Maine is not a young state. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2015 the median age in the state is 44.2 years, which means half the state’s population of 1.3 million is older than that figure and half is younger. No other state in the union has such a high median age (the median age of the country as a whole is 37.7 years).

Maine’s oldest counties, by median age, are Piscataquis (50.2), Lincoln (50.1) and Hancock (47.9). The youngest counties are Androscoggin (40.9), Penobscot (41.5) and Cumberland (42.3).

Maine’s lobstermen reflect this fact. The average age of Maine lobstermen is 50 years old. But more telling is the number of lobstermen age 50 or older. A quick survey of the Department of Marine Resources 2014 list of licensed lobstermen in the state reveals that of the nearly 6,000 commercial lobstermen in the state at the time, approximately 1,600 turned out for those meetings. “Some of it was novelty, checking out the new commissioner,” Keliher recalled. “But also I think there was some appreciation of the dialogue.” As a

Continued on page 16

By Melissa Waterman

RIVERDALE MILLS COATED WIRE TRAP TURNS 35

By Nancy Griffin

The wire lobster trap was introduced as a commercial product in 1980, making it a feature on the docks for 35 years this year. However, like many revolutionary products, its process of evolution took much longer.

James W. Knott, Sr., founder of Riverdale Mills in Northbridge, Massachusetts, began experimenting with the wire trap in the 1950s. Long a summer resident of Cape Ann and a lobster license holder, Knott would bring wire mesh to fisherman there.

“He used to bring the wire to the Rockport docks and guys would put it on the sides of wood traps,” said James W. Knott, Jr., CEO of Riverdale Mills. “Then they went to making all-wire traps. That didn’t work, so they went back to traditional heads.”

The problem for lobstermen was marine worms, which liked to eat the traditional half-round wooden slat traps. Wire, however, was not on the worms’ diet. “Worms don’t eat the mesh. Plus it weighs more in the water and less on deck,” said Knott.

Continued on page 17

From Trap to Table™
100% Certified Maine Lobster™
November is a tough month. Suddenly it’s dark way too early. Nor’easters can blow up or, as was the case last year, a sudden snowstorm can envelop the state with a blanket of wet, heavy snow. Although the Gulf of Maine stays warm much longer than the air above it, it still can be a hard time of year to be out there hauling traps as so many lobstermen will continue to do throughout the month.

In this issue of Landings, we take a look at who some of those younger lobstermen are. Maine’s population has the oldest median age of any state in the country. So it’s not much of a surprise to learn that the average age of Maine’s lobstermen is around 50 years old. Lobstering is an occupation that a man or woman generally sticks with throughout their lives. Most will cut back a bit as they get older, relying only when hauling becomes too hard on their body. Landings introduces us to several of this new generation of young lobstermen who are entering the fishery at a time when both supply and price are doing well. They have a sense of the future that shows maturity as well as a sober assessment of how Maine’s environment is changing. As part of this issue’s focus on the young, Landings highlights the Eastern Maine Skippers Program (EMSP), a joint project of the Deer Isle-Stonington High School and Penobscot East Resource Center. Throughout the school year students from eight Downeast high schools participate in a hands-on investigation of a topic related to fishing. In past years, students have looked at developing a trap-based winter flounder fishery and the problem of invasive green crabs. This year the students will be focusing on Maine’s lobster industry.

We also talk to Department of Marine Resources Commissioner Patrick Keliher about the third series of meetings he has held with lobstermen since he became head of the agency in 2012. Keliher, who previously served as head of DMR’s Sea Run Fisheries and Habitat Bureau, has worked to establish a dialogue with Maine’s lobstermen about the fishery and its management. In his desire to engage lobstermen before important decisions are made, Keliher and his staff met with lobstermen throughout the coast in September to discuss the existing lobster licensing system and changes that could be made to it during the upcoming legislative session this winter.

COASTAL OUTLOOK

Thoughts from MLCA President Patrice McCarron

MLCA fosters thriving coastal communities and preserves Maine’s lobstering heritage

Send your support to:
Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance | P.O. Box 315 | Kennebunk, Maine | 04043 | www.mlcalliance.org

The MLCA invites you to support Maine’s lobster industry. Donations of $25 or more include a subscription to Landings.

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MLCA is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit charitable organization.
By Matt Jacobson

Friday, September 25, 2015, was the first official National Lobster Day. It was a thrill to celebrate lobster and the men and women of the lobster industry with a national and international audience. But even more, National Lobster Day was a huge success for the Maine lobster industry and for Maine.

Through the efforts of Maine Senators Collins and King, the U.S. Senate passed a resolution designating September 25, 2015, as National Lobster Day. This might seem like an inconsequential development, but we at the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative took it very seriously. We contacted publications and journalists, television stations and producers to tell them about the day and share Maine’s amazing lobster story. The holiday was featured in 20 print and online articles and more than 100 broadcasts, reaching 153 million people. For comparison, a 30-second TV ad during “the big football game” reached just 112 million people—and that was for a product! National Lobster Day was a prime example of our strategy in action: Create demand for Maine Lobster by influencing media and chefs. Our focus is to educate the world about Maine Lobster by sharing our unique story. We introduce them to Maine New Shell Lobster, a seasonal delicacy only available from Maine between July and November when our lobstermen catch it. We teach people about the fascinating men and women in the industry who dedicate their life’s work to lobstering in the cold, clear and pristine waters of Maine. We explain how our industry has a rich family tradition of fishermen and shore-side partners and the many people’s livelihoods that are supported when they buy Maine Lobster. We talk about sustainability and how Maine Lobster is the original sustainable seafood—our first sustainability laws were passed in 1829, long before they were fashionable.

Ultimately, we’re telling them the story of Maine. And chefs are hearing our story—in fact not only did the President of China enjoy Maine Lobster at the White House, but the Pope was also served Maine Lobster during his recent visit to America! Chef Lidia Bastianich created Heirloom Tomato, Housemade Burrata, Steamed Maine Lobster. You can find the recipe here: www.splendidtable.org/recipes/heirloom-tomato-housemade-burrata-steamed-maine-lobster. It seems that Maine Lobster is something the whole world loves.

Now that our season is winding down, you’ll see our messaging pivot to recipe ideas for Thanksgiving and the holidays. Before long it will be Valentine’s Day and you can be sure we’ll be promoting Maine Lobster for that occasion, and others. This fall, we plan a mini-campaign featuring Maine Lobster Tails for football games. We’ll call it “Tail-gating.” With all of these efforts we intend to keep Maine Lobster at the top of the minds of our target chefs and media during the winter months. We are also deep in the planning of our activities for next year. You can expect to see the same messaging around the live "Maine New Shell" product and similar themes focused on the different culinary applications, the great people and place that produces Maine Lobster and our sustainability story. We intend to bring that message and education to more chefs and media located in more U.S. cities, with affiliated offices in Damariscotta, Bath, and Kennebunk.
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS LEARN BY STUDYING THE WORLD AROUND THEM

By Melissa Waterman

This fall the Eastern Maine Skippers Program enters its third year. The regional program, a joint effort of the Penobscot East Resource Center and Deer Isle-Stonington High School, is aimed at high school students from eight Downeast schools who are currently fishing or aspiring to become fishermen. The students focus on a topic which relates to the region and has relevancy to the larger world. That topic is then incorporated into their school curriculum.

"This program came out of the local communities recognizing that students were fishing and were somewhat disengaged from high school and education," said Megan Flenniken, who recently took over management of the program at Penobscot East Resource Center. "It’s not a vocational program. The outcomes are very definitely academic."

"It’s important that we reach them and engage them in all parts of the industry, the management, the science, all of it."

This year 86 students from eight high schools (Deer Isle-Stonington, George Stevens Academy, Vinalhaven, North Haven, Narraguagus, Jonesport-Beals, Mount Desert Island and Ellsworth) will concentrate on the Maine lobstering industry. Last year they tackled the issue of invasive green crabs, asking the question of what could be done to control the crabs and also foster new businesses. The prior year they studied the viability of developing a winter flounder trap fishery for the region, designing the traps and successfully applying for a special license from the Department of Marine Resources to harvest the fish.

