In a global economy where huge numbers of products fly from country to country every minute of every day, having enough available for customers at any time is critical to a company’s success. But what if the product you are shipping is alive, like a lobster? How can a seafood business ensure that it will have enough live lobster available when an order for 10,000 or 20,000 pounds comes in? You can't just run down to the local wharf and haul in a few crates.

Seafood was Maine's leading export in 2014, with its total value of $456.67 million topping the No. 2 export commodity of paper and pulp products by almost $100 million. And the biggest driver of seafood’s rise to the top of the state’s export commodity chart, says Jeffrey Bennett of the Maine International Trade Center, is that tasty two-clawed crustacean harvested by hundreds of independent fishermen in the Gulf of Maine, the Maine lobster.

“Th at’s pretty significant for the industry,” says Bennett, MITC’s senior trade specialist who was part of a Maine delegation touting the state’s iconic lobster and other seafood products at the world’s largest seafood show in Brussels in late April. “We’ve seen huge growth in Asia.”

To prove Bennett’s point, one could start off by visiting Tom Adams at his four-year-old Maine Coast Shellfish distribution and processing plant in York. Located less than two miles from Exit 7 on the Maine Turnpike, the 16,000-square-foot plant features four holding tanks capable of storing up to 150,000 pounds of live lobster in circulated, filtered and chilled natural ocean water. There’s an atmosphere of friendly efficiency, as workers wearing rubber gloves and overalls hoist totes of lobsters out of the tanks, sort them by weight in a climate-controlled

By Melissa Waterman

HUMPBACK WHALE MAY BE DE-LISTED

By Nancy Griffin

The majestic humpback whale has been considered endangered for nearly 45 years. As a result of new research and a comprehensive status review, scientists now understand that there are many distinct populations of humpback whales and a majority of them are actually thriving. As a result, NOAA Fisheries is recommending that many of them be taken off the Endangered Species Act (ESA) list.

“Because of a lot of science, we have reevaluated and now believe there are 14 distinct population segments (DPSs) of humpbacks,” said David Gouveia, chief of the Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Conservation Program for NOAA Fisheries. Previously, NOAA had considered the status of the humpback whale globally, so no matter how well some

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Continued on page 19
People outside of the lobster industry view lobster fishing as a romantic occupation: hardy men facing the mighty sea to wrestle a living from Nature. Few view lobster fishing as a business. Of course Mother Nature has a lot to do with the success of that business, but so too do the multitude of systems in place to get the lobster from the trap to the table.

In this issue of Landings, we look at different aspects of the business of lobstering. With the dramatic upturn in lobster landings in recent years, finding space to store all those live lobsters prior to shipping them has become a key factor in the fishery’s success. Where once lobsters were stored in natural tidal pounds, now many large seafood firms use giant high technology indoor tanks to keep the crustaceans cool and comfortable. Others use a combination of tidal pounds and “closed” systems to ensure that they have enough lobsters at any one time to meet a client’s order.

John Sackton, publisher of SeafoodNews.com and a long-time observer of the nation’s seafood industry, comments on the issue in consolidation among lobster dealers. As he notes, the trend toward consolidation reflects the changing stature of lobster among international markets. While once lobster occupied a small niche in those markets, overshadowed by other items such as shrimp, now it has become a more-desired item, particularly among Chinese consumers.

The growth in demand has led to a remarkable surge in exports of Maine lobster. Landings reprints an article from a recent issue of Mainebiz which reported that the value of Maine lobster exports jumped by 45.4% from 2013 to 2014. For that period, lobster accounted for $366 million of the total $456.7 million of seafood exported from Maine. The article focuses on the successful story of Tom Adams, president of Maine Coast Shellfish in York, whose young company is capitalizing on the expanding markets for Maine lobster.

Cutler lobsterman Kristan Porter recently traveled to Australia to educate their lobster industry on Maine’s long-standing lobster management and sustainability practices. Porter was first introduced to the Australian lobster fishery during the MLA’s International Lobstermen’s Exchange. Since then, he has maintained that connection and continued to share information on strategies to reduce whale entanglement and Maine’s lobster conservation practices.

Christina Lemieux, an advertising executive born into a Cutler lobstering family, also investigates the growing appeal of Maine lobster, this time from the point of view of the young “Millennial” generation. She attributes some of that appeal to the provenance of the lobster, the romantic angle that so many associate with the fishery. Recognizing that a real person caught the lobster and knowing something about that person’s life and fishery adds tremendously to the Maine lobster “brand,” argues Lemieux.

Landings continues to feature the people and places of Maine’s lobstering heritage.
The multi-year high points of lobster landings are continuing both in Maine and Canada. Maine lobster landings were 123.6 million pounds in 2014, making this the first time in more than 100 years of records that landings have exceeded 100 million pounds four years in a row.

Canada

Canada’s landings will be about 185 million pounds for 2015, probably a record. Landings for southwestern Nova Scotia (Lobster Fishing Areas 33 and 34 from Halifax to Yarmouth and the Bay of Fundy) were the highest in over 200 years of record keeping. About 13 million pounds were landed on the south coast of Nova Scotia, and 55 million pounds in the winter fishery in LFA 34 (Yarmouth) from November to May.

Meanwhile, the May and June season in the Gulf of St. Lawrence was delayed by 11 days due to heavy ice in local harbors, but fishing has now started. Canners from November to May, lack of heavy landings in Canada prior to Mother’s Day. Traditionally this holiday kicks off the Canadian sales season for live lobster but this year the fishery was too late. As a result, many packers are having to find additional customers for the lobsters that they otherwise would have sold on Mother’s Day.

Because prices were very high over the spring, there was not much inventory. But since May 12th, prices have been dropping like a rock. This is a normal seasonal adjustment, perhaps accelerated by the lack of sales on Mother’s Day.

Maine

So what is the outlook in Maine? One of the biggest changes in recent years has been the growth of lobster processing in Maine. This has attracted a lot of deep-pocketed companies, like Mazzetta, the largest shrimp importer in the U.S.; Chicken of the Sea, owned by Thai Union, which has taken over Orion; and Harbor Seafood. They are competing with established Maine companies like East Coast/ Pature.

This increase in processing capacity will force processors to bid for lobster supply and will help stabilize the price.

Despite the overwhelming presence of the lobster industry in Maine, in the global seafood market North American lobster has been a niche player until recently. The sale of Orion marks a turning point in the industry, because it shows that lobster is becoming more of a mainstream seafood product rather than a niche product.

Most Maine lobsters were sold to the tourist trade, and most Canadian frozen lobsters were sold to Darden Restaurants, Las Vegas casinos and other big North American buyers. This changed after the financial crisis of 2009. With the financial collapse, the lobster market also collapsed. That led to a period of extremely low prices that ended up attracting a number of new users and buyers to lobster. Many restaurants that never would have thought of using lobster began to do so. Over time, this expansion of the market helped to correct the price, and prices began moving up again.

Asia

At the same time, the Australian spiny lobster fishery, which had been the key supplier of lobsters to China, suffered a big drop in production. It sent the Chinese looking for new sources, and they began buying North American lobster. At first it was a hard sell. The Chinese prize lobster as a “dragon prawn” as the dragon is the most prestigious creature in Chinese culture. But North American lobster had claws, unlike spiny lobster. And the Chinese did not know what to do with them. Instead of reminding them of a dragon, the North American lobster reminded them of a crab. This led to it being sold at a lower price than spiny lobster, which still persists today.

But just as the low prices in 2009-2010 expanded the U.S. market, the lower prices in China drastically expanded the Chinese market. In 2014, for the first time, China moved up to second place as a buyer of U.S. lobster.

The multi-year high points of lobster landings are continuing both in Maine and Canada. Maine lobster landings were 123.6 million pounds in 2014, making this the first time in more than 100 years of records that landings have exceeded 100 million pounds four years in a row.

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GUEST COLUMN: Lobster outlook positive, consolidation taking place

By John Sackton

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www.smithwick-ins.com
By Christina Lemieux

"How many did you catch today?" A voice with a thick New York accent called down to my father and me from the top of the wharf as we stood aboard our boat, crating and weighing the lobsters from that day's fishing. "Is it dangerous out there?" enquired his female companion. My father gave me a knowing smile.

Questions from "flatlanders" were a frequent and often entertaining addition to the process of unloading our catch during the summers when I worked as sternman with my dad. We didn't get many tourists in Cutler, but those who came usually found their way onto the wharf, eager to strike up a conversation. Oblivious to a lobsterman's desire for discretion, they would ask about the quantity of traps we fished and the volume of lobsters we caught. They would enquire about how many weeks we'd been out at sea or whether we took all our traps up at night. Some questions were indiscreet, others were amusing and many were mundane, but they all pointed toward an intense eagerness to learn the story behind Maine's most famous fishing industry.

Like many girls along the coast of Downeast Maine, I grew up with my name on the side of my father's lobster boat. Unlike most girls at the time, I also worked on that boat. I stuffed bait bags and banded lobster every summer and school break from the age of 10 until I graduated from college. It gave me an intimate knowledge of the art of lobster fishing and also insight into how fascinated people are by lobster fishing. I carried this knowledge with me when I left rural Maine and embarked on a career in advertising. My city coworkers and friends showed the same fascination with my lobstering heritage as did the tourists on the docks of Cutler. Over the years I have served many friends freshly FedEx'd Maine lobster. While they've always delighted in such a delicious dinner, it is clear to me that what has really made the meal special to them is the idea of eating seafood prepared by someone with a direct link to the source.

In Maine, lobstering is such a way of life that we take for granted the intimate connection we have with the sea. Beyond Maine, especially in city centers constructed of concrete and steel, the concept of wrestling one's living from a wild and unforgiving ocean is exotic and intriguing, as is the idea that one's work day can be dictated by the wind and the tides. The vast majority of Americans have never met a lobsterman. Few have had the experience of harvesting their own meals. As the world becomes increasing globalized and urban, so does their desire for a provenance story - a story of the craft, authenticity, and personality of the place and people behind the things they buy.

