME 04043
Or feel free to call in your nomination to 967-4555
or email patrice@mainelobstermen.org
MAINE LOBSTERMEN’S ASSOCIATION UPDATE

- Native tribes apprentice bill to allow the tribes to design and administer their own Lobster Apprentice Program before assigning tribal lobster licenses allocated by law.

In addition, DMR is working with Governor LePage to close its budget gap by keeping a greater proportion of license fees rather than contributing that revenue to the General Fund.

Patrice provided updates on several pending issues. The New England Fisheries Management Council is working on Framework 5 to address haddock by-catch in the Area 5 fishery. The Council will hold another herring workshop in December 2017. The DMR Advisory Council approved a regulation in November 2016 that expands an existing requirement for the use of second zone tags on traps fished outside of a declared zone, effective June 1, 2017. This requirement is intended to improve enforcement of the “49/51” rule that limits the number of traps a lobsterman may fish outside his declared zone to 49% of the number of tags they purchase. The requirement for the use of a second zone tag is already in place for Zones B/C, and Zones F/G. Under the new rule, any lobsterman fishing outside his declared zone will need to affix a second zone tag to those traps by June 1, 2017.

Swans Island - There are two new rules in place for Swans Island. First, the trap limit was changed from 475 to 600 traps so that the regulation matches the recent change in law. Second, Swans Island created an island limited entry program. It includes the recent island limited entry referendum vote, allowing up to 72 commercial island resident lobster licenses to be issued annually. Individuals also can now register for the Swans Island Conservation Area at any time during the year.

NEW ENGLAND FISHERIES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Coral zones and gear restriction

At its November meeting, the New England Fishery Management Council debated whether to continue developing potential lobster trap/pot restrictions in the Gulf of Maine coral zones. The two at issue are located offshore along the downeast Maine coast in the areas near the Outer Schoodic Ridge and west of Mt. Desert Rock.

The DMR and MLA requested that the Council provide an exemption for lobster and crab fishing within these zones, arguing that the inshore lobster fishery in this area is the primary economic driver for Washington and Hancock Counties. Coral zone restrictions would affect lobstermen from at least 15 harbors.

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

- Allen Insurance & Financial
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- Beals Lobster Pier
- Bell Power Systems Inc.
- Bowdoin College Dining Services
- Buoysticks.com
- Chapman & Chapman
- Chase Leavitt & Co.
- Coastal Documentation
- Conary Cove Lobster Co.
- Cousins Maine Lobster
- Cushing Diesel, LLC
- Damariscotta Bank & Trust Co.
- Eastern Tire & Auto Service
- Farrin’s Boatshop Finestkind Scenic Cruises
- First National Bank
- Friendship Lobster Trusts F W Thurston Co. Inc.
- Georgetown Fisher- men’s Co-op
- Gulf of Maine Lobster Foundation
- Guy Cotten, Inc.
- Harbor Bait Inc.
- H&K Propeller Shop
- Inland Seafood
- Interstate Lobster Co.
- Island Fishing Gear & Auto Parts
- Island Fisherman’s Wives
- Island Seafood LLC
- John’s Boat Co.
- Jonesport Shipyard
- Kips Seafood Co.
- Lake Pemaquid Inc.
- Lobster.com
- Lonnie’s Hydraulic Inc.
- Maine Financial Group
- Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance
- Maine Port Authority
- Marine Sea Grant
- Marine Hydraulic Engineering Co. Inc.
- McMillan Offshore Survival Training
- Midocean Marine Supply
- Mount Desert Oceanarium
- Muscongus Bay Lobster
- Nautiles Marine Fabrication Inc.
- New England Detroit Diesel Allison
- New England Marine & Industrial Inc.
- Nicholas H. Walsh, PA
- Northeast Marine Survey Inc.
- Novatec Braids LTD
- Penobscot Bay & River Pilots Assn.
- Penobscot East Resource Center
- Pete’s Marine Electronics
- Polyform US
- Port Clyde Fishermen’s Co-op
- Port Lobster Co.
- Re/Max Oceanside
- Riverdale Mills
- South Bristol Fishermen’s Cooperative
- Superior Bait and Salt
- Superior Marine Products Inc.
- Vinalhaven Fishermen’s Coop
- Weirs Motor Sales Inc.
- William Coffin & Sons
- Williams CPA Group LLC
- Worcesters Lobster Bait
The Council acknowledged the importance of these coral zone areas to the lobster fishery but was not prepared to completely eliminate lobster gear restrictions from consideration at this stage of the amendment process. Instead, it will continue to develop the two coral zone plan alternatives but will include an option to exempt lobster trap/pot fishing. Public hearings will likely be held in the spring. A final action is not expected on this issue before June, 2017. The Council also made two decisions related to the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument, which President Obama established on in September. Although the President designated the monument, his proclamation directed the Secretary of Commerce to manage the activities and specify the areas to which the provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and other federal laws apply. In an October 21 letter to the Council, John Bullard, head of the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO), asked the Council to amend its fishery management plans to “reflect the action of the President and implement the appropriate fishing regulations for the Marine National Monument.” The Council discussed the request and decided not to develop its own amendment since it did not designate the monument. This means the Commerce Department will fulfill the President’s charge through a secretarial amendment. Bullard said public hearings would be held and any proposed amendments would be sent to both the New England and Mid-Atlantic Councils for “consideration and comment.” The Council also debated a motion it had postponed during its September meeting to move all proposals in the Deep-Sea Coral Amendment that overlap with the Marine National Monument to the “considered but rejected” portion of the hearing. After considerable debate, the Council voted to keep the overlapping alternatives in place for further consideration and analysis, noting that it was important to move forward with the coral protection process it had begun. Regarding the current list of alternatives in the coral amendment, the Council voted to add an additional option to the mix. The Council is proposing to protect corals through the development of two types of coral zones – discrete areas and broad areas. Discrete Areas designate narrowly defined coral zones in the Gulf of Maine, for single canyons and on individual seamounts; and Broad Areas designate a coral zone along the entire shelf-slope region between the U.S./Canada Exclusive Economic Zone boundary and the New England/Mid-Atlantic Council boundary. Broad Zones are meant to prevent the expansion of fishing effort into additional deep-water habitats. The Council is considering various minimum depth contours for defining these zones.

