Continued on page 21

LOBSTER MEETINGS WRESTLE WITH ENTRY, EFFORT
by MLA staff

The Department of Marine Resources’ (DMR) recent round of eight meetings with the lobster industry generated some heated debate, with eastern Maine zones largely in concurrence with DMR’s proposals and zones from midcoast to the west expressing concerns. DMR Commissioner Pat Keliher and several key staff members hit the road for the third time in recent years, this time to speak directly with lobstermen about some potential changes to the lobster entry system slated for debate during the upcoming legislative session.

Continued on page 4

CASHES LEDGE NOMINATED TO BE A NATIONAL MONUMENT
By Melissa Waterman

In mid-September a coalition of environmental organizations, including the Conservation Law Foundation, the National Geographic Society, the Pew Charitable Trusts, and the Natural Resources Defense Council, petitioned President Barack Obama to designate Cashes Ledge and the New England Coral Canyons and Seamounts, a chain of undersea formations about 150 miles off the coast of Massachusetts, as National Marine Monuments. These would be the first such monuments on the East Coast. The proposal produced immediate opposition from fishing groups, lobstering associations, and Maine Governor Paul LePage.

The Antiquities Act
President Obama, like past presidents, can create a national monument with a stroke of his pen, due to the language of the 1906 Antiquities Act. The Act allows a president to create a national monument to protect areas of “historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest.” At the time the Act was passed by Congress, public lands in the western states were being stripped of archeological relics. The intent of the Act was to allow the president to act quickly, by himself, to protect these sites. National Monuments receive permanent funding. Their status cannot be revoked by subsequent presidents, and would require an act of Congress to reverse.

George W. Bush created the largest marine national monument in the nation’s history when he designated the Pacific Remote Islands National Marine Monument in 2006, a vast stretch of ocean approximately 87,000 square miles in size. Obama

OCT. 15 IS DEADLINE FOR SAFETY EXAMS
By Melissa Waterman

Under the Coast Guard Reauthorization Act of 2010, all fishermen who fish outside of the 3 nautical mile line must have passed a Coast Guard safety exam of their vessel by October 15. According to Coast Guard safety inspector Brian Smith, who works with fishermen from Bar Harbor to Boothbay Harbor, lobstermen have been calling his office steadily to arrange the no-cost inspection. “Yes, there’s been an increase in calls. We’re definitely doing more exams than six months ago,” Smith said. As of August 31, 802 vessels have taken the exam. Of those, 580 boats have passed.

Safety inspector Garry Moores, who covers the coast from Canada to Bar Harbor, is doing about 70% more exams than six months ago. “The guys are pretty receptive to these exams. A lot of them, however, aren’t really ready because they have never done one before,” he said.

The exact items that are required for the safety exam differ based on the length of the vessel, type of fuel used, number of crew, where the vessel operates, and other factors. Both Smith and Moores encourage boat owners to go to www.FishSafe.info to fill out an online Commercial Fishing Vessel Checklist in order to prepare for the dockside exam.

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LANDINGS

News & Views from Maine’s Lobstering Community

By MLA staff

OCT. 15 IS DEADLINE FOR SAFETY EXAMS

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Continued on page 21
COASTAL OUTLOOK  Thoughts from MLCA President Patrice McCarron

It’s a busy time of the year here on the Maine coast. In many harbors the recreational boats are gone and the marinas have turned quiet. At sea, however, Maine’s lobstermen are still in the midst of another strong lobster season, hauling in their million-dollar catch. Since September they have been able to haul their traps on Sundays so they have a bit more flexibility to keep fishing steadily as the air cools and the days get shorter. Soon the weather will turn and many lobstermen will begin to bring their traps ashore. But during October, it’s still full steam ahead!

Part of successful fishing is staying safe. As of October 15, lobster boats that operate beyond the 3-mile limit must have passed a Coast Guard safety exam in order to continue to fish. In this issue of Landings, we talk to the three Coast Guard safety inspectors about the ins and outs of earning the Coast Guard inspection decal before the deadline.

We also review the recent series of meetings held by Department of Marine Resources Commissioner Patrick Keliher in September. The purpose of the meetings was to hear from lobstermen their thoughts about potential changes to the way lobster licenses are issued. The long years that some people qualified to lobster must often wait until they are allowed to fish in a certain lobster zone has caused anger and frustration in recent years. The Joint Committee on Marine Resources and the Governor have pledged to address these issues in the Legislative session that begins in January. The Commissioner heard from lobstermen directly what they think his agency should and shouldn’t do, which we summarize in this issue.

In September a coalition of environmental groups put forth a proposal to designate Cashes Ledge as well as offshore submarine canyons and seamounts in New England as National Monuments. Declaring an area a National Monument is a prerogative of the President and can be accomplished by Presidential proclamation or by Congress. Monument is a prerogative of the President and can be accomplished by Presidential proclamation or by Congress. The Commissioner heard from lobstermen directly what they think his agency should and shouldn’t do, which we summarize in this issue.

Finally, what’s in a name? As an article first published by the CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Company) notes, a lot. The Chinese, who are an increasingly important market for Maine lobster, think of all lobster as “Boston” lobster, according to the article. Canadian seafood firms are trying to change that notion through various marketing strategies.