Lobster fishing is something that most students in the region are very familiar with, yet the complexities of the industry might be new to them. "The curriculum is divided into three parts," explained curriculum leader Val Peacock, who is consulting with the program through the Rural Aspirations Project. "We have the ‘in office’ section, which is concerned with the business aspects of lobstering, then the ‘on the water’ section, which involves things such as seamanship and oceanography. The third section is ‘at the table’ which has to do with what happens to a lobster after it leaves the boat."

This year the older students returned to review earlier years’ work and help with the younger students. "What they did last year has relevance to this year’s students," said Flenniken. "Sometimes we may bring people [with particular knowledge] into each school. Or sometimes there are already people in the community with that knowledge, for instance how to operate a lobster pound," Peacock explained.

The participating students will gather on November 18 at the Schoodic Institute in Winter Harbor to kick off the year-long program with a review of Maine’s lobstering industry. In January the students will focus on specific questions related to lobstering that are relevant to their communities. In March they will make presentations on those questions at the Maine Fishermen’s Forum in Rockport. The final presentations will take place in May. "We have some students who will be in the program for the third year. They will have made public presentations to large groups maybe ten times by this year," Flenniken noted.

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EMSP students travelled to North Haven last fall aboard the Khristy Michelle, Stonington lobsterman John Williams’ vessel. Photo courtesy of PERC.

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The program therefore draws on the expertise of those in the surrounding communities who have the specialized knowledge the students require. Peacock recounts the experience of working with students at Narraguagus High School on the flounder project three years ago. The teacher involved knew very little about winter flounder but Curtis Haycock, a local Milbridge fisherman, did. Haycock came in to meet with the students, assisted them in designing a trap and then helped set it at sea. "Sometimes we may bring people [with particular knowledge] into each school. Or sometimes there are already people in the community with that knowledge, for instance how to operate a lobster pound," Peacock explained.

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Under new federal rules implemented on June 1 to protect right whales from entanglement in lobster traps, lobstermen must "trawl up" their traps outside of the exemption line set in state waters. There must be a minimum of three traps per trawl from the 3-mile line to the 6-mile line. For zones A, B and C, there must be a minimum of five traps per trawl from the 6-mile line to the 12-mile line and zones D, E, F and G are required to fish a minimum of 10 traps per trawl from 6 to 12 miles. For all zones, outside of 12 miles there must be a minimum of 15 traps per trawl; this number increases to 20 traps per trawl in Zones F and G from November 1 until the end of February.

Some lobstermen have complained that the trawling up requirements are dangerous and put them and their crew at risk in offshore waters. We asked John Higgins, a NOAA specialist in protected species fishing gear modifications, whether he had heard any complaints about trawling up from those who fish offshore. We reprint his response here.

While I have had a few calls from Maine lobstermen discussing the challenges of trawling up, for the most part, Maine lobstermen have accepted the trawling up changes well. Trawling up was a bigger challenge in Massachusetts and Rhode Island waters because trap pot fisherman do not have miles of exempt state waters as Maine does. Because of this, the trawling up mandates came right to the shore and captured many small vessels with limited capacity, some of which were outboard boats.

We are in a monitoring phase and it is difficult to measure success, gear compliance and so on. The population of North Atlantic right whales has grown and I think it is important that fishermen know their efforts and expenses may be paying off. When I tell fishermen that the right whale population has grown from around 300 to more than 450 over the past 10 years (a 50% increase), some will respond, "Great, more to entangle!" My reply is, "Imagine if the population was not growing and how that would affect the federal rules. Usually a fisherman is glad to hear the population has grown.

Keep in mind that, more often than not, most fishermen are happy to learn the population has grown because they respect these animals that live and work in the same waters as they do. If a fisherman is arguing with me over the whale plan it is more often about how these animals are protected, not that these animals are protected.

In the years when I fished both offshore and inshore, from Long Island to the Gulf of Maine, I never heard a fisherman have a bad word to say about these large whales. When we saw one at the very least it took the boredom out of a very long, hard day. The captain would turn to the crew, point off across the horizon and yell, "Hey, check that out." Then we would stop flaking nets, look up and take it in for a moment together, nod our heads until someone shouted, "Cool!" (Now they say awesome.) Then it would be back to our eyes on our work with never a bad thing to say, not on all the boats I worked.

The bigger story is how well the overwhelming majority of fishermen in Maine have accepted the rule. Again I am certain that is a result of the MLA, the Maine Department of Marine Resources and some individual fishermen speaking as one Maine voice at the Take Reduction Team meeting.

If you are worried about the safety of your vessel and crew in complying with the offshore trawling requirements under the whale rules, please call John Higgins to explain your concerns. It is important that your concerns are heard by NMFS! He can be reached via cell at 207-771-3669 or landline at 207-359-4404.

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For generations, Farm Credit East has helped commercial fishing operations plan for and finance the equipment they need to harvest more profits for their business. Today, we continue to provide flexible financing and solid advice for aquatic businesses of every type and size.

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Thus far trawling up has been more of a problem in Mass. and R.I. than in Maine. Photo by Steve Motta.
But what of the younger lobstermen? In a state dominated by the older generation and faced with changes in economics and the ocean environment, their parents could not imagine, how are today’s new lobstermen faring?

Erin Hanley, age 20, of Bass Harbor exudes a sense of cheerfulness. It’s a good time to be a lobsterman. In 1995, when Hanley was born, Maine lobstermen landed slightly more than 37 million pounds of lobster at an average price of $2.74 per pound. Forty years ago, when her parents’ generation was born, lobstermen landed 16.5 million pounds at an average price of $1.61. By contrast, last year lobster landings in Maine topped 123 million pounds, with an average price of $3.69 per pound. That’s a big increase — moving into bigger boats and heading further out to sea is an easy job but I love a challenge. And I make pretty good money, ” she said laughing.

Hanley graduated from Mt. Desert High School in 2012, a year earlier than the rest of her class, and promptly became a full-time lobsterman. “I started with my dad [Patrick Hanley], working on the boat the first year I had it. ” He fished from an older 28-foot boat, made of fiberglass over wood. “I’ve got a decent set up,” he said. “I paid for the boat the first year I had it. It’s got a little gas engine, uses about 10 gallons of fuel a day. ” He fishes in state waters and this year’s season has been, as he put it, “normal, like it was a few years ago.”

Jellison recognizes that the incredible uptick in landings in recent years has been an incentive for some lobstermen to move into bigger boats and head offshore to lobster. But he remains cautious about such expenditures. “Honestly, the big boats rely on making more money, ” he said. “They have to because they have all those expenses. I don’t plan to have that problem. Maybe in the next ten years or so I’ll get a little bit bigger boat to fish longer through the season,” he said.

This year not only have lobstermen harvested a steady stream of lobsters but the price has increased compared to past years. That means lobstermen should have more money in their pockets to pay for things like a new car or even a house.

Caleb MacDonald, 21, of Swan’s Island, illustrates what a young lobsterman can accomplish. He began lobstering with his uncle and grandfather on his mother’s side when he was a child and had his commercial license by the time he was five years old. “My uncle would come in from hauling and he’d take me out in the afternoon to haul my traps by hand from a skiff. It would take two to three hours every afternoon. That’s when I really developed a passion for it,” he said.

MacDonald attended Maine Maritime Academy but only for one year. “I did well but I couldn’t stop thinking about lobstering. I was considering the Merchant Marine. But I really just wanted to go lobstering. The harder you work the more money you make.”

And so he did. In 2013 MacDonald’s grandfather retired from fishing and sold his 28-foot boat to his grandson. The next year after securing a loan, MacDonald stepped up to a 35-foot Mitchell Cove which he fishes year round.