Herring Framework Adjustment 5
The Council looked at the range of alternatives under consideration in Herring Framework Adjustment 5 to modify the Georges Bank haddock accountability measures (AMs) that apply to the herring midwater trawl fishery. The Council is scheduled to take final action during its January meeting. The herring/haddock issue is being addressed through two channels: one groundfish action and one herring action. The Council voted to increase the herring midwater trawl fishery’s Georges Bank haddock sub-annual catch limit (sub-ACL) from 1% to 1.5% through the groundfish plan. The Herring Framework 5 action is needed to:

- Reduce the potential negative economic impacts on herring midwater trawl vessels that result from Georges Bank haddock AM closures, which in turn reduce the opportunity to harvest the herring in Areas 3 and 1B.
- Avoid potential impacts to the supply of herring used as bait for the lobster fishery.
- Reduce the potential negative economic impacts on the mackerel fishery from Georges Bank haddock AM closures, which in turn reduce the opportunity to harvest mackerel on Georges Bank.

Herring Framework 5 alternatives include two options for implementing a “proactive” AM closure in addition to maintaining the existing “reactive” AM closure. The reactive AM requirement shut down of Georges Bank herring fishing to directed herring midwater trawl fishing — for the remainder of the groundfish fishing year — once the haddock sub-ACL is caught. Framework 5 proposes a proactive approach that would prevent midwater trawl fishing in Closed Areas I and II — either with or without a 15-nautical-mile buffer around the red areas — under three possible seasons: (a) a year-round proactive closure; (b) a May-October proactive closure; or (c) a June-August proactive closure. Framework 5 contains other alternatives, including one to seasonally split the Georges Bank haddock sub-ACL so that 80% of the quota is released on May 1 and then 20% is released on November 1 to support a winter herring/mackerel fishery. The Council also reviewed actions related to Amendment 8. The Council...
will hold its second Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) Workshop in Portsmouth, N.H., on December 7 and 8. The MSE approach is being used to establish an acceptable biological catch (ABC) control rule for the Atlantic herring fishery under Amendment 8 that may explicitly account for herring’s role in the ecosystem and deal with biological and ecological requirements of the herring resource itself.

ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

Atlantic Herring

The ASMFC’s Atlantic Herring Section initiated Addendum I to the Herring management plan to improve the performance of the Area 1A (inshore Gulf of Maine) Atlantic herring fishery. The purpose of the addendum is to develop additional management alternatives for the days-out program. It is in response to the accelerated pace of Area 1A Trimester 2 (June through September) landings in recent years and the increasingly dynamic nature of days-out measures to control Trimester 2 effort that have varied across states.

In 2016, DMR implemented a series of emergency rules that were more restrictive than Commission measures in an attempt to extend the Trimester 2 quota into September. DMR's measures only applied to vessels landing in Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts later implemented one of these management measures. The Draft Addendum will explore these measures and potentially others that could be uniformly applied to Area 1A by Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

In addition to initiating an addendum to consider improvements to Area 1A days-out measures, the Section allocated the 2017 Area 1A sub-ACL seasonally with 72.8% available from June through September and 27.2% allocated from October through December. The fishery will close when 92 percent of the seasonal period quota has been harvested. Quota underages from June through September may be rolled into the October through December period.

Herring Update

The Area 1A Atlantic herring fishery was closed for 2016 on October 18; the Area 1B fishery closed on November 18. The Area 1A restriction shall be in place until at least June, 2017; and the 1B restriction until May, 2017, when the 2017 quota becomes available. The inshore spawning areas were in place along the coast in eastern Maine from August 28 through September 24, western Maine from September 18 through October 15 and in Massachusetts/New Hampshire from October 2 through October 29.

