From DMR

The Department of Marine Resources (DMR) is periodically required by law to contact individuals currently on the Limited Entry Zone Lobster License Waiting Lists, to determine if they wish to remain on the waiting list, or if they no longer want a lobster license, and wish to be removed from the waiting list. DMR is now in the process of contacting all individuals who are currently on the lobster license waiting lists for each of the seven Limited Entry Zones (A, B, C, D, E, F and G).

The Department has mailed out a form to each individual on each of the seven apprentice waiting lists, to the most current address they have provided to the Department.

Individuals who wish to remain in their current position on the waiting list must return the completed form by April 9, 2019. If an individual does not respond within the timeframes provided in the law, the Commissioner is required to remove that person’s name from the waiting list.

If you are currently on an apprentice waiting list, please watch your mail for the form, and return it to the Department at your earliest convenience. If you have a friend or family member on a waiting list, please advise them to do the same.

If you did not receive your form or misplaced your form, please go to the Maine DMR website, www.maine.gov/dmr and download a printable form that can be completed and mailed in to the Department no later than April 9, 2019.

Continued on page 20

By Melissa Waterman
They say a man’s home is his castle but for most lobstermen, it’s his shop that’s the castle. Whether it’s a small shed with scarcely room to swing a cat or a good-sized garage with a concrete floor and heat, most lobstermen spend a lot of time in their shop. For Kurt Winter of South Thomaston, his expansive shop doubles as a wood studio, a place where he makes one-of-a-kind tables, benches and custom items.

Winter, 39, began lobstering when he was a boy, hauling four traps by hand on the Weskeag River in South Thomaston. He progressed to a skiff with a hauler in high school and, after graduation, enrolled at Plymouth College in New Hampshire to study graphic design. “It was not what I thought it would be,” Winter admitted. “Way too much time behind a computer.” He recognized that what he truly wanted to do was waiting for him back home in Maine and so, after two years, he returned and took up lobstering as his career. “My father and I got a 25-foot Blue Hill Marine and I did that for a few years. Then a 32-foot H&H which I fished for nine years. Now I have a 35-foot Maine Way, Osmond Beal design. I love lobstering, I think about being on the boat when I’m not on it,” he said, recounting his fishing life through his boats.

Continued on page 20

By Melissa Waterman
In early February Matt Jacobson, executive director of the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC), announced that he would be leaving that position on February 25. Jacobson has served as the Collaborative’s director since 2014, one year after the body was created by the State Legislature. Marianne LaCroix, the MLMC’s marketing director, will serve as interim executive director while the MLMC board’s executive committee conducts a nationwide search for the next director.

Prior to his tenure at the MLMC, Jacobson was president and CEO of Canadian National Railway. He also was one of seven Republican candidates for Maine governor in 2010. He led the successful drive in 2018 to secure legislative reauthorization for...
It may not feel like it most days in March, but spring is just around the corner! MLA photo.

COASTAL OUTLOOK
Thoughts from MLCA President Patrice McCarron

They say that March “roars in like a lion and leaves like a lamb.” Given the constant swings in temperature this winter – from zero one day to 41 degrees the next – it’s a good bet that March will bring an array of storms and tumultuous weather. But the sun’s rays are getting stronger and the days are longer – true spring is not too far away!

This month Landings brings you an array of stories on Maine’s lobstering world, from the old to the new. We start with Kurt Winter, a young lobsterman from South Thomaston who discovered that he had a way with wood. Winter’s wife wanted a dining room table. A true Mainer, Kurt said to himself “I could make that,” and so a new business was born. Days Off Design produces high-end tables, benches and other furniture for customers across the country, all produced in Winter’s crowded gear shop.

Phillip Torrey of Winter Harbor reflects on what he learned years ago from the old-timers in his fishing town. When he was starting out as a fisherman, he watched the older men cut wood to make lathes for their lobster traps and knit their own bait bags. “The hard work and dedication these men had was epic.” As an adult himself now, he recognizes how hard those men and their families worked, not only to make a living but to survive.

Micah Woodcock understands hard work. Woodcock harvests wild seaweed from a small island off Stonington, cutting the algae on a low tide and hauling it to land to dry. In “Voices from the Fishermen’s Forum,” he explains the rhythm of his days, the camaraderie among wild sea vegetable harvesters, and the qualities of Maine that make it a place in which to forge an unusual life.

Today the issues facing lobstermen are much more complex than in days past. Among the most troubling is the interaction of those who know best how the lobster fishery operates with large whales. “We can’t do it without the assistance and cooperation of those who know best how the lobster fishery interacts with large whales.”

Maintaining a foothold along the coast is also a critical issue for Maine fisherfolk. With less than 25 miles of working waterfront in the state, each parcel of land still in use by fishermen is precious. Monique Coombs writes again about the uncomfortable situation residents of fishing communities face as what was once familiar — wharfs with piles of rope and gear, trucks rattling down to the water in the early morning hours, modest homes with boats stored next to them during the winter — slowly disappears, to make way for hotels, summer homes and other, non-water-dependent development. She writes about solastalgia, “the sadness a person feels when their home environment is desolated in ways they cannot control,” and calls for the state and local communities to step up and defend something which, once gone, cannot be replaced.

The Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative will be seeing a new face in the top in the next several months. Matt Jacobson, the Collaborative’s director for the last six years, stepped down from his position in late February. The 11-member group is responsible for developing marketing strategies to increase recognition of Maine lobster among consumers at multiple levels. Jacobson led the Collaborative in innovative ventures such as “Maine After Midnight,” a series of outreach events designed to introduce celebrity chefs to the qualities of Maine soft-shell lobster. The Collaborative’s executive committee is conducting a nationwide search for the next director, who they hope to have in place by early summer.

We hope you enjoy this issue of Landings and we welcome your ideas for future stories.

President’s Notes
Thoughts from MLCA President Patrice McCarron

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The advertising deadline is the second Monday of each month. Please contact Melissa Waterman (melissa@mainelobstermen.org or 967-6221) for more information.
After a disastrous 2017 for North Atlantic right whales — 17 deaths and no births — we face the question of how to ensure that these iconic large whales survive in our increasingly busy coastal waters. An additional three right whale deaths were documented in 2018, bringing the loss over the past two years to about 5% of the total population, coming on the heels of a population decline that began in 2010.

We are getting some good news this year as at least seven calves have been born during this calving season so far, and while this is welcomed improvement over the zero births last year, seven calves is still below the long-term average, and a level of growth that is not sufficient to sustain this endangered population. And yet I believe by working together we can find a way to have both a healthy right whale population and a sustainable and lucrative lobster fishery.