This season has been good — no complaints — with a steady catch and good price. MacDonald is using the money he makes carefully. “I’ve taken these first couple of years of establishment to myself, buying a federal permit [to fish outside in federal waters] and a new boat and all new gear,” he said. “You can’t have junk gear out there. I just bought a house and a new truck.” MacDonald rents space to store his traps and work on his gear from Kent’s Wharf, where he sells his lobsters to owners Cynthia and David Nigquette. “I’m thankful, to have a boat and a house and all these things at my age. We are very fortunate right now. I sure don’t want the low price of a few years ago,” he said.

Investing cautiously in a boat and gear seems to be the hallmark of many young lobstermen. Julian Zuke, 20, who fishes from Cape Porpoise, borrowed money from his father to buy his first boat, a 21-foot Repco, which he promptly paid back. He started out as a sternman at age 12, working for a friend of his father’s for two years, then for various lobstermen in the area. He completed his apprenticeship hours quickly and received his commercial license on his 17th birthday. His current boat is a 31-foot Jim Beal. “I took out a bank loan [for the Beal], I bought my federal permit too,” he said. He also spent a year studying at the Landings School in Arundel in the school’s marine systems program. “It was hard to be off the water. But I wanted to learn to work on my own boat,” he said.

This season was slow to start but has picked up steam since mid-summer. And the price? “This is the highest price I’ve seen since I started fishing,” Zuke said happily. He’s considering buying a larger boat in three years’ time, when he’s paid off his boat loan. “I’m not really worried about anything in the future except the government putting in some regulations or a quota like they did with groundfish so we can’t make money anymore,” he said.

![Erin Hanley and an oversized lobster. Photo courtesy of E. Hanley.](image)

![Caleb MacDonald says he is thankful to be able to own his own house and boat at such a young age. Photo courtesy of C. MacDonald.](image)
I have a lot of respect for lobstermen. After 15 years in my position that respect has only gotten stronger. There are so many people in the industry who are truly committed to ensuring that we keep the lobster population robust and lobstermen thriving so that the next generation can have the opportunities they did. After reading this month’s lead story in Landings about some of the younger lobstermen just starting out, I am even more encouraged about the future. Before we did the Lobster Leadership Program last year, there was a mindset among many older fishermen that the younger generation didn’t care, didn’t believe that the young ones did not want to be involved in anything but their boats and their traps. People were worried that no new leaders would step up and carry the industry forward. As it turns out, nothing could be further from the truth.

We are taught as children that assumptions can be dangerous. In this case, our assumptions have been a bit misguided. Young lobstermen are not the disadvantaged so many of us thought. In fact, the group of lobstermen who participated in the Lobster Leadership Program are all incredibly bright, forward and independent thinkers, who care deeply about the future of the industry. They were not actively involved in the nuts and bolts of lobster management because they didn’t think anyone cared what they thought. After having the opportunity to learn about lobster science, management and marketing and gain some perspective on Maine’s lobster fishery they are visiting Prince Edward Island lobstermen, all that changed.

Those young lobstermen and others have stepped up, and in a big way. Many have been elected or appointed to serve on lobster zone councils, the Lobster Advisory Council, the Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Council, the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative and the Maine Lobstermen’s Association Board. They say that they have been warmly welcomed by those who have served in those positions for many years. Which is as it should be.

Having younger lobstermen participate in industry meetings and discussions has certainly affected the MLA and how the Board thinks and works. Many Leadership Institute alumni regularly attend our monthly MLA Directors meetings. And they don’t just show up; they actively participate in discussions and bring their perspectives to the group. They learn about the issues our industry is grappling with, challenge ideas and help move the conversation forward. These young people are influencing decisions and definitely making a difference.

The Landings article shatters another misconception about the next generation. Older fishermen grumble that the younger generation is too reckless in spending and not planning cautiously enough for the future. Since they have lobstered only during mostly good times, the assumption goes, they don’t know what it means to scrimp and save for the possibility of bad times. Yet those profiled in this month’s paper have a strong sense of how to run a small business. They and many others like them are being strategic with their investments and planning for their future. That type of thinking speaks well also for the future of Maine lobstering.

With the average age of a Maine lobsterman now 50 years old, a good portion of the nearly 6,000 lobstermen in the state are already well-established and beginning to think about retirement. They have built their homes, raised their families, and are now on the other side of their careers. These men and women include a dedicated bunch of passionate and active leaders, who have helped shepherd Maine’s lobster landings to record highs and guided the industry to a stable and profitable place.

New blood, new faces, new ideas. It’s heartening to know that within such a traditional fishery, where often change comes slowly if at all, the transition from the older generation to the new is taking place quietly and smoothly. We look forward to watching the next generation of leaders make their own distinctive marks in Maine’s lobstering world.

As always, stay safe on the water.
News You Can Use

SAFETY AND OFFSHORE TRAWLING UP REQUIREMENTS

Are you concerned about your ability to safely comply with the offshore trawling up requirements implemented as part of the whale rules? The MLA has raised this concern with NMFS, but we are not sure how to solve it because the situation for each vessel is unique.

So, what can you do? Call John Higgins, NMFS Gear Specialist, at 207-359-4404 (land line) or 207-771-3669 (cell). He can document your safety concerns and meet you to view the issues specific to your vessel. Based on his experience working with other lobstermen, he may have solutions used by others to safely comply with the rules. The bottom line is that we need to get these safety issues in trying to comply with the whale rules documented by NMFS. This step is essential to helping us find a solution that will keep you safe. If you believe the trawling up requirements pose a safety issue for your lobstering operation, please call John Higgins!

TRAP TAGS CAN BE HOG RINGED

If you need to cut out trap tags to shift your lobster gear, remember that you no longer need to get replacement tags from DMR. Be sure to cut out your tags in a manner that keeps all of the identifying information intact so it is clear to Marine Patrol that it is a legal 2015 trap tag and then hog ring the tag into the bridge of the trap. Catastrophic losses for replacement tags still need to go through Marine Patrol for reissue. Questions? Call your local Marine Patrol Officer.

ROYAL RIVER DREDGING

Beginning the last week of October, the Army Corps of Engineers began dredging two small sections of the channel of the Royal River Federal navigation project (FNP) in Yarmouth. The dredged sediments will be placed at the Portland Disposal Site located approximately 15 nautical miles from the dredging site. All fishing gear must be removed from within the specified Haul Route to avoid damage to or loss of fishing gear during the disposal of dredged material. A map of the haul route is available at www.nae.usace.army.mil/Missions/ProjectsTopics/RoyalRiver.aspx. FMI on this project or if you have an inquiry regarding the loss of fishing gear suspected to be the result of dredged material disposal, contact Michael Walsh, the Corps Project Manager, at 978-318-8586.

CANADIAN LOBSTER SEASON OPENINGS

The upper Bay of Fundy lobster fishery, LFA 35, opened its 2.5 month season on Oct. 14 and will close on December 31. This fishery has a trap limit of 300 traps. The Southwest and Southeast Nova Scotia lobster fisheries, LFA 33 and 34, are scheduled to open their six month seasons on November 30 and will close at the end of May, 2016. LFA 33 has a trap limit of 250 traps; LFA 34 has a trap limit of 375 and 400 traps and is Canada’s largest lobster fishery. The New Brunswick Bay of Fundy lobster fisheries, LFA 36 and 37, will open their two month season on November 10 and close on January 14, 2016. These fisheries have a trap limit of 300 traps. The Grand Manan lobster fishery, LFA 38, opens its 7.5 month season on November 10 through June 29. This fishery has a trap limit of 375 traps. The Grand Manan fishery around Machias Seal Island, LFA 38B, finishes its 6-month season on November 6. This fishery is limited to 375 traps. The Gulf of St. Lawrence lobster fishery, from northern New Brunswick across to the southwest side of P.E.I., LFA 25, finished its two month season on October 10. This fishery has a trap limit of 275 traps.