I've worked in advertising my entire adult life so I have long known that telling a story can impact the value of a brand. In my opinion, there truly has never been a more perfect time to tell the story of the Maine lobster. The trend among consumers to focus on the heritage and human touch behind products is having a massive impact on the food industry. As concisely articulated in a recent Financial Times article titled "Craft versus Kraft," not only is the food landscape "changing to natural, organic, protein and non-processed foods," it has also become increasing important for food companies "to tell consumers an interesting story ... narratives [that] give brands the coveted – and elusive – quality of authenticity."

Despite a rebounding economy, some of America's most major food companies are losing sales while smaller businesses, with a more authentic product and the marketing savvy to tell that product's story, are growing by leaps and bounds. For example, Campbell Soup Company's market share slumped by 6.6% between 2005 and 2014 while Amy's Kitchen, a family-run, organic soup company, has more than doubled its market share in the same period. General Mills was so keen to add an authentic, organic food company to its existing repertoire of brands that it forked out $820 million in cash for Annie's Homegrown. Berkeley-based Annie's has spent years focusing its marketing materials on the story behind its food, from the farm on which the ingredients are grown sustainably to their health benefits.

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By Melissa Waterman

In this series we continue our profiles of some of the young men and women who took part in the Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance’s inaugural Lobster Leadership Institute in May, 2014.

By Melissa Waterman

On this cool day in mid-May, Travis Otis is wearing a flannel shirt and jeans as he walks around the boat yard at Otis Enterprises in Searsport. The black flies had just begun to appear over the weekend so Otis is pleased by the cool weather. He gestures to his 36-foot Northern Bay lobster boat behind him and several other boats on cradles in the yard. “Time to get these in the water,” he says.

Otis, age 33, has a multi-faceted work life. During the winter he works with his father, Keith, building and repairing commercial and recreational boats. When spring comes around, he gets ready to set his traps in upper Penobscot Bay. He recently was hired as the assistant harbormaster for Searsport. And throughout the year, Otis, who is vice-president of the Maine Lobster Boat Racing Association, is busy preparing for the upcoming season of lobster boat racing.

Taking part in the Lobster Leadership Institute last year seemed a natural thing to do, according to Otis. “It’s my industry, I build boats and fish myself,” he said. “I was interested to see what happens to the lobsters after I sell them.” He studied marine biology at Maine Maritime Academy and has a strong curiosity about what goes on in the bay. “I’m part of the ventless trap program [run by the Department of Marine Resources] this year. And I’m doing the samples for the closed area at the mouth of the river.” The DMR closed a small area of Penobscot Bay to lobster and crab fishing last year due to mercury contamination. Otis sets traps for the DMR which then tests the lobster and crab tissues to get a better understanding of contaminant levels throughout the year.

Building boats, fishing for lobsters, conducting scientific sampling: it all makes sense to Otis. He uses a boatbuilding analogy to explain. “Boatbuilding changes the way you look at things. You have to have a systems mentality. To get to something you have to think about it sequentially, how to get to that end. Lobstering is like that too.” As a lobsterman in Searsport, Otis must carefully think ahead. There is no bait facility in town or a handy buyer for his lobsters. “I have to plan a day to get my bait, then bring it back, repack it and so forth. I have to hustle.” He fishes in-shore, about 20 miles down the bay, and sells his catch to Young’s in Belfast or Wyman Seafood in Stockton Springs.

Otis enjoyed lobstering with the fishermen on Prince Edward Island last spring as part of the Lobster Leadership Institute program. Like other participants, he learned that what he considered normal practice was not the case in Canada. “The guys on P.E.I. had a log book for each trap. They took a temperature reading. We went out one day and got 1,400 pounds. The next day we got nothing. Turns out the bottom temperature had dropped 5 degrees overnight,” Otis recalled. As a lobsterman who has to travel long distances to get his bait, he appreciated the Canadian lobstermen’s baiting habits. “They put one fish in a trap. And they catch their own bait. They move just ridiculously slowly compared to me,” he said. “Some guys, though, will fish through all their traps in a day and then do it again!”

Getting consumers to recognize Maine lobster and call for it by name also makes good sense to Otis. But he is cautious about how the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative will go about accomplishing that goal. “I think they have potential as long as they don’t mire themselves in the old way of thinking that there is one silver bullet that will solve all our problems,” he said.

“We are sending our best lobster out into the world but I don’t think we’ve used our domestic markets as well as we can. You can ship new-shell lobster successfully. We just have to treat them much better.”

Lobstering in the Otis family is not just for the men. Otis mentions proudly that his eldest niece just got her license at age 9. “I gave her ten traps that she’s going to re-rig. So next thing she says to me, ‘When are you going to build me a boat?’ It’s the heritage, it’s what we have here,” Otis said.

Travis Otis has been involved in the Maine Lobster Boat Racing Association since 2001. Currently he is vice-president of the association and the reigning champion in Diesel Class H. His perspective toward lobster boat racing is a mix of traditional and more contemporary views. “People ask me ‘What’s the big deal about lobster boat racing?’ I say it’s like putting NASCAR and a tractor pull together at a family reunion. It’s where the elite and the normal boats gather,” Otis said.

Some people feel that the flavor of lobster boat racing in the state changed sharply in recent decades as more high-powered boats joined the circuit. Boats with enormous engines or those that appear to have been designed for racing, not lobstering, now compete with working lobster boats. “The question is, are we racing lobster licenses or lobster boats?” Otis said. “It’s complicated. For instance, my first boat, Easy Money, I built it and fished it. Then someone else bought it and didn’t fish. Now someone owns it who has just five traps. So what is that boat?”

Sometimes those big boats with big engines have mishaps. Many remember the race in 2001 when Wild Wild West flipped during a choppy race off Searsport. Boat owners do all sorts of things to make their boats go faster, from the commonsense tactic of cleaning the boat hull of barnacles, to tinkering with the fuel mix to get more horsepower.

Otis and his father Keith are proud of the modifications they have made to his lobster boat, First Team. Otis maintains that during the lobster races participants can get “very aggressive,” but that afterwards people remain friendly. “You are mostly in it for the bragging rights,” he said.

This year Searsport returns to the racing circuit after renovations to the town dock were completed. “I think this year there will be a lot more local participants,” Otis said. “The younger guys may come in because they had a good high school last year.” In past years when fuel prices were low, lobstermen from far-flung harbors would go to races throughout the coast. When fuel prices jumped during the 2000s, many chose to stay put or just participate in the races in their area. “Places like Winter Harbor, they always have large local participation from all the harbors around there, plus they have good prices,” Otis said. “And Stonington, too, because they’re an all commercial fleet.”

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NEW LEADERS IN MAINE’S LOBSTER FISHERY: Travis Otis, Searsport
Maine Lobstermen’s Association

Steaming Ahead

June is an exciting time for the Maine lobster fishery. Spring has finally brought warmth and life back to the great outdoors, and the snow is a distant memory, everyone is anxious for those lazy days of summer and, of course, shedder season! There is such a sense of excitement for what lies ahead as you ready those last few traps or buoys, paint those endlines, launch your boat, and set traps out for this season. The recent five-year scare that remind us of all the sometimes better reality and vulnerability of being both selves to the law. The lobster fishery and Mother Nature for a living has given way to a more pleasant situation, full of the independence and success this fishery affords us. The fear that gripped so many when the recession hit in 2008 and was enhanced by the difficult and memorable 2012 season is finally a dim memory. Through it all, Maine’s lobstermen survived those trying days through hard work, stubbornness and determination. And it looks like that pain has paid off. The seemingly dismal combination of weak lobster prices and high volume resulted in a frenzy of growth in the industry. Maine has seen tremendous private investment and growth in lobster landings, especially during what was dubbed ‘The Longest Summer’ of 2018. While Maine’s dealers and processors were busy growing infrastructure and demand for Maine lobster, industry leaders from the Lobster Advisory Council and Maine Lobstermen’s Association were ushering up the harvesters’ future through establishment of the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC). Lobstermen worked with the Legislature to reinvent and reinvest in the marketing arm of Maine’s lobster industry. And today, targeted strategic marketing is finally happening.

You can sense the excitement and enthusiasm about Maine lobster right now. We have professionals, namely international marketing firm Weber Shandwick, charging ahead. The MLMC has identified tremendous market potential to grow the sales of Maine lobster in the restaurants of the urban northeast. In addition, there is a growing appetite for Maine lobster in China and other Asian countries that our dealers are taking advantage of and successfully capitalizing on. We have a bright future for sure.

Fortunately, Maine lobstermen continue to be excellent stewards of the resource, holding a shared vision of the fishery’s future. Every short lobster, oversize lobster, egg-bearing female and V-notch lobster that you return to the sea represents an investment in that future. Consumers want to know where their seafood comes from. And they particularly want to know that those who harvest it care about the resource and the environment. And we do. This industry will always have its ups and downs. Right now, Maine’s lobster stocks remain sound, providing a remarkable fishery to Maine’s commercial lobstermen. Lobsters continue to provide a sustainable living for thousands of families along the coast, who then support all sorts of other businesses in their communities. I know of many lobstermen who have been able to invest in new boats, new traps, new trucks and other gear this year. These investments keep both the lobster industry and our communities afloat. Being a fisherman will never be a stress-free job. But for all the stress and headaches it brings, remember all that you reap from it and be thankful. 2015 looks like it’s going to be a great year!

As always, stay safe on the water.

Patrice
MAINE LOBSTERMEN’S ASSOCIATION UPDATE

LOBSTER ADVISORY COUNCIL
The Lobster Advisory Council (LAC) met on May 12. More than half the members of the Marine Resources Committee attended as well, including the two chairs, and four students from the Eastern Maine Skippers program.