The reasons for right whales’ decline are complicated, but overall appear largely related to ecosystem shifts occurring in the Northwest Atlantic. As the Gulf of Maine gets warmer, the prey right whales rely on — tiny copepods and zooplankton — are moving. Right whales must then spend more time and more energy searching for adequate food sources. The farther they travel for looking for food, the less energy they have available for reproduction. As they travel into new areas looking for food, they face new threats including entanglement in gear or being hit by vessels that are not used to seeing these whales in their waters. In recent years, as a result of the additional energy needed simply to find food, calving intervals for adult females have increased from one calf expected every four or five years for each reproductively mature female to one calf every 10 years — a significant decline in the birth rate.

Risk of Entanglement

Over the past two decades, the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team has developed protective management measures including seasonal fixed gear closures and numerous gear modifications. The Team consists of 61 people representing the fishing industry, federal and state managers, conservationists, and scientists. Due in part to the Team’s work, we saw steady population growth among right whales, from about 270 right whales in 1990 to about 480 in 2010. Since 2010, however, the population has been on a downward trajectory, with only 411 individuals estimated at the end of 2017. Despite the efforts and sacrifices of fishermen, entanglement in fishing gear continues to be a major problem. New England Aquarium researchers report that 85% of right whales have entanglement scars, and the number of right whales with entanglement scars has gone up every year for the past several decades.

In 2018, we observed 6 right whales and 33 humpback whales alive and newly entangled in both the U.S. and Canada, but many more exhibited scars indicative of previous entanglements. However, as whales are able to travel vast distances dragging entangling gear, we do not always know where the gear came from, making addressing this problem more challenging and the need for data more pressing.

More Data on Maine’s Lobster Fishery is Needed

In February of last year, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Lobster Management Board adopted Addendum XXVI to its lobster management plan to expand the data collected from New England’s largest fixed gear fishery, the lobster fishery. Fishing vessel trip reports are not yet required for all federally permitted lobster vessels as only those vessels that also hold federal permits in other fisheries (e.g., groundfish, monkfish, etc.) are required to submit catch data, and not all states currently require 100% reporting of state-permitted vessels. While slightly more than half of the approximately 3,000 federal lobster permit holders currently have a requirement to report, the majority of those who don’t report hail from Maine ports.

Addendum XXVI recommends that NOAA Fisheries expand its harvester reporting requirements to all federal lobster permit holders, and that the State of Maine expand harvester reporting requirements to all state lobster license holders within five years. Expanded reporting would improve our understanding of where the fishery is taking place, and provide more information that
Micah Woodcock was born in Maine but moved around frequently growing up. He found his way back to the state as an adult and now works as a wild-seaweed harvester on a small island off Stonington. This interview was recorded in March 2018 at the Maine Fishermen’s Forum. Micah Woodcock was interviewed by Galen Koch. This interview was edited by intern Kaitlyn Clark.

In the winters, I live in Sedgwick and the rest of the year I live on a very small island many miles off Stonington. I wild harvest edible seaweeds or sea vegetables for food, and I’ve been doing that for eight years now after apprenticing with a harvester who’s been harvesting in the same bay for about 40 years. Seaweed harvesting is regulated as a fishery by the Department of Marine Resources. But as far as who harvests where, that is more self-regulated among the harvesters. It’s a small enough industry that we know each other and we know who’s harvesting where and we give each other room to work.

It’s important to distinguish between the sea vegetables and the rockweed. The rockweed is a bigger industry and different end use of the products. That’s more for animal feed and fertilizer and there the volumes are different. With the sea vegetables, we’re taking relatively small quantities and it’s for human consumption and so there’s a lot more quality control. So with the sea veggies there’s five companies, four of which are owner-operated so you have individuals or families who are really running all aspects of the business. There’s one larger company that buys from some independent harvesters, but that’s the bulk of it at this point.

I’m off and on [the island] for usually about three seasons. As far as what’s out there, fishing is just about all and it’s a great spot for me, as far as having access to a lot of the quality edible seaweeds.

My really concentrated work is around the new moon and the full moon, with the bigger tides. I go out with the tide. I’ll usually be out harvesting for maybe three hours a day, and it doesn’t matter what time of day it is, 2:00 in the morning, 3:00 in the morning, 4:00 in the morning. And you’re out harvesting for a few hours and then come back and unload everything and then you’re hanging everything up to dry or spreading it out on wooden racks. [Seaweed] can dry really quickly. So I start the seaweeds outside. [And then] usually I move them into a building where I’ve got fans and heat and then it’s dry in 24 to 36 hours and then you start over.

Continued on page 21
By Phillip Torrey

As I get older I’ve learned to appreciate the generations before me more and more. In being a fisherman this holds especially true. I remember being young and hearing all the old-timers tell their stories and although I loved to hear them, they didn’t really sink in until years later.

The hard work and dedication these men had was epic. Cutting the wood and having it milled to get the stuff you needed to build traps. Knitting your own heads, hour after hour. I remember all this stuff going on when I was a kid but didn’t think anything of it. When you got older, if you mentioned it to the guys doing it they would shrug it off like it was nothing compared to the guys before them.

I remember asking my Uncle Doug when he started fishing. It was when he was a kid and went with his grandfather. When I asked him how much money he made he explained to me that back in those days it wasn’t about money as much as it was about survival. Many times his grandfather would trade whatever they caught with somebody else who had something he needed. Meat, vegetables, lumber, etc. It was hard to fathom such a thing but it made perfect sense.

He told me how over the years lobsters started to become more sought after and the state decided to form a Department of Sea and Shore Fisheries and appointed a man named Horatio Crie to be the Commissioner. It sounded like most agreed he was the guy for the job so when he made the decision to have every fisherman come to Augusta to get a license number, they all headed that way. Five fishermen from Winter Harbor all jumped into the only vehicle they had that would make it to Augusta and left to get in line early. The numbers they received were #8 William Gerrish, #9 Morton Torrey, #10 Elmer Torrey, #11 Elwood Sargent, and #19 Gilbert Gerrish.

Lobstering was now officially a licensed fishery and guys were fierce. Many changes have taken place since then, both good and bad. Lobstering grew and families and communities up and down the coast thrived because of it. Boats changed and boat builders were turning them out as fast as they could. And when they couldn’t turn them out fast enough they started to make them out of fiberglass to speed the process up. Eventually a fishery that started as a way of survival exploded into a multi-million-dollar business.

We've lost a lot of the old-timers along the way: some got to see the changes and some didn’t. I miss them. I never got to meet Elmer Torrey who stood in line to get the #10 that day in Augusta; he died in 1930. His son Philip kept the number until 1954 when it was handed down to my uncle, Douglas Torrey, who kept it until 2008 when, at the age of 83, he handed it down to me.

Doug Torrey and author’s father Dale Torrey relaxing.

Doug Torrey working on a wooden trap. Photos courtesy of P. Torrey.