HAULING RESTRICTIONS LIFTED

As of November 1, it is legal to haul lobster traps at any time of day until May 31st. It is always legal to set lobster traps at any time throughout the year. Hauling restrictions are in place in both state and federal waters during the period ½ hour after sunset until ½ hour before sunrise from June 1st to October 31st; and during the period from 4 p.m., EDST, Saturday to ½ hour before sunrise the following Monday morning from June 1st to August 31st.

review data and discuss this issue during upcoming meetings in order to prepare for the state-wide discussion which will be underway by the new year. The DMR plans to submit legislation proposing changes to the lobster entry system in the next legislative session. They hope to bring the draft legislation to the zone councils before it is debated by the Legislature.

Amy Lent, Director of the Maine Maritime Museum, thanked the MLA Board for its help with the new lobster exhibit which opened this summer. It has been very well received and is attracting a lot of visitors. The museum will continue to make improvements and updates to the permanent exhibit as necessary. The next MLA Directors meeting will be November 10 in Bellast.

MLA PUBLIC OUTREACH

MLA Director Patrice McCarron sat on a panel during the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership’s 2015 State of the Bay conference. The session was entitled “Perspectives on our Changing Coast.” McCarron gave an overview of the Maine lobster industry and the importance of the lobster industry to Casco Bay. She noted that the health of the bay is essential to the future of the lobster industry, as well as the many dealers, processors and other support businesses located around the waterfront of the bay.

McCarron also gave two lectures as part of the Maine Maritime Museum’s lecture series celebrating the launch of the new lobster exhibit. The talks was entitled “Grit & Determination: Past, Present, and Future Issues Facing Lobstering.” McCarron presented a overview of the Maine lobster industry and explained the history of challenges lobstermen have faced, what they deal with now, and what is on the horizon in the 21st century.

DOUBLE GEAR MARKING IN EFFECT FOR JEFFREYS LEDGE AND JORDAN BASIN

Effective September 1, 2015, two additional Gear Marking Areas around Jeffreys Ledge and near Jordan Basin became part of the federal whale rules. Gear fished in the Jeffreys Gear Marking Area must be marked in three 12” sections with red and green; gear fished in the Jordan Basin Gear Marking Area must be marked in three 12” sections with red and purple. All other Maine lobstermen fishing gear outside the exemption line must have their endlines marked in three 12” sections with red.

JONESPORT BUOY IS BACK!

The NOAA buoy off of Jonesport is back online. Buoy 44027, located 20 nm Southeast of Jonesport, is owned and maintained by the National Data Buoy Center. The buoy went offline on March 24, 2015 and was successfully re-deployed the week of October 21, 2015. Visit www.nodc.noaa.gov to monitor buoy data.
The Area 1A herring fishery reopened on October 1 with the start of the third trimester. All permitted herring vessels, both purse seines and midwater trawls, are allowed to fish this area from October 1 to December 31, or until the quota is landed. The ASMFC’s Atlantic Herring Section set the Trimester 3 (October 1 to December 31) days out effort control measure to allow three (3) consecutive landing days per week in Area 1A from Sundays at 6 a.m. to Wednesdays at 6 p.m., Thursday through Sunday are “no landing” days.

Landings will be monitored closely; the directed fishery will be closed when 92% of the Area 1A quota is projected to be reached. For the Trimester 3 Area 1A fishery that value is 6,971 metric tons (mt).

Coast Guard Safety Stickers

The deadline for lobstermen who fish outside 3 miles to successfully complete a dockside safety exam and be issued a safety decal was October 15. The decal must be renewed at least every five years. If you had already received a safety decal issued after January 1, 2013, you are not required to have your vessel reexamined until five years from the date when the decal was issued. If you are boarded by the Coast Guard and found not in full compliance, you may be subject to enforcement action to include a civil penalty, termination of the vessel’s voyage, or other operational controls.

The Coast Guard has an online commercial vessel checklist. Simply answer the questions and this tool will generate a custom checklist of items required for your particular fishing vessel. You can find it at www.uscg.mil/d13/cfvs/test/1ChecklistCover.html.

To schedule an exam, contact:

• Seabrook, NH to Waldoboro: Kevin Plowman, 207-780-3526, kevin.l.plowman@uscg.mil
• Waldoboro to Ellsworth: Brian Smith, 207-664-3931, brian.m.smith@uscg.mil
• Ellsworth to Eastport: Garry Moores, 207-838-4440, fxexaminer@myfairpoint.net

COAST GUARD LIFE RAFTS

Effective February 26, 2016, new safety regulations require that vessels fishing outside of 3 miles must carry survival craft that ensures no part of an individual is immersed in water.

MLA WELCOMES NEW STAFF

The MLA was sad to say goodbye to April McNutt, who guided Maine lobstermen and their families through the Maine’s Health Insurance Marketplace created under the Affordable Care Act.

We are excited to welcome Alisha Keezer to the MLA staff as our new health insurance Navigator. Alisha has her degree in Public Health and is working towards receiving her Masters degree. Her previous work experience includes working with the public to understand Maine’s health insurance marketplace and assist with enrollment. MLA is also excited to welcome Andi Pelletier to the MLA staff. Andi will be working as our new membership director, focusing on keeping MLA’s membership strong and looking for ways to ensure that MLA remains responsive and relevant to our members.

MLA V-NOTCH SURVEY

Thank you to everyone who participated in this year’s V-notch Survey, which took place the week of October 12. Maine’s commitment to V-notching our egg-bearing female lobsters has been critical to the success of our fishery. V-notchng has become a major part of the conservation measures in the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission lobster management plan. The MLA has been conducting this survey since 1985 and we couldn’t do it without your support. Thank you!
Present your MLA membership card at the following businesses and receive generous discounts!

**Applied Refrigeration Services**  
Windham, ME -- $250 off new installations.

**Back River Financial Group**  
Farmingdale, ME -- Free initial consultation and review of previous tax returns.

**Bessy Bait, LLC**  
Seabrook, NH -- $5 discount per drum on multiple drum purchases (must show current MLA card).

**Coastal Hydraulics**  
Seabrook, NH -- 10% discount on all in stock items for MLA members.

**Commercial Fisheries News**  
Deer Isle, ME -- Discounted annual subscription rate for $18.75 with MLA membership noted on check.

**Craig’s All Natural**  
Durham, NH -- 10% discount on all Victinox Cutlery.

**Friendship Trap Company**  
Friendship, ME -- 5% off list price on traps purchased at the Friendship store.

**Hamilton Marine**  
Searsport, Rockland, Portland, Southwest Harbor, Jonesport, ME -- Discounts available to commercial fishermen.

**Law Office of J. Scott Logan, LLC**  
Portland, ME -- 20% discount on foreclosure defense and bankruptcy legal fees.

**Liferaft Services, LLC**  
York, ME -- 5% off liferaft repack with proof of MLA membership. CAN be combined with other promotions.

**Maine Camp Outfitters**  
Sunset, ME -- 10% off all apparel and promotional product orders.

**Maine Lobstermen’s Association**  
Kennebunk, ME -- 10% off MLA merchandise.

**Maine Maritime Museum**  
Bath, ME -- Free admission to MLA members.

**McMillan Offshore Survival Training**  
Belfast, ME -- 10% discount on USCG Drill Conductor training.

**Midcoast Marine Electronics**  
Rockland, ME -- 10% off list price on all marine electronic products.

**National Fisherman**  
North Hollywood, CA -- Special annual subscription rate.

**New England Propeller Inc**  
Plymouth, MA -- Discounts on marine propeller, shafting, and related items, sales & repairs.

**North Atlantic Power Products**  
Exeter, NH -- 10% discount on parts and service.

**Nicholas H Walsh PA**  
Portland, ME -- 20% off legal services.

**North Atlantic Power Products**  
Exeter, NH -- 10% discount on parts and service.

**Penobscot Marine Museum**  
Searsport, ME -- Free admission for MLA members.

**Richard Stanley Custom Boats**  
Exeter, NH -- Free admission for MLA members.

**Sea Rose Traps Co.**  
Scarborough, ME -- 5% off trap list price when you show your MLA card.

**Smithwick & Mariners Insurance**  
Falmouth, ME -- Discounted vessel insurance plus 5% discount with proof of CG approved Drill Conductor course within the last 5 years.