In its first order of business, the LAC elected Josh Miller of Tenants Harbor as Chair and Jeff Putnam of Chebeague as Vice-Chair. Bob Baines was thanked for his nine years of service as LAC Chair.

Deirdre Gilbert updated the LAC on the status of legislation affecting lobstermen: three bills have passed (LD 98 increasing Swans Island trap limit; LD 1038 clarifying DMRs emergency rulemaking authority to comply with federal and interstate management plans; LD 1233 which includes a permanent license revocation for scrubbing lobsters); two bills were carried over (LD 427 to mitigate environmental consequences of gear; LD 1233 which includes a permanent license revocation for scrubbing lobsters); and two bills have a divided report (LD 896 to allow family transfer of lobster licenses; and LD 1026 to keep email addresses confidential).

Commissioner Keliher informed the LAC that the DMR and the Governor are committed to dealing with issues of latency of entry into the lobster fishery. He will hold at least 10 meetings during August and September to talk to lobstermen about these issues. DMR will submit legislation to address entry issues in late fall for debate during the second Legislative session.

Deirdre Gilbert presented a proposed timeline for the development of the Lobster Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and draft goals and objectives for discussion. The goals and objectives are purposely broad, to give the industry a lot of discretion in how the plan is developed and implemented. DMR stressed that this is an evolving “guidance document” which has no authority on its own and must be supported by regulations of at least 1300 words in length. Members were concerned about how to keep the industry fully engaged in the process and specifically about the proposal to include economic considerations as a goal of the plan. The FMP document will be taken to the zone councils in May and June, and come back to the LAC for further input in September. The LAC plans to be very involved in developing recommendations to achieve the plan’s goals and objectives.

Commissioner Keliher asked the LAC for feedback on the concept of creating an offshore lobster zone. He stated that the idea has been raised with the DMR on several occasions over the past few years. There are several ways to approach it: creating an offshore zone outside of 12 miles; requiring lobstermen to declare a home zone where majority of gear would be fished; allow license stacking offshore; require VMS in order to enforce an offshore zone; and others. At this point, Commissioner Keliher said, it is only a collection of ideas. The LAC did not oppose or support the idea, but stated that it was worth further exploration and should be discussed at the next round of zone council meetings.

Commissioner Keliher also asked for feedback on the concept of requiring double tagging in all zones of all gear fished outside of a declared home zone. The state continues to have complaints from Zone E, B and C on excessive amounts of gear from other zones being fished over the line. Currently, some areas have double tagging while others do not. The LAC urged the Commissioner to explore the possibility of double tagging to apply state-wide in order to aid enforcement and have a fair and consistent standard across all lobster zones. DMR will add this to the agenda for the next round of zone council meetings to solicit more feedback.

Kathleen Reardon presented new data showing that bio panels are not working as well as intended. The ferrous hog rings used to secure bio panels in lobster traps are not degrading when the traps are lost and remain underwater. It turns out that they need air to weaken, so many lobster traps continue to fish long after they are lost. Several LAC members indicated that the soft wood lathes used by some as bio panels also last for a very long time. Scientists are looking at other techniques to create bio panels that would allow bycatch to escape in a reasonable amount of time before it is lost.

The LAC nominated two individuals, Albert Carver and Annie Tselikis, to solicit input on the state’s lobster monitoring programs. The lobster stock assessment is projected to be complete soon; DMR will hold a public hearing once that happens.

PROTECTED RESOURCES RULEMAKING (DMR, CHAPTER 75)

The Department of Marine Resources has proposed regulatory changes to comply with the federal vertical line regulations (otherwise known as the “whale rules”) which will go into effect on June 1. The new whale rules require a minimum number of lobster traps per trawl based on the different lobster zones and distance from shore to reduce the number of buoy lines in the water column. The various changes apply to areas of Maine’s Pocket Waters, inside the Maine Silver Area and federal waters. The DMR is adopting additional gear marking, a new 6-mile line, minimum travel lengths and some island buffers in regulation for compliance and consistency with the federal whale rules.

NEW ENGLAND COUNCIL COMPLETES SCOPING ON HERRING PLAN

The New England Fisheries Management Council (NEFMC) recently completed a public scoping process to get input from the public on Amendment 8 to the Herring Plan. The purpose of this amendment is to address the biological needs of the Atlantic herring resource as well as the ecological importance of Atlantic herring to the region in a manner that is consistent with the requirements and intent of the federal law. The Council has directed that the amendment consider the importance of Atlantic herring as a forage species, so the amendment will include habitat protection for much of the herring resource should be allocated to the commercial fishery. After information is gathered through the Amendment 8 scoping process, the amendment’s goals and objectives and a range of alternatives will be developed and public meetings scheduled in late 2015. An Environmental Impact Statement will be developed and public feedback solicited in 2016; the final plan could be effective for the 2017 fishing year.

ASMFC SPRING MEETING ROUNDUP

Herring Section — Days Out

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission’s (ASMFC) Atlantic Herring Section set the “days out” effort control measures for the 2015 Area 1A Trimester 2 (June - September). From June 1 through July 5, vessels may land herring five days a week on Monday through Friday. From July 6 through September 30, vessels may land seven days a week until further notice. By starting with five landings days and then adjusting to seven days per week during Trimester 2, the quota is projected to be caught close to the end of that trimester. Landings will be monitored closely and the fishery will be closed when the projected date of the quota is projected to be reached.

In 2015, Area 1A has a 30.290 metric ton (mt) annual catch limit after adjusting for a carryover from 2013, 295 mt fixed gear set-aside, and 3% research set-aside. The Section allocated 72.8% of the quota to Trimester 2. The Atlantic Herring Section is scheduled to reconvene via conference calls to review the fishing effort and adjust landing days as necessary on or Monday, June 29 at 10 a.m. and Thursday, July 30. To join the call, dial 888.394.8197 and enter passcode 499811.
Atlantic Herring Section

The ASMFC’s Atlantic Herring Section has approved Draft Amendment 3 to the Interstate Atlantic Herring Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for public comment. Draft Amendment 3 was initiated to strengthen spawning protections in Area 1A (inshore Gulf of Maine) and address concerns raised by the commercial Atlantic herring industry.

The Draft Amendment proposes 1) changing the spawning monitoring program to remove the fixed gear set-aside rollover provision, and 3) requiring a vessel’s fish hold to be emptied before leaving on a fishing trip. The empty fish hold provision is also being addressed by the NEFMC under Framework Adjustment 4.

The Commission’s Plan Development Team conducted a review of the current spawning monitoring program and recommended new tools and adjustments to improve protection for spawning fish. The review revealed spawning events occur at different times each year and typically last six weeks. Options include a new forecast system to allow fisheries biologists to pool samples of herring from Maine and Massachusetts and project the date of peak spawning. Options for adjusting the default closure dates are based on analysis of spawning data from the past decade, and provide flexibility in the proportion of spawning fish protected.

The Draft Amendment proposes merging the Western Maine (WM) and Massachusetts/New Hampshire (MA-NH) spawning areas because there have been no significant differences in the starting dates of spawning events. Lastly, an option proposes to extend the closure period in WM-MA-NH to six weeks reflecting the current characteristics of the rebuilt herring population.

At the request of the fishing industry, the Draft Amendment also includes options to remove the fixed gear set-aside provision and establish a requirement for empty fish holds. Currently, 295 mt is set-aside for the fixed gear fishery in Area 1A until November 1, after which the remaining set-aside is made available. The TAC will be made available to the states based on past decade, and provide flexibility in the proportion of spawning fish protected.

The ASMFC’s Atlantic Menhaden Management Board approved a total allowable catch (TAC) for the 2015 and 2016 fishing seasons at 187,880 mt per year, a 10% increase from the 2014 TAC. The increase responds to the positive findings of the 2015 menhaden benchmark assessment which indicates the resource is not overfished nor experiencing overfishing relative to the current biological reference points. The TAC will be allocated to the states based on the state-by-state allocation established by Amendment 2.

Addendum XXIV removes the 10% conservation tax on full business transfers. Transfer tax on full business transfers was found not to be necessary to prevent activation of latent effort and that current regulations provide sufficient latent effort controls. Addendum XXIV also specifies traps shall be transferred in 10-trap increments in all areas that currently have a trap transferability program, unless specified otherwise. This change allows for fewer traps to be transferred at one time. This repeals restrictions on vessel size and trap allocation transfers and does not require a permit be retired if the permit holder has less than 50 traps.

Addendum XXIV allows dual permit holders to transfer allocation with dual permit holders from other states. If a dual permit holder chooses to purchase a federal trap allocation from a dual permit holder from another state, only the federal allocation will transfer. Therefore, the buyer must also purchase state allocation from a permit holder in their own state to align the federal and state allocations. If the state and federal allocations do not align, the most restrictive rule applies. The Addendum’s measures are effective immediately.

In response to a recommendation from the Fishing for Energy Workshop, the Board voted to recommend to the ISFMP Policy Board to convene the Gear Technology Working Group. The working group, in conjunction with industry, will assess the effectiveness of ghost panels. An update stated that the Lobster Trap Transfer Database will be ready for the August and September trap transfer window. The peer-reviewed Lobster Stock Assessment will be presented at the August meeting.

The Board also recommended to the ISFMP Policy Board to have the Commission send a letter to the NEFMC requesting a prohibition on all bottom-tending mobile gear in Closed Area II from July 15 to October 31. This provision aligns with the language in the groundfish and offshore lobster industry agreement as well as Addendum XX. The Commission previously sent comments to NEFMC identifying the importance of the large seasonal migration of lobster into and out of Closed Area II and the contribution these migrating lobster have on the overall health of the Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank lobster stocks. During the summer and fall months, the abundance of large female and egg-bearing lobsters is high (~35% of all egg-bearing lobster biomass). The Board discussed a motion to initiate the process to develop an addendum to prohibit all mobile gear in Closed Area II, but this motion was tabled until the August meeting, which will be held after the NEFMC takes action on Closed Area II measures in June.