We hope you enjoy this issue, and please, let us know what you want to read about in future issues!

Patrice

On a lighter note, we hear from John Tripp, one of the young lobstermen who took part in the Lobster Leadership Institute in 2014. Tripp, who fishes from Spruce Head, is looking forward to a long and successful lobster career. His experience in the Leadership Institute opened his eyes about the need to plan for the leaner times that may lie ahead and to keep informed of what is happening in the industry.

We hope you enjoy this issue, and please, let us know what you want to read about in future issues!

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

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It has always been an important fishing ground. It was declared essential fishery habitat and closed to trawling by the New England Council in 2002. The CLF petition seeks to go around NOAA and the Council, and make Cashes Ledge part of a permanent marine sanctuary. The petition is disingenuous because it fails to mention the forty year history of fisheries management and habitat protection already in place through the Magnuson-Stevens Act and other environmental laws. Saving Seafood has organized an industry petition to counter the very effective public campaign of CLF.

There are many legitimate criticisms of the New England Fisheries Management Council, which has one of the worst records in terms of stock management among U.S. regional councils. However, the new measures that have been put in place are in fact strenuously limiting fishing, with most stocks now harvested well below their sustainable limit. Over time this will lead to rebounding fishery populations.

Saving Seafood argues that current management actions are vetted via public meetings where the best available science and analytical tools are scrutinized in a transparent manner. The national monument request undermines the democratic process established for fisheries management. In fact, it has largely been viewed by many involved in the management process as an "end-run" to the current process. It removes the ability for public and fishery stakeholders to provide input to a scientifically based, public process which is held to clear goals and objectives and replaces it with a purely political process.

The Obama Administration is considering a national monument designation for three deep sea canyons and four sea mounts at the southern edge of Georges Bank. The primary purpose of this designation is to protect deep sea corals that are found in the canyons. In addition, the Conservation Law Foundation is asking that the administration include Cashes Ledge in the monument designation. Cashes Ledge is an area about 100 miles Northeast of Gloucester where a ridge rises to within 40 feet of the surface. The currents there are very conducive to mixing and support high productivity.

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The New England Fisheries Management Council just completed their work on a Habitat Amendment which will protect large areas of Cashes Ledge. These new regulatory measures are scheduled to be in place by 2016. They’ll be working on a regulatory action for deep sea canyons and seamounts toward the end of this month. The Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council also recently approved an action to protect deep sea canyons and seamounts.

The success of the American system of fishery management, widely seen as one of the best in the world, has relied on a transparent and decentralized system of regional fishery management councils, and the centralized authority of NOAA. The key element of the law is that all management decisions must be based on the best available science. Currently there is a lot of discussion on the types of protections needed for both the Canyons and Cashes ledge. The push for a national monument would be an end run around these discussions. By making this a political issue outside the council, the NGO’s are essentially giving up on the council system to make long term sustainability decisions. They would replace it with a political process where choices are made not based on science, but on the relative political strength of the combatants.

In some areas of the U.S., this type of politicization has already led to significant restrictions on commercial fishing, in favor of recreational fishing, with worse conservation outcomes. The reallocation of Gulf red snapper to less responsible and monitored recreational fishermen is one example. The stock was currently there is a lot of discussion on the types of protections needed for both the Canyons and Cashes ledge. The push for a national monument would be an end run around these discussions. By making this a political issue outside the council, the NGO’s are essentially giving up on the council system to make long term sustainability decisions. They would replace it with a political process where choices are made not based on science, but on the relative political strength of the combatants.

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expanding that monument in 2014 to 490,000 square miles in total.

The New England Fisheries Management Council

Many fishermen and fishing organizations find the idea of the national monument designation troubling, in part because Cashes Ledge is under the jurisdiction of the New England Fisheries Management Council (NEFMC). Bottom trawling and dredging have been banned there for more than a decade although it remains open to lobstering.

Furthermore, the Council’s Omnibus Fisheries Habitat Amendment, after twelve years in development, was approved by the Council in June with a reconfigured Cashes Ledge closure and additional protections for Ammen Rock.

Those within the commercial fishing world, and some outside that world, see the action as an effort by environmental groups to circumvent the Council process [see John Sackton’s column in this issue]. A unilateral action by President Obama would permanently end all fishing in the area and remove Cashes Ledge, and the offshore seamount and canyon system, from further oversight by the Council. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) held a “Town Hall” meeting in Providence, Rhode Island, on September 14 to hear public comments on the proposals.

Where is it?

There are two areas being considered for the national monument. Cashes Ledge, well-known to Gulf of Maine fishermen, is located about 80 miles southeast of Portland. The highest peak in Cashes Ledge, Ammen Rock, holds the deepest and largest kelp forest along the Atlantic seaboard. The New England Coral Canyons and Seamounts area encompasses five underwater canyons and four seamounts approximately 150 miles off the coast of Cape Cod. The four seamounts, which are extinct underwater volcanos, rise as high as 7,700 feet above the ocean floor. The canyons and seamounts are noted for the diversity and abundance of deep-sea corals, many of which are hundreds if not thousands of years old.