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www.swboatworks.com

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**North Atlantic Power Products**  
Exeter, NH -- 10% discount on parts and service.

**Penobscot Marine Museum**  
Searsport, ME -- Free admission for MLA members.

**Richard Stanley Custom Boats**  
Exeter, NH -- Free admission for MLA members.

**SMithwick & Mariners Insurance**  
Falmouth, ME -- Discounted vessel insurance plus 5% discount with proof of CG approved Drill Conductor course within the last 5 years.

**SW Boatworks**  
Lamonie, ME -- $1000 discount for hull or top

**Weatherlye Seafood Inc.**  
Kittery, ME -- 10% off mail order purchases, just mention you are an MLA member.  
1-800-914-1774.
As a younger fisherman, I always want to experiment and try new ideas so I can catch more lobster. The folks at Friendship Trap are always there to help me develop these ideas and get the traps just the way I want them. AND, I get a top quality trap that’s built to last and get the traps just the way I want them.

—I really enjoy providing helpful information to our customers. I see what’s working along the coast and can provide ideas that can help them design their traps. Effort spent getting their traps just the way they need them pays off!

—Jerry Wadsworth, Friendship Trap road sales manager

Take charge of your health and get coverage!

Open Enrollment for 2016 begins November 1, 2015

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All plans in Maine’s Marketplace cover preventive and essential services such as:

Essential Services:
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• Maternity care
• Prescriptions
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Free Preventive Services:
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• Counseling

Did you receive tax credits for your 2015 insurance plan? Make sure to update your account to continue receiving tax credits in 2016!

QUESTIONS?
Call MLA’s Navigator Alisha Keezer at 207-967-4555 or email her at alisha@mainelobstermen.org.
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HEALTH INSURANCE ENROLLMENT BEGINS NOV. 1

By MLA staff

Yes, it is that time again, time to consider enrolling in Affordable Care Act (ACA) health insurance plan or, if you are already enrolled, to update your information and re-enroll. The enrollment period is shorter this year than in the past, from November 1 to January 31, 2016, so now is the time to get at it!

Most Maine residents purchase their individual or family health insurance policies through Maine’s health insurance marketplace located at www.healthcare.gov. The marketplace, also called a health exchange, is set up to facilitate the purchase of health insurance in each state in accordance with the ACA. According to the Maine Bureau of Insurance, three companies will offer plans in Maine’s marketplace this year: Community Health Options (CHO), Anthem Health Plan of Maine, and Harvard Pilgrim Health Care. Combined, these companies offer about 40 individual policies through the marketplace.

It’s even more important to enroll in a health insurance plan this year than in past years because the penalty for not enrolling has risen. If you do not have health insurance coverage in place for 2016 and do not qualify for an exemption, your tax penalty when you file your 2016 taxes will be either 2.5% of your yearly household income or $695 per adult and $347.50 for each child under 18 (up to 2 children), whichever figure is higher. The total liability for a family is capped at 300% of the individual penalty, or $2,085. Ouch!

To find out what it would cost to buy health insurance for you and your family from any of these companies, visit Maine’s Health Insurance Marketplace at www.healthcare.gov. Your quote will reflect whether or not you qualify for an Advanced Premium Tax Credit, which would lower the cost of the premium. The policy rates vary based on the level of coverage, where you live, your age, whether you smoke, household size and your income.

Small businesses

Beginning in November, the Small Business Health Options Program, known as SHOP, is available through Maine’s health insurance marketplace at www.healthcare.gov. Companies that have between two and 50 full-time employees (those who work at least 30 hours per week) may enroll directly in insurance plans through SHOP under the ACA. There is no open enrollment period for SHOP; employers can select a plan at any time. However, small businesses are not required to provide health insurance and there is no penalty if a small business chooses not to do so.

The Maine marketplace offers various health insurance options for employees through the SHOP. If a company wants to use the program, it must offer coverage to all full-time employees.

If you are a small business owner you can start the process by visiting Maine’s health insurance marketplace at www.healthcare.gov for information about available SHOP plans and pricing. Small businesses may also learn more about SHOP plans by contacting an agent, broker, or preferred insurance company. Healthcare.gov will notify you about your eligibility for SHOP by phone and email. You can also ask to get your notification by mail.

If you're not eligible to participate in the SHOP Marketplace, you and your employees can keep your existing coverage, but you won’t be eligible for the Small Business Health Care Tax Credit.

Under the ACA, your small business may qualify for the Small Business Health Care Tax Credit if you have fewer than 25 full-time employees, your average employee salary is $25,000 per year or less, you offer your employees health insurance through the SHOP and pay at least 50% of your full-time employees’ premium costs. This tax credit is worth 50% of your contribution towards your employee’s premium costs.

If you plan to claim the Small Business Health Care Tax Credit, you’ll need to get an official eligibility determination from the SHOP Marketplace. If you’re eligible, you can claim the tax credit when you submit your federal income tax returns.

THE MLA WELCOMES NEW HEALTH INSURANCE NAVIGATOR

This month the Maine Lobstermen’s Association (MLA) welcomes Alisha Keezer as the organization’s new health insurance Navigator. Keezer, 23, is a native of Biddeford Pool. She attended Wheaton College and University of New England (UNE) from which she graduated in 2014. She is currently completing her Master’s degree in Public Health at UNE.

“What draws me to public health is the feeling of helping someone. You feel satisfied with yourself at the end of the day,” Keezer said. “We are delighted to have Alisha on board. She’s ready to hit the ground running to get Maine lobstermen and their families to help them find the appropriate health insurance plan for their needs.”

Keezer most recently worked for Maine Health Partners, a nonprofit organization that assists Maine residents with finding health care and health insurance. She worked in one of the organization’s programs, known as Care Partners, which links low-income Maine residents who don’t qualify for Maine Care or federal health insurance with volunteer doctors as well as health care managers. “They make sure that the clients get what they need. Plus they provide health education on other things, like nutrition,” Keezer explained. She was also trained as a certified health insurance counselor to aid people who wished to obtain health insurance through the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

It was while she was attending Wheaton College that she felt the urge to get involved in public health issues. “I did a project on children living below the poverty level and their outcomes in terms of health issues,” Keezer explained. “I surveyed children at schools in Maine and Massachusetts who were receiving free lunch [a proxy for income level]. She found that among the many health issues that plague poor children, diabetes was a major illness. “They were overweight because they weren’t eating properly. And I wasn’t providing any help,” she said.

As a child Keezer lived three doors away from the pier in Biddeford Pool so she grew up around fishermen. She’s looking forward to working with lobstermen and their families to help them find the appropriate health insurance through the ACA. “I have a passion to help and I think I know how to interact with people so they understand their options,” she said. A competitive swimmer in her college days, Keezer is ready to put her enthusiasm and skills to work for Maine’s lobstering communities.
result of those meetings, DMR withdrew the proposal of a tiered licensing system put forth in the report. "History shows that fishermen have always had to react to a drafted law. The sea change was to truly have a conversation," he said.

Lobstermen gave Keliher and his staff an earful. But despite the sometimes rough exchanges during the meetings, the talk that took place afterward in the parking lot or via email tended to be fruitful. "After any meeting people would come up to talk to me. It’s all about laying out the information so people understand, so that we get through to them," Keliher noted.

In February, 2014, Keliher once again hit the road, this time to talk to lobstermen about data showing a drop in juvenile lobsters along the coast and about the problem of latency among lobster license holders. Latency refers to the number of unused traps that lobstermen could at some point put in the water. "Those meetings were somewhat somber," Keliher recalled. "The settlement numbers made lobstermen feel sort of like ‘uh-oh, the eggshell’s cracked.’ Plus there was natural skepticism about the science." It was at this round of meetings that the notion of creating a state Fisheries Management Plan for lobster was first introduced.