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- Patrice McCarron, MLA Executive Director

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS’ MEETING SCHEDULE
All meetings take place in
Belfast, unless otherwise indicated.

March 1, MLA Annual Meeting,
9 a.m. Samoset Resort,
Rockport
MLA DIRECTORS MEETING SUMMARY
The MLA Board met February 4 in Belfast. President Kristan Porter welcomed everyone to the meeting and began with introductions. Robbie Begin shared his concerns over DMR’s proposed menhaden regulations. With the severe cuts in herring quota, many menhaden harvesters anticipate even more boats turning to pogies this year. There is concern that the quota will be caught up quickly which could impact the price and supply of bait. The board discussed options to ensure that Maine could maximize its share of quota while pacing out landings to avoid oversupply. The board discussed options to ensure that Maine could maximize its share of quota while pacing out landings to provide stability to the bait market.

FIRST YEAR AT THE HELM
By Kristan Porter, MLA President
Hello members.
I am writing to update you on my first year as President of the Maine Lobstermen’s Association (MLA). There was definitely no time to “ease” into this job. From the time I was voted in at the Annual Meeting last year there has been no shortage of issues facing the Maine lobster industry, the two obvious ones being whales and bait. Most of my time, besides actually fishing, has been spent on these issues.

I think new whale regulations have the potential to actually change the way our fishery operates. One of the first things I did as President was attend several small industry meetings hosted by the MLA to have open discussions with lobstermen about whale rules. What I learned most from those meetings was just how differently we all fish in each area of the coast. The other big thing I learned was that after getting all the information about how the whale rules work and what we are up against, guys realized that there may be big changes coming and that we need a strategy in place to influence these changes. We received a lot of thoughtful suggestions at those events and I got a chance to meet some great people.

Since then I have been appointed to the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team (ALWTRT). I serve with other MLA members Mike Sargent, John Williams, and Dwight Carver, and our executive director, Patrice McCarron. You can be assured that with our group and Department of Marine Resources whale coordinator Erin Summers the State of Maine is being well represented on the ALWTRT and in other whale management arenas.

Another big decision made by the MLA this year was to become involved in the lawsuit filed by conservation groups against the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) as an “intervenor.” It was a tough decision, because anything related to the courts is expensive, but ultimately, we need to be involved. It is not like the MLA to sit on the sidelines. By the way, donations to the Legal Defense Fund are greatly appreciated and needed to keep the MLA involved in this case.

Enough about whales. Bait is going to be the big story for the upcoming season. The NMFS has announced that the 2019 Atlantic herring quota will be cut 70% compared to last year. To put this in perspective, the 2018 quota was 110 million pounds and the 2019 quota will be 33 million.

The MLA was Maine’s only lobstering group attending bait meetings and pushing NMFS for more quota this year. Unfortunately, the poor stock assessment outweighed our concerns over how this will impact lobstermen. It will be pretty hard to make up 77 million pounds by putting a few less fish in each bait sack, but that’s a place to start. It will take a variety of strategies to weather this storm but I believe in the ability of lobstermen to adapt to difficult situations.

Some other issues that I have spent time on over the past year are meeting with Maine’s Congressional delegation over whales and bait, the China tariffs on U.S. lobster, wind power developments, and testifying on multiple bills at the Maine Legislature. When I agreed to take on this position, I knew it would take up a great deal of my time. One of the biggest challenges for me is just how far I live from everything. It seems sometimes that I am spending more time more behind the wheel of my old truck than the wheel on my bulkhead.

I am very thankful for the unbelievable board of directors who step up when I can’t make a trip to Augusta. I know it goes without saying but executive director Patrice McCarron is the glue that holds this thing together. Her depth of knowledge of all the issues keeps me informed and helps me do my job effectively. I may be at the helm but she definitely does the navigating.

Being away from home many evenings and having endless phone calls with news media, fishery managers, fishermen and others definitely take some getting used to. I am grateful for the patience and support I get from my wife and family. It has been a big transition for all of us.

Lastly, I want to thank my board of directors for supporting me this first year and also our members because without your financial support we wouldn’t be able to do all that we do. We have some huge hurdles ahead but you can be assured that the MLA will be there, fulfilling our mission to advocate for a sustainable lobster resource and the fishermen and communities that depend on it. It is my privilege to serve as your president.

The board unanimously supported submitting comments to DMR in support of its proposal for the state allocation, with landings of 120,000 pounds per day and 160,000 pounds per week, to harvest the state quota quickly. The MLA will recommend that the state slow down landings of the episodic quota to better match demand from the lobster industry and allow small boats equal access to catch the fish. The MLA recommends the episodic quota be limited to 40,000 pounds a day and 80,000 pounds per week.

The board reasoned that it is better to start slow because landings can be increased if necessary. But if the fish are caught too quickly, there is no going back.

MLA Directors reviewed a petition organized by the group Save Maquoit Bay seeking an immediate moratorium on all
pending aquaculture lease applications greater than 10 acres in size. The MLA board was concerned that the number of existing leases and new applications is increasing rapidly. This is resulting in new many leases and consolidation of existing leases into smaller footprints. The MLA Board did not support a moratorium. The MLA needs more information to fully understand this issue but would partici- pate in discussions on ways to ensure the state’s aquaculture permitting process adequately coexists with existing users and remains effective in regulating the pace of aquaculture expansion.

The MLA Board finalized plans for its Annual Meeting on March 1 at the Samoset. The MLA again is offering a trip to the Boston Seafood Show on March 18, free for members of the fishing industry, which includes transportation and admission to the show and attendance at the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative reception. The MLCA will hold a fundraiser for MLA’s Legal Defense Fund on April 6 at Bowen’s Tavern in Belfast from 5 to 9 p.m. The Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team meeting originally scheduled for March has been postponed to April or May. The ASMFC Lobster Board met February 5 to consider changes to the lobster management plan to protect right whales.

The MLA Board voted on lobster bills pending before the Legislature.

LD 28 An Act Regarding Access to Lobster Licenses is sponsored by Rep. McCreight of Harpswell. LD 28 proposes to give lobster licenses to those who have completed the Apprentice program and have been on the waiting list for 10 or more years. This would occur annually. The existing limited entry process would re- main in place so those waiting less than 10 years would enter through the regu- lar lottery. The MLA Board discussed this bill at length. All but one board member strongly opposed the bill. The overarching concern was adding new effort as the industry braces for new whale rules and bait shortages. Solving the entry process for the lobster industry would require a more comprehensive solution to address the amount of effort each zone can accommodate and a mechanism for fair entry for both students and apprentices. Many flooded into the fishery in 1997 when Maine’s lobster management changed, and the state has not been successful in reducing trap tags back to those levels. Some would like to see new entrants start with more than 300 traps. On the other side, some lobsters believe the system is not fair and the wait list is too long. Many missed getting a commercial license because they were not ready to commit to the fishery at a young age and are now stuck on the waiting list. The MLA board supported a motion to oppose the bill, with one vote in opposition.