Who is against the Cashes Ledge nomination and why

In a joint letter to President Obama opposing the proposal, the Massachusetts Lobstermen’s Association, the Maine Lobstermen’s Association, the Atlantic Offshore Lobstermen’s Association, and other lobstering groups stated, “The only fixed gear commercial fishery currently allowed in [the Cashes Ledge area] is the lobster fishery, which is managed under the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Act, via the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and...”

NOAA Fisheries. These organizations have determined that the placement of lobster pots on the bottom has negligible impact on the habitat/bottom as Cashes Ledge continues to thrive even with lobster fishing taking place.

Furthermore, the organizations note that imposition of national monument status on these federal waters and lands would completely circumvent the Council process which, although slow-moving and often frustrating, reflects multiple perspectives. “The management measures adopted to date have been the result of countless discussions, public hearings, rulings and collaborative efforts of scientists, commercial fishermen, state and federal fisheries managers, and other important stakeholders in the New England region. The key point is that these efforts have all been taken in an open, democratic, deliberative, public process that allows individuals to offer public comments on proposed restrictions, and offer suggestions on how to mitigate negative impacts.”

In a separate letter to NOAA administrators, Senator Susan Collins and Representative Bruce Poliquin also objected to any unilateral action by the President and NOAA. The two officials stated, “A National Marine Monument designation in the Cashes Ledge region could well undermine the NEFMC’s long-standing, cooperative, and effective management systems and its years of hard work to develop balanced management plans in the region. We are particularly troubled to learn that NOAA did not consult with the NEFMC about its consideration of a National Marine Monument designation prior to public notice of a Town Hall meeting.”

What next?

The designation process for a new National Monument is murky. “There are few, if any, steps that need to be followed when designating a monument,” said Terry Stockwell, chair of the NEFMC. “I’m not sure who will review the comments [from the Providence meeting]. I suspect it will be the White House Council on Environmental Quality. According to NOAA we will all be reading the announcement, if it’s forthcoming, at the same time.”

All of these campaigns have in common the disregard for the give and take of multiple perspectives. “The management measures adopted to date have been the result of countless discussions, public hearings, rulings and collaborative efforts of scientists, commercial fishermen, state and federal fisheries managers, and other important stakeholders in the New England region. The key point is that these efforts have all been taken in an open, democratic, deliberative, public process that allows individuals to offer public comments on proposed restrictions, and offer suggestions on how to mitigate negative impacts.”

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rebuilt from the efforts of the commercial sector, and then the fruits of that rebuilding were taken from them.

In Florida a political campaign years ago outlawed all gillnets, putting some entire fisheries out of business. In Alaska, there is a potential for a referendum that would end set netting in Cook Inlet, in favor of suburban anchorage recreational fishermen.

All of these campaigns have in common the disregard for the give and take of the present management system, and in particular the requirement that decisions have a scientific basis. The issues with Cashes Ledge and the Canyon habitats can be described and measured scientifically. The Council’s actions, and NOAAs mandate, require that there be a scientific basis for regulations and protections.

By making an exaggerated emotional claim—that unless the protections on Cashes Ledge put in place in 2002 are retained forever, the entire ecosystem will be destroyed—the environmental groups are taking this argument out of the realm of science, and instead making a political end run. In the long run, a small player like the commercial fishing industry cannot stand up to this kind of attack.
NEW LEADERS IN MAINE’S LOBSTER FISHERY: John Tripp, Spruce Head

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

by Melissa Waterman

John Tripp’s new house sits on a wide expanse of cleared land in Spruce Head. On this quiet afternoon his five-week-old daughter Everly and his wife Mallary are resting upstairs. “We finished the house about a month before she was born,” Tripp, 27, said. In the year since he participated in the Lobster Leadership Institute, Tripp has experienced numerous changes, yet he radiates a sense of calm.

“Everything about Prince Edward Island was totally different,” Tripp recalled, thinking back on his visit to the island last year. He went lobstering with local fishermen Robby Jenkins and John Lock. “Even the lobsters looked different. They keep the small ones [called canners] which is the opposite of what we do. And the bottom had very little variation.” Tripp was encouraged to take part in the Institute by his father-in-law, MLA board member Tad Miller. He admits that before getting involved he had a very different idea about the MLA. “You think of the MLA, you think of trap limits,” he said. “But I’ve changed my mind since then.”

In addition to finishing his house and becoming a father, Tripp also bought a new boat this year. “I bought it from my father. It’s a 42-foot Peter Kass John’s Sea Wife. Photo by Walt Barrows, wlb3.smugmug.com.

Lowell which he fished until purchasing the new boat but also because his catch is down compared to previous years.

In recent years more and more lobstermen driving big boats with big engines have set their traps offshore, leading on occasion to something of a Wild West situation. Tripp acknowledges that offshore lobstering has its good and bad points. “Lobstering is about the most competitive thing there is. You have to pay your dues. There’s a lot more effort going on out there, there has been and there will be,” he said. He’d like to be able to try fisheries other than lobster but those avenues are closed for right now. “I can’t get a scallop license and if I got a shrimp license, there’s no guarantee I’d ever be able to use it,” he said.