This year’s latest round of meetings in September focused on the licensing system brought different responses from each zone, according to Keliher. "For example, Zone A is the poster child for the other zones. They changed from trap tags to licenses for their entry standard and 22 people came off the waiting list [in the last 2 years]. That gives some predictability," Keliher said. In Zone B, by contrast, very few lobstermen are leaving the fishery. "Lobstermen came to the Zone B meeting saying ‘Yup, we never envisioned this. We didn’t have to go through this [waiting list] to come in and we need to find a way to fix it.’ It [changing the entry/exit standard] is something that we can do that does not threaten the fishery right now. Licenses will continue to decline by zone, but in a trickle, not in a rush," Keliher said.

While the typical fisherman’s notion of government is that its aim is solely to constrain fishing activities, Keliher’s point of view is different. "Technology exists right now that could destroy any fishery," he said, referring to the complex electronics and other fish-finding gear used by many fishermen. "Our job is to regulate to assure the sustainability of the stocks. At the same time, we have to be an advocate for the fishermen as well as the fish. It’s a balance," Keliher spoke of the state’s scallop fishery as a successful example of that balance. As a result of closing scallop beds for three years throughout the coast on a rotating basis, Maine’s scallop landings have increased dramatically during the past two years. "We worked hand-in-hand with the fishermen to allow fishing while the stock recovers," Keliher said. "I remember meeting with about 200 scallop fishermen in the Whiting town hall. They were pissed off. We said, ‘here’s what we have to do’ [based on NEFMC criteria], so help us, talk with us.”

Creating a Fisheries Management Plan for lobster will also require this type of collaborative process. Components of the plan went out to the Lobster Advisory Council in the spring, then to the Zone Councils. The next step will be to send out the Stock Assessment section through the same process, followed by specific elements, called “triggers,” during the winter. "While the Lobstermen’s Union continues to talk about the FMP as if this is a power grab on the part of DMR, it’s not. It does not have the force of law, it’s a guidance document," Keliher emphasized. "We are doing this now, when the sky’s not falling. At each meeting I ask people in the room to raise their hands if they think that lobster landings will stay at this level in the future. No one raises their hand."

By the tank

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Knott Sr. bought the former textile and paper mill on the Blackstone River in 1979, after spending 20 years as president of Coatings Engineering Corporation, the largest custom coating company in the world. Knott Jr. joined the company in 1979, worked as its chief operating officer from 1988 to 1997, “then went off to do other things, inside the industry and out,” he said. He returned three years ago to run the business.

When Knott Sr. introduced the trademarked Aquamesh vinyl-coated wire in 1980, he had already worked for years to perfect the steel mesh by making it impervious to corrosion. His wire traps initially were constructed first, then dipped in vinyl. Eventually he changed that system. Aquamesh wire is produced using a two-step method of first galvanizing rolls of steel mesh (called “galvanizing after welding,” or GAW), then coating with polyvinyl chloride (PVC) to protect the wire from harsh ocean conditions.

The first load of Aquamesh was delivered in 1980 to the coast of Maine, long known as the center of the New England fishery. Traps made with Aquamesh now comprise 80 percent of all U.S. lobster traps.

“We always used to sell the mesh in rolls. One of the big changes we’ve adopted is that 75 percent is now sold in panels for trap builders or fishermen. We take large orders and cut to size, then they fabricate the traps. We also sell tools for bending wire,” Knott explained.

“It’s low-cost and highly effective,” said Knott Jr. “Each fisherman likes to finish in his own way: one or two heads, different colors, etc. At first the mesh was only green vinyl-coated, but now comes in seven colors. In Maine, the most popular color is yellow, while Canadians favor blue. Some fishermen like to use a different color on the ends or doors to distinguish theirs from other lobstermen’s traps.

Riverdale has competition, primarily from China, but, as CEO Knott explains, while the mesh from China is less expensive it is also less durable, showing signs of rust in as few as two years. “Lobstermen mostly buy ours, which says they care about quality. We make it all, we don’t buy it, so we control the inputs that go into the vinyl,” said Knott. He noted that the Chinese mesh is “not designed for sub-sea use, not as abrasion-resistant, and the sea water extracts some compounds from the vinyl. They chose the wrong inputs because they are economy-driven, not quality-driven. And ours is better environmentally.”

The company buys all its steel in North America, from either the U.S. or Canada. The steel comes to the company by a train that delivers directly to the Riverdale Mills factory. “This helps the industry and helps keep rates down to fishermen,” Knott said.

The process starts with hot rolled steel, drawn into wire in any diameter desired. “We start with 1/3-inch rod and make wire, then we weld the wire into mesh. After the weld, there’s a hot galvanized zinc bath that makes the mesh very corrosion resistant,” he said.

Next an epoxy coat is applied followed by a powder coat with PVC. The exact process is proprietary to Riverdale Mills. After coating, the mesh is finished to be sold in either rolls or sheets. “Our product goes several years before there is any evidence of rust,” Knott noted.

The mill where the wire is made had a long and varied history before Knott Sr. began manufacturing coated mesh. It began in the early 19th century as the first mass manufacturer of scythes. Later the mill expanded to forge bayonets for the Union Army during the Civil War. After that it became a textile mill, then in 1910 was turned into a mill for special coated papers. With changes in manufacturing, the mill fell on hard times until Knott bought it.

Riverdale makes several types of wire—galvanized, stainless steel, and copper alloy wire—in many configurations. Besides Aquamesh, the company’s trademarked products include Geomesh for land uses including erosion control; WireWall, used to define parts of the U.S.-Mexico border; and SoftStep for the poultry industry. The latest change in Riverdale’s Aquamesh business is in the aquaculture market. One of the biggest uses of the wire now is for cultivation of shellfish, primarily oysters.

“We work closely with a company in eastern Canada called OysterGro. They use our mesh for their products. Usually those products are rectangular baskets used to raise oysters in bags at the surface of the water because it turns out there are more nutrients in surface-level water. You end up with better-shaped oysters,” said Knott.


Riverdale Mills delivered its first roll of Aquamesh coated trap wire to Maine in 1980.
Get ready for El Niño!

El Niño refers to a period of months when the waters of the central and eastern Pacific Ocean are much warmer than average. The warm water in turn causes the atmosphere above the ocean to grow warmer, which then affects the climate over much of the United States. A strong El Niño will typically influence the climate and weather during the winter. This year’s El Niño is amongst the strongest on record.

The El Niño phenomenon was first noticed by South American fishermen in the 1600s. The warmer-than-usual water that brushed the western shores of the continent during El Niño blocked upwelling of cold water which brought the anchovy schools close to shore. Not a good thing for the anchovy fishermen.

The two strongest El Niño events on record prior to this year, 1982-1983 and 1997-1998, produced quite mild winters from the Pacific Northwest to the Northeast. “If people remember those years, they might expect a repeat this winter,” said NOAA Regional Climate Services Director for the Eastern Region Ellen Mecray. “But not so fast,” she cautioned.

“We can look back at past years when El Niño was strong and get an idea about what this winter will be like, but there are many factors that affect the weather here in the Northeast,” she said. “Typically, a strong El Niño year means warmer temperatures and more precipitation.” But, she said, that is if you only look at the effect of El Niño. Other factors influencing winter weather include the North Atlantic Oscillation, jet streams, and oceanographic factors. “The Gulf of Maine is warmer now than it was in past El Niño years. Maybe that means stronger storms this winter. We aren’t really sure,” Mecray said.

Pershing said that just because the winter may be warmer on average, that may not be the case in Maine, specifically.

U.S. Winter Outlook

The winter forecast for New England predicts a normal amount of precipitation but a distinctly greater chance of warmer temperatures. Still, Mother Nature could throw us another winter of heavy snowfall.

