LOBSTER LARVAE GIVE HINTS ABOUT THE FUTURE

By Melissa Waterman

Jesica Waller, currently a Master’s degree student at the University of Maine, was working as a laboratory technician at Bigelow Laboratory in East Boothbay several years ago when she heard researchers at the lab talking about lobsters. Ocean acidification and a warming Gulf of Maine were in the news yet the effect these environmental changes would have on lobsters was unknown. So when Waller decided to attend graduate school at the University in 2014, she knew what she wanted to study. "I had heard my advisors [Rick Wahle and David Fields] talking about this in an abstract way and I said that I’d like to take that on," Waller explained.

To do so meant raising lobster larvae in a laboratory setting, then subjecting the larvae to increased temperature and acidic water. "It's hard to raise lobster larvae in the lab," Waller said. "We have our own system here. So in 2014 we did a test run to see if it worked."

It did. Waller was able to raise a large number of lobster larvae through all four molt stages [after which they will seek a place to settle on the sea floor]. By 2015 she was ready to conduct her experiments.

LOBSTERMEN READY TO HELP ON THE WATER

By MLCA staff

Everyone knows that going to sea is dangerous. The number of ways in which one can become injured or killed are too numerous to count. Lobstermen are particularly aware of how quickly they, or anyone aboard a vessel, can get into serious trouble. And lobstermen also are often the first ones on the scene when an accident occurs at sea. This year Maine lobstermen have taken part in several — sometimes tragic — rescues.

Gerry Cushman, a lobsterman from Port Clyde, was hauling his traps aboard his boat Bug Catcha one morning this past January when he heard a distress call issued by the Coast Guard and also someone yelling “fire” on Channel 80, a channel monitored by fishermen in his area. The lobster boat Miss Lynne was on fire approximately four miles south of Port Clyde and a Coast Guard vessel was on its way from Rockland. Cushman realized that he was a little over two miles away from the burning boat. He hurried at top speed to the Miss Lynne, where he found the captain, John Hall, and his sternman, Karl Hoffman, standing at the burning boat’s bow. Cushman maneuvered his boat parallel to the Miss Lynne and the two men, outfit in their survival suits, jumped aboard. The Coast Guard arrived soon after but could not save the vessel.

In June, two visitors from New Jersey and a local kayak guide encountered a violent squall while they were enjoying an afternoon paddle off Corea. Jennifer Popper, her husband Michael, and the guide, Gouldsboro’s code enforcement officer Ed Brackett, capsized when strong winds blew through the area. The water temperature was ap...
The month of November always seems to be such a surprise. The summer picks up speed and the next thing you know we are in the clear and cool days of September and October, the height of the Maine lobstering season. Then, bam! November, a month when the days are short and lobstermen start to bring in their traps. It’s a time of year when lobstermen begin to take stock of their landings for the year and look forward to the quiet that winter will bring.

Major changes are taking place in the Downeast Maine fishery, specifically in Zone C, which encompasses the waters from Sedgwick to Surry and includes the islands of North Haven, Vinalhaven, Cribhaven and Matinicus. Zone C has long been known as the only open lobster zone in Maine, still allowing anyone with a commercial license to fish within its boundaries without a waiting period. But in recent years the increasing volume of lobsters landed in the zone has led to increasing fishing pressure in the area. More lobstermen in a finite area means more snarls, lost gear and rising levels of frustration. In this issue of Landings, we look at the facts that led the Zone C council members to vote this year to close the zone to new entrants.

Lobster landings thus far hint at another strong season for Maine. An increasing proportion of the lobster landed will go to consumers in the fast-growing middle classes of Asian countries. Jeff Bennett, senior trade specialist at the Maine International Trade Center, provides an overview of just how fast those markets have expanded for Maine lobster and other seafood products.

Some of the lobsters landed later in the year are kept in lobster pounds for several months before being shipped to their final destinations. Lobstermen today are using technology, including modern fish-processing equipment, to ensure their catch remains safe, healthy and disease-free. One way of forestalling a disease outbreak is to provide the animals with a medicated feed, a practice that has been followed for decades. Seth Berry of Kennebec River Biosciences explains the ramifications of a new federal law that will restrict the use of medicated feed in lobster operations beginning next year.

This fall an unforeseen outbreak of domoic acid produced by a microscopic phytoplankton species closed shellfish beds throughout Maine and Massachusetts. Domoic acid is a biotoxin that builds up in the tissues of filter-feeding animals such as the North Atlantic right whale, which is made of the same substance as human fingernails, they can gain a better understanding of its health. Researchers have found, however, that by looking at the whale’s baleen plates, which are made of the same substance as human fingernails, they can gain a better understanding of its health. Researchers have found, however, that by looking at the whale’s baleen plates, which are made of the same substance as human fingernails, they can gain a better understanding of its health. Researchers have found, however, that by looking at the whale’s baleen plates, which are made of the same substance as human fingernails, they can gain a better understanding of its health. Researchers have found, however, that by looking at the whale’s baleen plates, which are made of the same substance as human fingernails, they can gain a better understanding of its health. Researchers have found, however, that by looking at the whale’s baleen plates, which are made of the same substance as human fingernails, they can gain a better understanding of its health.

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BOOMING LOBSTER EXPORTS TO CHINA
NOT AN OVERNIGHT SUCCESS STORY

By Jeff Bennett
Maine International Trade Center

Chinese New Year, which was on February 8 this year, launched a strong start for Maine's 2016 lobster exports to China. And that start has shown little signs of slowing down.

Through August, Maine's lobster exports to mainland China were up 56.94% ($16.9 million), and our lobster exports to Hong Kong were up 9.47% ($4.1 million) compared to the previous year.

Export numbers from the past five years reveal an impressive growth curve. In 2015, Maine exported nearly $20 million worth of lobster to China and another $5.8 million to Hong Kong. In 2010, Maine was exporting less than $1 million worth of lobster to each of these markets.

China's Economic Growth

After China initiated market reforms in 1978, its gross domestic product (GDP) growth has averaged nearly 10% a year - the fastest economic expansion in history. While China is still a developing country, this rapid economic expansion has lifted more than 800 million out of poverty.

There could be no better example of the rise of the Chinese market-based expansion than what happened this year during Singles Day - China's 24-hour shopping festival held annually on November 11 driven by China's on-line retail giant Alibaba — where sales topped $14 billion (USD) in a single day. For comparison, Cyber Monday in the U.S. topped $3 billion in 2015.

Food and Seafood Demand

China's increased wealth has led to an increase in consumption of imported food, agricultural and seafood products. Chinese imports of U.S. food and agricultural products increased from $13.1 billion in 2009 to $24.5 billion in 2014 — an increase of 87%.

China's first "taste" of lobsters began with the Australian rock lobster. This luxury brand commanded a high price. It fed into China's growing consumer wealth and use of more and more exotic food options to symbolize status. With this increased demand, the opportunity was there to promote American lobster.

For over a decade, Maine's lobster industry, guided by its dealers and processors, has been leading the charge to educate China's consumers and develop relations with China's seafood distributors. Accumulating thousands of frequent flyer miles, business leaders have been active in China promoting Maine's brand through educational seminars and chef demonstrations and exhibiting at the world's largest seafood trade events in Boston, Brussels, Hong Kong, and Dalian and Qingdao, China.

State of Maine Trade Mission

Last fall's trade mission to Tokyo and Shanghai, led by the Maine International Trade Center (MITC) and Governor LePage, had a strong focus on seafood. Maine's lobster dealers and processors were a large part of the delegation. They held business matchmaking meetings with buyers and distributors and toured

Continued on page 6
To the Editor:

I’ve been a commercial salmon fisherman on Kodiak Island since 1969. My brothers make their living fishing Bering Sea crab and Bristol Bay salmon. Our family was commercial fishing in Alaska since before statehood. We also own and operate an engine-generator business in Seattle, Marine Engine Repair Co. We build work boat engines and generators for the commercial fishing and tug boat fleets on the West Coast. Our past, present, and future is tied to a healthy, sustainable ocean. I don’t scare easy and I’m scared.

I’ve witnessed the results of the steady rise in ocean temperature and acidity first hand. I’m troubled about the viability of the ocean my grandchildren and their children will inherit. This is not just our livelihood, it’s our way of life and it’s changing rapidly. I’m seeing warm water fish in places they’ve never been and cold water fish moving further north, salmon run timing is becoming less predictable and run strength less consistent, and shellfish are dying at infancy because the acidity of the water is too high for them to build a protective shell. All we can do as individuals is take care of our own backyard, but if we all do that, change happens on a global scale.