Since taking part in the Leadership Institute, Tripp has attended many of the MLA Board of Directors’ monthly meetings in Belfast. “I want to find out what’s going on. Lobstermen are often their own worst enemies, griping about things which have been in the works for a while. Anyone can go to the meetings if they want to. They’ll listen to you,” he said.

The afternoon is drawing on. Mallary and newborn Everly come down to the living room. Tripp’s yellow Labrador nudges at the door. The new house is cool and clean, showing the pride Tripp takes in his home and his life. He holds Everly in his arms. “This is about the best thing that’s ever happened to me,” he says quietly.

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Board of Directors’ Meeting Schedule
All meetings take place at Darby’s Restaurant, Belfast.
Oct. 7, 5 p.m.
Nov. 10, 5 p.m.
Dec. 2, 5 p.m.

STEAMING AHEAD

I often get asked how the lobster business is going. It’s certainly a question worth asking, since Maine’s coastal economy depends on the success of the lobster industry. In recent years the answer to that question has varied a lot. It’s been a wild ride in the lobster industry since the financial crisis of 2008. Prior to 2008, lobster landings were slowly increasing but had only exceed the 70 million pound mark twice. Lobster prices had pushed up during that time, averaging more than $4.00 per pound in four separate years. Bait and fuel prices were on the increase, but seemed manageable because of the rising lobster prices.

In the seven years since 2008, we’ve seen landings shoot up from the 70 million pound mark; in three different years they’ve hovered around 125 million pounds. During this time, lobster prices dipped below $3.00 a pound in three of those years, and then rebounded last year to nearly $3.70 a pound. Meanwhile fuel prices peaked at almost $5.00 a gallon in 2008, dipped below $3.00 for a few years, and then steadily climbed near the $4.00 mark. And bait prices have crept up year after year.

Talk about a roller coaster ride! But the lobster industry responded as best it could to those hard times. Many lobsters adapted by making their businesses as efficient as possible—burning less fuel, improving lobster holding capacity on deck and generally taking better care of their lobsters to maximize price. Lobster buyers and co-ops have improved dockside infrastructure by adding aeration and cooling systems and mechanizing the transport of lobsters from boat to truck. Other dealers have invested in new state-of-the-art land-based holding facilities, plus Maine’s lobster processing capacity has grown. Lobster dealers have successfully recruited a lot more customers both home and away. Lobster prices had pushed up during that time, averaging more than $4.00 per pound in four separate years. Bait and fuel prices were on the increase, but seemed manageable because of the rising lobster prices.

The collective efforts of the industry seem to be paying off. By most accounts, the 2015 season is shaping up to be a great one along the coast. Lobstermen report prices are up compared to last year, which was itself a solid year. Fuel prices are way down, hovering just above the $2.00 a gallon mark. Lobster landings remain strong and prospects for the future look good—lobstermen are seeing plenty of lobsters to maximize price. Lobster buyers and co-ops have improved dockside infrastructure by adding aeration and cooling systems and mechanizing the transport of lobsters from boat to truck. Other dealers have invested in new state-of-the-art land-based holding facilities, plus Maine’s lobster processing capacity has grown. Lobster dealers have successfully recruited a lot more customers both here in the U.S. and abroad. And the industry as a whole has collaborated to make a meaningful investment in marketing our product through the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative.

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MAINE LOBSTERMEN'S ASSOCIATION UPDATE

is very concerned about the zone councils losing authority. MLA will attend all of the meetings to continue to assess the issue and feedback from the industry.

The ASMFC Herring Section closed the Area 1A herring fishery, effective August 28, though herring vessels voluntarily stopped fishing on August 26. The ASMFC earlier had cited data that showed herring were being caught at a rate that would have allowed the fishery to continue through September. However the landings rate accelerated significantly in late August resulting in the shutdown. Since then, it has been reported that the landings were not monitored accurately due to a computer glitch. The Area 1A fishery will reopen on October 1, when all vessels are allowed access to the fishery.

Atlantic Herring Landings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Current Week's Catch</th>
<th>Cumulative Catch</th>
<th>Quota June 1 thru Sept 30</th>
<th>Total Annual Quota</th>
<th>Percent Quota</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1A</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21,038</td>
<td>20,926</td>
<td>30,290</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1B</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2,909</td>
<td>4,922</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11,346</td>
<td>52,100</td>
<td>67,490</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2,822</td>
<td>28,773</td>
<td>44,910</td>
<td>83,000</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,834</td>
<td>63,953</td>
<td>104,566</td>
<td>187,000</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ASMFC implements rolling spawning closures in the herring fishery to provide adequate protection for spawning herring and prevent damage to herring egg beds. Since there were not sufficient samples to determine the spawning condition of the fish, the default spawning closures were implemented. Herring taken legally outside the Spawning Area Closures may be transported through the area only if all of its fishing gear has been stowed. Additional closures will be announced when ripe females are detected.

- Eastern Maine Spawning Area: August 15 through September 11, 2015
- Western Maine Spawning Area: September 1 through September 28, 2015.
- Western Maine and Mass/NH Spawning Area: September 21 through October 18, 2015.