NOAA graphics.
### Maine Lobster Zone Council Members (as of November 2015)

Names shaded in gray reflect the winners of the 2015 election. Congratulations!!!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Zone A</th>
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<th>Zone C</th>
<th>Zone D</th>
<th>Zone E</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>John Drouin ('18) 259-3949</td>
<td>Mark Bennett ('17) 422-6470</td>
<td>David Tall ('18) 359-6538</td>
<td>Michael Dawson ('16) 563-1562</td>
<td>Eric Wellington ('16) 889-2572</td>
<td>Lyman Kennedy ('18) 781-4662</td>
<td>Christopher Leger ('17) 451-0600</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Dennis Sargent Sr ('17) 546-2005</td>
<td>Wyatt Beal ('18) 244-0765</td>
<td>Jacob Thompson ('17) 683-9387</td>
<td>Erik Waterman ('18) 542-5225</td>
<td>Glenn Rogers ('18) 833-5240</td>
<td>Chris Nunn ('18) 284-3034</td>
<td>Cody Nunn ('17) 710-6580</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Michael Hutchins ('17) 763-3983</td>
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<td>Mike Bickford ('18) 857-2994</td>
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</table>
| 11       | Wayne Canning ('17) 338-4601 | Rodney Jordan ('10) 799-7743 | Bessy Bait is sold at our warehouse located at 155 rear Batchedler Rd., Seabrook NH 03874 Please call for HOURS and PRICING! Bessy Bait is also sold at all Brooks Trap Mill locations.

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Can't wait for the next issue of Landings?

Do you have fishing photos you want to share? Stories to tell? Want to catch up on news and info from around the region?

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www.facebook.com/mlcalliance
This editorial first appeared on October 22 on the C-Science of Fisheries Sustainability web site (http://cfishsci.org/).

Where is the science in seafood sustainability and certification? It is about money and values – science has been largely lost. Seafood sustainability is again in the news as the Global Seafood Sustainability Initiative (GSSI) released its tool for evaluating the sustainability of fisheries. The GSSI tool has drawn immediate criticism from World Wildlife Fund (WWF) as they recently published an article titled, “GSSI compliance does not indicate sustainability certification, WWF warns.” This is an interesting development since WWF is on the board of GSSI.

GSSI is intended to provide an agreed standard for the wide range of certification and seafood labeling schemes. As their web site says “GSSI is a global platform and partnership of seafood companies, NGOs, experts, governmental and intergovernmental organizations working towards more sustainable seafood for everyone.” So who is right in this case, does the GSSI benchmarking tool tell you if a fishery is sustainable?

At its core, seafood sustainability is about the ability to produce food from the sea in the long term. Are the fishery and its management system operated in such a way that our grandchildren can still enjoy the same production from the fishery (subject to the constraints of external factors such as climate change) as we do today?

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, whose objective is food security, has been a big supporter of GSSI. For FAO, sustainability is about continued food production. During the 1990s when overfishing in developed countries was at its height, many retailers supported seafood certification because they wanted to have products to sell in the future ... again a focus on food sustainability.

However, environmental NGOs such as WWF are interested less in food sustainability, and more in reducing the environmental impacts of fishing, whether that be catch of non-target species like sharks, or impacts of fishing gear on the seafloor. Consequently, WWF has been a strong supporter of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), which is the leading certification scheme for sustainable fisheries. The MSC standard covers much more than sustainable food.

The most interesting development in seafood sustainability is the force driving the GSSI tool. The GSSI standards are likely to become a secure funding source for the NGO. Tim Wilson, in his paper from “hostile” NGOs that might picket a retailer “naked extortion. If, however, initiatives like GSSI were to be widely accepted, those steady sources of funds will dry up.

The most interesting development in seafood sustainability is the force driving certification, and — spoiler alert — it isn’t consumers. Not too many people buy their fish based on sustainability ratings. Retailers, like your neighborhood Whole Foods, Costco or Safeway, do not want the media on their backs or an environmental NGO picketing their store for selling unsustainably harvested fish; they would rather be seen as supporting sustainable fishing to avoid negative press. They consider seafood certification that is backed by key NGOs like Seafood Watch itself. Skipjack tuna is one of the largest fisheries in the world and provides most of the world’s canned tuna. Skipjack from the western Pacific are red (Avoid), yellow (Good Alternative) and green (Best Choice) on the Seafood Watch guide, depending on how they are caught. Purse seine fishing has bycatch of many species and is thus red, while pole-and-line fishing has less bycatch and is green. However, purse seineing has a much lower carbon footprint than pole-and-line fishing, Seafood Watch is valuing by-catch more than carbon footprint.

There is a major role for science in seafood sustainability. Science can determine if the management of a fishery will lead to long-term sustainability of food production. Science can also evaluate the environmental impacts of a fishery. However, science cannot tell you what environmental impacts are valued — that is a question of individual choice or public policy.

So where does this leave consumers, retailers and the rest of us interested in fish as food? The answer is confusing and will likely remain so. MSC was seen as a hope to sort out the conflicts in seafood labelling – given the WWF response it doesn’t seem likely it will do so.

Due to the support of a broad range of diverse stakeholders, GSSI is a potential challenger to the MSC as the premier standard of what fish species are sustainably fished. If the GSSI standards are widely accepted, competitors to MSC that have a lower standard may be accepted by retailers as defining sustainability. Currently, consumer and retailers face a broad range of conflicting seafood advice. Once the criteria moves beyond just the sustainability of the fishery to include environmental impacts, things become confusing as there are so many different types of impacts with no consensus on which ones are more important than others. This is where fisheries certification moves from the arena of science, to one of values.

For consumers and retailers, all the conflicting seafood advice is confusing. Take pollock from Alaska, the largest fishery in the US. This fishery is MSC certified, yet the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch does not rate it as a top choice, but as a “good alternative.” Greenpeace puts pollock on its red list.

Equally interesting is the conflict within the Monterey Bay Aquarium’s Seafood Watch itself. Skipjack tuna is one of the largest fisheries in the world and provides most of the world’s canned tuna. Skipjack from the western Pacific is red (Avoid), yellow (Good Alternative) and green (Best Choice) on the Seafood Watch guide, depending on how they are caught. Purse seine fishing has bycatch of many species and is thus red, while pole-and-line fishing has less bycatch and is green. However, purse seineing has a much lower carbon footprint than pole-and-line fishing, Seafood Watch is valuing by-catch more than carbon footprint.

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LOBSTER TRAPS TRANSFORMED INTO BICYCLE BASKETS

By Shelley Wigglesworth

For the past 21 years, former U.S. Marine Jim Huebener has lobstered out of Cape Elizabeth on Stickman, his Pointer skiff. The 59-year-old mechanical engineer and part-time lobsterman also has a passion for cycling. He brought all three aspects of his life together in 2013 when he came up with a practical idea while commuting home from work on his bicycle. “I sometimes need to carry things when commuting and running errands, and my backpack is not always the best method. I’ve seen people using different types of bike baskets, but the ones I’ve seen are permanently mounted to the bike,” he explained. “I figured I could use my lobster trap materials to make my own basket, one that could be removed easily from a rack. I finally came up with one version that I liked the best. I named it ‘The Trap Basket.’”

Huebener makes the baskets with both recycled and new wire trap parts. “I cut up some of my old traps and those that have been given to me by other lobstermen. I use the parts that are still in satisfactory condition to make the baskets, and the accessories I offer are a result of that road testing,” he explained.

After fine tuning all aspects of his product, and testing the end result personally, Huebener reached out to area bike shops to see if they were interested in carrying his invention. “Because I knew they wouldn’t be interested in selling every basket one rider made, I planned to work with area bike shops to see if they were interested in carrying my baskets.”

His company, Kettle Cove Enterprises, also offers a variety of bike basket accessories, such as shock cords to keep items from rolling around, rope handles to carry the baskets, even unused bait bags for small items that otherwise might fall through the wire. “I had the Trap Baskets road tested in Brooklyn, New York, by a group of local bikers and the accessories I offer are a result of that road testing,” he explained.