We experienced a huge toxic algae outbreak last year, closing Dungeness crab and razor clam fisheries for much of their seasons. These threats are directly linked to carbon emissions, but we’re still lacking a carbon policy here in Washington.

I talk to a lot of fishermen on the West Coast, and what’s really scary to me is that there are so many in denial. We go about our daily lives and don’t think about how this plays out. What’s the end game? What’s the future look like with a hot, sour, and breathless ocean?

When it comes to carbon policy, the East Coast has adopted one of the best models in the world: nine states, from Maine to Maryland (minus New Jersey), participate in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, or RGGI, which puts a declining cap on power plant emissions and earns revenue by auctioning off emissions allowances.

The money made from the RGGI carbon allowance auction is directly invested back into projects like outfitting businesses with more efficient equipment, free weatherization, and direct electric bill assistance. RGGI has achieved a 30% reduction in emissions since 2008 (more than double the national average) while growing the economy more than the rest of the country, and creating 23,000 jobs. On top of these impressive results, electricity prices fell by 3.4% in RGGI states, while going up 7.2% in non-RGGI states.

Among the 40 carbon markets currently in operation across the world, RGGI is one of the best, consistently achieving strong emissions reductions more quickly than the cap requires, while at the same time improving the economy. From what I’ve heard, many Maine fishermen may have saved on their electric bills and taken advantage of the free weatherization program without realizing where the funds came from.

RGGI is currently up for renewal, and right now program representatives are seeking stakeholder input on where the cap should be set from 2020: whether to set a 2.5% decline per year, or 5% per year. This decision is made by consensus among the nine states. Although RGGI has consistently achieved a 5% reduction since 2008, more conservative states are pushing for the 2.5% option. I hope those of you who rely on fisheries for your livelihood understand the importance of RGGI and are speaking up to ensure maximum effectiveness of a program that is protecting our ocean (and saving you money at the same time). If the cap is set at a 5% decline each year through 2030, it will put Maine on track to meet the state’s aggressive climate requirements while creating jobs and keeping money in the local economy.

I can’t afford to fix the whole world. I can only do what I can do and that’s get involved in my own backyard. I’m educating myself on the facts and trying to pull my head out of the sand. My company is building engines with 95% less harmful emissions than the old tried-and-true diesels of the past. They are complex and costly. But we have to do this and more if we want a future on the ocean.

Many companies can’t afford new energy-efficient equipment. But with programs like RGGI, businesses that otherwise couldn’t have cut their carbon footprints can – saving money and reducing pollution simultaneously. Here in Washington State there’s a carbon tax on the ballot this year. Unfortunately, it gives the revenue away in tax breaks instead of reinvesting it like RGGI. Similar programs have been proven too weak to work so I’m holding out for the kind of strong policy that Maine currently enjoys.

All we can do as individuals is take care of our own backyard, but if we all do that, change happens on a global scale. Often the problem seems too overwhelming for an individual to make a difference. But we can help shape the future through our actions.

Those of us who depend on a healthy ocean have to do our part. The ocean absorbs about 25% of all carbon emissions, and over 90% of the excess heat. The Gulf of Maine is particularly at risk: scientists say it’s warming 99% faster than the world’s large bodies of saltwater. The fishing industry is of great importance to Maine, and your state’s policymakers should know where the industry stands on RGGI and climate action.

Wondering how to help? Get involved. Write letters and emails, call your representatives, let the Governor’s office know where you stand, get a seat at the table when decisions are made on where the money goes, and contact key representatives responsible for deciding RGGI’s future.

Robert Allen
Seattle, WA
For more information on how to make your voice heard about RGGI, call Nick Battista at the Island Institute at 594-9209.
Fourteen-year-old Charlie Spinney of Kennebunk, a freshman at Kennebunk High School, started lobstering out of Kennebunkport this past May. Spinney's paternal great-great-grandfather and his great-great-uncles were all lobstermen in Kittery Point many years ago and, although the fishing gene skipped a few generations, it has resurfaced yet again in young Charlie. "My dad's grandmother's family, her dad and brothers were all fishermen. They owned lobster businesses and built boats down in Kittery Point. I never got the chance to meet any of them, except for my Nana. She died about four years ago, but she always told stories of the fishermen who would sell her the lobsters that she would market. That always stuck with me. My parents tell me that Nana and the rest of the Witham crew are channeling through me," he said.

Spinney showed a keen interest in all kinds of fishing even as a toddler. "I've always loved fishing," he said. "I started crabbing at Colony Beach in Kennebunkport when I was four. I always wanted to fish off the jetty there too and couldn't wait until I was old enough to do it."

In addition to his deep-rooted interest in fishing, Spinney also showed an entrepreneurial side from a very young age. "I've always loved to earn money," he said matter-of-factly. "First it was lemonade stands, then lawn mowing and snow shoveling, which turned into more ideas and opportunities." Spinney got interested in sand worms, read up on the creatures and then applied for a license a few years ago. "Now I sell my worms to different stores in the area and charter boats too. After that, I spoke with my parents about fishing for lobsters, which led to me scanning for boats," he said. Last winter he bought a 16-foot skiff.

"Charlie is the oldest of three and has always been driven and has always wanted to run his own show," explained Tara Spinney, Charlie's mother. "His father Byron and I have always tried to support his endeavors and allow him to experience life. Charlie is a hard-winner, and a work ethic that is amazing." To get started in lobstering, Spinney researched the fishery and made some phone calls on his own. "I started calling people to find out what I had to do. I found out through the Department of Marine Resources that in order to get my license I needed sponsors and 1000 hours. Then I called people in the business who were able to help me," he said. Kennebunkport lobstermen Lauren Brooks and Pete Hutchins helped Spinney learn the ropes, taking him out on their boats and sharing with him some of their knowledge. "They really helped out a lot," Spinney explained.

While still in 8th grade, Spinney approached Dwight Raymond, owner of Performance Marine, to see if Raymond had any place on the Kennebunkport river for help. His parents also insist that their son wear his life jacket at all times out for safety. "After high school, depending on how lobstering works out for me, I will either continue fishing or go to a college or a trade school for business or boat building," he said.

Spinney sold all his lobsters this year to nearby Port Lobster Company. "Next year I'd like to try and distribute them to a few restaurants too," he said.

By the end of his first summer, Spinney was able to buy a 21-foot center console T-top, using his earnings and help from his parents and the boat's former owner, Sherman Thompson from Cape Porpoise. "He and my parents and I sat down together to figure out what I could afford to pay each month and came up with a number that would work for all of us. To help me pay for this I'll be working on the weekends this winter on the Niewkerk family's lobster boats. They have been really helpful too, and I have learned so much from them," Spinney said. Byron and Tara Spinney said Charlie has taken "every safety class we can think of for boat and marine safety." Last April, he took a Mariners safety course in Portland and learned how to survive in cold water, repair an engine on the fly, plug a leak and radio for help. His parents also insist that their son wear his life jacket at all times out on the ocean and they require the same of anyone on his boat with him.

While working weekends lobstering during the 2016-2017 school year, the ninth grader has plans to also play high school basketball, and join the Future Business Leaders of America club. "After high school, depending on how lobstering works out for me, I will either continue fishing or go to a college or a trade school for business or boat building, What I do know for sure is that I will be involved in the Maine fishing industry," he said.

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NEW FEED REQUIREMENTS FOR LOBSTER POUND OWNERS

By Seth Berry

Due to a new federal rule to protect human health, medicated feed for lobsters will be harder to get as of January 1, 2017, except for those who plan ahead. Lobster pound operators who use medicated feed to prevent shrinkage due to diseases like gaffkemia (red tail disease) will only be able to use medicated feed when it is prescribed by an attending veterinarian. Fortunately, Maine has a number of veterinarians experienced in aquatic animal health.

Why the new rule?

In short, the new rule is intended to save lives and protect human health. Since penicillin was first used to treat infections, roughly 75 years ago, antibiotics have saved millions of lives and extended our lifespans. Today, however, antibiotic resistance is becoming a serious threat.

Mainly due to the overuse of antibiotics, bacterial species have been given many opportunities to adapt and proliferate. As the use of antibiotics has exploded in agriculture, to promote growth or “just in case,” even the newest generations of antimicrobials have become ineffective at an alarming rate. Each year in the U.S., say the Centers for Disease Control, over 2 million people are infected with antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Of these, least 23,000 die each year.

What does the rule require?