Area 3 landings continue to fall significantly short of the 2015 season. The 2016 herring landings from Area 3 reached only 16,000 mt by mid-November, compared to more than 33,000 mt in 2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area 3 Haddock Incidental Catch Quota</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quota Cap</td>
<td>227 mt</td>
<td>521 mt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>43.09</td>
<td>56.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>54.51</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>45.70</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug.</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep.</td>
<td>66.32</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct.</td>
<td>23.68</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov.</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>235 (104%)</td>
<td>134.5 (25.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The haddock bycatch quota for Area 3 was increased to 521 mt in 2016 (up from 227 mt in 2015), and the fleet appears to have been more cautious in avoiding haddock. As of November, only 135 mt of haddock had been observed in the Area 3 herring fishery, representing 26% of the haddock cap.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Atlantic Herring Landings</th>
<th>For data through Nov. 22, 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>Cumulative Catch YTD (11/18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1A*</td>
<td>27,808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1B</td>
<td>3,580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9,803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>17,002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58,192</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Area 1A Quota June 1 thru Sept 30 = 21,910; Oct 1 thru Dec 31 = 8,192

Continued on page 20
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"The MLA is a good thing. I believe that the dealers still have so much pull, it’s good to belong."
Andy Gove, Stonington

"The MLA is a good thing. I believe there is strength in numbers."
Ernie Burgess, Chebeague Island

"Patrice and the entire MLA staff work really hard to represent the industry."
Jim Henderson, Saco

"The MLA’s family will continue to support and be a part of the MLA in the future."
Sonny Beal, Beals Island
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  - Farmingdale, ME 04344
  - 207-622-3772

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  - Newcastle, ME 04552

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  - Hot Springs, AR 71913

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  - Boothbay Harbor, ME 04538
  - 207-633-2300

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  - Trenton, ME 04606

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  - Sunset, ME 04683

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  - York, ME 03909

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  - 603-418-0470

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  - Sunset, ME 04683

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  - 207-784-3700

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  - 120 Breakwater Annex
  - South Portland, ME 04106

**WALLPAPER**
- EasternBay
  - 207-767-2300
Scallop aquaculture is largely a family operation in Aomori. D. Morse photo.

Scallop with drill hole to upper right corner. D. Morse photo.

opens northward to the Tsugaru Strait, between the islands of Honshu and Hokkaido. About 600 vessels are involved in the scallop industry on Mutsu Bay alone; approximately 2,000 individuals have on-the-water employment there. In many cases, these are family operations and the boat crew will consistently consist of a husband and wife and one or more of their children. Mutsu Bay produces roughly 90,000 metric tons of scallops annually (the Japanese scallop is Placopecten yessoensis, also referred to as the Ezo scallop), compared to approximately 400,000 metric tons produced in Hokkaido. These weights are reckoned for whole, in-shell product. The Aomori industry is principally made up of suspended culture — lantern nets, pearl nets and ear-hanging — and the bottom-seeding method is more common in Hokkaido. The suspension-culture sector is fully mechanized, and that mechanization was a principal reason for our visit.

The manufacturer and inventor of many of these machines is Hiroaki Sugiyama, owner of Mutsu Kaden Tokki Co., Ltd. Mr. Sugiyama and his sons have been creating and improving specialized machinery for the scallop industry for over 40 years now. A group of Mainer visiting Aomori in 2010 were introduced to him and his work and his visit to Maine in 2014 confirmed the possibilities that ear-hanging technology has promise here.

The method itself is simple but labor-intensive, hence the mechanization. Wild seed scallops are gathered using spat collectors, identical to those that have been in use in Maine for nearly two decades now. Collectors consist of bags roughly the size of a pillowcase and made of plastic mesh. The bag mesh size is about 3.0mm and the inside of the bag is filled with a different type of plastic mesh, called Netron. Larval scallops are carried into the bag by the currents, and settle on the Netron filling, where they go through a metamorphosis, becoming scallop seed. Once the scallop seed grow for a while, they become too big to escape through the outer bag. A single collector can easily retain 1,000-3,000 scallops or more in Maine, but in Aomori there are recorded incidences of a single collector retaining over one million scallop larvae — a benefit of both the local oceanography and the nearby presence of so many spawning scallops on the farms. Settlement season is different in Aomori and Maine; Japanese collectors go out from April to May, whereas collectors are commonly deployed in coastal Maine waters from mid-September through mid-October.

In Japan when the scallops are removed from the collectors, they are usually about 1-2 cm in size and must grow some more in what’s usually referred to as a nursery system. Japanese nursery culture consists mostly of pearl nets, pyramidal nets that hang in strings from a horizontal longline. Since P. yesoensis grows quickly, the time in the nursery is fairly short, usually about five months or so. The nursery phase is a lot shorter than for our native sea scallop (Placopecten magellanicus), which is not an impossible situation to overcome, for those who may be thinking about scallop aquaculture in Maine. The goal is to achieve a 50-70mm shell length at which point the scallops can be put onto ear-hanging lines or set onto the bottom for final grow-out.

Our group was interested in learning more about the ear-hanging technique. Ear-hanging works on the premise that by maximizing the scallops’ ability to feed and by keeping them away from predators, growth is maximized and mortality is minimized. It appears to work for Mutsu Bay fishermen, because there are a lot of successful Japanese businesses in the area and plenty of new vessels and new gear to be seen. (Note: In keeping with Japanese tradition most of the people met on the trip were referred to by others as fishermen, and they referred to themselves that way also.)

The ear-hanging (mimi-zuri, in Japanese) arrangement is simple but uses an odd mix of machinery and manual work to accomplish the various tasks. The main element of the production system is the longline (also referred to as a “backline”), a rope held horizontally in the water at a certain depth and maintained there by anchors and surface buoys. Backline is commonly 28mm nylon line, used because of its strength and stretch — these lines take a lot of tension.