**SEARSPORT DREDGE PROJECT ON HOLD**

On September 8, the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Maine DOT announced the withdrawal of the Water Quality Certification (WQC)/Natural Resources Protection Act application for the Searsport Harbor maintenance and improvement project. The letter stated that the application may be resubmitted at a future. In a subsequent interview, Maine Port Authority Director John Henshaw commented that the application was withdrawn due to issues of timing, and that he expects the application to be refiled. The Army Corps project manager noted that Army Corps wanted more time to study the project, and that the application process was taking longer than expected.

**MLA SAYS NO TO A NATIONAL MONUMENT IN THE GULF OF MAINE**

The MLA joined several other fishing industry groups (Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association, Atlantic Offshore Lobstermen's Association, Downeast Lobstermen's Association, Maine Lobstermen's Union, Stellwagen Bank Charter Boat Association, Rhode Island Lobstermen's Association, Gloucester Fisheries Commission and the American Bluefin Tuna Association) in signing a letter to President Obama strongly opposing the designation of Cashes Ledge and the offshore canyons as a National Monument. Such a designation would permanently ban fishing and other activities in the area and could be expanded at any time in the future. The letter notes that this potential designation would usurp the established habitat and fisheries management public process and could be economically catastrophic not only to the fishermen, but also to hundreds of small coastal communities in New England. MLA has also been in touch with state officials and Maine's federal delegation on this issue.

**GMRI SEEKS INDUSTRY FEEDBACK ON LOBSTER FORECAST MODEL**

GMRI is seeking input from lobstermen and others in the industry to help evaluate and improve these forecasts. Through answers to the following questions, GMRI will assess lobstermen's thoughts on this year's forecast and identify options for how it might be improved. Any responses (full or partial) are appreciated; please e-mail responses to Kathy Mills at kmills@gmri.org. You can learn more about the modelling approach and the full series of forecasts for 2015 are available at www.gmri.org/lobster-forecast.

- Which lobster zone do you fish in?
- What is your home port?
- Where do you typically fish? (approximate lat/long or place name)
- When do you normally expect to start catching shedders?
- When did you start to pick up shedders this year?
- Did the shed come on quickly, or did they stream in?
- If you could have advanced warning of one aspect of the lobster fishery (for example, timing of the shed, volume of the catch, price, etc.), what would be most useful to you?
- Do you have other comments or feedback on the lobster forecast model?

**MAINE LOBSTER MARKETING COLLABORATIVE**

The Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative met in September in Rockland, Maine. Representatives from Weber Shandwick were in attendance to update the Board on implementation of the marketing plan to date. The strategy—to work with chefs to move new shell lobster into East Coast markets during peak supply and ramp up MLMC’s web and social media presence—has been extremely successful. Both chefs and consumers have been eager to learn about the taste and seasonality of Maine new shells.

Continued on page 8.
COAST GUARD SAFETY STICKERS DUE OCT. 15

Lobstermen who fish outside the 3 nautical mile line must successfully complete a dockside safety exam and be issued a safety decal for your commercial fishing vessel no later than October 15, 2015. After that date, the exam must be completed at least every five years.

If your vessel was examined and safety decal issued after January 1, 2013, you are not required to have your vessel re-examined 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.

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

To schedule your 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

DOUBLE GEAR MARKING IN EFFECT FOR JEFFREYS LEDGE AND JORDAN BASIN

Effective September 1, 2015, two additional Gear Marking Areas go into effect, including a large area around Jeffreys Ledge and another near Jordan Basin as part of the federal whale rules. Gear fished in the Jeffreys Gear Marking Area must be marked with red and green; gear fished in the Jordan Basin Gear Marking Area must be marked with red and purple.

The rope must be marked at least three times (top, middle, bottom) and each must mark total 12-inch in length. If the mark consists of two colors then each color mark may be 6-inch for a total mark of 12-inches.

TRAP TAGS CAN BE HOG RINGED

The DMR is reminding lobstermen that you no longer need to contact your local Marine Patrol Officer to obtain replacement tags, unless you have a major loss. If you are shifting gear, you may cut your tag out of a trap and hog ring it into the bridge of the trap. Be sure that you do not cut any of the identifying information so it is clear to Marine Patrol that it is a legal 2015 trap tag.

Fall 2015 Inshore Trawl Survey aboard F/V Robert Michael

The fall groundfish trawl survey conducted by the Maine Dept. of Marine Resources is scheduled to begin September 28th in New Hampshire working east to Lubec. The weekly schedule breaks down as: Sept. 28 through Oct. 2, we will be working from New Hampshire to Cape Elizabeth; Oct. 5 through 9, we will be working from Portland to Muscongus Bay; Oct. 12 through 16, we will be working in Penobscot Bay area (Port Clyde to Isle au Haut); Oct. 19 through 23, we will be working from Isle au Haut to Schoodic Point (Mt. Desert Is. Area); and Oct. 26 through 30, we will be working from Schoodic to Lubec (eastern Maine). Schedules are subject to the weather conditions and can change at the last minute.