To help keep antibiotics effective, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has prohibited virtually all over-the-counter sales of medicated lobster feed as of January, 2017. To medicate against red tail, Photobacterium indicum, or any other disease, lobster pound operators will first need to obtain a veterinary feed directive (VFD) from a veterinarian licensed in their state.

Lobster pound owners will need to consult with a veterinarian in order to continue using medicated feed. S. Berry photo.

To issue a VFD for animals like lobster, a veterinarian must have a “veterinarian-client-patient-relationship,” or VCPR. For lobster pounds, this means working directly with the pound owner to make clinical judgments about lobster health. The veterinarian must also have “sufficient knowledge” of the pound’s lobsters. This can be obtained through testing provided at labs and through in-person visits to the pound.

What do I do next?

Sudden, unpredictable shrinkage has been a problem for the lobster industry during some years. To prevent shrinkage and associated loss of revenue, it is best to be highly proactive. Lobster pound owners are advised to contact a licensed Maine veterinarian who is experienced with aquatic animals, and to do so before any lobster health problems begin. Routine testing of even healthy lobsters at a reputable laboratory can often detect potential disease problems in advance and help reduce shrinkage.

As part of the VCPR, veterinarians can also assess biosecurity which may result in other recommendations to maximize lobsters’ health and quality. While the new FDA requirements can impose an additional up-front cost on pound owners, they may also help protect the excellent reputation of the industry from consumer concerns regarding antibiotics use and reduce shrinkage losses in the long run.

Who can I call?

For a directory of veterinarians who may be able to meet your needs, you can visit the Maine Veterinary Medical Association Web site at www.mainavetmed.org and click on “Find a Veterinarian.” Take time to answer this question: Is your pound ready to evolve?

Seth Berry is Vice President for Business Development at Kennebec River Biosciences. For more information, he can be reached at (207) 844-5459 or at sberry@kennebecbio.com.

Exports continued from page 3

seafood markets in each city. The State of Maine receptions in both markets featured Maine lobster on the menu and were extremely well attended, attracting well over 150 in Tokyo (a record turnout) and approximately 125 in Shanghai. The Department of Marine Resources (DMR) held education seminars in each location, attracting members of the seafood industry and local media who wanted to learn more about Maine’s lobster fishery.

When the trade mission ended, the seafood delegation remained in China to conduct further matchmaking activities through Food Export USA and then traveled to Qingdao to exhibit at the world’s second-largest seafood show, China Fisheries. Perhaps the highlight of the trip was an invitation to meet with the seafood buying team at Alibaba and tour their headquarters in Hangzhou.

Maine’s 2016 export growth in China is indeed remarkable. Yet as you can see, it’s far from an overnight success.

Jeff Bennett is the Canada Desk Director and Senior Trade Specialist with Maine International Trade Center, where the seafood industry is one of his focus areas.
Maine Lobstermen’s Association

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STEAMING AHEAD

As I write this, we are in the home stretch of the election season. It seems the negative campaigning and rhetoric reached a new high (or low) this year. Fortunately, soon after you read this the results will be in. Regardless of how it all turned out, I am glad it’s over.

The tone of this year’s election season put a lot of people off. The stress of the unknown affects people differently – some get fired up, while others feel disenchanted. When things become this polarized, many people are gripped with fear about the future. This fear can make us lose sight of how blessed we are to live in a free, democratic country.

And if the election season wasn’t overwhelming enough, there’s been plenty going on within Maine’s lobster industry to strike fear into everyone’s heart. I know that my heart skipped a few beats when I learned about the Maine shellfish recall and closures this fall due to high domoic acid levels caused by a harmful algae bloom. That, and the California Dungeness crab fishery closure last year due to a domoic acid outbreak, tells me it’s time that the Maine lobster industry becomes educated on how sustainable lobstering can be to this deadly toxin. While we are fortunate to have a strong bio- toxin monitoring program in place to detect these natural outbreaks and ensure that the public is not at risk, dealing with a closure and product recall is anything anyone wants to experience.

Another topic that certainly makes gasp-ups rise among lobstermen is the state of the North Atlantic right whale population. The Gulf of Maine’s changing environmental conditions are having significant impacts on these whales. Despite the many changes our industry has made to reduce the risk lobster gear poses to whales and the near doubling of the right whale population since 1997 when we became engaged in efforts to protect whales, scientists are now concerned that the whale population is trending downward. While there is no definitive research, it seems that the abundance and availability of food sources are shifting, where and when the whales are seen have become less predictable, and their health has been affected. This news, coupled with some recent high-profile entanglements, is certainly a cause for concern for our industry.

Bait also turned out to be a nerve-wracking issue for lobstermen this season. I doubt there’s a single lobsterman who hasn’t felt the pinch from this year’s tight supply and record-high bait prices. Thankfully, the lobster catch along the coast has been stable and prices remained good throughout the summer and early fall. Each lobsterman will have to reconcile how increased bait prices affected his or her bottom line this winter: were lobster landings and price strong enough to offset rising bait costs? And then there is the weather. With the fall fishing season firmly upon us, anxiety about weather increases day-by-day. The warm, calm sunny days of summer have shifted to a windy, stormy fall. Whether or not you go fishing is largely determined by the weather. Good fishing days are few and far between, and staying safe at sea and keeping track of gear becomes more worrisome.

None of this is new to lobstermen. Being a fisherman and running a small business will always be a source of anxiety. There are simply no guarantees when you are self-employed and your livelihood is dependent on Mother Nature. This life is not for everyone. You must be prepared to survive the ups and downs of the industry by being a skilled fisherman, having a clear business plan, and being prepared for your future. It is when you add all of those other issues to the fundamental challenge and danger of making your living at sea that it becomes so much harder.

It appears that this is the new normal for the lobster fishery. We have an amazing track record of being proactive. Due to the foresight of our forefathers, we are fortunate to have a strong, sustainable lobster population. Over the past few years we have developed strong national and international markets to support it. However, the future remains uncertain. As the Gulf of Maine continues to change, and the rest of the world’s oceans as well, the past provides less guidance for us today.

How do we deal with an uncertain future? Some will get angry, some will look for scapegoats, some will withdraw and disconnect from what they fear. Others will take on the challenge, becoming more educated about the issues facing lobstermen, more disciplined in business planning and more cautious about their activities today. As Winston Churchill said, “Fear is a reaction. Courage is a decision.” As always, stay safe on the water.
MAINE LOBSTERMEN’S ASSOCIATION UPDATE

While there was little opposition to the proposal, logistical issues about lobstering and managing second zone tags were raised. Second zone tags will cost 10 cents and can be removed and refastened among traps. The rulemaking proposal must go before the DMR Advisory Council for review and approval.

The DMR solicited feedback from the lobster zone councils on establishing and setting criteria for a Zone Transfer list, which would be independent of the Apprentice waiting list. The creation of a Zone Transfer List was mandated by the Legislature as part of the new limited entry rules adopted last spring. DMR has brought forward two ideas for consideration, but is hoping to solicit additional concepts from the industry. DMR also solicited feedback during some of the zone council meetings on how best to realign the tag and license year, for instance, to change the license year to match the tag year.

The MLA Directors discussed several issues concerning bait. Herring landings picked up when Area 1A reopened on October 2 and more fish were landed from Area 3. MLA is monitoring discussions through the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission regarding the menhaden quota. The fishery is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring so MLA is pushing to see an increase in that quota. Issues regarding state-by-state menhaden allocations and allocations for episodic menhaden events will be dealt with separately through the amendment process. Finally, there has been some confusion along the coast regarding the legality of some forms of hide bait. Specifically, a product marketed as pig hide and sold primarily in the Jonesport, Beals and Stonington areas was deemed to have too much fat. Only hairless hide baits are legal; if the product is mostly fat or contains other animal parts, it is not legal to use. Marine Patrol is working to educate the industry on this issue.

To date, it doesn’t appear that there will be many bills related to the lobster industry introduced in the next Legislative session. Cloture, the deadline to submit bill titles, is December 6 for government agencies and December 16 for legislators. However, during the full session of the Legislature many bills are submitted after deadline.

MLA is reaching out to lobstermen who fish in the coral zones around Schoodic Ridges and Mount Desert Rock to get a sense of the level of fishing effort in these areas and the potential economic losses if a closure is put in place. The New England Fishery Management Council is moving forward with discussions of its Coral Amendment which could close coral zones to commercial fishing. The MLA is pushing for an exemption of lobster gear in these areas.

It was a bad month for right whales and the commercial fishing industry. A spate of high profile entanglements made the news. During the year to date, there have been seven incidents with right whales, including two deaths. One of the deaths was entanglement-related and the other was not. The other five cases were entanglements. One whale was disentangled while four remain entangled. Much of the gear observed on the whales appears to be large diameter rope ½” or greater.