From this longline are hung dropper lines and strings of nursery gear such as the pearl nets (lantern nets are used too, more for growing larger scallops) or dropper lines that are used for grow-out to larger sizes. The dropper lines are either braided rope with plastic pins at intervals (called “age-pins,” pronounced ah-gai), or lines with monofilament loops (called “loop cord” lines); both are in common use.

To get the scallops onto either age-pins or loop cords, a hole is drilled through the upper shell, near the hinge of the scallop. The target area for drilling is the byssal notch of the lower shell. By drilling through only one shell, tissue damage is minimized, and growth is not badly affected. There are a variety of machines that can do this step, but they all involve a high-speed drill and a hardened drill bit of about 1.5mm diameter. Once the hole is drilled through the shell, the scallops are either attached by hand or in some cases the drilling machine will also attach the scallops to the pin. Both methods are widely used.

Loop cords are used because growth appears to be faster with them than on age-pins and labor for stringing the scallops is thought to be less costly. The loop cord allows a line of monofilament to be passed through the drill holes of the scallop and keeps it tight enough so that the scallops don’t tangle — like fishing line going through the ferrules of a fishing rod. Scallop strings are usually strung two per gap between the loops, or about six per running foot, compared to four per running foot for age-pins.

Once the scallops are attached to the lines, the dropper lines are tied onto the backline. It’s common to have 80-100 pins per line, so the droppers can be 40 or 50 feet long. The backline floats at about 15 feet below the surface, so some depth is needed for the whole arrangement; otherwise, the droplines would drag on the seabed and would become easy targets for climbing starfish and crabs.

Scallop grow on these lines for 12 to 24 months, during which time they are cleaned by machine once or twice per year. The cleaning machine uses high-pressure water to get rid of fouling organisms and can manage a dropline of 100 pins in about two minutes. It’s expensive but effective, and virtually all the boats in the Japanese industry have such equipment aboard.

Given the early work with the ear-hanging method in Maine, it’s not at all unreasonable to think about growing a 2- or 2.5-inch scallop to 4 inches within about 12 months from drilling, or a 5-inch shell within 24 months. Meat weights are projected to be 20-count after a year and 15 count after two years, though further data collection will clarify this. Longlines are commonly 200 meters long and will have 400-600 drop lines, each carrying up to 200 scallops. In such an...
Members of the 2016 delegation from Maine to Aomori

Scallops continued from page 16
instance, a 200-meter line may easily have upwards of 50,000 scallops aboard,
and at 20/pound and a $14/per pound value, that’s $35K of product potentially
coming from one line (Caution – this is farming, and nothing is guaranteed!)
The Maine delegation visited with scientists, the equipment specialists at
Mutsu Kaden Tokki Co., and with several fishermen in the Hiranai Fisheries
Cooperative, which is the largest co-op on Mutsu Bay. In coming weeks and
months, more outcomes from this trip will occur, as what we learned is put
into practice more fully and as we gather more information on ear-hanging as
a potential method for scallop culture in Maine.

This trip to Mr. Sugiyama’s part of the world was made possible both through
the United States Japan Foundation and through funding by Maine Technology
Institute. The MTI Cluster Development Award will also support the purchase
of a limited amount of ear-hanging equipment, to jump-start the pilot-scale
production of scallops via this method.

Members of the 2016 delegation from Maine to Aomori:
Sebastian Belle - Maine Aquaculture Association
Bob Brewer - F/V Lindsay Marie, Stonington
Marsden Brewer - F/V Lindsay Marie, Stonington
Hugh Cowperthwaite - Coastal Enterprises, Inc
Chris Davis - Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center/Pemaquid Oyster Co.
Gordon “Skip” Connell - Spruce Head
Don Hudson - Maine Aomori Sister State Advisory Council
Matt Morett - Wild Ocean Aquaculture / Bangs Island Mussels
Dana Morse - Maine Sea Grant / Univ. of Maine Cooperative Extension
Nate Perry - Pine Point Oyster Co.
ENROLLING IN ACA HEALTH INSURANCE IS EASY!

By Alisha Keezer

When you look back at the past four years, one thing is certain: a lot has changed since the first open enrollment for health insurance through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in 2013! The enrollment application is shorter; the Marketplace website has changed significantly; and lots of families have gained health insurance. Throughout the years, however, one thing has remained the same: you have always had the opportunity to get help enrolling from someone who knows the process. Health insurance “Navigators” have helped many people understand the process of gaining and retaining affordable health insurance.

The Maine Lobstermen’s Association (MLA) has been assisting lobstermen with health insurance enrollment since November, 2013, when the Health Insurance Marketplace was launched. MLA Navigators make themselves available for phone consultations during the evening hours or on weekends when lobstermen are at home. For some, this is the first time they are getting health insurance. MLA Navigators take the time to walk them through the process; no one will be rushed.

Open enrollment for 2017 through the Health Insurance Marketplace started on November 1, and continues through January 31, 2017. Coverage, however, doesn’t start immediately.