Atlantic Menhaden Board

The ASMFC’s Atlantic Menhaden Management Board approved a total allowable catch (TAC) for the 2015 and 2016 fishing seasons at 187,880 mt per year, a 10% increase from the 2014 TAC. The increase responds to the positive findings of the 2015 menhaden benchmark assessment which indicates the resource is not overfished nor experiencing overfishing relative to the current biological reference points. The TAC will be allocated to the states based on the state-by-state allocation established by Amendment 2.

In addition, the provision could encourage less wasteful fishing practices by creating an incentive to catch amounts of herring as demanded by markets.

States will be conducting public hearings on the Draft Amendment this spring and summer. Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Draft Amendment either by attending state public hearings or providing written comment.

American Lobster Board

The American Lobster Management Board reviewed issues including the Draft Jonah Crab FMP, the Draft Addendum XXIV, and the progress of the Lobster Trap Transfer Database. The Draft Jonah Crab FMP, which proposes the first management measures for the species, was approved for public comment. The document sets goals and objectives, measures for permits including options for a lobster/crab permit and a crab only permit, spawning stock biomass projections, non-trap limits, and data collection elements.

A press release will announce the availability of the document for public comment and public hearing dates and locations. A motion to establish a Jonah crab fishery control area immediately was passed; individuals entering the fishery after the control date may be treated differently than those participating prior to the control date. The Commission will work with NOAA fisheries to finalize the control date. The Jonah Crab Advisory Panel was established with seven members.

The ASMFMC’s American Lobster Management Board has approved Addendum XXIV to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Lobster Fishery Management Plan. The Addendum aligns state and federal trap transfer programs for Lobster Conservation Management Areas 2, 3, and 4, and Outer Cape Cod regarding the conservation tax on trap allocations when whole fishing businesses are transferred, trap allocation transfer increments, and restrictions on trap allocation transfers among permit holders who are authorized to fish both state and federal waters (dual permit holders) within a single lobster management area.

2015 ATLANTIC MENHADEN QUOTAS*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>QUOTA (MT)</th>
<th>QUOTA (LBS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ME</td>
<td>73.24</td>
<td>81,466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH</td>
<td>0.06</td>
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<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>1,559.74</td>
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<td>31.32</td>
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<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>24.56</td>
<td>54,132</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>GA</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL</td>
<td>33.43</td>
<td>73,695</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>186,010.20</td>
<td>410,062,453</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Quotas may be adjusted pending final 2014 landings. Total landings after 1% set-aside for episodic events.

The Board also committed to moving forward with the development of an amendment to establish ecological-based reference points that reflect Atlantic menhaden’s role as a forage species and changes to the current state-by-state allocation scheme.
Dredging Proposals
Beals Harbor and Pig Island Gut

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has submitted a Congressionally-authorized dredge project for Beals Harbor. Approximately 100,000 cubic yards of silty clay material would be removed from an 18.5 acre subtidal area to a depth of 10 feet MLLW. In addition, the USACE proposes a maintenance dredging project in Pig Island Gut for a 80-foot-wide by 6-foot-deep channel and anchorage, which would remove 9,000 cubic yards of subtidal material. Maine DMR is holding a public hearing to solicit feedback on the impacts of this proposed dredge project on the fishing industry.

Searsport

The USACE has applied for a state Water Quality Certification and Natural Resources Protection Act Permit to conduct the Searsport Harbor Navigation Improvement Project. The Project would maintain and deepen the existing entrance channel and turning basin from -35 feet to -40 feet MLLW. Also, the entrance channel would be widened from 500 feet at its narrowest point to 650 feet and a maneuvering area adjacent to State Pier’s east berth would be created. Dredged material would be disposed of at the identified Penobscot Bay Disposal Site.

Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) for any vessels engaged in a Category I or II fishery but not in possession of a federal permit. The lobster trap/pot fishery has been classified as a Category I fishery for 2015. Vessels that have a federal permit but fish in state waters could still be selected for coverage by the provider.

Coverage in future years will depend on data needs and funding available to meet those needs. Any lobsterman who is interested in taking an observer or learning more about the program should contact the observer program.

FEDERAL OBSERVER COVERAGE REQUIRED IN MAINE LOBSTER FISHERY

By Glenn Chamberlain, Northeast Fisheries Science Center, Fisheries Sampling Branch

Everyone is aware that groundfish vessels must carry fisheries observers aboard to collect data on the catch. But did you know that observers are assigned to lobster boats as well?

The Northeast Fisheries Observer Program (NEFOP) is a federal observer program run by the Northeast Fisheries Science Center in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, a part of the National Marine Fisheries Service. The program has been in place since 1989 with a mission to collect, process, and manage data collected by observers on commercial fishing vessels. It has contracted with MRAG Americas to provide fishing vessel observers.

Lobster pot/trap sampling

The primary reason for observer coverage of the lobster pot and trap fishery is to sample the lobster catch (kept and discarded) and to sample bycatch (finfish, crabs, etc.). Catch data collected by observers include lobster weight, carapace length, sex, v-notch status, shell condition, and finfish lengths and weights. Observers also collect gear configuration data, haul level data, and trip level data. How many observers are assigned to how many boats is determined through a process known as the Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology (SBRM). The SBRM is evaluated prior to the start of each fishing year by the Population Dynamics Branch of the NEFSC and applies to a range of fisheries (for more information, see: http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/lfsb/sbrm/). The lobster industry is not required to cover the cost of observers. All observers carry insurance through their employer, MRAG Americas (for contact information see: https://www.mragamericas.com/observer-programs/northeast-lobster-observer-program/).

UPDATE - Lobster pot/trap sea days 2015-2016

The program covered 15 trips in 2012, 30 in 2013, and 55 in 2014 (from the Northeast to the Mid-Atlantic). This year (2015-2016) the observer program will cover more sea days for the Maine lobster fishery than in prior years. Another change for the 2015-2016 year is that sea days are assigned to each state as opposed to specific statistical areas. As a result, observed lobster trips will depart from a wider selection of ports along the Maine coast and will include inshore and offshore trips.

The observer program covers vessels fishing in state or federal waters under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Act for boats in possession of a federal limited access lobster permit (or any federal fishing permit) and the Marine

The Bait Report

2015 Herring Catch and Quota

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Quota (as of 5/22)</th>
<th>% of quota</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area 1A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area 1B</td>
<td>2,609</td>
<td>53.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area 2</td>
<td>11,375</td>
<td>35.44 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Area 3</td>
<td>9,082</td>
<td>20.22 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23,066</td>
<td>22.06%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data from the NMFS Weekly Atlantic Herring report. Quota deductions were made from Herring Areas 1A, 1B, 2, and 3, to account for the 3 percent Herring Research Set-Aside awarded in 2015. These amounts are: 936 mt in Area 1A, 18 mt in Area 1B, 900 mt in Area 2, and 1,260 mt in Area 3.

By Glenn Chamberlain, Northeast Fisheries Science Center, Fisheries Sampling Branch

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The observer program covers vessels fishing in state or federal waters under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Act for boats in possession of a federal limited access lobster permit (or any federal fishing permit) and the Marine
By Shelley Wigglesworth

Forty-five-year-old lobsterman Joe Cyr is a fourth-generation fisherman and bodybuilder whose family roots began on Chebeague Island nearly a century ago. One of eight children, Cyr knew early on that he wanted to fish. “I was the only one out of all of the kids in my family who showed an interest in fishing and my grandfather, Ray White, saw that right away. He first took me out when I was seven years old. After that I lived with him and my grandmother in Kennebunkport each summer and I fished with him for years,” Cyr said.

It was fishing with his grandfather that ultimately led Cyr to bodybuilding. “I was about 11 years old and I overheard my grandfather say to my grandmother that he didn’t think I was strong enough yet to do some of the work on the boat. Once I heard that, it stayed with me and I wanted to prove to him that I could. Not long after that I started lifting weights,” Cyr said.

His weight lifting as a youngster ultimately led him to competitive bodybuilding. He earned the Junior Mr. Maine title in 1990 and the Mr. Maine title in 1991. “I stopped competing after that, because there really isn’t any money in it. I never stopped training though. I may get back into competing someday, just to do it again and have something for my kids to look back on. I’m bigger and in better shape now than I was back then, plus training keeps me in a good mood. I’m always pretty happy and that’s the way to be,” he said.

In the early 1980’s when Cyr was 13, White’s health took a turn for the worse. He could no longer fish which put an end to Cyr’s summers lobstering with his grandfather. “Before long, Portland lobsterman Ed “Bibby” Willette took notice of the young teen and offered him a sternman position on his boat, Barbara Mae. “He taught me everything about lobstering that summer and I stayed with him until I was out of high school. He was like a second dad to me,” Cyr said.

After graduating from Portland High School in 1989, Cyr went on to own and operate two of his own lobster boats, the Sea Witch and the Jill E. He also was an urchin diver for a while in the early 1990’s when the market was big. “I learned how to dive from a guy named Warren Ammerita. We did a trade – I taught him how to run a boat and he taught me how to dive,” Cyr explained.

When the urchin business began to take a downturn, Cyr began investing in more lobster gear. He sold the Sea Witch and kept the Jill E and, in a twist of fate, he ended up buying the Barbara Mae, the lobster boat he got his start on with Willette years earlier.

He currently fishes 800 traps out of Portland on the Barbara Mae. “Bibby is still alive and so is his wife, Barbara. She is the one the boat is named after. I stop in and see them all the time. I still have the Jill E too but I am not using her. I’m on the Barbara Mae for sentimental and loyalty reasons. There’s a lot of respect there,” he said.