LD 174 An Act to Promote Youth Participation in the Maine Lobster Fishery is sponsored by Rep. McDonald of Stonington. LD 74 proposes to allow a child 12 years old or younger, who does not hold a student license, to assist a Class I, II, or III lobster license holder while lobstering. The MLA Board voted unanimously in support of this bill but stressed that it must not be used in lieu of the student license and is solely for educational purposes.

LD 314 An Act to Simplify Apprenticeship Requirements for Student and Apprentice Lobster and Crab Fishing License Holders is sponsored by Rep. Faulkingham of Winter Harbor. LD 314 proposes to allow a person with an Apprentice or Student lobster license an alternate method to demonstrate Apprentice Program completion through verified lobster landings of at least 4,000 pounds over a period of no more than two years. The MLA board discussed this bill at length. All but one board member strongly opposed the bill. The board believes it undermines the educational component of the Apprentice Program. It would be very easy to cheat by falsifying landing slips from a parent or another lobsterman’s catch. It also creates an inequity between students and apprentices because apprentices can’t land lobster. This bill is sponsored by Rep. McDonald of Stonington. A similar bill was debated last session and resulted in extending the current Temporary Medical Allowance from a maximum of one year to two. LD 340 proposes to create a new section of law and establish a temporary terminal condition medical allowance to allow a person who meets several criteria to haul gear of the terminally ill lobsterman if he harvested at least 1,000 pounds in the previous year. There is no proposed limit on the number of renewals for the temporary terminal condition medical allowance. The MLA unanimously opposed this bill and instead supports keeping the existing temporary medical allowance in place to treat all lobstermen who face pro- longed illness equally.

LD 430 An Act To Establish a Temporary Conditional Medical Allowance for Lobster and Crab Fishing License Holders. This bill is sponsored by Rep. McCreight of Harpswell. A similar bill was debated last session and resulted in extending the current Temporary Medical Allowance from a maximum of one year to two. LD 430 proposes to create a new section of law and establish a temporary terminal condition medical allowance to allow a person who meets several criteria to haul gear of the terminally ill lobsterman if he harvested at least 1,000 pounds in the previous year. There is no proposed limit on the number of renewals for the temporary terminal condition medical allowance. The MLA unanimously opposed this bill and instead supports keeping the existing temporary medical allowance in place to treat all lobstermen who face prolonged illness equally.

LD 434 An Act To Establish and Promote a System of Safe Disposal of Expired Marine Flares. This bill is sponsored by Rep. McCreight of Harpswell. LD 434 proposes the Department of Public Safety establish programs for the collection and disposal of expired marine flares and for education of the public and state agency personnel regarding expired marine flares. It has been referred to the Criminal Justice Committee. MLA board members thought that some local transfer stations, fire departments and safety trainers will take expired flares, however there are not programs in place everywhere. The MLA voted to support this bill.

LD 618 An Act To Remove Nighttime Restrictions on Lobster Fishing in a Certain Area in the Bay of Fundy. This bill is sponsored by Rep. Tuell of East Machias. LD 618 proposes to allow Zone A lobstermen who fish in the U.S. portion of the Gray Zone to raise and haul lobster traps during any time of day between Labor Day and Memorial Day. Day time hauling restrictions would remain in place during June, July and August. The Gray Zone encompasses approximately 70 square miles around Machias Seal Island. Gray zone lobstermen are fishing beside Canadian fishermen who do not have any night time restrictions on gear hauling. Further, Maine Marine Patrol has no enforcement authority over Canadian fisherman. Due to the unique circumstances faced by Maine’s Gray Zone lobstermen, the MLA does not believe that this proposal would set a precedent to expand night-time hauling in the rest of the state. The MLA voted unanimously to support this bill.

The MLA Board was not able to vote on them due to lack of information.

LR 1161 An Act to Strengthen the Maine Economy, sponsored by Pres. Jackson


The MLA did not have enough information to take a position on LD 434 An Act To Price Carbon Pollution in Maine which proposes to tax carbon fuels sold in Maine.

Several bill titles have been submitted, but the bill text is not yet available. The MLA Board was not able to vote on them due to lack of information.


LR 1314 An Act to Provide Equity in the Lobster Promotion License Surcharge. This bill is sponsored by Rep. Faulkingham of Winter Harbor. LD 675 proposes to amend the provisions regarding surcharges to fund the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative by replacing the current 3-tiered structure (Class I $165, Class II $330, Class III $480, 75) with a single surcharge of $310 for all three classes of licenses. The intent of the current MLMC funding structure is to charge more to lobstering operations that land more catch and lesser operations. Because is not possible to place a surcharge on lobster landings, the fee uses license class as a proxy. The MLA Board voted unanimously to oppose this bill.
Continued from page 2

to the herring management plan to consider options to strengthen spawning protections in Area 1A (inside Gulf of Maine). This action responds to the results of the 2018 Benchmark Stock Assessment which showed reduced levels of recruitment and spawning stock biomass over the past five years, with 2016 recruitment levels the lowest on record.

The ASMFC currently uses a series of closures to protect spawning aggregations in the Gulf of Maine. These closures use biological samples to project the annual start of spawning. The closures are implemented for four weeks but can be extended by two additional weeks if samples indicate the continued presence of spawning herring. Recent analysis found that while the spawning closure system was significantly improved under the most recent management plan, the protocol could be further strengthened by considering when, and for how long, a closure is initiated. Specifically, the analysis showed that currently specified closures are initiated too late to protect the spatially and temporally variable resource in the fishery. Greater protection could be provided by initiating a closure when a lower percentage of the population is spawning and extending the closure for a longer time. The draft addendum considers extending the length of the spawning closures as well as altering the point at which closures are triggered in order to provide greater protection to the stock.

States will hold public hearings and written comments are due on April 3, 2019 and should be forwarded to Megan Ware, FMP Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, Virginia 22201; 703.842.0741 (fax) or at comments@asmfc.org (Subject line: Atlantic Herring Draft Addendum II).

NMFS SLASHES 2019 HERRING QUOTA

NMFS announced a herring quota of 15,065 metric tons for the 2019 fishing season, a 70% reduction in herring compared to the 2018 quota. This action is expected to prevent overfishing of the herring resource and lower the risk of the stock becoming overfished.

In June 2018, a new stock assessment for herring concluded that although herring was not overfished and overfishing was not occurring in 2017, poor recruitment would likely result in a substantial decline in herring biomass. The stock assessment estimated that recruitment had been at historic lows during the most recent five years (2013-2017). The assessment projected that biomass could increase, after reaching a low in 2019, if recruitment returns to average levels but that herring catch would need to be reduced, starting in 2018, to prevent overfishing and lower the risk of the stock becoming overfished.