• If you sign up between Nov. 1 and Dec. 15, 2016, your coverage will start Jan. 1, 2017.
• If you sign up between Dec. 16, 2016, and Jan. 15, 2017, your coverage will start Feb. 1, 2017.
• If you sign up between Jan. 16 and Jan. 31, 2017, your coverage will start March 1, 2017.

Enrollment Process

MLA’s Navigators pride themselves on making enrollment in health coverage easy. Our enrollment approach is a multi-step process:

During the first interaction, our Navigators provide basic information about the Health Insurance Marketplace, explain the consumer’s responsibility in choosing a health insurance plan, walk through the Health Insurance Marketplace window shopping tool and answer questions. This can be done simply by calling the MLA office during open enrollment.

The window shopping tool allows you to preview and compare 2017 health insurance plan coverage and pricing before you apply. This allows you to see the benefits of each plan and what it covers. MLA Navigators can help you compare plans based on what’s important to you, choosing the combination of price and coverage that best fits your needs and budget.

The Marketplace has new plans and prices every year, so it is worthwhile to work with an MLA Navigator to review your options each year. If you haven’t been successful in finding a good health insurance plan in the past, there may be new options this year that work better for you. If you already have health insurance, a Navigator can make sure the plan you have is still the best fit for you using the window shopping tool.

Already have a 2016 Marketplace plan? This is the time to make changes to your plan.

It’s still important to compare plans and prices for 2017. Our Navigators can help you compare 2017 health plans and prices against your current coverage, update your application with any household or income changes, and enroll in a plan. New and more affordable health plans may be available this year, so don’t miss out on savings for 2017. Your 2016 plan must send you a notice of any changes it will make for 2017. Make sure to open this mail and see what it means for you.

After that, the Navigator will provide the consumer with a packet of information including eligibility determination and then schedule an enrollment appointment either face to face or through remote computer access.

The MLA offers in-person appointments through remote computer access (using gotomeeting). This has allowed us to overcome many of the challenges posed by the geography of the coast and to enroll consumers at times which are convenient for them. Gotomeeting is a screen-share program that is accessed by having a web link sent to your email address. After completing the application during your appointment, you will select a plan, and a Navigator will make sure that you understand the steps to take following your enrollment.

Once the enrollment appointment is over, the Navigator will compile all the necessary documents for your health insurance plan and other useful hand-outs to mail to you. And once you are enrolled, MLA Navigators will follow up with you during the year, so you have the support you need to stay covered.

The Navigator will do follow-up phone calls to ensure consumers understand the policy and how to make payments and update their Health Insurance Marketplace account. They also make sure that consumers are taking advantage of their health insurance services.

If you have questions about your options, you can meet one-on-one for free with one of the MLA Navigators. Please contact the MLA at 207-967-4555 or email alisha@mainelobstermen.org.

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NORTHEAST HARBOR SAYS “NO” TO CRUISE SHIPS

by Melissa Waterman

In Northeast Harbor, the town’s selectmen have decided that bigger is not necessarily better. In November, the board of selectmen voted unanimously against allowing American Cruise Lines to anchor in town waters next summer, after a visit by the company’s 325-foot vessel Pearl Mist in September raised hackles among local lobstermen and residents.

The neighboring town of Bar Harbor, by contrast, has seen the number of cruise ships in Frenchboro Bay grow dramatically. Bar Harbor was visited by 105 cruise ships this year, which brought more than 158,000 people into the small town. Portland had only 70 ships in its harbor in 2015, bringing approximately 100,000 people to the city.

After the brief visit of the Pearl Mist, local residents grew concerned that the small-town character of Northeast Harbor would be damaged if additional ships made a call each season. Local lobstermen were angry about the real damage they suffered from the transit of the enormous vessel. Jack Merrill from Islesford was irate at the state of his lobster gear after the ship departed. “Well, it’s total devastation, there’s nothing left,” he said in a newspaper interview. Between 20 and 25 lobstermen fish in the waters around Northeast Harbor. They argued that having cruise ships move through would pose significant safety hazards not only to themselves but also to the many recreational boaters who use the waters in the summer and fall. The Maine Lobstermen’s Association wrote a letter in support of lobstermen’s concerns.
Transfer continued from page 1

by the Legislature, however, the Department of Marine Resources (DMR) must maintain a separate waiting list for those commercial lobstermen who wish to change zones. The problem then becomes, what is a fair way to allow those lobstermen into zones which have existing waiting lists?

"The Department committed to getting input from the seven Lobster Zone Councils regarding how this system should be created and administered," explained Sarah Cotnoir, resource management coordinator within DMR. At each of the zone council meetings held during September, Cotnoir posed two questions to council members: how should a transfer into a particular zone occur and should license holders have to meet any particular criteria to be eligible for transfer?

Council members discussed two different approaches for creating a fair system. The first is to create a single list of all lobstermen who want to transfer to a different zone. Each April, when DMR is reviewing entry into the zones, staff would go through the list and determine if there were any matches – for example, a Zone F lobsterman who wants to fish in Zone G and a Zone G lobsterman who wants to fish in Zone F. Under this system, there would be no net increase in the number of lobstermen in any zone. However, if there aren’t equal matches among the zones, some lobstermen could be left waiting until a match is found.