These days, Cyr, who is the father of two teenagers, spends his time balancing family life with lobstering and his other business, Top to Bottom Home Improvement. “I always knew I wanted to fish, but I learned carpentry in high school because I knew I might need it someday,” he said. Cyr also remains dedicated to training daily, something he said keeps him focused. His son, Joe Jr., has his Apprentice lobster license and fishes with his father each summer, learning the ways of the water and the family fishing traditions from Cyr just as Cyr learned them from his grandfather decades earlier. “Joey will probably be the fifth generation of commercial fishermen in my family, and I’d like to see him do it if that’s what he wants,” Cyr concluded.

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2015 MAINE LOBSTER BOAT RACING

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**SCHEDULE**

20 JUNE

Brewer (207)-223-8846

Annual Meeting/Awards Banquet and Willy Catering Brewer (207)-223-8846

21 JUNE

Rockland

5 AUGUST

10 OCTOBER

Dot Black (207) 975-9609

24 AUGUST

15 OCTOBER

Jollene S. Kennedy (207) 877-2804

11 JULY

26 JULY

16 AUGUST

12 JULY

8 AUGUST

Jon Johansen (207) 223-8846

13 AUGUST

19 JULY

9 AUGUST

20 AUGUST

Jon Johansen (207) 223-8846

Friendship

Wes Lash (207) 832-7407

Portland Harbor, Pemaquid

Don Drisko (207) 677-2432

Kennebunkport

Albert Rose (207) 844-0346

Scott Young (207) 963-7272

Sturgeon Inn (207) 548-6362

Barbara Mae

Barbara Mae

Jill E

3 AUGUST

4 AUGUST

5 AUGUST

6 AUGUST

10 AUGUST

11 AUGUST

12 AUGUST

13 AUGUST

14 AUGUST

15 AUGUST

16 AUGUST

20 JUNE

Jon Johansen (207) 223-8846

20 JUNE

20 JUNE

20 JUNE

20 JUNE

1-2 PM, Start 3 PM.

Exception

All Races:

Sign-up

8 to 9 AM

Races Start

10 AM

Listen on VHF Channel 10

M. Farnham  (207) 380-5892

Jon Johansen (207) 223-8846

Shelley Wigglesworth

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**Phone #:**
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**Item #2:**
  - Qty: __________ Size: ________ Color: ________
**Item #3:**
  - Qty: __________ Size: ________ Color: ________

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WHAT TO DO NOW THAT YOU HAVE HEALTH INSURANCE

By Sarah Duquette

We hope last month’s article encouraged you to select your primary care physician; perhaps you even made an appointment. If you have visited a doctor, you have probably received an Explanation of Benefits (EOB) from your insurance company. An EOB is not a bill, rather it is an explanation of charges and who is responsible for payment. After you visit the doctor, they will mail you the insurance company. The EOB shows you what your doctor’s visit cost, how much of that cost your insurance company covered and what is left for you to pay. Your doctor’s office will send you a bill for the charges you are responsible for separately.

Not all EOBs look the same, but they all have the same information, including:

• Service description – what kind of care you received
• Provider charges – how much your visit cost
• Allowed charges – the amount your provider will be reimbursed
• Paid by insurer – the amount your insurance plan will cover
• Payee – The person who will get reimbursed if the claim is overpaid (may be you or your provider)
• What you owe – the amount you owe your provider

The remark code is a code that explains more about the costs. The code should have been explained under the list of charges or on the back of your EOB. If you believe a service should have been covered and wasn’t, call your insurance company. Its phone number should be near the logo or on the back of your EOB.

Your insurance plan does more than help pay for doctors’ visits: it also helps cover the cost of prescription medicines. Each plan has an approved list of medicines that your insurance company will cover at three different levels. This list is called a formulary and can be found on your insurance company’s Web site or you can call your insurance company and request it.

A formulary will list both generic and brand-name drugs that your plan covers. Generic drugs are considered Tier 1 drugs and will cost you the least. Tier 2 drugs cost more and consist of preferred, brand-name drugs; Tier 3 is made up of non-preferred, brand-name drugs which will cost more than the other two tiers of drugs. Some plans also have Tier 4 for specialty drugs. If your doctor prescribes you a medicine, ask if there is a generic you can take that works as well as the brand-name so you can save money.

Formularies have many, many pages of drugs listed. If you have a digital copy of your formulary on your computer, you can quickly find a drug by hitting the “control” and “f” keys at the same time. This will bring up a search menu so you can type in the drug you are looking for. You can also call your insurance company and ask if your plan covers certain drugs.

For example, if you need a heart medication, your formulary will list the generic and the brand-name versions. They may have the same active ingredient, but the brand-name drug may have side effects that the generic does not. Your formulary may also include a list of non-preferred drugs, which are less expensive, but may interact with other medications you take.

When you get your EOB, you can use it to appeal an insurance company’s decision. Many companies have a process for appealing a decision, and it is important to understand what you can do to correct an error. If you feel your EOB has been incorrect, or you feel a service wasn’t covered at the correct rate, you can appeal it. Your EOB should come with information on how to file an appeal or grievance – it may be printed on the back of your EOB.

If you believe a service should have been covered and wasn’t, call your insurance company. Its phone number should be near the logo or on the back of your EOB.
I want to be a major shipper of lobster worldwide," says Adams, who also attended the Brussels trade show. "To grow as quickly as I could, I also attended the Brussels trade and Newark, N.J.

Maine Coast Shellfish's sales have grown from zero to $40 million in four years, earning Adams the ac- colade as the U.S. Small Business Administration's 2015 Small Business Exporter of the Year for Maine. He'll be honored at an SBA reception at the Augusta Country Club on May 5. Ready Seafood, a Portland-based lobster dealer and processor started 10 years ago by John and Brendan Ready, is receiving a similar award from the Maine International Trade Center on May 21 for its growing global seafood business, with international markets now accounting for more than 70% of its business. Both companies are playing a significant role in expand- ing markets for Maine's lobsters, helping to drive a record seven-year increase of almost $87 million in the overall value of the 2014 catch over 2013.

"In the last year, the value of lobster per pound went up 79 cents," Adams says. "That's dramatic. At $3.63 per pound, that's a 20% higher value than the year before.

Emerging markets

Adams, 45, started his company in 2011 with the vision of focusing on international sales. The market in Asia, at that point, was just emerging — with China, for example, importing a bit more than $100,000 worth of Maine lobsters in 2010, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's foreign trade division. In 2014, with $21.3 million in sales, China is the No. 2 importer of Maine lobsters after Canada, at $300.5 million.

Although Adams knew the European market would be an important seg- ment of his overall business, he quickly realized Asia had stronger growth potential. In a mature market, he says, Maine Coast Shellfish would have to take away market share from someone else; in an emerging mar- ket, the future was wide open.

"The bulk of the industry was just starting to see a market develop in Asia, and mainland China," Adams says. "I knew I needed to find customers in those new emerging markets."

Although his company is technically a start-up, Adams has more than paid his dues: He's a 30-year veteran of Maine's shellfish industry. "I pretty much had just had one job before starting this business," he says, noting that he began working for a York lobster dealer when he was 15 and eventually became a 50% owner of that company by the time he hit 30. Although things were going well at that business, Adams says that by 2009 he decided it was time to take a different path and sold his half of the business.

He spent almost two years care- fully planning his re-entry into the lobster distribution business. From the beginning, he was thinking big. Typically, he says, new lobster dealers start small, building facilities capable of handling 200,000 to 300,000 lobsters at a time. His plans called for retrofitting an existing industrial facility in York and installing hold- ing tanks with a capacity of 150,000 pounds. The first bank he went to, he says, turned him down, saying, "This is pretty large for a start-up."

Adams says he eventually found a willing lender in Bangor Savings Bank, which, in 2011 and every year since, has been the top SBA lender in Maine. Acknowledging that both the bank and SBA put his business plan through a rigorous review process, Adams says he recognized "they asked the right questions."

"They wanted me to cross every 'T' and dot every 'I,' " he says. "It took longer [to close the loan], but I felt it was worth my time to make sure ever- ything we did was right."

Adams says he resisted locating in nearby New Hampshire — with no in- come or sales taxes and closer prox- imity to international airports — for a very simple reason. "I chose to stay in Maine because I wanted to say I was a 'Maine' lobster company," he says. "Aside from the fact that my family has lived in Maine for many genera- tions, my marketing effort from the start has been based on the fact that I am a Maine lobster business."

He also knew, from the start, that in- vesting heavily in marketing was impor- tant.

"I wanted to get name recognition very quickly and worldwide," he says. "We're spending well over $100,000 in marketing and advertising. We've invested heavily in trade shows, ad- vertising, building our website with a responsive design that would work with multiple platforms ... We recog- nized mobile is becoming so impor- tant [as a marketing tool]."

His company’s logo, featuring an el- egant line drawing of a lobster boat cutting through ocean waves with "Maine Coast" in bold letters be- side a drawn-on anchor, "speaks a closer affi nity to Oriental line drawings as an Ogunsquit art colony watercolor painting. That's by design," Adams says. "We struggled to get it right. We wanted it to be recognizable onlook- ers everywhere, but we didn't want just an old-fashioned lobster and logo label."

Great risk, great opportunity

With almost $2 million invested in his new facility and not a single customer lined up when he opened Maine Coast Shellfish in 2011, Adams says his business plan targeting interna- tional markets has paid off, with the company achieving profitability in its first year with $7 million in overall sales. Top-line sales grew to $15 mil- lion in 2012, $25 million in 2013 and $40 million in 2014.

He expects that torrid rate of growth will level off eventually and is already benchmarking his company against other comparable-sized shellfish dis- tributors to make sure he’s on a sus- tainable path. He's just made his first executive hire, a controller who'll be helping him do just that.

"We want to keep growing," he says. "We want to do it safely by mitigating whatever risks we can without get- ting too risk-averse."