The Science and Statistical Committee (SSC) reviewed the herring stock assessment and recommended that herring ABCs should not exceed 21,266 mt in 2019, 16,131 mt in 2020 and 2021. When adjusted for management uncertainty associated with the Canadian weath fishery, this equates to a quota of 15,065 mt in 2019, 9,931 mt in 2020 and 2022. The SSC was concerned that the new assessment’s recruitment projections used a long-term average, rather than weighting recent low recruitment, resulting in a substantial projected biomass increase for 2021. To mitigate its concerns, the SSC recommended maintaining the 2020 ABC (16,131 mt) for 2021, updating the herring assessment in 2020, and investigating herring’s recent low recruitment. The assessment update would enable the SSC to reconsider its 2021 ABC recommendation based on updated estimates of recruitment and biomass.

The MLA urged NMFS to set a higher quota for 2019 in order to allow the lobster industry time to identify alternative sources of bait, coordinate bait distribution, and expand infrastructure and storage capacity to minimize the economic impacts of reduced herring catch limits.

NMFS provided the following rationale for not choosing a higher quota. “We understand the comments made by these stakeholders and why they advocate for a higher herring catch in 2019. While the impacts of less catch and less revenue associated with either ABC alternative will negatively impact the fishing industry, we agree with the commenters that economic impacts on the fishing industry will likely be more severe with implementation of the lower ABC. Because actual catch in 2018 was higher than anticipated, the proposed ABC of 30,688 mt likely has less than a 50% probability of preventing overfishing in 2019. This means that the higher ABC is no longer a viable alternative for 2019. The partial government

ASMFC CONSIDERS MEASURES TO PROTECT SPAWNING HERRING IN AREA 1A

The ASMFC’s Atlantic Herring Management Board approved a draft addendum...
shutdown that began on December 22, 2018, prevented us from analyzing additional ABC alternatives. Therefore, to better account for scientific uncertainty and prevent overfishing and lower the risk of the stock becoming overfished, we are implementing the lower ABC recommended by the Council for 2019.7
The MLA also advocated for a higher proportion of herring to be allocated to Area 1A because recent allocations do not reflect the availability of herring or the effort of the herring fishery. In addition, it would help to lessen the impact of the quota reduction on the lobster fishery. NMFS provided the following rationale for choosing to not allocate more fish to Area 1A. “We understand the concerns expressed in these comments. Because sub-ACL allocations have the potential for biological impacts on the herring stock and economic impacts on the fishing industry, we are deferring to the Council’s recommendations for sub-ACL allocations. The Council will soon begin developing herring specifications for 2020-2021 and will likely reconsider sub-ACL allocations at that time. Because herring revenue makes up a larger percentage of total revenue for purse seine vessels than trawl vessels, we agree that purse seine vessels may be more negatively affected by low catch limits than trawl vessels. We disagree that sub-ACL allocations will prevent the ACL from being harvested in 2019 because recent catch (2016-2018) in each of the management areas has been higher than the 2019 sub-ACLs, with the exception of Area 2 in 2017. But if there is unharvested herring catch available in any of the management areas near the end of the fishing year, the Council could request we use an additional in-season adjustment to reallocate unharvested catch.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
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<th>Cumulative Catch</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15,065</td>
<td>2,350</td>
<td>24%</td>
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**RIGHT WHALE WORKING GROUP CONSIDERS ROPE**

The New England Aquarium convened a two-day meeting with fishing industry members and researchers from the U.S. and Canada to discuss methods to make fishing rope safer for whales. Options discussed included methods to avoid whales encountering rope, such as red ropes, or removing ropes through trawling up or other gear reductions. The group also looked at options that may reduce the risk that an entanglement results in a serious injury or death, such as weak ropes, knots, splices, tag lines or other methods. The New England Aquarium will draft a report summarizing the discussions. There were three points of potential agreement from the meeting: 1) reduced breaking strength rope is worth exploring; 2) there may be validity in phasing in gear modifications to allow fishermen time to adapt to the changes and explore options for financial assistance; and 3) there is an urgent need for field testing in the offshore fishery where reduced strength rope may be difficult to fish.

**PATRICK KELIHER RE-APPOINTED AS DMR COMMISSIONER**

The Maine Senate and House both confirmed the reappointment of Patrick Keliher as Commissioner of Marine Resources. Keliher was sworn in by Governor Mills in February.

**MAINE LOBSTER RESEARCH COLLABORATIVE**

The Lobster Research Collaborative met in February. Researchers funded through this effort provided updates on lobster research underway. The group discussed ways for researchers to set priorities for lobster research and collaborate on projects to further our understanding of the lobster stocks in a changing climate.

**TOP ENTRY CRAB TRAPS REQUIRE TRAP TAG**

It has been Maine’s policy to allow top entry crab traps to be fished within state waters without a lobster trap tag. This is no longer the case. Effective immediately, all lobster and/or crab traps, no matter what the configuration, must have a valid lobster trap tag attached to them in both state and federal waters. If you currently have crab traps submerged in coastal waters without a valid lobster trap tag, please contact your local Marine Patrol Officer to work through this policy change.
This year we’ll continue our focus on our key audiences of chefs, media and consumers. We’ll kick off the season with a new video series highlighting the unique dynamic between chefs and lobstermen shot along coastal Maine. We’ll also showcase the different types of lobster through a product-focused how-to video series including tails, meat and processed lobster. The videos will also highlight the different usage occasions for Maine Lobster, and how it can be used as a versatile cooking ingredient.

The successful Maine After Midnight events will continue in 2018 but with a twist – our first-ever live broadcast, which allows the MLMC to scale beyond the footprint of our events, reaching a global audience. The broadcast will reconvene the chef and lobstermen pairs featured in our video series and will include a panel discussion and demonstrations of their favorite Maine Lobster recipes, and footage from the video series that will premiere earlier in the summer.

The MLMC will round out these robust programs with continuous media outreach, chef engagement and ongoing social content, ensuring that Maine Lobster is top of mind year-round.

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Other trap wire is manufactured overseas using a substandard galvanized before welding (GBW) and plastic coating process. The wire is first coated with a very thin layer of zinc and then welded together and coated in vinyl plastic. During the welding process the zinc is burnt off leaving the wire unprotected at the weld. The weld is completely exposed to all environmental elements causing premature rusting and breakage, leading to a limited lifetime of use and costing more due to the frequency of replacing.

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I want to add my voice to the choir of concern from local fishermen and lobstermen about the proposed Mere Point Oyster Company (MPOC) on Maquoit Bay in Brunswick. The MPOC proposal stands to deny the rights of established commercial fishermen – the rights of traditional access to a public resource that we have relied on for years and denial will significantly impact our livelihood. I encourage anyone who believes that the rights of community fishermen and lobstermen should not be negated for the benefit of two individuals to join me in voicing opposition to this application.