The National Weather Service (NWS) requested input on raising the level of conditions that trigger a Small Craft Advisory (SCA) during the cold season months. The Directors believe very strongly that the NWS should keep the status quo regarding SCA in all seasons. Small vessels are even more vulnerable during winter fishing and the proposed revised criteria could put the fleet at risk. Although there are many days during the winter when small craft advisories are in place, the MLA Directors believe those are necessary to warn vessels.

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$5 Buoy Shirt
about at-sea conditions. Most fishermen use the small craft advisories in conjunction with real-time ocean buoy data to decide whether or not conditions are safe enough to go out.

MLA attended a Congressional press conference on the potential ban of lobster by the European Union; the MLA is exploring options with Maine Dealers Association and other stakeholders should this issue move forward. [NOTE: On October 14, the EU Committee on Invasive Alien Species announced that it had decided that it would not proceed with the listing of American lobster as an invasive species at the European Union level.]

The MLA Directors continued discussions on setting policy priorities for the upcoming year.

The Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance received $4,276 for the MLCA Relief Fund from a fundraiser held by Cook’s Lobster. The MLCA Relief Fund made a donation to Jon Popham’s family in October. MLCA continues to raise funds through contributions and event sponsorships and via offers of services to support the lobstermen’s families in times of need.

Jonah crab has long been considered a bycatch of the lobster fishery but, in recent years, there has been increasing fishing pressure and growing market demand for crab. The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission approved an Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Jonah Crab in August, 2015, and then modified Jonah crab management measures with Addendum I in May, 2016. The Commission has requested that NOAA Fisheries issue complementary regulations for federal waters. State partners were required to implement regulations consistent with the Jonah Crab Plan by June, 2016. In preparation for future rulemaking, NOAA Fisheries is seeking public comment on the Commission’s recommended management measures in federal waters. They are also seeking input on any additional alternatives that should be considered for managing the Jonah crab fishery in federal waters. The comment period is open through November 14. Comments are accepted through the online e-Rulemaking portal, or by mail to John K. Bullard, Regional Administrator, NMFS, Greater Atlantic Regional Office, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Please mark the outside of the envelope: “Comments on Jonah Crab Plan.”

### ASMF’s Recommended Jonah Crab Management Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Commercial Management Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permits</td>
<td>Limits participation in the directed trap fishery to only those vessels and permit holders that already hold a lobster permit, or can prove prior participation in the crab fishery before the June 2, 2015, control date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Size</td>
<td>4 ½ inches (12.065 cm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landings Disposition</td>
<td>Whole crab fishery, with an exception for New Jersey, Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia harvesting zones that can demonstrate history in the claw-only fishery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broodstock Protection</td>
<td>Prohibition on the retention of egg-bearing females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incidental Catch Limit</td>
<td>1,000 crabs/trip for non-lobster trap and non-trap gear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational Management Measure</td>
<td>Possession Limit of 60 whole crabs/person per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broodstock Protection</td>
<td>Prohibition on the retention of egg-bearing females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting Requirements</td>
<td>Dealer Reporting 100% dealer reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harvester Reporting 100% harvester reporting, but allows jurisdictions that currently require less than 100% of lobster harvesters to report are required to maintain its current reporting programs and extend them to Jonah crab</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Catch Quota Breakdown

- **2015 Catch YTD (10/21):**
  - $\text{1A}^\star$: 27,309
  - 1B: 911
  - 2: 9,803
  - 3: 15,790
  - Total: 43,413

- **2016 % of Quota:**
  - $\text{1A}^\star$: 30.290
  - 1B: 4.922
  - 2: 32.100
  - 3: 44.910
  - Total: 104.566

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

### NOAA Fisheries Begins Rulemaking to Implement Jonah Crab Plan

Jonah crab has long been considered a bycatch of the lobster fishery but, in recent years, there has been increasing fishing pressure and growing market demand for crab. The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission approved an Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Jonah Crab in August, 2015, and then modified Jonah crab management measures with Addendum I in May, 2016. The Commission has requested that NOAA Fisheries issue complementary regulations for federal waters. State partners were required to implement regulations consistent with the Jonah Crab Plan by June, 2016. In preparation for future rulemaking, NOAA Fisheries is seeking public comment on the Commission’s recommended management measures in federal waters. They are also seeking input on any additional alternatives that should be considered for managing the Jonah crab fishery in federal waters. The comment period is open through November 14. Comments are accepted through the online e-Rulemaking portal, or by mail to John K. Bullard, Regional Administrator, NMFS, Greater Atlantic Regional Office, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Please mark the outside of the envelope: “Comments on Jonah Crab Plan.”

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

- Allen Insurance & Financial
- Arwood Lobster
- Beals-Jonesport Coop Inc.
- Bell Lobster Pier
- Bowdoin College Dining Services
- Buoysticks.com
- Chapman & Chapman
- Chase Leavit & Co.
- Coastal Documentation
- Comary Cove Lobster Co.
- Cousins Maine Lobster
- Cushing Diesel, LLC
- Damiscottaba Bank & Trust Co.
- Eastern Time & Auto Service
- Farrin’s Boatshop
- Finestkind Scenic Cruises
- First National Bank
- Friendship Lobster Treats
- F W Thurston Co. Inc.
- Georgetown Fishermen’s Men’s Co-op
- Gulf of Maine Lobster Foundation
- Guy Cotten, Inc.
- Harbor Bait Inc.
- J&H Propeller Shop
- Inland Seafood
- Instaterlobe Lobster Co.
- Island Fishing Gear & Auto Parts
- Island Fisherwomen’s Wives
- Island Seafood LLC
- John’s Bay Boat Co.
- Jonesport Shipyard
- Kips Seafood Co.
- Lake Pemaquid Inc.
- Lobster.com
- Lomnie’s Hydraulic Inc.
- Maine Financial Group
- Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance
- Maine Port Authority
- Maine Sea Grant
- Marine Hydraulic Engineering Co. Inc.
- McKinnon Offshore Survival Training
- Midcoast Marine Supply
- Mount Desert Oceanarium
- Muscongus Bay Lobster
- Nautillus Marine Fabrication Inc.
- New England Detroit Diesel Allison
- New England Marine & Industrial Inc.
- Nicholas H. Walsh, PA
- Northeast Marine Survey Inc.
- Novatec Brails LTD
- Penobscot Bay & River Pilots Assn.
- Penobscot East Resource Center
- Pete’s Marine Electronics
- Polyform US
- Port Clyde Fishermen’s Co-op
- Port Lobster Co.
- Re/Max Oceanside
- Riverdale Mills
- South Bristol Fishermen’s Cooperative
- Superior Bait and Salt
- Superior Marine Products Inc.
- Vinalhaven Fishermen’s Coop
- Weirs Motor Sales Inc.
- William Coffin & Sons
- Williams CPA Group LLC
- Wentworth’s Lobster Bait

### Clerical Clarifications on Zone Lines - DMR Rulemaking

DMR has proposed rule to make clerical corrections to the Lobster Zone line boundaries, amend confusing language for greater clarity, and add positions where Lobster Zone lines intersect with the Lobster Management Area 3 line. The proposal is online at [www.maine.gov/dmr/laws-regulations/documents/Ch.25%20proposedrule10192016.pdf](http://www.maine.gov/dmr/laws-regulations/documents/Ch.25%20proposedrule10192016.pdf). DMR is accepting written comments until November 18. No public hearing is scheduled. Questions or comments about this rulemaking should be directed to Sarah Cotoir, Maine DMR, 21 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333; phone 207-624-6596 or email sarah.cotoir@maine.gov.
There was a zero percent chance of overfishing if the quota were to be raised. There potential harvest level raises. At all levels tested, the scientists’ conclusion was that assessment consisted of nearly 9,000 simulations, testing a variety of different scenarios to measure the potential impact of a quota increase on the menhaden population. The ASMFC also conducted an analysis earlier this year to determine the potential for a quota increase on the menhaden population. The assessment consisted of nearly 9,000 simulations, testing a variety of different potential harvest levels. At all levels tested, the scientists’ conclusion was that there was a zero percent chance of overfishing if the quota were to be raised. There are few decisions of resource allocation that can be made with such certainty. Today, menhaden fishermen are back out on the water thanks to an “episodic exemption” from the ASMFC. This allows them to continue to fish above Maine’s low menhaden quota when the fish become abundant in state waters. This year’s episodic exemption in Maine supports the assessment’s conclusion that there are large numbers of menhaden in Atlantic waters. This phenomenon is not limited to Maine. Large schools of menhaden have been reported throughout New England and the Mid-Atlantic, especially in states like New York and Rhode Island. Both of those states were also granted episodic exemptions this year after experiencing unusually large menhaden runs in their state waters. There is currently no reason why the quota cannot be reasonably increased. Even states with larger quotas, such as New Jersey, have had trouble keeping up with the menhaden schools in their waters. Garden State fishermen met their menhaden quota early in the summer, leaving enough menhaden crowding into local waterways to cause menhaden die-offs. These incidents support the ASMFC’s scientific conclusions that the menhaden stock is healthy, and menhaden management is sustainable. All of which raises the question — why has the quota remained at its current artificially low level, given the flawed assessment that the quota is predicated on? As it stands, lobstermen are paying exorbitant prices for bait due to this year’s summer shortage of fresh baits such as herring and menhaden. Maine’s lobster industry generated nearly $2 billion in economic activity for Maine in 2015. Lobster landings alone were valued at more than half a billion dollars. Our coastal communities depend on this revenue for their economic vitality, and Maine lobstermen depend on a steady bait supply to generate landings. In addition, menhaden fishermen also lose thousands of dollars each year by virtue of the artificially low cap.