"...his success very much depends on sustaining dozens of fishing communities all along the coast of Maine."

Selling lobsters in international mar- kets, Adams admits, is not for the faint-hearted. The "risks are consid- erable" in Asia's lobster market, he says, with mortality, shipping delays and unpaid receivables being the primary headaches. Almost on cue, as he was being interviewed, one of his sales team tells him a shipment of lobsters heading to China is held up in Newark’s airport. The delay would extend the travel time from 48 hours to 60 hours. "Do we bring it back, or let it fly?" the salesman asks, Adams, who's inclined to proceed but tells his salesman to call the customer as back-up.

"I don't want to make that decision without including the customer," he says. "Yes, we want to make the de- livery and it is unfortunate an air- line can delay our shipment without any recourse for us ... That's $20,000 worth of lobster we are making a bet on."

The risk of not getting paid for a ship- ment, he says, also is a greater risk in an emerging market like China than in a mature one such as Europe, where longstanding and well-establish- ed customers are in place.

"I've had some bad debt, and I've tak- en steps to mitigate the risk," he says. "But you have to take the risk if you're serious about [capturing a significant share of the export market]."

Building on a long fishing heritage

Matt Jacobson, executive direc- tor of the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative, says Adams, the Ready brothers and other dealers deserve credit for expanding international markets for Maine lobsters. "It's im- portant for a lot of reasons, not the least of which is that the domestic market needs to grow too," he says. "The export market can serve as a buffer and help stabilize prices by..."
AUSTRALIA & MAINE: “WE’VE JUST GONE ABOUT IT DIFFERENTLY”

By Melissa Waterman

It’s a little bit daunting to visit the opposite side of the world. There are the long hours spent in an airplane, and the different weather, customs and food. But for Cutler lobsterman Kristan Porter, visiting Australia to share Maine’s lobstering practices and learn more about that country’s thriving rock lobster fishery was an adventure.

“It started with the International Lobstermen’s Exchange that Maine Sea Grant and the Maine Lobstermen’s Association (MLA) organized in March, 2010. I met a lot of guys through that,” Porter explained. The Exchange brought lobstermen from southwest Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Ireland, Western Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand to Maine to find out about the state’s lobster industry. The lobstermen visited 11 Maine towns, fished with local lobstermen, and met with officials from the area’s fisheries management agency, and generally learned a lot about how things are done on the far side of the world. “The guys were so good to me there. It’s a lot like Maine in a way, because it’s a huge country with a small population. The people were very friendly,” Porter said. Western Australia’s rock lobster fishery has been a limited-entry fishery since 1963. A licensed lobsterman holds an individual transferable quota which dictates how many pounds he can land. He is also limited in the number of traps he can set. As in Maine, there are minimum and maximum size requirements and regulations prohibiting the harvest of breeding female lobsters. The fishery was the first certified by the Marine Stewardship Council as a sustainable fishery in 2000. There are 250 vessels in the Western rock lobster fishery, which is the most valuable in Australia. The total allowable commercial catch in 2013-14 was 5,554 tons with an export value of $358 million (Australian).

During the summer of 2014 Jason How, an Australian whale researcher, came to Maine to learn more about how Maine lobstermen rig their gear to minimize interactions with whales. The MLA connected How with several lobstermen along the coast. “He went out with David Couens, Steve Train, and me. He was fascinated by how we fish and the management system for lobstering, the entry/exit ratios, the apprenticeship program and so on,” Porter said. Australian rock lobstermen fish all single traps, no trawls, and they are limited in the number of traps they can set. Seeing thousands of buoys in the water “just blew him away,” he recalled.

Porter kept in contact with his new friends in Australia. Then, this past winter, another invitation came his way. “They asked me to come to the Rock Lobster Congress in April to talk about what we are doing here in Maine. They would provide accommodations if I could get there.” Travelling to Western Australia for a three-day conference would not be a casual trip. Porter, like most other lobstermen, was getting ready to start putting his traps in the water and make some money again after a long, cold winter. He hesitated. “Then I decided, what the heck, I’m going, You’re a long time dead, do what you want to do now,” he said.

His aim in attending the conference was to keep the flow of ideas between fishermen, started in the initial lobstermen’s exchange in 2010, going. Porter ended up successfully applying for a small travel grant from Maine Sea Grant based on that principle. He was there and back in less than a week. “It was a quick trip,” he acknowledged. “I had to get back to set my gear.”

Porter admitted to feeling a little nervous heading to a scientific conference by himself. He worked with the MLA to prepare a PowerPoint presentation covering all of the major points about the Maine lobster fishery. Although he has been a board member of the Maine Fishermen’s Forum for many years, standing up at a podium in front of an audience of strangers wasn’t something he felt comfortable about. “I was worried about not knowing anyone there. But it was completely the opposite. I met up with some of the guys I’d fished with two years ago. They took me under their wings and included me in everything.”

While the two fisheries take place at opposite parts of the globe under very different management regimes, they do have many traits in common, according to Porter. “It’s not that one way is better than the other. We both have MSC certification but we’ve gone about it differently,” he said.


A well-loaded Australian boat about to set a few traps. Photo courtesy of K. Porter.
WHY LOBSTER Buoys End Up in Europe

By Melissa Waterman

Everyone has read stories about the castaway sailor who writes a message in a bottle, then tosses it in the sea in hopes that the currents will take it to some distant shore and he will be rescued. While there aren’t too many castaway sailors in the cold North Atlantic Ocean at the moment (thankfully), a number of lobster buoys and other gear are heading across the Atlantic to make landfall in Europe.

A buoy of Boothbay lobsterman Mark Jones (lat. 43.87 N., long. 69.63 W.), managed to make its way across the ocean to Scotland. On April 26, a beachcomber on Scotland’s west coast found the buoy, which had its license number still visible, in the Bay of Skail (lat. 59.35 N., long. 2.95 W.). He posted information about it on his Facebook page where Jones’ daughter eventually found it. The Scottish man offered to return the buoy to Jones, who declined.

In 2012, Gerard O’Malley, proprietor of a ferry service on the west coast of Ireland, found a buoy which bore the name and phone number of Stephen Robbins Jr. of Stonington (lat. 44.04 N., long. 68.62 W.). O’Malley tossed the buoy in his shed for a year or so, then unearthed it to serve as a fender on his ferry running to Inishturk and Clare Island (lat. 52.84 N., long. 8.98 W.), where he had first found it. A local fisherman took a picture of the buoy and posted it to a Facebook page. Robbins was surprised when he learned the information about it on his Facebook page led to the identification of Mark Jones’ buoy.

Other people are taking advantage of the eastward drift to help students understand oceanography. Retired physical therapist and life-long sailor Dick Baldwin of Lincolnville started Educational Passages in 2008. His goal was to encourage interest among children in the complexities of the world’s oceans.

Baldwin of Lincolnville started Educational Passages in 2008. His goal was to encourage interest among children in the complexities of the world’s oceans. Through Educational Passages, students build and rig four-foot model ships, which are then launched from volunteer vessels into the Atlantic from Maine, Florida, Bermuda, and the Canary Islands. The boats are equipped with GPS units that broadcast their location twice each day.

Since the program’s start, 40 boats have been built and launched. Most were tracked via GPS and recovered after they landed in Europe, the Caribbean, Cuba, Bahamas, Panama, Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia. In April one model, called the Mighty Spartan, was found on the northwest coast of Ireland. The model was built by the fifth and sixth grade class at Lake Forest Central Elementary School in Felton, Delaware and launched by a freighter headed to Bermuda in mid-November, 2014. From there it managed a speedy four-and-a-half-month trip to Ireland, where it was found on a beach in Strandhill (lat. 54.27 N., long. 8.95 W.), near Sligo, on March 31. Its sail had been damaged, but otherwise the boat was in good shape. Manning credited the quick voyage to the facts that the sail stayed in one piece and that it started its trip right in the Gulf Stream.

Another student-built boat model, called the Crimson Wive, was launched from the same freighter. This boat found its way further north, landing somewhere on the Orkney Island of Papa Westray (lat. 59.35 N., long. -2.90 W.) on April 25.

You can see the tracks of the model boats deployed last year and in previous years at the Web site http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/driftfr/drift_ep_2014_3.html.

FISHERMEN’S VOICE

News & Comment for and by the Fishermen of Maine

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NEW ENGLAND FISHERIES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL APPROVES OMNIBUS HABITAT AMENDMENT, REMAINING ISSUES TO BE DECIDED THIS MONTH

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The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) made final decisions, referred to at the meeting as final preferred alternatives, on most sections of the Habitat Amendment at its meeting in Mystic, CT. Once all elements of the action — proposed area designations and those identified as vulnerable and requiring protection from the impacts of fishing — receive Council approval they will be forwarded to NOAA Fisheries for agency approval and implementation. NOAA is always the final decision maker on any measures moved forward by the Council.

To better understand the Council’s intent in developing the Habitat Amendment, it may be helpful to review an introductory paragraph in the draft amendment document that helps explain what types of areas are being considered and why.

Essential Fish Habitat and Habitat Area of Particular Concern designations are based on species-specific distributions and life-history information, and are used primarily for analytical approaches in impact analyses and agency consultations.

Spatial management areas, on the other hand, contain habitats of importance to multiple species, are vulnerable to impacts from fishing, and as such, could be subject to gear restrictions for conservation purposes on the basis of gear type. Three types of spatial management areas are being proposed in the Habitat Amendment. Year-round habitat management areas and dedicated habitat research areas, both discussed below; and groundfish seasonal spawning areas. The latter will be discussed at the June Council meeting.

An additional Georges Bank Habitat Management Area alternative, discussed at the April meeting but not previously analyzed, will also be considered in June, along with the groundfish spawning areas.

Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Designations

EFH designations were specified for all managed species and life stages, including a small number of specific modifications discussed at the meeting. By definition, fishing restrictions are not associated with these areas.