Sincerely,
John Powers, Lobsterman

Protect the rights of commercial fishermen to access public waters and stop aquaculture leases that benefit the applicant at the expense of others. Let your voice be heard. Contact the Department of Marine Resources Commissioner Patrick Keliher and let him know that the ocean belongs to all of us.

Email: Patrick.Keliher@maine.gov
Call: Department of Marine Resources
207-624-6553

For more information:
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**Harvester Membership Levels**

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<td>Highliner</td>
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<td>Harvester Family*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior Harvester (over 65)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retired Harvester (no longer a captain)</td>
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**Individual Membership Levels:**

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<tr>
<td>Lobster Friend</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lobster Lover</td>
<td>$250</td>
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*(Please include to receive weekly e-news updates and lobster, bait, & fuel prices)*

*Family Members:*  

Name:___________________________________________________________  
Address:_________________________________________________________________  
City/State/Zip:_________________________________________________________  
Phone:__________________ Cell:____________________ D.O.B:_____________  
Email:___________________________________________________________________  
Boat Name:_____________________________________________________________  
Lobster License #:____________ Zone & District:_________________________  
Payment info:   Pay with:       Visa      MasterCard      Check: #_______________  
Credit Card #:___________-___________-___________-____________  Exp. date:_________  CV code:_________  
Billing town/state/zip:______________________________________________________________________________________

New members join for $200!
By Monique Coombs

In 2039, driving to Orr’s Island likely will look a lot different. F/V Restless might not be moored off the right side of the bridge, and there probably won’t be any rickety floats hanging on to the rocks. The ocean will probably seem a little higher all around; maybe Cook’s Lobster & Ale House on Bailey Island won’t have lobster boats moored around it. And further down the road Mackerel Cove will probably look like any pretty cove with no wharfs, no Glendon’s, no lobster boats cluttering up the picture. Nubble, one of Maine’s most photographed buildings, won’t be covered with buoys and there won’t be any more pickup trucks along Abner Point Road. What will Land’s End look like? Will there be any lobster boats going by for tourists to snap pictures of? What’s it going to smell like? What will it sound like? Who will live here?

Imagining Orr’s Island or Port Clyde or Cutler without fishing boats conjures a sense of solastalgia, a word used to describe the distress felt by residents after a familiar place because that place is no longer familiar. For example, residents felt solastalgia in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina destroyed many homes and landmarks that gave the community its sense of place.

Solastalgia is an apt word to describe how fishing community residents feel when hotels and McMansions go up in an area usually used for fishing. This feeling can also arise in the summer when coastal Mainers play host to thousands of tourists who infiltrate restaurants and general stores. A sense of normalcy returns in early September, usually, but Maine is becoming a travel destination year-round.

In a recent article in MaineBiz, Steve Hewins, president and CEO of Hospitality Maine, said that he doesn’t see any signs of a saturation point for new development in Portland: “All the new capacity is being absorbed… Eventually there has to be a tipping point. But I don’t believe we see that point yet.”

People in Maine fishing communities can see the saturation point staring them in the face. They feel it every time a parcel of waterfront land is sold to a developer or summer resident. They see it when others use the fishing industry as an advertising gimmick to achieve their agenda, like generic lobster boats appearing in political ads or new Portland condos that advertise proximity to the working waterfront.

How do you measure the distance from where we are today to the point of saturation? What’s on the other side of that tipping point? And what is the route back after you reach saturation?

In an effort to gain more dollars, we are diminishing the very reason visitors come to Maine. At some point in the future, if we continue on this path, Maine will become an empty shell of what it once was: Cook’s Lobster & Ale House with no lobster, coves with no fishing boats, and wharves with no character. But how do you measure that loss when it is incremental, happens over time, and is felt more than it is tangible?

The term “cultural appropriation” was once reserved for academics but is now in the mainstream vernacular. Cultural appropriation is borrowing a tradition or trend from another culture. People who have never worked a day in their life who wear Carhartt are borrowing from blue collar culture; this is an innocent example of cultural appropriation.

Groups or companies often appropriate from the fishing industry to achieve their goals without any regard for the impact or consequences to fisherman and their communities. A hotel being built on the waterfront side of Commercial Street in Portland wants to offer its customers views of fishermen and their boats but doesn’t recognize that their visitors might not like the smell of bait, and that the high room costs could alter the economics of the area, making it harder for fishermen to work and fish at all.

A working waterfront is not just a quaint picture. It is a composite of people, boats, gear and traditions that are inextricably linked to a place. And that place is adjacent to the ocean. Bit by bit the familiar smells and noise of Maine’s working waterfronts are evaporating. Solastalgia is taking place in Portland, on Bailey Island, in a small harbor near you. It is time to step up and defend something which, once gone, cannot be replaced.
By Melissa Waterman

As the days grow longer and sun slightly stronger, Maine lobstermen are beginning to assess their gear and get ready for another season on the water. They know that long days at sea will have an effect on their shoulders and their knees, but they might not consider the harm that constant exposure to the sun will have on their skin and eyes. Being prepared for the season also means being prepared to prevent skin cancer.

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. Skin cancer comes in three forms: basal cell and squamous cell carcinomas and melanoma. The first two are curable, if costly, to treat. Melanoma, however, is more dangerous and causes the most deaths.

These cancers are caused by the electromagnetic energy of sun, expressed as ultraviolet (UV) waves. There are three types of UV rays that strike the earth: UVA, UVB and UVC. The one to worry about is UVA. The particular wavelength of UVA allows it to reach deep into human skin and mess with the DNA of skin cells. UVB rays are mostly absorbed by the earth's ozone layer, although those that get through can also cause DNA damage. UVC rays are very deadly but are completely absorbed by the ozone layer (whew!). Not only can UV rays cause skin cancer, they also contribute to the creation of eye cataracts.

For decades we have considered a tan a sign of health. After all, to get that warm brown color, one presumably is spending lots of time outside, which leads to good health, right? Actually, turning brown or red from sunburn is a sign that the skin has been damaged. Research shows that those who use tanning beds before age 35 increase their risk for melanoma by 75%. Skin cells produce more of a pigment called melanin when hit by UV energy. Melanin absorbs UV radiation to prevent the radiation from damaging the cells underneath. So when your skin turns brown, it’s a sign that the cells are taking a whack from all those UV rays.

The sun’s UV rays can harm your skin on cloudy or hazy days, as well as bright and sunny days. The rays also reflect off water, sand, and snow, so protection is important in both the winter and summer. In the northern hemisphere UV rays are strongest during late spring and early summer.