This month, the ASMFC has the opportunity to reverse their flawed decision to cut the menhaden harvest, when the issue of raising the menhaden quota is again brought to a vote. Mainers would be greatly served by a prompt ASMFC vote to increase the quota to a reasonable level.

Sincerely,

Patrice McCarron
Maine Lobstermen’s Association executive director
Complete and Committed.

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(in MA, RI) Kevin Hampson, 508-634-5503, Kevin_Hampson@miltoncat.com

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Typographical errors are unintentional and subject to correction.

The Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative celebrated another successful National Lobster Day, garnering excitement with media and on social channels. Compared to efforts in 2015, media mentions almost doubled and there were nearly 1000% more user engagements on social media. News about the holiday was shared through targeted media and social campaigns, garnering over 416 million impressions and reaching consumers, chefs and media through a variety of channels.

Media coverage highlights included 3 Associated Press stories, 3 national and 3 local broadcast placements, including mentions on MSNBC’s Morning Joe and segments on WCSH-TV Portland and WLBZ-TV Bangor. Consumers were also reached via social media through influencer posts and through the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative social channels, with the conversation around #NationalLobsterDay reaching almost 3 million users. In addition, several national restaurants participated in the celebration; including: Joe’s Crab Shack, Star Provisions, Crave Fish Bar, Red Lobster and Legal Seafood!

Maine Lobster Makes Headlines During National Lobster Day 2016


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Show your support for these businesses!
The MLLI curriculum covers the scope of information necessary to ground new lobstermen leaders in the issues facing the industry. It provides a firm foundation to understand the context in which Maine’s lobster fishery operates and how it differs from lobster fisheries in other areas. The MLCA is recruiting up to 20 young active commercial lobstermen who are interested in becoming more involved in the lobster industry from across Maine’s seven lobster zones. Preference will be given to those under age 40, but others looking to step into leadership roles will be considered.

As the Maine lobster industry copes with a rapidly changing fishery, keeping the industry relevant and profitable for the next generation is essential. Current lobster industry leaders have served this industry for many years and are ready to pass the torch to the next generation.

New leaders must become engaged to ensure that the fishery remains strong. New leaders must continue to preserve the industry-driven conservation standards that are fundamental to the lobster fishery’s success, embrace the new technologies and social structure of the 21st century and define the industry’s goals and priorities moving forward.

The Maine Lobster Leadership Institute (MLLI) will foster new lobster industry leaders to identify priorities for the fishery and develop strategies to continue to engage lobstermen in securing a vibrant future for the fishery.

You must commit to attend a two-day workshop retreat in late January, an exchange trip to Prince Edward Island in May, and a minimum of one meeting each month in February, March and April. The MLLI will cover the costs of meals (no alcohol), accommodations, and transportation for the two-day retreat and the exchange trip to Canada.

Interested lobstermen must hold a valid Maine commercial lobster license with no convictions. Participants must hold or obtain a current, valid U.S. passport or U.S. passport card. Those who have been convicted of criminal offense or any alcohol related offense will likely be denied entry into Canada.

### 2017 Draft Program Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Two-day workshop on lobster science, management, marketing and business planning. Onsite introduction to the Maine Legislature and Marine Resources Committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Choose at least one: Attend industry meetings such as zone council, Lobster Advisory Council, or industry association boards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Choose at least one: A day in the life of a lobster (workshop) Maine Fishermen’s Forum Boston Seafood Show</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Choose at least one: Maine aquaculture farms Maine Legislature (public hearings, work sessions, House, Senate) Workshops on lobster issues (whales, bait, etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Travel to Prince Edward Island, fish with lobstermen, meet with associations, tour fishermen-owned holding and processing facilities, and more!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Program Wrap-up Maine processing plants and holding infrastructure International Lobster Biology/Management conference Wrap-up meeting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Apply Today!

**Maine Lobstermen Leadership Institute 2017 Program Application**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Lobster License #</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Federal permit?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
<td># years lobstering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>Lobster or marine violations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of Birth</td>
<td>Current/valid passport?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why are you interested in the program?</td>
<td>Tell us more about yourself, your background and your interests.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mail to Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance, PO Box 315, Kennebunk, ME 04043 or email to patrice@mainelobstermen.org

**Deadline December 15, 2016**

Questions?
Patrice McCarron at 967-6221 or patrice@mainelobstermen.org
begin fishing. By 2001, all the zones except for Zones A and C had adopted an exit/entry ratio. Zone A entered the limited entry program in 2004. Initially the ratio was based on lobster licenses; then it was changed to tags. Presently, a zone can base its exit ratio on either licenses or the historic high of tags held by a retiring lobsterman.

Zone C, which runs from Sedgwick to Surry and includes the islands of North Haven, Vinalhaven, Crihaven and Matinicus, had chosen to remain open to any Maine lobsterman who had completed his or her Apprenticeship requirements. That meant any commercial lobsterman could declare Zone C; a lobsterman from York could fish in Blue Hill Bay or a Rockland lobsterman could fish off Stonington. When lobster landings were light, as they were in the 1990s and early 2000s, pressure on the lobster stocks from lobstermen moving into the zone also remained light. But then lobster landings increased. The numbers and early 2000s, pressure on the lobster stocks from lobstermen moving into the zone also remained light. But then lobster landings increased. The numbers and

“Leave it *** alone. Please. Thank you.” “Not only no but Hell No” were some of the things, wrote comments on their questionnaires. “Too many traps in the water are a lot of people and a lot of buoys out there. The number of licenses hasn’t changed over the years, it’s that a lot of licenses are being used more than they were six or eight years ago.”

The questionnaire was mailed to 914 lobstermen in August that year; 347 responded (38%). It had one question: do you favor establishing limited entry into Zone C? Sixty-six percent of those that responded favored closing the zone; 34% were against it. Lobstermen, not known for being reticent about any thing, wrote comments on their questionnaires. “Too many traps in the water now. Seems about the same number of traps ’come to us’ come to us every time during November.”

The closure of the Zone is in effect until either: the Council decides not to advance the proposal to the Commissioner; the Commissioner determines that the Commissioner will not initiate rulemaking to establish Limited Entry. In no event can the Zone remain closed for longer than one year, unless Limited Entry regulations are adopted. When a Zone is “closed” lobster and crab fishing licenses for the current year (2016) can only be issued to people who held a license in the previous licensing year (2015) and indicated that zone as their fishing zone (no transfers). A Waiting List for new entrants wishing to enter the Zone will be established. Students will still be able to upgrade to a commercial license.

The survey is mailed to all commercial lobster license holders in the Zone. The survey may ask: whether there is support for Limited Entry in the Zone (Yes or No): what the exit ratio to limit new entrants should be (1:1, 2:1, 3:1, etc.); what “currency” should be used for the yearly entry calculation (licenses not renewed or remained unclaimed and tags that should be used or not used) [This can be determined at the Council meeting or can be included on the survey].

When a zone proposes to establish an exit ratio for the first time to limit new zone entrants, it may also propose to the Commissioner to grandfather individuals that have completed at least 92% of the hours required (900 hours) and at least 92% of the days required (184 days) by the AP by the date the Commissioner receives writ-

The following steps are taken to determine whether or not a Zone will change from an open Zone to a Limited Entry Zone:

1. The Council holds a Zone Council Meeting and may initiate the process to make the Zone Limited Entry by voting for a written survey of license holders to be conducted. A majority of the Council members present and voting must vote in favor of sending the survey.