The data collected by the survey is used in the assessment of lobster stocks and many other species of fish and shellfish. The better information we have about ALL our fishery resources, the better we can defend our fisheries and livelihoods. In order to complete the required minimum number of tows for each of our 20 strata, we are asking for the cooperation of lobstermen in clearing proposed tow areas of gear. Mailings of proposed daily tow schedules with start and stop coordinates and area overviews to all lobster license holders have already started. Thank you for your cooperation.

Tow Schedule and Updates will be available via several methods:
For detailed charts, please call Sally Sherman 633-9593, Keri Stepanek 633-9530.
Website: www.state.me.us/dmr/rmm/trawl/trawl.htm.
Maine Patrol: Division I, Boothbay@ 633-9595 or Division II, Lamoine@ 667-3573.

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

Jeffreys Gear Marking Area

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HR Beal & Sons Inc.
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Island Fishermen’s Wives
Island Seafood II, LLC
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Kips Seafood Co.
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Linda Bean’s Maine Lobster
Lobster ME
Lobster Products Inc.
Lumme’s Hydraulic Inc.
Machias Savings Bank
Maine Financial Group
Maine Lobster Dealers Association
Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance
Maine Maritime Museum
Maine Port Authority
Maine Sea Grant
Maine Hydraulic Engineering Co. Inc.
McMillan Offshore Survival Training
Midcoast Marine Supply
Mount Desert Oceanarium
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Nautilus Marine Fabrication Inc.
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North Atlantic Power Products
Northland Marine Survey Co.
Novatec Brazils LTD
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Penobscot Bay & River Pilots Association
Penobscot East Resource Center
Pet’s Marine Electronics
PJ Lobster Company
Polyform US
Port Clyde Fisherman’s Co-op
Port Lobster Co.
Quahog Lobster Inc.
Re/Max Oceanside
Seaview Lobster Co.
South Bristol Fishermen’s Cooperative
Superior Bait & Salt
Superior Marine Products Inc.
The Compass Insurance Group
The First NA
Vinalhaven Fishermen’s Co-op
WD Matthews Machinery Co.
Weathervane Seafoods Inc.
Weirs Motor Sales Inc.
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Williams CPA Group LLC
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LANDINGS | October 2015

Present your MLA membership card at the following businesses and receive generous discounts!

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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 fisherman.

Hews Company, LLC
South Portland, ME -- 10% off all hydraulic components and Cable Craft cables in 2015.

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

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

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

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

Mount Desert Oceanarium
Bar Harbor, ME -- Free admission to commercial fishermen and their families.

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

North Atlantic Power Products
Exeter, NH -- 10% off marine gears, controls, accessories, and parts.

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

Richard Stanley Custom Boats
Bass Harbor, ME -- $1,000 off final price of hull with MLA membership.

Sea Rose Trap 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.

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

Weathervane Seafood Inc.
Kittery, ME -- 10% off mail order purchases. Just mention you are an MLA member. 1-800-914-1774.

SW Boatworks is now taking orders for new Calvin Beal 42’ Hull/Top packages for 2016. The 42’ Calvin Beal design is similar to the 38’ Calvin Beal, but with more length to accommodate both commercial and sports fishing demands and a width of 15’. This design has been approved by Calvin Beal and Captain Stewart Workman. Production of the 42’ hulls and tops will begin January 1, 2016. Demand for the boats has been great which means only nine production spots remain for 2016. Call now to reserve yours!

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Second Runner-Up: Richard Wall, Tenants Harbor
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Straight from the cold waters of Iceland to you!
It’s fall. Night and day are approximately the same number of hours. The air is cool, and brisk northeasterly storms swell across the Gulf of Maine. The Gulf, however, still remains warm since water retains the summer heat much longer than the land. And out there, once again, the engine of the Gulf’s food web is kicking into gear.

Most recognize the tell-tale green hue of the Gulf of Maine in the spring when microscopic plants produce an abundance of chlorophyll known as the phytoplankton bloom. The spring bloom is fueled by the warming surface of the Gulf combining with the oxygen-rich water churned up from the depths from the winter’s storms and nutrients brought in by meltwater from the region’s many rivers. But what happens in the fall? The phytoplankton once again bloom, but in patterns that are patchy and unpredictable, quite dissimilar to the spring bloom. “No one has really studied the fall bloom,” explained David Townsend, professor of oceanography at the University of Maine School of Marine Sciences. “In theory it does occur.”

During the summer, the Gulf of Maine is like a Jello parfait. At the surface is a deep layer of warm, nutrient-depleted water. As one moves deeper, water temperatures drop very gradually. In the middle is a layer of slightly mixed water, called the thermocline. Below the thermocline layer, water temperature will drop abruptly, leaving a layer of very cold, nutrient- and oxygen-filled water at the bottom of the Gulf. The three layers coexist together but do not mingle, like layers of different-colored Jello in a parfait.

Come fall, when the hours of sunlight decrease, that surface layer of warm water begins to diminish. Autumn storms will churn it up, allowing the cold deeper water to rise up to replace it through a process called convection. The thermocline layer expands in size as nutrients from the bottom layer mix with the warmer surface water layer. “The thermocline (slope) is gentle,” Townsend said. “Phytoplankton are getting less light but more nutrients [than during the summer].”