Anyone can get skin cancer, but certain traits put you at greater risk:

- A lighter natural skin color.
- Skin that burns, freckles, reddens easily, or becomes painful in the sun.
- Blue or green eyes.
- Blond or red hair.
- Certain types and a large number of moles.
- A family history of skin cancer.

The most common sign of skin cancer is a change in your skin. It could be a new growth, a sore that doesn’t heal, or a change in a mole. A simple way to remember the signs of melanoma is to remember ABCDE:

- “A” stands for asymmetrical. Does the mole or spot have an irregular shape with two parts that look very different?
- “B” stands for border. Is the border irregular or jagged?
- “C” is for color. Is the color uneven?
- “D” is for diameter. Is the mole or spot larger than the size of a pea?
- “E” is for evolving. Has the mole or spot changed during the past few weeks or months?

According to the Centers for Disease Control, there were 2,135 new cases of skin melanomas in Maine from 2011 to 2015; 263 people died of the disease during that time.

It’s easy to forget to bring the sun block and a hat when first starting out in the spring. But, as these statistics show, making sure to protect yourself from the sun’s rays is crucial to protecting yourself against the harmful effects of spending hours on the water every day.

For more information on how best to protect yourself from skin cancer, visit www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin.
Winter is quite clear about his motivation to start making furniture. “My wife, Jen, wanted a dining room table. We were looking at one online last year and it was crazy expensive. I thought ‘I could make that,’” he said. So he did, creating a large dining room table of birch with a bench to match. “I thought I could probably sell it, so I put it up on Craig’s List. A summer person living on Sebago Lake saw it and bought it. Then she ordered an end table and a bathroom countertop?” Winter said with a big grin.

Since then Winter has put out his shingle – Day Off Designs – publicizing his creations via Instagram and Etsy. His shop is filled with huge slabs of drying ash, matched slabs of walnut, hunks of granite and other items he incorporates into his work. He readily admits that he is learning the fine points of furniture making as he goes along, pointing to his first set of bowties, also known as Dutchman joints, in a long table. “First time I’ve done those,” he said.

He doesn’t design his pieces on paper, rather thinking them through and then figuring out how to make his vision work. “Certain things look good together. I incorporate them, like these granite stones for a base,” Winter explained. He used Awlgrip as the finish for his first table. For a larger walnut dining table, he decided to fill a cavity between the two matched boards with tinted epoxy. “It has three-and-a-half gallons of epoxy there. It is so much epoxy I had to do it in two pours. Epoxy heats up as it dries and so it pulls away from the wood,” he explained, pointing to the lake-like shape of black epoxy running through the center of the table.

To date, Winter has produced dining room tables, benches, coffee tables, end tables and charcuterie boards for customers across the country. And he’s thoroughly enjoying learning the finer points of furniture making. “I have all these ideas in my head. Wood is forgiving and easy to work with,” he said. “Measuring is key. And it’s OK if it is not exactly how you picture it if it still looks pretty cool.” Winter has a few projects to finish up in the shop before he clears his woodworking tools away and sets up to repair traps and get ready for the fishing season. And as for that new dining room table his wife wanted last year? “She’s still waiting,” Winter admitted.
people are attracted to seaweed harvesting. One conclusion is that it’s a little bit of both, it attracts people who are a little bit sideways from the get-go and it reinforces that. Once you’re in the industry, you start to meet more and more people who are seaweed crazy and they love doing it and they have a whole way of life built up around it. For me, I’ve always been interested in things that are overlooked and grew up gardening and cooking and stuff and got interested in weeds and their culinary uses. Then in high school I met a guy who used to work for the harvester who I apprenticed with. So a few years later I tracked the old-timer down and then one thing led to another.

I think you need to leave Maine to appreciate it. A lot of people who leave go to urban areas and a lot of cities are getting increasingly expensive so you have to work harder and harder for a lesser quality of life. One thing also is that it’s easier to stand out in Maine. If you just show up and you do something remarkable and you keep showing up, people are going to support you partly because there’s less going on. I don’t mean that in the sense of, ‘Oh, well, it’s a good place for people who failed elsewhere, you can come back home.’ ‘Cause people are doing things that would be remarkable wherever they are doing them, but there’s more overt support from the get-go here.

Harvesting and hauling seaweed to land to dry is dependent on the tides. Photo courtesy of Atlantic Holdfast Seaweed Co.

My parents [dragged] me all over the world as a kid so I’ve lived lots of places and then did a bunch of traveling on my own to really see what was what all around America. I came back to Maine really by accident. I wasn’t, ‘Oh I’m going to move back to Maine.’ I came back to visit and liked what I saw as an adult and stuck around.

The scalability of the wild-harvested edible seaweed in Maine is pretty small. There’s room for a little more sustainable harvest, but honestly not that much. It’s always going to be a relatively small fishery and I think that’s one of its strengths. That gives me confidence for the future because with the smaller number of people realistically it can be easier to work things out. We know each other and we know who’s harvesting where and we have a vested interest in keeping the peace. If I come step on your toes and harvest in your area, you can come do the same to me. People have gotten along remarkably well in that regard in the past, so that gives me hope.

Voices of the Maine Fishermen’s Forum, an Oral History was made possible by Maine Sea Grant, The First Coast, College of the Atlantic, and the Island Institute. This series is coordinated by Natalie Springuel, Maine Sea Grant.
NEW RIGHT WHALE CALVES NOW TOTAL 7

A seventh right whale calf was seen with its mother off St. Catherine’s Island, Georgia on February 14. Researchers said the mother whale is #3270, also known as “Picc.” She was first seen in 2002, making her at least 17 years old. This is her second calf. Her last calf was born in 2011. While the news is positive, whale experts said they would need to see more than 16 calves this season to have a net population gain over last year. In 2018 no calves were reported and only five calves were reported in the 2016-2017 season. Right whales migrate each winter from the waters off Maine and Nova Scotia to the waters off the coasts of Florida and Georgia for the calving season.

LOCAL NONPROFIT SAVES BOOTHBAY HARBOR WORKING WATERFRONT PROPERTY

As controversy over development along Boothbay Harbor’s east side continues, a nonprofit foundation has completed the purchase of the Sea Pier lobster-buying station. The Boothbay Region Maritime Foundation will continue to run the property as a lobster-buying station. Plans are underway to repair the property and restore the pier to its former size. The property joins the adjacent Cap’n Fish Motel to form a stretch of property recently purchased by other nonprofits to preserve public access to the water and the working waterfront.

UNION WHARF DREDGING GROUP LOOKS FOR FUNDING

After years of work, a plan is taking shape to dredge contaminated sediment from the Portland waterfront and deposit it in an underwater pit. The next challenge for the group behind the effort is getting enough money to finish the long-delayed project. “A lot has happened: we are getting there,” said Charlie Poole, president of Proprietors of Union Wharf. “It has been slow, but at least the site has an established outfall pipe, and key aquaculture closures. Th e money you contribute to the Fund is used to pay for potential new whale rules such as ropeless fishing and seasonal closures. Th e MLA Legal Defense Fund allows MLA to fight in court against legal expertise from Crowell and Moring in response to a lawsuit filed by several national environmental groups.