2. If the vote is in favor, the Council then sends a letter to the Commissioner stating that they have voted to conduct a survey. Upon receipt of the letter, the law requires that the Commissioner close the zone to new entrants while the survey is taking place. Students can still upgrade to a commercial license when they complete the apprenticeship program (AP).

3. The closure of the Zone is in effect until either: the Council decides not to advance a proposal; or regulations defining an exit ratio are adopted; or the Commissioner determines he or she will not initiate rulemaking to establish Limited Entry. In no event can the Zone remain closed for longer than one year, unless Limited Entry regulations are adopted. When a Zone is “closed” lobster and crab fishing licenses for the current year (2016) can only be issued to people who held a license in the previous licensing year (2015) and indicated that zone as their fishing zone (no transfers). A Waiting List for new entrants wishing to enter the Zone will be established. Students will still be able to upgrade to a commercial license.

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5. After DMR tallies the results, the Council meets to review the survey results and determine if they want to make a proposal to the Commissioner. The Council is not required to submit the proposed exit ratio to the Commissioner and the proposed exit ratio does not need to receive approval through the survey in order for the Council to forward the proposal to the Commissioner.

6. The Council may recommend an exit ratio and currency (licenses or tags) to the Commissioner, by sending a letter, if they are proposing that the Commissioner initiate the rulemaking process.

7. A public hearing is held within the affected Zone, and people can also provide written comment.

8. If the Commissioner advances the rulemaking to the DMR Advisory Council (AC), the AC may vote to adopt the regulations or may reject them.

9. If there is an affirmative vote by the DMR AC, the rule is then filed with the Secretary of State, and becomes effective 5 days later.

10. Once an exit ratio is adopted for a Limited Entry Zone, the Council may not vote to conduct a survey or make a proposal to the Department for a new exit ratio for a minimum of 24 months from the effective date of the regulation establishing the exit ratio.

If an exit ratio is not adopted after a survey has been conducted in the Zone and the Commissioner made a recommendation to the Commissioner regarding an exit ratio, the Council may not vote to conduct another survey for 36 months from the date of the previous vote by the Council to conduct a survey.
By Alisha Keezer

With cold and flu season upon us, the last thing you need is to get caught without health insurance. An illness or injury can happen any day, but thankfully, you don’t have to worry about how to pay for your healthcare or medical bills. Open enrollment for Affordable Care Act (ACA) insurance began on November 1 and will go through January 31, 2017.

The ACA requires individuals to have health insurance or pay a tax penalty. The requirement can be met by having a plan with minimal essential coverage—either through one’s employer or another group, or by purchasing an individual/family policy through Maine’s health insurance Marketplace.

For 2016, if an individual did not have health insurance, he or she will pay a tax penalty of 2.5% of the household income or $695 per adult and $347.50 per child, up to $2,085 per household, whichever figure was greater, when the annual income tax return is filed.

In 2017, the 2.5% of household income penalty will remain for those without coverage. However, if the dollar amount is greater, then a person would have to pay the 2016 dollar amounts plus a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA).

Either way, you don’t want to be without health insurance next year. Get coverage to avoid these penalties. There are a variety of plans available to fit your needs and your budget. All the plans on Maine’s Marketplace cover doctor visits, hospital stays, prescriptions, preventive care and more.

Be sure to visit www.healthcare.gov to see what plans are available in 2017.

The 2017 Marketplace offers plans from three health insurance carriers—Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield, Community Health Options, and Harvard Pilgrim—all of which provide coverage across the state. Maine residents can select from 33 plans for the 2017 coverage year. Consumers can browse plans within the Marketplace and compare levels of coverage. The health care plans are labelled as Bronze, Silver, and Gold, and there are catastrophic plans for those under 30.

Anthem offers quality care in 16 Maine counties with over 3,000 specialists and 1,000 primary-care physicians in its network, called “Pathway X.” Anthem splits the state into two network branches, offering eleven different plans in each network:

- Northern POS (point of service) network
- Southern HMO (health maintenance organization) network

Pathway X: Aroostook, Hancock, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Somerset, and Washington Counties.

Community Health Options is a consumer operated and oriented plan (CO-OP) network. It covers medical care, hospitalization, and prescription drugs.

Community Health Options is the only insurance company in Maine’s Northern HMO. Its network includes all the hospitals in Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts.

Community Health Options provides its members with a Chronic Illness Support Program (CISP) which enables reduced out-of-pocket costs for covered services related to the routine management of five major chronic conditions: asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), diabetes, hypertension, and coronary artery disease (CAD). These services do not require any cost sharing when performed by a plan provider. Examples include office visits for the condition, medications related to the condition, lab tests, self-management classes, equipment, and supplies.

Community Health Options is the only insurance company in Maine’s Marketplace that provides benefits for pediatric dental services in some of their plans. It also offers a nurse telephone line which is available to members 24/7 for assistance in making important health care decisions. In addition, it has an online wellness portal with over 6,000 health topics plus tools and videos to enable informed choices about treatment options.

Harvard Pilgrim is a nonprofit health care company that was founded by doctors and has provided health insurance in Maine since 1994. It has a multi-state provider network which includes all the hospitals in Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts. The regional network offers over 30,000 providers (doctors, hospitals, and ancillary providers). Harvard Pilgrim’s individual 2017 plans in Maine use an HMO (health maintenance organization) network. In southern and central Maine, it also offers plans that have a tiered network (Maine Choice Plans). Maine Choice HMO will be offered in Androscoggin, Cumberland, Franklin, Kennebec, Knox, Lincoln, Oxford, Sagadahoc, Waldo, and York Counties.

The Maine Choice Plans have discounts that range from 10% to 15% on the monthly premium and cost sharing for those who choose the insurer’s narrowest level. This network is called the Preferred tier and has over 700 primary care providers, 3,000 specialists, and 12 hospitals. But members can also use the Standard tier which includes all doctors and hospitals in Harvard Pilgrim’s New England network (this option costs more than the Preferred tier).

Harvard Pilgrim also offers a Condition Management Program for members who are living with conditions such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), diabetes, heart disease, and kidney disease. Their offering includes programs for healthy eating, personal health coaches, member savings discount program, and a $150 fitness reimbursement program. Additional benefits include world-wide emergency care covered at the “in-network” level, no referral requirements for acupuncture or chiropractic services, and a list of discounts for alternative medicine services.

Be sure to visit www.healthcare.gov to see what plans are available. Please contact the MLA’s Navigator to set up an appointment at 207-967-4555 or email alisha@mainelobstermen.org.
Using a series of seawater tanks, Waller tested the effect that warmer water and increased carbon dioxide (CO₂) would have on lobster larvae. Climatologists predict that by the end of this century, ocean temperatures will have risen by 3 °C (5 °F). So Waller set up tanks with the current average temperature (16 °C, or 61 °F) and tanks with the end-of-the-century temperature of 19 °C (66 °F). The lobster larvae were then raised through all four molt stages at the two different temperatures. Waller measured the lobsters’ length, weight, swimming speed and other factors.

It was time-consuming work. After all, as they pass through the first three molts of their lives, lobster larvae may be no more than 11 millimeters in length, less than the diameter of a dime. When they enter their fourth stage, when they begin to resemble a lobster, lobster larvae may be a whopping 14 millimeters in length. Keeping track of their size is a tricky endeavor.

"David Fields had developed a way to film the lobsters in 3-D," Waller explained. Two video cameras were set up perpendicular to each other above each tank to track the lobsters’ movements. "I went through each ten-hour video to determine swimming speed," Waller said. "It took a lot of time!" To measure larvae length, Waller would take a picture of ten larvae each day. Using image analysis software, she could determine the length of each larva. Weighing took place on an extremely high-resolution scale.

So if the Gulf of Maine continues to increase in temperature, can lobsters possibly adapt in time to survive in the new environment?

To study the effect that increasing acidity would have on lobster larvae, Waller used 24 tanks, each of which could be infused with a mix of carbon dioxide and air. "You can make any condition you want in the tank," she said. Acidity, or pH level, is measured on a logarithmic scale. "We dropped the pH by 0.3 units, from 8.1 to 7.8," Waller said. "We don’t know why but a preliminary hypothesis is that the larvae had an easier time building their shells in that environment."