Omnibus Essential Fish Habitat Amendment 2: Final Alternatives as of April 2015 New England Fishery Management Council meeting

- Gear exemption areas hatchet in western Gulf of Maine, short-tailed rock cod, in Great South Channel, clam dredges exempted (broad);
- Dedicated habitat research areas hatchet in eastern Gulf of Maine, clam dredges exempted (broad);
- Gear restrictions for GLOUL in northeast Gulf of Maine, long-tailed rock cod,
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portions of the stock were doing, all were considered endangered. Of those DPS, the National Atmospheric and Oceanic Administration (NOAA) is proposing to remove ten from the ESA listing altogether, list two as "threatened" and list two as endangered. The North Atlantic humpbacks that travel to the Gulf of Maine are part of the West Indies Distinct Population of approximately 12,000 animals, which would be one of the ten designated "not warranted for listing."

"The return of the iconic humpback whale is an ESA success story," said Eileen Sobeck, assistant NOAA administrator for fisheries. "As we learn more about the species—and realize the populations are largely independent of each other—managing them separately allows us to focus protection on the animals that need it the most."

The 90-day comment period following release of the NOAA proposal closes on July 20. This final rule must be published by February 20, 2016, but will undoubtedly be sooner, probably late summer or early fall, said Gouveia. The only public hearing in New England will be held in Plymouth, Mass., on June 3.

"Everyone should be happy," said Gouveia. "We rarely see animals taken off the endangered species list."

Images of humpbacks can be seen everywhere—they are the poster icon for "save the whales" efforts and a favorite of whale watchers because of their antics, such as breaching or slapping the water surface with their heads, tails or pectoral fins. Those fins can reach 15 feet in length and have such distinctive markings—white striations on dark gray—they allow researchers to identify individual animals. They can reach up to 60 feet in length, weigh between 25 and 40 tons, and can consume up to 3,000 pounds of food per day, mostly krill, plankton and small fish. Their life span is about 50 years.

The name of these baleen whales, Megaptera novaeangliae, means "big-winged New Englander" since the New England population was the one best known to Europeans. Their seasonal migration is thought to be longer than any other whales', often around 3,000 miles but a few have been recorded up to 5,000 miles.

The whales will continue to be managed under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), and those regulations won't change because they cover all three whales—humpback, right and finback—that migrate through New England and Gulf of Maine waters. A de-listing of humpbacks would mean that the population is healthy enough to sustain larger numbers of whales being seriously injured or killed as a result of human interactions from fishing and ship strikes. While a delisting would likely mean that current levels of entanglements and ship strikes no longer exceed the limit allowed under the law, it would not impact the whale regulations in place for fishermen. Entanglement in fixed fishing gear is still the biggest cause of death beyond natural mortality, said Gouveia, followed by ship strikes.

"Our concern with the humpback's delisting is the precedent it is setting for what it takes to remove an animal from the endangered list," said Regina Asmutis-Silvia, executive director and senior biologist for Whale and Dolphin Conservation—North America in Plymouth, Mass. who has worked with whales for 25 years.

"I think we're not sure across the board exactly what it (de-listing) will mean. The entanglement process under the MMPA will remain in effect." She believes since they are highly migratory that "we might not know all we would like to. The important maternal aspect is not being fully considered. Whales only come to the Gulf of Maine if their mothers brought them there."

Removing humpbacks from the ESA is based on the species' recovery since the 1970s. Yet whale conservationists like Asmutis-Silvia are concerned about the Gulf of Maine portion of the North Atlantic stock. Scientists reclassified Gulf of Maine humpback whales as a separate feeding stock in 1999; it has been managed separately since then.

Humpback whales face a multitude of threats from human interactions which is compounded by a changing environment. "A study here shows that 15 percent of (living) whales have been hit by vessels. Of the whales that died, 15 percent died from ship strikes. There are a lot of different things that impact humpbacks," said Asmutis-Silvia. "With climate change, we will see whales in different places than before, which will mean different gear conflicts than before, just as the issue of entanglement changed when lines went from hemp to polypropylene."

Asmutis-Silvia is also concerned with how offshore energy development affects whales. "We know seismic activity is planned to increase in the mid-Atlantic, we know the whales go through there, we know it affects them. It's never just one thing. Like entanglement, whales die from infections when their flippers are cut by lines. It's a significant welfare issue as well."

Her organization plans to make "substantive comments" on the proposed delisting, but they have not written them yet. "I think we want to say the Gulf of Maine should be seen as a distinct humpback population that can't lump them in with all the other whales in the Atlantic. They need extra protection," said Asmutis-Silvia. Not all conservation groups are expected to see the delisting in the same light, she added. "Some groups will see this as something to celebrate. It's not the way we see it. We're not always on the same page."

To read more about and comment on the proposed humpback listing, go to: http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/pr/species/mammals/whales/humpback-whale.html.
Holding capacity continued from page 1

That’s when the ability to hold large volumes of lobster for long periods of time becomes paramount.

Traditionally, lobstermen were kept in tidal pounds (see sidebar) which provided them with the flow of seawater needed to maintain their health. Today, however, most lobstermen have given way to high-tech closed and open holding systems, both here and in the Canadian Maritime provinces. Island Seafood in Eliot has been shipping live lobsters since 1993. Randy Townsend, one of the owners, speaks proudly of the company’s three buildings which combined can hold 600,000 pounds of lobster. “We started out on Badger’s Island down in Kittery. Then we moved here and built the first building in 2004. We added another in 2006 and then in 2007,” Townsend said.

Keeping a lobster healthy in an artificial environment is not simple. To begin with, it has to be in salt water. That water needs to be aerated, the pH levels monitored, and any wastes result in the build-up of ammonia, nitrates and nitrates, removed. To keep the lobsters in a nearly dormant state, the salt water must be cold, somewhere around 40°F. “We test the water daily. We have a sizable investment in that water. It’s trucked in from Rye Harbor [in New Hampshire],” Townsend explained.

Greenhead Lobster in Stonington has a distributed holding network for its lobsters. Approximately 245,000 pounds are kept in outdoor lobster pounds. Another 80,000 pounds are stored in cold water tanks in facilities in Stonington and Kittery. An additional 15,000 to 150,000 pounds are stored in rented facilities located in Nova Scotia, explained Hugh Reynolds, president of the company.

Greenhead makes good use of tidal pounds, but Reynolds clearly is in favor of other storage facilities. “Without cold storage there’s no hope for doing anything better in this industry,” said Reynolds. “In Canada, they have so much capacity they are offering us space cheaper than I can get here. Right now there’s something like 50 million pounds of holding capacity there.”

The trouble in Maine, Reynolds continued, is that lobsters are landed all at once, something like 25 to 30 million pounds of holding capacity there. “You’re either going forward or going behind. It’s never the same. ”

Tim Harkins at Rocky Coast Lobster in Boothbay Harbor doesn’t deal in quite the same volume of lobster. Harkins’ closed system can hold between 36,000 and 50,000 pounds of lobster in single stacks. “We have access to seawater so we can flush the system out easily,” Harkins said, acknowledging that “it is a bit tight right now [as the season picks up].”

Harkins started out in the mid-1990s buying sea urchins for a scallop company. He watched the shift occur among seafood companies as restrictions were placed on groundfish stocks and boom and busts occurred in the sea urchin and shrimp fisheries. “There were opportunities [in the 1980s and 1990s]. Companies that did take advantage of those opportunities really grew big. They were able to pay off debt,” he said.

Harkins foresees consolidation among the seafood companies in the future, based on the increasing demand for Maine lobster. Yet he worries that such consolidation will have a downside. While lobster landings have increased dramatically during the past fifteen years, Harkins, like many others in the seafood business, remain cautious about the future. “If at some point we see landings decrease, where does that put those who expanded their holding capacity? It’s a worrisome thing for those who have done a major expansion,” he noted.

David Pottle, owner of Lighthouse Lobster and Bait, is not worried. He completed construction of a 6,000-square-foot, land-based holding facility in Eastport in 2012. Prior to then, he held approximately 9,000 pounds in tanks at his home in Perry.

Pottle first became interested in land-based lobster pounds when he visited one owned and operated by Wade Nickerson at SeaKist Lobster in Nova Scotia. Pottle, who also runs a construction firm, built his new building himself.

The building can hold 130,000 pounds of lobster. “It’s a partially closed system,” he explained. “We bring in the water, chill it and recirculate it.” Seawater is filtered and pumped onshore into a 150,000-gallon tank and a 40,000-gallon tank. The tanks are aerated and water is cooled and kept at a constant temperature. The lobsters are kept in individual sections in trays, not crates, for up to four months.

Lighthouse Lobster’s new facility can hold 130,000 pounds at a time. Photo courtesy of D. Pottle.

Pottle buys his lobsters from 25 boats in the area. Typically he will hold and sell lobsters throughout the winter then restock beginning in April. “Generally we put in about 75,000 pounds during June, July and August,” he said. Pottle is considering putting in a spray system similar to those he has seen operating in Canada to store lobsters for the short-term. “I might put in another tank and spray for a month, month and a half [before selling the lobsters],” he said. Pottle sells his lobsters to Island Seafood’s facility in Milbridge and rents holding space to them. “Whenever they need lobsters, we put them on a truck and send them.”

Garbo Lobster of Connecticut operates a tidal pound in Hancock, Maine, which can hold 500,000 pounds of lobster. In addition, the Hancock facility has an open system of tanks capable of holding 153,000 pounds in single stacks. Chilled seawater is pumped into and out of the tanks, keeping the lobsters at 38 to 40°F temperatures. The company has a similar open system in Groton, Connecticut, capable of holding 300,000 pounds. In Dipper Harbor, New Brunswick, the company can hold 80,000 pounds. And in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, it can store 1 million pounds of lobster.