Townsend, who has tracked phytoplankton in the Gulf for decades, finds the fall phytoplankton bloom somewhat mysterious. “The satellite images [which show concentrations of chlorophyll produced by the phytoplankton] aggregate the data. You could have a high concentration in one pixel [of the image] and zero in the next,” he noted. It’s the variation among areas of the Gulf that he believes tells the story of the fall bloom. “In all years there must be the same productivity but it is expressed in a different way. Instead of a bloom it’s more of a gradual increase,” he said.

One of the factors that influences the fall phytoplankton bloom is the temperature of the water at depth. In some years bottom waters in the Gulf are particularly cold; in other years much warmer and saltier. Townsend explained that the difference in temperature is related to the amount of melting occurring in the Arctic Ocean.

Close-up images of Gulf of Maine phytoplankton reveal their beauty. Photos by D. Townsend.

FALL PHYTOPLANKTON DEPEND ON LIGHT, NUTRIENTS
By Melissa Waterman
It’s peak lobster season in Maine and we are still celebrating! We recently invited chefs and media to Maine to experience all that goes into bringing Maine Lobster from “trap to table.” Activities included a lobster boat tour, a visit to the Maine State Aquarium, and a trip to the annual Claw Down event.

Chefs and media alike were immersed in the Maine way of life, and have become ambassadors for the Maine Lobster story! The chefs and media shared images of their Maine experiences on social media and garnered over 250,000 views on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, with more substantial print and online coverage to come.

IF IT’S NOT FROM Maine, IT’S JUST LOBSTER
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By Paul Withers, CBC News
First published on Sept. 2, 2015; reprinted with permission.

With Canadian lobster sales in China at record levels, a major Nova Scotia exporter is trying to rebrand the tasty crustacean to overcome its generic name in China: "Boston lobster."

“We all know Canadian lobster is better quality than lobster from the U.S. side,” says Jack Liu, of Zoneco, a large Chinese seafood company that has bought into the Nova Scotia lobster industry. “It’s stronger, the meat is fuller. The yield is high, there is more meat inside.”

Sales of live Canadian lobster to China — mostly from Nova Scotia — have more than tripled in the last few years. By the end of June, sales in 2015 totalled $55 million, and are on pace to top a record from 2014 when sales totalled $67 million. But Chinese consumers may not know where they come from.

The first company in the Chinese market was American. "Boston lobster" has, as a result, become the generic name for all two-clawed lobsters from North America. “We feel we need to do some work to educate the market and consumer to better understand the origin of the lobster to tell them the story, the environment and the community,” says Liu.

Replacing a widely-accepted generic name is going to be very difficult.

Since its arrival in Nova Scotia last year, Zoneco has been air shipping about 35,000 pounds a week to China from of its plant in Eastern Passage outside Halifax. The company has applied for permits for a five-fold expansion of the operation and says it will open another facility on the province’s south shore.

The company’s promotional campaign includes a feel-good video featuring crews who catch and process the lobster caught off Nova Scotia. A portion of the video with Nova Scotia Fisheries Minister Keith Colwell features Chinese subtitles. “It’s the right thing to do to tell the true story and let consumers know,” says Liu. He also agrees successful rebranding could yield a higher price and a better bottom line. “We believe that would be the result.”

Replacing a widely-accepted generic name is going to be very difficult, according to Mount Saint Vincent University marketing expert Dr. Peter Mombourquette. “Most companies that try to brand a commodity generally stop after a certain point. There’s very few companies that have been been successful doing so,” he said.

Mombourquette also questions whether consumers in China who may eat lobster two or three times a year will really be able to distinguish a difference between lobster from Atlantic Canada and the United States.

Liu points to Norwegian-farmed salmon and branding by the Alaskan Seafood Institute as successes. He admits the effort will take time but the company is in for the long haul, saying for instance that its expansion plans are going ahead despite a weakening Chinese economy. “A short-term phenomenon will not change our strategic decision.”

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LEFT: Executives from Zoneco handle a lobster at the plant in Nova Scotia earlier this year. Photo courtesy of The Chronicle Herald.
HEALTH INSURANCE ENROLLMENT BEGINS NOV. 1

By April Gilmore McNutt

It’s hard to believe the summer has passed and health insurance open enrollment is right around the corner again! This will be the third open enrollment period under the Affordable Care Act. Open enrollment for 2016 health insurance coverage starts November 1 and will end January 31, 2016. If you enroll in a plan before December 15, your coverage will start January 1.

The open enrollment period for 2016 is even shorter than in previous years so be sure to plan ahead to make your enrollment as simple as possible. And since the first two months overlap with the holiday season, if you wait you could get stuck scrambling during the closing weeks of open enrollment. The last few weeks are always extremely busy, so to avoid long waiting times on the phone or any technical issues with the healthcare.gov website, it’s best to start the process early. Navigators are here to help you in person as well, but schedules have been known to fill up fast!

If you miss the open enrollment period you can only enroll in a plan for 2016 if you meet “special enrollment” criteria, meaning you have some sort of life event that would qualify you: for example, if you have a baby or get married or move outside your plan’s service area.