Huebener was a bitregistration for the company in May 2013, and the Trap Basket is already being sold. “I’ve sold about 100 baskets since May,” he said. “I don’t want to get too carried away. I’m not trying to replace my lobstering income. I’m just excited about having another way to make a living.”

Huebener says he enjoys the feedback he’s received from customers. “I love being able to combine my passions. I think my customers like the lobster trap look, and how the baskets and accessories are different.”

Although the future looks bright for his Trap Baskets business and he has plenty of ideas brewing for more lobster gear-related products, Huebener has no plans to give up fishing. “I will lobster ‘til they bury me,” he said firmly.

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November 2015 | LANDINGS | Page 21

November 2015

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PROSPECT HARBOR PROCESSOR EXPANDING AGAIN

Maine Fair Trade Lobster, which has been processing lobsters in Prospect Harbor for three years, formed a new partnership with Forum Capital Group of Jacksonville, Florida, in October. Maine Fair Trade Lobster, which includes Garbo Lobster, East Coast Seafood and now Forum Capital, expects to more than double its production this year to 9 million pounds from 4.3 million pounds in 2013.

The size of Forum Capital’s investment was not disclosed, but Maine Fair Trade Lobster said the funds will enable the company to add products, improve logistics and increase operating efficiencies. Maine Fair Trade Lobster also is looking at building employee housing to expand its work force from 150 to possibly as many as 225 employees. Employee dormitories would be built on a hillside the company owns that overlooks the plant. The company’s customers include, among others, Legal Seafood and Costco.

LIBERAL PARTY WINS BIG IN CANADA

Justin Trudeau will be Canada’s next prime minister after leading the Liberal Party to a majority government win, dashing the hopes of Conservative Stephen Harper, who has been in power since 2006. This will be the second time for Canada to be led by a Trudeau, as the 43-year-old Liberal leader follows in the footsteps of his father, the late Pierre Elliott Trudeau, who served as prime minister for almost 16 years before retiring in 1984.

MONITORS ON VESSELS STARTING DECEMBER 1

New England groundfishermen will have to start paying for at-sea monitors on their vessels beginning December 1, unless emergency measures are taken. NOAA officials said the money the agency had been using to pay for monitors who work in New England will run out around that date.

EXPLORATORY DRILLING TO BEGIN IN CANADIAN WATERS

Shell Canada Ltd. has received the go ahead from the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board to begin exploratory drilling off the coast of Nova Scotia. One authorization allows the company to begin preparatory work offshore at an exploration site 250 kilometers from southwestern Nova Scotia. A second permit lets Shell begin drilling the first well, called Cheshire. Cheshire would be the first well drilled off the province’s coast in a decade. The drill ship will remain offshore for 10 to 11 months, the company said. Shell also plans to drill a second well during that time.

AMERICAN EELS ARE NOT ENDANGERED

On October 7, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced that the American eel is stable and does not need protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The decision, also known as a 12-month finding, follows an in-depth status review on a 2010 petition to list the eel as threatened under the ESA. After examining the best scientific and commercial information available regarding past, present and future stressors facing the species, the Service determined the eel’s single population is overall stable and not in danger of extinction (endangered) or likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future (threatened). Nonetheless, for the species’ long-term stability, the agency recommends continuing efforts to maintain healthy habitats, monitor harvest levels, and improve river passage for migrating eels. This is the second time the Service has evaluated the American eel for listing under the ESA and found listing not warranted. The first decision came in 2007 after an extensive status review.

HAVE A TAILGATE PARTY WITH LOBSTER TAILS

Tailgating celebrations have taken on a life of their own off the field, with more chefs and home cooks creating unique dishes to serve to their guests. To drive demand for Maine lobster tails and leverage the existing interest in tailgating, the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative took action on social media to engage fans and followers with clever football-related visuals and recipe inspiration. They also engaged media and food industry leaders by sharing Maine lobster tail recipes perfect for any tailgate gathering, whether at the game or at home with friends and family.
Health Insurance Marketplace Open Enrollment begins! Visit www.healthcare.gov or call the MLA office at 967-4555.

November 2-5
ASMFC Annual Meeting, St. Augustine, FL.

November 3-6

November 4-5

November 9-10
Taking Stock: A workshop to collaboratively improve stock assessments, Plymouth, MA. FMI: 772-2321.

November 10
Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative meeting, Island Institute, Rockland. FMI: 541-9310.

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

November 12
Haddock and Beyond: Recent Success in New England fisheries, 7 p.m., Gulf of Maine Research Institute, Portland. FMI: 228-1699.

CHEFS, WRITERS LEARN THE ROUTE OF “TRAP TO TABLE”

By Marianne Lacroix, Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative

“From trap to table.” The concept is second nature here in Maine, but how do you explain the hours of hauling, handling, and hard work that go into our lobster industry to someone from away? Bring them up to Maine, of course.

This September, the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative invited seven journalists who write for outlets like Today.com, Yankee Magazine and Tasting Table, as well five chefs from top-tier restaurants in Boston, New York City, Chicago, and Atlanta, to visit Maine for an in-depth look at our lobster industry.

With a special itinerary designed to immerse the journalists and chefs in each step of the “trap to table” process, our visitors learned how to haul lobsters on board the Lucky Catch with Dave LaLibertie and the Sea Swallow with Clive Farrin, gauging the carapace, notching berried females and baiting traps. Back on the dock, the groups visited lobster dealers to get an up-close look at the storage, sorting and shipping techniques responsible for delivering live Maine Lobster to customers around the world. We then brought our guests to processing facilities to show them the methods used for producing lobster meat, tails and other specialty products. The group also visited the Maine State Aquarium to see oversized, undersized and unusually colored lobsters. The reaction at each stop along the way was unanimous – all were awestruck by the laborious, tradition-driven, and meticulous nature of the industry.

Our culinary and sustainability ambassador, Barton Seaver, played a crucial role in tying all of these lessons together. Over brunch at his home, Barton explained how lobster sustains countless communities up and down the coast of Maine. He also shared an array of culinary applications for New Shell lobster, inviting guests to roll up their sleeves and pick their own hard shell and new shell lobsters as he described the molting process and its effect on flavor. We heard from our panel of trained chefs that the difference in flavor is clear.

We selected this group of influential food writers and culinary leaders to show—rather than tell—our Maine Lobster story and to inspire them to share it with their respective audiences of engaged readers and hungry customers. Since the trip, we’ve seen excellent articles written by our media guests. We’ve learned of menu experimentation from the chefs, and we’ve empowered 12 authoritative writers to share their own Maine Lobster stories through their personal experiences in Maine.

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Give the gift of the MLA!
Matt Ginn, executive chef at four-month-old Evo restaurant in Portland, was named Maine’s Lobster Chef of the Year at a sold-out cooking contest in Portland in October, part of the annual Harvest on the Harbor festivities. Ginn created a poached lobster served Turkish style with hand-made pasta and roasted summer squash with yogurt and Roman beans. More than 225 people attended the event.

Chef Stephen Richards of Mine Oyster in Boothbay Harbor, the 2014 Maine Lobster Chef of the Year, was runner-up. He created a lobster dish prepared with a hand smoker. The lobster-glazed foie gras was layered with local goat cheese mousse, cranberry maple jam, brown butter creme fleurette and sweet and salty pine nut brittle.

The annual contest is sponsored by the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative. The other chefs competing included Josh Berry of Union in The Press Hotel in Portland, Isaac Aldrich of Pilot House at Sebasco Harbor Resort in Bath, and Nicholas Krukkaala of The Thistle Inn in Boothbay Harbor, in addition to Ginn and Richards.

Ginn won a check for $1,000 and bragging rights to his title for the next year.

The winning dish: poached lobster served Turkish style with hand-made pasta and roasted summer squash with yogurt and Roman beans.