It’s all about inventory, according to Pete Daley, company manager. “You have to have a steady supply to keep your markets happy,” he said. “When a customer picks up the phone to place an order, they want to hear ‘no problem’ or they go on to the next guy. You’ve got to have a steady supply to keep your markets happy,” he said. “When a customer picks up the phone to place an order, they want to hear ‘no problem’ or they go on to the next guy. You’ve got to have that inventory.” Having enough lobsters is particularly important during key holidays, such as Christmas, New Year’s Eve, or Valentine’s Day. During the Christmas season, for example, Daley noted that the company typically packs and ships 200,000 pounds of lobster each day. “This time of year [late spring], it’s more like 40 to 50,000 pounds,” he said.

Garbo Lobster also keeps a high percentage of its lobsters in pounds. “It’s inventory control,” Daley emphasizes again. “[For] when you can’t get product because of the weather or season. The lobsters last longer in a pound, too. As the volume of lobsters landed has increased, so too has the company’s capacity to store the crustaceans. ‘Sure, we’ve reacted to what’s occurring in the business. During the past five to ten years we’ve dumped millions of dollars back into infrastructure to hold large volumes to meet our customer base,’ Daley explained. ‘You’re either going forward or going behind. It’s never the same.’
time, the total legal imports of North American lobster surpassed those of spiny lobster in China.

In terms of grey market imports [the shadowy smuggling trade prominent in Asia], things are booming. Canadians and some U.S. companies are shipping huge quantities of lobster to Vietnam, where it is then carried across the border into China. For example, from January to March of this year, the U.S. exported 2.8 million pounds of lobster to China and Vietnam versus 1.48 million pounds for the same period in 2014. But the share going through Vietnam increased to 2.8 million pounds of lobster to China.

In short, prices this summer will likely come down to normal levels, possibly a little higher than last year unless there is some hiccup in landings. But the market has expanded to take care of the record high landings, and this bodes well for the future, both this year and in the next five years as well.

broadening the overall customer base.”

From a marketing standpoint, Jacobson says there’s no question that “Maine” has a strong cachet both for the domestic and international lobster trade. It’s based on a long fishing heritage and images of independent lobstermen heading out from cozy rockbound harbors in the early morning and harvesting an ocean resource sustainably with conservation measures such as notching the tails of egg-bearing females.

Adams agrees, saying his success very much depends on sustaining dozens of fishing communities all along the coast of Maine.

“We need each other,” he says. “It takes many lobster fishermen, many harvesters, to support what we do here. ‘They are all my partners.’

Supporting our Coastal Fishing Communities with Employment Opportunities

MAINE FAIR TRADE LOBSTER IS ACTIVELY HIRING. Transportation is available.

We are looking for motivated and enthusiastic people to fulfill a variety of positions in our newly renovated lobster production facility located in Prospect Harbor. Training is available for all positions. Pay rate starts at $10 per hour. All full-time employees are eligible for benefits after 90 days including health, dental, paid holidays and paid time off.

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RED TIDE THREAT MODEST AGAIN THIS YEAR

New England’s spring and summer red tides will be similar to those of the past three years, according to the 2015 Gulf of Maine red tide seasonal forecast. The forecast is the eighth such forecast issued by scientists from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and North Carolina State University.

Red tide, a type of harmful algal bloom caused by the alga *Alexandrium fundyense*, produces a toxin that can lead to paralytic shellfish poisoning, which can result in serious or even fatal illness in humans who eat contaminated shellfish. In 2005, an unusually large red tide event caused $23 million in lost shellfish sales in Massachusetts and Maine.

Woods Hole scientists will also maintain three robotic sensors called environmental sample processors (ESPs) at locations along the Maine coast throughout the spring and summer. This is the first year the Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) will provide direct measurements of shellfish toxicity to researchers for comparison with ESP estimates in order to predict toxicity in shellfish.

MENHADEN QUOTA UP SLIGHTLY

This spring the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) increased the quota for menhaden by 10 percent. The total allowable catch was set at 187,880 metric tons for 2015 and 2016, up from 170,800 tons for the past two years.

In 2012 the ASMFC reported the stock of menhaden was experiencing overfishing and instituted a 20-percent reduction of the harvest. Earlier this year however, they reversed their opinion based on the 2014 stock assessment. The Commission found the fish’s spawning stock was near record levels and above historic averages.

NEW SIZE LIMIT ON STRIPED BASS

A new size limit on striped bass took effect in May, restricting Maine fishermen to one fish per day, 28 inches or greater. The new limit is in response to an addendum to the interstate striped bass fishery management plan approved last year by the ASMFC, which directed coastal states to reduce the harvest of striped bass by at least 25 percent beginning in 2015.

Maine has a year-round recreational-only striped bass fishery. There are special regulations in effect from December 1 through June in the Kennebec, Sheepscot and Androscoggin Rivers and tributaries. The state’s previous daily bag limit also allowed recreational fishermen to keep one striped bass from 20 to 26 inches long, or greater than 40 inches.

PROMOTION IN MARINE PATROL BUREAU

Dan White, who has served as a Sergeant in the Maine Marine Patrol since 2011, was promoted in May to Lieutenant of Division I, which stretches from Kittery to the St. George River. Lieutenant White replaces Major Rene Cloutier who was promoted to Major earlier this year.

Lieutenant White began his career with the Marine Patrol in 1997, serving as an Officer in the Bristol and Barnegat area for nearly fifteen years. His duties included operating patrol vessels in the mid-coast area in addition to conducting patrols by land.

In 2011, he received a promotion to Sergeant where he supervised, trained, directed and evaluated Marine Patrol Officers and Specialists. His responsibilities also included organizing and directing search and rescue operations and overseeing and conducting investigations. "Lieutenant White brings in-depth experience as a skilled and professional boat operator in addition to an extensive background in supervision to his new position," said Department of Marine Resources Commissioner Patrick Keliher.

NOVA SCOTIA 2014 LOBSTER LANDINGS BREAK RECORD

In 2014, lobstermen in Nova Scotia’s LFA 33, the area between Halifax and Digby, caught nearly 13.2 million pounds (6,000 metric tons) of lobster. Lobstermen from LFA 34, the area around Yarmouth and the Bay of Fundy, caught an estimated 55 million pounds (25,000 metric tons). This is the most ever recorded for these areas. While official figures are not yet released, 2014 landings for Canada are estimated at 185 million pounds.

Department of Fisheries and Oceans scientist John Tremblay has been tracking lobster abundance in Nova Scotia for years. “Our commercial catch of lobster is the highest we’ve seen recorded going back to the 1800s, in LFA 33 and LFA 34, which is southwestern Nova Scotia,” Tremblay said. A variety of factors may be at work. There are fewer cod to eat juvenile lobster; climate change could be moving the lobster stocks north to colder water and in some areas the government has increased the legal size of lobster that can be caught.

LEPAGE TO VISIT ASIA THIS FALL ON TRADE MISSION

Gov. Paul LePage will be leading a delegation of Maine businesses and educational institutions on a trade mission to Japan and China this October, with the goal of luring investment to the state, attracting international students to Maine schools and promoting Maine exports, particularly lobsters. The trade mission, organized by the Maine International Trade Center and the U.S. Department of Commerce’s International Trade Administration, will visit the cities of Tokyo and Shanghai.

The export demand for Maine lobster has shifted from traditional markets in Europe to Asia. The demand is fueled by the growing middle class in China. Export figures reflect the growing appetite in China for lobsters; Maine’s export revenues jumped from zero in 2007 to $15.2 million in 2013. China is now the top destination outside North America for Maine lobster.
Lemieux continued from page 4

ster to city slickers, they give consumers a "Downeast feel in the downtown hustle." Each location has lobster gear and symbols of the industry's sustainability practices, like gauges and gear vents, on display. In 2012, Dorr Lobster Co. began shipping each of its lobsters with a tag which allows the buyer to trace the source of his or her lobster back to the fisherman who caught it.

Leaving this important task to just a few companies is soon to change. Weber Shandwick, the public relations firm hired to assist the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC) in marketing Maine lobster, has given the MLMC's marketing budget a strategic focus on the Northeast region, on restaurants as large-quantity buyers, and on new-shell lobster as a desirable difference from Canadian lobster. But what I was most pleased to see in the marketing strategy shared at the Maine Fishermen's Forum was Weber Shandwick's plan to shine a light on the "built-in benefits" of Maine lobster. Telling a provenance story which draws on lobstermen as spokespeople and works with them to broadcast the message is in sync with what consumers are looking for: real people doing real work to produce an authentic food product.

As Maine Lobstermen's Association president David Cousens said recently, "We've got a great story to tell. We need to get that story out there because that story sells." As a former lobster fisherman who has devoted her adult career to advertising and brand-building, I am extremely excited to see the Maine lobster brand professionally marketed to America and beyond.
FREE SAFETY TRAINING DRAWS DOZENS TO PORTLAND HARBOR

On May 21st Fishing Partnership Support Services (FPSS) partnered with the Maine Lobstermen’s Association to hold a free safety and survival training for fishermen at the South Portland Coast Guard station. More than 40 people attended the day-long workshop to learn about first aid, survival suits, firefighting, life raft equipment, and more. Everyone also got a tour of the Coast Guard’s command center to learn how the Coast Guard responds to distress calls.

Fishermen seemed most appreciative of the session about survival suits. For many, this was the first time they had tried their suits on. “This is the most helpful part of the day,” said Hugh Bowen, a lobsterman from Freeport. He said it was his first time in the water in his survival suit.

Luis Catala, FPSS Safety Training Program Coordinator, said he was impressed with the age range he saw at the South Portland training. “I believe we had an equal amount of very young lobstermen as we did old-timers.” And, he continued, “regardless of age, about 90% raised their hand when asked if this was the first time attending any safety training offering. These are great things to see, that we are reaching folks who need this training regardless of age or experience level.”

Photos by Sarah Paquette.