BELFAST AQUACULTURE DEVELOPER PLANS SIMILAR WEST COAST PROJECT

Nordic Aquafarms announced in early February that it is planning to build a second recirculating aquaculture system facility in the United States. The new plant will be in Humboldt County, California. The company is pursuing permits in Maine to build a similar aquaculture facility in Belfast. Nordic Aquafarms has been working through the permitting process for the first phase of its project in Belfast. That project, announced a year ago, is planned to start construction later this year. The new California location offers access to both fresh- and seawater, and already has a substation with power on site, Nordic said. Perhaps more importantly, the site has an established outfall pipe, and key aquaculture licenses already in place. According to Humboldt County officials, the area that the facility will be located in has been specifically targeted for aquaculture projects.

STONINGTON LOBSTER DEALER WILL OPEN PROCESSING PLANT IN BUCKSPORT

At the Buckstown Heritage Park in Bucksport, Greenhead Lobster Company is completing construction of a 15,000-square-foot processing plant. Owner Hugh Reynolds is expanding the processing side of the operation by forming Greenhead Lobster Products, LLC. The new company plans to hire 40 to 50 employees by the time the plant opens in June. Reynolds expects the new company will process between 3 million and 4 million pounds of lobster annually. All of that will come either directly from Greenhead or from other suppliers. The new facility will use the latest high-pressure pasteurization technology to humanely kill the lobsters and to extend the shelf life of its lobster products. Those products will include flash-frozen, ice-glazed raw lobster tails and a variety of cooked claw and knuckle-meat products that will be sold frozen or chilled, depending on customer requirements.

NEW COAST GUARD COMMAND CENTER OPENS IN SOUTH PORTLAND

Coast Guard Sector Northern New England officially opened a new 24-hour command center on February 20 in South Portland. U.S. Sen. Susan Collins, Atlantic Area Commander Vice Adm. Scott Buschman, and First District Commandant Rear Adm. Andrew Tompson were all on hand for the ribbon cutting ceremony. The command center is the hub for all Coast Guard operations across Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and parts of New York. Located at Coast Guard Base South Portland, the command center is able to receive alerts of distress anytime day or night. The updates to the command center cost nearly $400,000 and were part of a larger $2.3 million-dollar upgrade to the base.

The MLA Legal Defense Fund needs your support.

The MLA Legal Defense Fund allows MLA to fight in court against potential new whale rules such as ropeless fishing and seasonal closures. The money you contribute to the Fund is used to pay for legal expertise from Crowell and Moring in response to a lawsuit filed by several national environmental groups.

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would help clarify the entanglement risk of endangered whales in lobster fishing. Consistent with this request from the Commission, we are in the process of analyzing the harvester reporting requirements in a rulemaking action. At its recent meeting in February 2019, the Lobster Board initiated a new addendum to the lobster management plan to consider measures that could reduce the risk of large whales entanglement in lobster trap gear. The addendum will consider up to a 40% reduction in vertical lines through trap limits, gear configurations, seasonal closures and other measures, as well as eliminating the 10% replacement tag provision, which allows lobstermen to purchase extra trap tags in excess of their trap allocations to cover routine trap losses. Working with the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team As the ASMFC works to address data needs and entanglement risk through the lobster management plan, we have also been busy working with the Take Reduction Team. The Team met numerous times over the past 18 months to look into the feasibility of new conservation measures. The Team discussed using weaker rope (1,700-pound breaking strength), improving gear marking, and explored the concept of ropeless fishing. The Team was focused on three areas in its discussions: reducing the severity of entanglement; reducing the probability of entanglement; and gathering data to inform risk reduction.

What’s Next
In late March, the Team will convene subgroups in preparation for an April or early May meeting. To ensure productive deliberations at these meetings, we have begun analyzing proposals from the Team. Specific ideas stemming from previous discussions ranged from modifying or adding seasonal fishery closures or restricting line strength or diameter of buoy lines to researching new technologies particularly for new fisheries that use vertical line. The Team will develop final recommendations at a late April/early May meeting which will then go to NOAA Fisheries for rulemaking. Teamwork Critical to Finding Solutions Tackling entanglements is critical to the recovery of the North Atlantic right whale population, and we can’t do it without the assistance and cooperation of those who know best how the lobster fishery interacts with large whales. The continued participation and enthusiasm of our industry partners is not just welcome, it is absolutely necessary to future success. Working together, with all of the talent, ingenuity, and perseverance of this dedicated Team, I believe that we can find solutions that will allow fishermen and whales to not only coexist, but to thrive.

If you have questions or comments about the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team, please contact Patrice McCarron, the Maine Lobstermen’s Association’s Team representative, at 207-967-4555 or Colleen Coogan, NOAA Fisheries Take Reduction Team coordinator, at 978-281-9181.

Seven right whale calves have been spotted this season, an encouraging sign for the endangered population. NOAA photo.

Events Calendar

March 6
DMR Advisory Council meeting, 1-3 p.m., DMR office, Augusta.
Draft Addendum II to Amendment 3 of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Herring, 5 p.m., DMR office, Augusta.

March 18
MLA-hosted trip to Seafood Expo North America, Boston. FMI: 967-4555 or mainelobstermen.org.

March 27
NEFMC herring advisory committee meeting, Holiday Inn, Mansfield, MA.

March 28
New England Fishery Management Council Herring Committee meeting, 9 a.m., Holiday Inn, Mansfield, MA.

April 3
MLA Board of Directors meeting, 5 p.m., Darby’s restaurant, Belfast.

April 3-5
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Atlantic Menhaden Assessment Workshop, Arlington VA.

April 5-6
Lobster Institute Town Meeting, Westin Hotel, Portland, ME. FMI: umaine.edu/conferences/current-registrations or 581-4095.

April 6
MLA Legal Defense Fund fundraiser, 5 p.m., Bowen’s Tavern, Belfast.

April 16-18
New England Fishery Management Council meeting, Hilton Hotel, Mystic, CT.

April 23-26
Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team meeting, location TBD.

April 29-May 2
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission spring meeting, Westin Hotel, Arlington, VA.

You can find more information, links, and photos at www.mainelobstermen.org.
And let us know if you would like us to list your upcoming events!
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Roux, owned by Greg Bernier, Cundy’s Harbor.

Bella, of the F/V Vengeance, Kennebunk. Owner Jon Nunan.

Buzzy, of the F/V Kestrel, Marshfield, MA. Owner Pete Mason.

Nova, of the F/V Rough Times.

Copper, owned by William Sargent of Milbridge.

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