The other approach would allow a transfer to take place using a formula based on the number of new lobstermen allowed into a zone. That number would vary depending on the waiting list of each zone. If, for example, five new lobstermen enter a given zone, then one transfer lobsterman could also enter that zone.

"This system would ensure some movement on the transfer list," said Cotnoir. Lobstermen are not known for being of one mind on any given topic. And there are 80 zone council members serving on the seven zones from Eastport to Kittery. So it’s no surprise that there was no consensus of opinion among the zones after their meetings in September.

"There weren’t too many other ideas on how this could work," Cotnoir said. "The next opportunity to provide input on creating this system will be at the meetings of those zone councils that meet in December." Next spring, DMR will adopt final regulations to govern how transfers are administered. Prior to that, public hearings will be held at which lobstermen can make additional comments.

Jacobson continued from page 3

ability to extract value from Maine lobster. For the summer of 2016, the effort went as well as we could hope. We should celebrate our success and we should be proud of our effort and our industry.

But we are already planning next season and how we can drive even more demand for Maine lobster and our industry. It’s on to 2017!
Atlantic Menhaden Board

The Atlantic Menhaden Management Board set fishery specifications for the 2017 fishing year, approved a Public Information Document (PID) for Draft Amendment 3, and approved nominations to the Atlantic Menhaden Advisory Panel (AP) during the October meeting. The Board approved a total allowable catch (TAC) for the 2017 fishing season of 200,000 mt, a 6.45% increase from the 2016 TAC. According to Technical Committee analysis this increase has a zero percent probability of resulting in overfishing. The TAC will be made available to the states based on the state-by-state allocation established by Amendment 2.

Additionally, the Board approved the Public Information Document (PID) for Menhaden Draft Amendment 3. The PID is available on www.asmfc.org, and a public hearing is scheduled in Portland on December 13.

Jonah Crab Management

The ASMFC American Lobster Management Board approved Draft Addendum II to the Jonah Crab Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for public comment. The Draft Addendum considers establishing a coastwise standard for claw harvest to address concerns regarding the equity of the current claw provision. Specific options include establishing a whole crab fishery or allowing for the harvest of claws coastwide. It also considers establishing a definition of bycatch, based on a percent composition of catch, in order to minimize the expansion of a small-scale fishery under the bycatch allowance. A public hearing on the Amendment is scheduled for December 13 at 6 p.m. at Casco Bay Lines in Portland.

Lobster Harvester Reporting

The American Lobster Management Board explored ideas to improve harvester reporting data reviewed goals and recommendations proposed by the Lobster Reporting Work Group. These included a higher percentage of harvester reporting, the collection of additional data on trap hauls, soak time, and gear configuration, and the incorporation of VMS on lobster vessels. The Board will consider the initiation of an addendum in February, 2017, to comprehensively examine reporting in the fishery.

The Board also reviewed Draft Addendum XXV, which seeks to address the poor condition of the Southern New England (SNE) lobster stock. Results of the 2015 stock assessment found the SNE stock to be depleted, with record low abundance and recruitment. The Board initiated Addendum XXVY to increase egg production and reduce fishing mortality. The document also considers where these management measures should apply in Lobster Conservation Management Area (LCMA) 3 (offshore waters), since the LCMA contains both the Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank and SNE stocks. Following review of the document, the Board decided to provide an opportunity for industry input through the Lobster Conservation Management Teams (LCMTs) prior to approving the document for public comment. States submitted industry comments by November 30; these will be reviewed by a subset of Commissioners and the Plan Development Team. The Board will consider approving Draft Addendum XXV for public comment in February, 2017.

ASMFC Law Enforcement Committee

The Law Enforcement Committee (LEC) met over two days during the 2016 annual meeting of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) in Bar Harbor, Maine.

ASMFC staff briefed the LEC on development of an addendum to address the Southern New England stock. One issue of concern was the possible increase in regulatory complexity in offshore harvest areas due to enforcement limitations. The LEC will review and comment on proposed management measures as they are developed.

The Lobster Enforcement Subcommittee reported on its work to identify and recommend enhancements to existing enforcement efforts for the lobster trap fishery. The subcommittee was formed to proactively address enforcement needs in response to trap limitation programs and increasing activity in more remote waters.

The LEC reviewed a draft ASMFC letter requesting that NOAA Office of Law Enforcement increase its priority ranking for American lobster. The ranking is important to providing federal reimbursement to states for enforcement activities targeting the fishery and must be submitted for consideration in planning for 2018-2023 priorities.

The LEC continued a discussion of the limitations of enforcement vessels for reaching and checking offshore lobster trap lines. Where enforcement actions have occurred, untagged traps are being discovered. The United States Coast Guard District 5 considers American lobster a priority species for their work, but they are not set up to pull and check traps on their vessels. In addition to increased federal funding to support enforcement efforts, the LEC concluded that the next best area to focus on would be the establishment of a vessel monitoring system for the lobster fishery.

Shrimp Fishery Remains Closed for 2017

The Commission’s Northern Shrimp Section extended the moratorium on commercial shrimp fishing in response to the depleted condition of the northern shrimp population. The Section also approved a 53 metric ton (mt) research set aside to allow for the continued collection of much-needed biological data.