The results of the two experiments were telling. "With high CO₂ concentrations at today’s temperatures (61 °F) lobster larvae became longer and heavier," Waller said. "We don’t know why but a preliminary hypothesis is that the larvae had an easier time building their shells in that environment. We don’t have data on this, however.”

When water temperature was raised to 66 °F, regardless of the CO₂ concentration, lobster larvae had a hard time surviving. Those that did, however, progresses more rapidly through all four molt stages. "In the wild the fast development might help them survive all four stages and get to the seafloor as juveniles more quickly," Waller said.

But could a faster development time offset the low survival rate due to warmer water? "That’s a good question," Waller said. "In southern New England we’ve seen that there’s a threshold temperature below which lobsters can survive, which is roughly 20 °C." So if the Gulf of Maine continues to increase in temperature, can lobsters possibly adapt in time to survive in the new environment? "That’s also a good question. This study looked at ocean acidification and warming. The next step is to look at adaptation through multiple generations." Rick Wahle is planning a study using lobster larvae from southern New England, the Gulf of Maine and Nova Scotia to determine how larvae from the different locations react to warmer water and increased acidity.

For now, Waller is concentrating on defending her thesis this month and graduating in December. After that she plans to return to work at Bigelow Laboratory where her interest in science was sparked. "I just love figuring out what works and what is not going to work in a study," she said.

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**As the Gulf of Maine grows warmer and more acidic, can lobsters adapt quickly enough to cope with the changing environmental conditions?**

Photo by J. Waller.

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Coastal waters are home to many microscopic single-cell algae called phytoplankton. These tiny organisms are partially responsible for the Gulf of Maine’s greenish-blue color and serve as a key source of food and oxygen at the base of the food web. While phytoplankton are an important part of the ecosystem, harmful algal blooms (HAB) occur when phytoplankton produce biotoxins that pose a public health risk if consumed.

Harmful algal blooms in Maine typically occur between April and October. While phytoplankton are an important part of the ecosystem, greenish-blue color and serve as a key source of food and oxygen at the base of the food web. While phytoplankton are an important part of the ecosystem, harmful algal blooms (HAB) occur when phytoplankton produce biotoxins that pose a public health risk if consumed.

Coastal waters are home to many microscopic single-cell algae called phytoplankton. These tiny organisms are partially responsible for the Gulf of Maine’s greenish-blue color and serve as a key source of food and oxygen at the base of the food web. While phytoplankton are an important part of the ecosystem, harmful algal blooms (HAB) occur when phytoplankton produce biotoxins that pose a public health risk if consumed.

Pseudo-nitzschia paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP). In recent years, the phytoplankton called Pseudo-nitzschia has become a growing concern because it can produce a toxin called domoic acid (DA) which is responsible for amnesic shellfish poisoning (ASP).

DA is a neurotoxin that is destructive to brain tissue and can be fatal if consumed in high doses by marine mammals, birds and humans. Mild symptoms may include vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramps, headache and dizziness. In severe cases, the victim may experience trouble breathing, confusion, disorientation, permanent loss of short-term memory, coma or death.

This year Maine experienced widespread shellfish fishery closures due to a Pseudo-nitzschia bloom. To the state coastal monitoring program found some of the highest recorded DA toxicity in shellfish in the program’s history.

During HABs, clams, mussels, and all other bivalve shellfish feed on the toxic phytoplankton. As they filter the water to feed, they accumulate the toxin in the gut and tissue. The toxin is passed up the food chain to invertebrates such as crabs, lobsters and carnivorous snails when they feed on affected bivalves. These marine invertebrates are minimally affected by marine toxins, making toxicity very hard to detect visually. The presence of this toxic plankton in the environment is also hard to detect because it is rare if water color changes occur. Both ASP and PSP toxins are believed to remain in the viscera (internal organs) of animals that consume bivalve shellfish. That is why Maine’s long-standing lobster tomalley advisory includes PSP based on past sampling data.

Phytoplankton need the right combination of conditions to bloom including sunlight, temperature, and salinity and are also dependent on nitrogen, phosphorus and other nutrients. In general, Maine experiences HABs that last between six and eight weeks each year. However, the addition of nutrients from land (via rainfall or runoff) or from deep water upwelling in the ocean can prolong the bloom period.

While Alexandrium blooms produce PSP toxins throughout the entire bloom period, Pseudo-nitzschia blooms only produce DA toxins after nutrients are depleted in the water or the algae are environmentally stressed in some way. This makes predicting ASP toxin events and corresponding shellfish toxicity difficult. It also explains why in recent years Maine has documented many Pseudo-nitzschia blooms with very low or no DA associated with them.

Once HABs begin to decline, shellfish get rid of these toxins by filtering toxin-free seawater. Some species of bivalve shellfish, however, such as Atlantic scallop and surf (hen) clams, will retain and store toxins for long periods of time after the bloom is over. Razor clams and other food sources that retain the DA toxin were thought to be the cause of the high DA levels that closed the Dungeness and rock crab fisheries in California for the majority of last year’s season. Little is known about how long species like crab and lobster might retain DA and PSP toxins in their internal organs if affected.

Historically, few illnesses have been documented due to seafood with DA toxins in North America. The first confirmed outbreak of ASP occurred on Prince Edward Island in 1987 and was related to mussels; three people died and over 100 became ill. In 1991, 11 to 24 cases of ASP illness were reported after consumption of razor clams in Washington. Last year’s DA event in the West Coast crab fishery and the current event in Maine have had no reported illness despite the historic nature of these blooms.

In Maine, researchers will be unraveling why this Pseudo-nitzschia bloom produced such high levels of DA and how best to predict these events in the future. Questions remain regarding impacts of Pseudo-nitzschia-related toxicity for all marine organisms, not just bivalve shellfish. Answers to those questions will allow for better management and preparation for potential future DA events.

Alison Sirois worked for ten years in the Maine Department of Marine Resources’ Biotoxin and Phytoplankton Monitoring Programs.

By Alison Sirois

Pseudo-nitzschia may form long chains.
A. Sirois image.
by Ann Backus

Welcome to fall! Are you lobstermen working fewer hours as the daylight hours decrease? Probably not yet. But a shorter workday for those of you who are accustomed to working 12 or more hours a day is undoubtedly a good thing.

With a shorter workday, perhaps you will get more sleep, feel less stressed, eat more nutritious meals, and drink more water to keep hydrated. These behaviors may translate into feeling stronger, making better decisions, being able to concentrate longer or better on work tasks, or experiencing a more positive attitude.

With fewer work hours and more sleep you may also do your body some long-term health favors as well. Many studies in the occupational safety literature list hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, infections, muscular aches and pains, and depression as some of the health conditions associated with long work hours.

Research describes the relationship between work hours and injury in specific industries, such as trucking. The website www.truckaccidents.org notes that 30% of the 500,000 truck accidents per year are believed to be due to fatigue. The Department of Transportation regulations call for an 11-hour daily driving limit and a 14-hour limit to the work day (www.transportation.gov). In 2013 a new regulation reduced the allowable work week for truckers from 82 to 70 hours. This new regulation is expected to save lives and result in $280 million in savings from fewer large truck crashes and $470 million in savings from improved driver health.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) struggles with regulations regarding daily hours and rest. The agency mandates rest periods. For example, flight crews must have 10 hours of rest prior to a flight duty period and although this can include the time of commuting to the airport, it must include an 8-hour period during which actual rest is possible. The FAA breaks fatigue into three types: transient fatigue, defined as short-term fatigue resulting from one or two nights of insufficient sleep; cumulative fatigue, defined as multiple nights of poor or insufficient sleep; and circadian fatigue which is fatigue due to being out of sync with one's normal sleep/rest cycle. While these three types of fatigue may not apply to lobstermen, fishing crew on multi-day trips might suffer from all three kinds of fatigue.

The FAA also includes time on task with regard to fatigue, in the sense that the longer one spends on a given task the more likely one is to become fatigued. This concept is directly applicable to the fishing industry. We could argue that a day of lobstering does not generally include a wide variety of tasks and therefore could increase fatigue.

A number of years ago, Dr. Allard Dembe, then at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, realized that while there was research on fatigue in specific industries such as trucking and airlines, there was no research that undertook to assess risks due to work schedule across a variety of industries. He hypothesized that "working overtime or an extended work schedule increases the likelihood of reporting an occupational injury or illness compared to workers having less demanding schedules.”

He and his co-investigators launched a large and lengthy study. They enrolled nearly 13,000 people (aged 14-22 years) and followed them for 13 years. He defined various types of work that cause fatigue, two of which are relevant to fishermen, those which involve:

1) extended hours per week: regularly working more than 60 hours per week, and
2) extended hours per day: regularly working 12 or more hours per day.