The 2016 Stock Status Report for Gulf of Maine (GOM) Northern Shrimp indicates abundance and biomass indices for 2012–2016 are the lowest on record of the 33-year time series. Recruitment indices for the 2010–2015 year classes are also poor and include the three smallest year classes on record. Current harvestable biomass is almost entirely composed of the 2013 year class. To maintain the time series of data collected from the northern shrimp commercial fishery, a cooperative winter sampling program was approved with a 53 mt quota. This program allows for the continued collection of biological data (e.g. size composition, egg hatch timing) in the Gulf of Maine. This winter ten trawlers (eight from Maine trawlers, one from Massachusetts, and one from New Hampshire) and five trap fishermen, will fish for eight weeks, from mid-January to mid-March. The trawlers will have a maximum trip limit of 1,200 pounds per trip, with one trip per week, while the trappers will have a maximum possession limit of 500 pounds per week, with a 40-trap limit per vessel. Preference will be given to individuals in the lottery with double Nordmore grates who have shrimp fishing history prior to the June 7, 2011 control date.
NEW FACES ON MAINE’S LOBSTER ZONE COUNCILS

Maine Lobster Zone Council Members (election results as of 7/29/2016)
Names shaded in gray reflect the winners of the 2016 election. Congratulations!!

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<th>district</th>
<th>Zone A</th>
<th>Zone B</th>
<th>Zone C</th>
<th>Zone D</th>
<th>Zone E</th>
<th>Zone F</th>
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<td>Michael Hutchens ('18)</td>
<td>853-9883</td>
<td>867-7097</td>
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<td>Wayne Canning ('17)</td>
<td>88-4061</td>
<td>83-3893</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Tim Post ('17)</td>
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LOBSTERMEN CHARGED WITH FISHING TOO MANY TRAPS, OTHERS’ TAGS

The Department of Marine Resources Marine Patrol charged Brian Tarbox of Spruce Head in November with fishing 156 lobster traps more than he was authorized to fish. Tarbox has also been charged with fishing lobster traps that contain tags not registered to his vessel. In addition to fines, Tarbox faces the possibility of a suspension of his lobster license.

The violation was uncovered during a routine patrol in October. After inspecting Tarbox’s traps the Marine Patrol officer discovered that they included tags that belonged to another license holder, Eric Caswell of Lewiston. That discovery led Marine Patrol to haul all of Tarbox’s traps when the extra 156 traps were found. Also charged as a result of the investigation was Tarbox’s son Samuel of Spruce Head. Samuel Tarbox has been charged with fishing lobster traps that contain tags not registered to his vessel. In addition to the fine, he also faces the possibility of license suspension.

BAY OF FUNDY TIDAL TURBINE SET IN PLACE

A 1,000-ton tidal turbine is now operating on the Bay of Fundy seabed near Parrsboro, Nova Scotia, the first step for a test project demonstrating the mechanism’s potential. The project is called Cape Sharp Tidal, a joint venture between Emera Inc. and OpenHydro.

The turbine is connected to the region’s electrical power grid through a subsea cable and is expected to generate enough electricity to supply 1,000 homes. Eventually the company plans to install a pair of 2-megawatt in-stream tidal turbines at the testing site, in what would become North America’s first tidal array connected to an electrical grid. The Cape Sharp project is one of several that plan to test different turbine technologies in the Bay of Fundy, which has some of the world’s most powerful tides. Installation of the tidal turbine was fought vigorously but unsuccessfully by the Bay of Fundy Inshore Fishermen’s Association.

LOBSTER TRAP TREE OF MEMORIES

On December 1, the Barrington, Nova Scotia, Lobster Trap Christmas Tree was lighted up once again. The tree is built each year of hundreds of recycled lobster traps and decorated with buoys, each with the name of a fisherman who was lost at sea. The tradition of the lobster pot tree began in 2009. In 2014 people within the southwest Nova Scotian community began donating buoys, each marked with the name of a father, son, brother, friend or other loved one who had been lost at sea, to decorate the tree. More than 70 buoys donated in remembrance were hung on the lobster trap tree last year.

REGULATORS EXPAND SCALLOP ALLOCATION

The New England Fishery Management Council approved rules in November to increase the quota for scallops to 47 million pounds for the fishing year that begins in spring 2017. The new projection represents a slight increase from the 2016 rules, which allow fishermen to catch 46.9 million pounds. The 2016 quota is a 30% increase above the 36 million pounds of scallops fishermen landed in 2015. Regulators are also allowing fishermen slightly more access to limited scallop fishing areas; vessels can make four trips to the limited areas in 2017, one more than in 2016.

NEW NORTHEAST FISHERIES SCIENCE CENTER HEAD NAMED

NOAA appointed Jonathan A. Hare as the new science and research director for NOAA’s Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) in late October. As director, Dr. Hare will continue planning, developing, and managing a multidisciplinary program of basic and applied research on the living marine resources of the Northeast Continental Shelf Ecosystem, from the Gulf of Maine to Cape Hatteras. He will lead NOAA Fisheries’ five northeastern labs and field stations. Dr. Hare has held various positions with NOAA Fisheries for more than two decades. Most recently, he served as supervisory research oceanographer and acting ecosystems processes division chief for the NEFSC Narragansett Laboratory. In this role he managed division research while also managing personnel and research resources for five different locations.
December 2-3

December 2
Kennebunkport tree lighting ceremony, 5:30 p.m., Dock Square, Kennebunk.