His analysis showed those working more than 60 hours per week had a 23% greater risk for a workplace injury or illness, and those regularly working 12 or more hours per day had a 37% greater risk of an injury or illness than someone working fewer hours. This analysis controlled for age, gender, occupation, industry and region of the country.

The impact of a demanding work schedule may be made worse by the "intermediary condition" of fatigue and stress. In addition, factors such as hazard or the intensity of work will influence the impact that schedule has on the risk of injury or illness. Personal characteristics such as age, gender, and health status will influence risk and health impact as well. The organizational factors may have less relevance for the fishing community other than to the extent that regulations limit the hours during which fishing can be undertaken.

A study published in 2010 reported the results of research conducted by Paul Allen of Cardif University’s Centre for Occupational Health Psychology and his colleagues in which they surveyed 81 British fishermen. Their findings revealed that:

- 60% of these interviewed believed their personal safety had been at risk because of fatigue;
- 16% reported “having been involved in a fatigue-related accident”; and
- 44% said they had “worked to the point of exhaustion or collapse.”

In conclusion, in the fishing industry — the lobster fishery in this case — we are not exempt from the impacts of fatigue. The job is hazardous, the time on task is considerable, the work hours can be long. So to answer the question in this article's title: your risk of injury and illness is up. Get some sleep!
DERELICT GEAR RETRIEVAL TO BEGIN AGAIN THIS WINTER

The Center for Coastal Studies will be working this winter to clean up lost, abandoned or derelict fishing gear from Cape Cod and Massachusetts Bays. The organization was awarded a $95,000 grant through NOAA’s Marine Debris Program to survey likely areas where fishing gear is expected and work with commercial lobstermen to identify, remove, document, and properly dispose of lost gear from January through April.

“We try to isolate areas where gear will be likely to be found and recover it with grappling techniques,” said Laura Ludwig, the marine debris project coordinator with the Center for Coastal Studies. Previous efforts in 2013 and 2014 recovered more than 16 tons of gear including 660 lobster traps, half of which were retrieved using grappling techniques, “said Laura Ludwig, the marine debris project coordinator.

FISHERMEN CONTINUE TO CONTEST TIDAL POWER PROJECT

The Bay of Fundy Inshore Fishermen’s Association appeared in October in Nova Scotia Supreme Court to ask for the court to stay the province’s approval to allow Cape Sharp Tidal Ventures to install two 16-metre-wide turbines at the bottom of the Minas Passage. Cape Sharp Tidal is a partnership between Halifax-based Emera and French-owned Open Hydro, The Nova Scotia government and Cape Sharp Tidal want the court to dismiss the application. The Fishermen’s Association claims that the tidal turbines would cause a decline in commercial fishing across the entire region. Their argument is that the current scale of the project is much greater than the proposal that was approved in 2009.

RIGHT WHALES RETURN TO THE BAY OF FUNDY

A marine biologist and leading researcher of North Atlantic right whales declared 2016 a banner year for North Atlantic right whales in the Bay of Fundy. Moira Brown, a senior scientist with the New England Aquarium and the Canadian Whale Institute, said that after five years of desert-like conditions, an unexpected richness and diversity of sea-life has returned to the bay. In 2015, she and her team documented eight right whales during their annual survey. In 2016, they found more than 70 individual right whales by mid-October. Since 1985 the team of marine biologists have studied the population of North Atlantic right whales that visit the Bay of Fundy in search of the blooms of plankton in the deep waters off Grand Manan. The plankton are swept into the bay by strong currents from the Gulf of Maine; the whales follow to feed and court.

EU DENIES SWEDISH BAN ON AMERICAN LOBSTER

In October, the European Union denied a Swedish proposal to ban live American lobster from the EU’s 28 member countries. After finding several dozen American lobsters living off its shores, Sweden claimed that the crustacean threatened to interbreed with native European species, or bring new diseases to local fisheries. Members of the European Commission’s Invasive Alien Species Committee rejected that argument.
November 1
Health Insurance Open Enrollment begins at www.healthcare.gov. FMI: 967-4555.

November 1-3

November 9
MLA Board of Directors meeting, 5 p.m., Darby’s restaurant, Belfast.
ACA Health Insurance enrollment, 5-8 p.m., Rockland Free Clinic.

November 10
ASMFC Northern Shrimp Advisory Panel meeting, 9 a.m., Island Institute, Rockland.

November 14
ACA Health Insurance enrollment, 4:30-6:30 p.m., Midcoast School of Technology, Rockland.

November 15-17
New England Fishery Management Council meeting, Newport R.I.

November 18
Maine Islands Coalition meeting, 9 a.m., Island Institute, Rockland.

November 25
Rockland Festival of Lights Trap Tree lighting, 6 p.m., Rockland.

November 30
ACA Health Insurance enrollment, 3-8 p.m., Rockland Free Clinic.

UPCOMING
December 4
Kennebunk tree lighting ceremony, 5:30 p.m., Dock Square, Kennebunk.

December 6
Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative meeting, Island Institute, Rockland.

December 7
MLA Board meeting, 5 p.m., Darby’s restaurant, Belfast.

December 7-8
New England Fishery Management Council, Herring Workshop, Portsmouth, NH.

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

GIVING SAFETY A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE
By Rebecca Weil

Falls overboard are the leading cause of death in the northeast lobster fishery, according to the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Center for Maritime Safety and Health Studies, and could largely be prevented with the regular use of personal flotation devices (PFDs).

In response to this problem, a safety project is being launched by the Northeast Center for Occupational Health and Safety; Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (NEC), in conjunction with Fishing Partnership Support Services (FPSS) in Massachusetts.

Lobstermen from Maine and Massachusetts will be asked to try out existing, commercially available PFDs and to share what they like or don’t like about these designs. This information will be used to adjust existing designs whenever possible, then lobstermen will be given opportunities to try out these improved designs. A similar study was done with Alaskan fishermen, and one of the major takeaways from that study is that PFD design needs vary from fishery to fishery and from region to region. So the insights and experiences of lobstermen are very important.

Lobsterman Lewis Black and sternman Casey Soper were also in the area and noticed the boat still pulling him into the water. There he remained as his boat circled just outside Blue Hill harbor.

Later in the summer another lobsterman was involved in a rescue, this time involving both man and dog. Blue Hill lobsterman Brian Snow was in the process of setting back a trap when he noticed that his dog was about to get entangled in the rope as it was running off the stern of the boat. In the process of saving the dog, Snow became entangled himself and was pulled over the side as his boat continued forward. He managed to hold himself to the rail with one leg but the line was still pulling him into the water. There he remained as his boat circled just outside Blue Hill harbor.

Lobsterman Lewis Black and sternman Casey Soper were also in the area and noticed the boat going in circles without anyone at the helm. Black got his boat alongside but loose gear made it impossible for Soper to jump aboard. So he drove the bow of his boat right up against Snow’s stern which allowed Soper to jump safely onto the boat. Soper quickly freed an exhausted Snow from the line and got him back aboard.

It’s not only lobstermen and kayakers who may find themselves in difficult situations, as a letter to the editor of a Downeast newspaper this fall illustrated. Cally Dow and a friend were sailing along Eggemoggin Reach on a northeast wind when abruptly that wind strengthened.

Their problems with the mainsail so they were sailing with just the jib. The single sail was not enough to bring them back to their mooring. Flapping and beset by the increasing wind, they noticed a lobster boat coming toward them. The captain, Billy Grant, asked if they needed help, to which they answered a decided yes. Grant’s sternman threw a line and towed the sailboat back to the harbor. As the line was freed, Dow expressed her gratitude. “Happy to do it,” Grant replied.

Working and playing at sea can become dangerous and deadly. Lobstermen know that and, thankfully for many, are ready to lend a hand when necessary.
FALL FUNDRAISERS HELP
THE MAINE LOBSTERMEN’S COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

What could be better than good pizza and information about Maine’s lobstering industry? MLCA photo.

The staff at Otto Pizza in Yarmouth were happy to be part of the fundraising night in October. MLCA photo.

This fall the Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance was the recipient of several fundraising evenings at Otto Pizza of Yarmouth and the Flatbread Co. in Portland and Rockport. Customers enjoyed good food and information about Maine’s lobstermen and the state’s sustainable lobster fishery. All proceeds support the second Maine Lobster Leadership Institute taking place next spring. Many thanks to all who participated!

Brian welcomes customers to the MLCA fundraiser at Flatbread in Portland in September. MLCA photo.

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