December 5
Health Insurance Enrollment, 4:30-6:30 p.m., Midcoast School of Technology, Rockland. FMI: 467-4555.

December 6
Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative meeting, 1 p.m., Island Institute, Rockland.
MLA Board meeting, 5 p.m, Darby’s restaurant, Belfast.
Zone D Council meeting, 6 p.m., Rockland Ferry Terminal.

December 7-8

December 10
Health Insurance Enrollment, 10 a.m.-noon, Waldo County Hospital, Belfast.

December 14
Zone A, 5 p.m., Washington Academy Library, East Machias
ASMFC Jonah Crab and Menhaden Management Plans public hearing, 6-9 p.m., Casco Bay Lines conference room, Portland.

December 15
Health Insurance Enrollment, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Rockland Public Library. FMI: 467-4555.
Deadline for application to second Maine Lobster Leadership Institute. FMI: 967-4555.
Zone B, 6 p.m., Mount Desert Island High School Library.

UPCOMING
January 4
MLA Board meeting, noon, Darby’s restaurant, Belfast.

January 19-23
Massachusetts Lobstermen’s Association Annual Weekend, Falmouth, MA.

January 24-26
New England Fisheries Management Council meeting, Portsmouth, NH.

January 31

January 31-February 2
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission meeting, Alexandria, VA.

BOATS FOR BIKES PROJECT PEDESTAL ONWARD

by Paul Desaulniers, Oceanside High School

Each December, students at Oceanside High School in Rockland gather food and toys for local families in need. These items are then passed on to the Salvation Army and the U.S. Marine Corp’s Toys for Tots program. In 2015, seven juniors decided they wanted to do more for four young boys of a local family. They wanted to give them bicycles.

Since the juniors themselves were short on cash, the suggestion was made to approach the lobstermen for whom these students had worked as sternmen the previous summer to see if they would donate bicycles. At that moment Boats for Bikes was born.

Word of the students’ project spread among Spruce Head lobster boats and other local fishing fleets and communities. The local branch of The First bank joined in to set up accounts for accepting donations of bikes and cash. The whole effort was conceived, carried through and completed in seven very hectic days last year.

All the bikes were distributed through the local grammar schools, to children identified by the school principals. The students had hoped to give away four bikes when they started out. Instead, they ended up giving 92 mid-coast children truly memorable holidays with the gift of a new bicycle. And to ensure safe riding, the Rockland Kiwanis donated helmets for each new bicycle owner.

Don’t forget to check out our expanded calendar at www.mainelobstermen.org. You can find more information, links, and photos. And let us know if you have upcoming events.

Happy Holidays
From our family to yours:
Happy Holidays and
best wishes for the New Year!

Thank you to all our customers!

1946
Michael Brooks establishes
trap stock mill in Rockland

1973
Sons Karl and Lawrence
Brooks expand trap business
at Thomaston location

1986
Karl becomes sole owner of
trap and supply business

2003
Karl sells company to his
children, Stephen, Julie and Mark.
He passes away in 2010.

2016
Brooks Trap Mill operates in four locations
along the coast, continuing the family
tradition of providing quality products to
customers.

The Pride of Perkins Cove

by Shelley Wigglesworth

Drawing on local history and an intimate knowledge of the people, places, and
types of life of a working fishing village, first-time children's book author Brenda
Yorke Goodale and her childhood friend, artist Bunny Poulson, have captured
the essence of not only the fishing village of Perkins Cove, but of all the fish-
ing villages up and down the Maine coast in their children's book, The Pride of
Perkins Cove.

Yorke Goodale is both the daughter and the mother of a lobsterman. Today, she
still lives on the cove that she grew up in. It is her observations of the working
fishing community that inspired this charming and whimsical book.

The story is about a little boy named Jack who visits his grandmother in Perkins
Cove each summer. His grandmother tells him tales of years past in the lobster-
ing village, and one story in particular about an old fisherman and a lost carved
toy boat. The lost boat holds a key that can unlock the ice-breaking boat the

Crusher which is needed to help to save the village bridge from being destroyed by ice
in the winter. Every year Jack searches for the lost toy boat in hopes of finding the key and
keeping the bridge safe if the cove freezes over.

Though the book is histori-
cal fiction, "the story has some truth and facts," Yorke-
Goodale said. The Crusher
actually existed and can be
seen in old photos breaking
ice in the winter. "The old
fisherman is based on my
own grandfather. The nana in
the story is me, the late Billy
Tower of Barnacle Billy's and
the late harbor master Fred
Moyo, are in the book and my
children and grandchildren
are featured as well as local
lobster boats and landmarks." Ogunquit native Richard
Perkins, whose ancestors set-
tled Perkins Cove centuries
ago and whose relatives still fish from there today, said, "It may indeed be a
children's book but it has a magical adult appeal. If you are familiar with Perkins
Cove, its very essence pops out page after page."

Another well-known lobsterman from Perkins Cove, the late William "Billy
Mac" McIntire, who was lost at sea in 2013, is also featured in the book. Yorke-
Goodale dedicated the book to him and "to all who are called to the sea."