Maine residents will have even more choices this year as Aetna becomes the fourth company offering plans in the Maine marketplace along with Anthem, Harvard Pilgrim, and Community Health Options (formerly Maine Community Health Options) and Florida Blue Healthcare. Plans offered by all four companies will range from bronze to gold level, with catastrophic plans available to those people 30 years old and under.

All plans will cover the essential health benefits required under the Affordable Care Act, such as prescription drugs, emergency services, preventative care, and pregnancy, maternity and newborn care. You’ll want to take your time to look through plan options and choose a plan that suits your needs. The MLA will be here to help you look through plan options, help answer questions and assist with enrollment if needed.

If you already have insurance through the Marketplace, re-enrollment will be similar to the previous years: if you enrolled in a plan using www.healthcare.gov you will be automatically re-enrolled in the same plan or, if your current plan is no longer available, in a similar plan. Insurance companies are required to let you know about any changes to existing plans or new plans offered during open enrollment. If you have experienced any changes to your contact information, household size or estimated household income over this past year it is best to update your healthcare.gov account as soon as possible to reflect your current situation. Federal health insurance subsidies are based on household size and estimated household income; lack of accurate information could affect your future eligibility.

Healthcare.gov will also reach out to you through mail or email to let you know about your re-enrollment.

Ways to enroll will be the same as before: online, in person with an assister or over the phone at the healthcare.gov call center (1-800-318-2596 open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week). Enrolling through healthcare.gov will allow you to apply for federal subsidies, which could help lower your health insurance costs each month.

If you have any questions regarding how to make updates, what plan options are available or how to enroll, please contact the MLA. We are here to help you understand your options and enroll in the best plan for you and your family.

Phytoplankton continued from page 15

The Arctic meltwater flows into the Labrador Sea. That cold, fairly fresh water fuels the Labrador Current, an arm of which winds its way into the Gulf of Maine at the surface. Scientists refer to that water as Scotian Shelf Water. Warmer, nutrient-rich water slips in over Georges Bank and the continental shelf; that deep water is called Slope Water. "If lots of freshwater is coming in, then the deep slope water can’t come in,” Townsend said. As a result, phytoplankton may find themselves without the nutrients they need to explode into a bloom, both in the spring and in the winter months.

The Gulf of Maine is a complex system, whose rich productivity is a result of the interplay among the sun, the currents, and the wind. As the Earth’s climate warms, that complex interplay has begun to change as well.

Open Enrollment for 2016 health insurance coverage begins

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You may qualify for coverage now if you:

• Get married or divorced
• Have or adopt a child
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• Move to new part of state (ex. From Portland to Bangor)
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• Become a member of a recognized Indian tribe
• Leave jail

If your income changes significantly while you currently have coverage, you may qualify for new coverage.

For more information visit www.healthcare.gov

Questions? Call the MLA at 967-4555
INTERNATIONAL MARITIME LIBRARY A LABOR OF LOVE

By Jon Johansen
Publisher, Maine Coastal News

Wouldn’t it be helpful to be able to go to your computer and find specific information on a maritime subject? Yes, there is a lot of maritime information on the Internet, but there is a lot more still buried in the most obscure places. Another issue is that it is fragmented. You will find some here and some there, and at times it is nearly impossible to tie them together unless you know all the details. The International Maritime Library (IML) was formed in 2006 to answer this problem. It will be a digital library, based on computerized information, which can be called up at the touch of a button.

I have always been interested in maritime history and have consistently made it a part of the editorial content of Maine Coastal News. When putting together an article on vessels built on the Penobscot River I noticed there was not a complete detailed database on the vessels built in each town which could be accessed easily. I began to create a list for each of the towns on the river using the "List of Merchant Vessels for the United States" (MVUS).

Not thinking about the time it was going to take, I expanded this to not only encompass all the towns of the state of Maine, but for the United States. The "MVUS" was published yearly from 1867 until the early 1990s and contains basic information (Name; Official Number; Signal Letters; Rig; Gross and Net Tonnage; Length; Breadth; Depth; Service; Crew; Indicated Horsepower; When Built; Where Built; and Homeport) on each vessel registered in the United States. After 6,000 hours I had entered the data for approximately 31,000 merchant sailing vessels from 1867 to 1885 and then decided to start compiling a list of steam vessels from the "MVUS" for the years 1867 to 1903.

While entering this data I found that there were lists of vessels compiled by Robert Applebee of Stockton Springs at the Penobscot Marine Museum in Maine's history of merchant vessels is rich but unavailable to a casual researcher. Photo courtesy of the Penobscot Marine Museum.

Robert Applebee of Stockton Springs at the Penobscot Marine Museum in Searsport. He had done a good job compiling lists for vessels built mainly from Penobscot Bay to Eastport. Applebee documented just sailing vessels, thus he missed all the steamers and many of the small boats.

Another source is the Custom House records, which provide additional information on vessels arriving at certain ports around the United States. There were several volumes published by the Works Project Administration (WPA) in the 1930s and early 1940s, however, some were left partially completed. Only two Maine towns' records were published.

It is helpful having the basic information on all these vessels, but there is a lot of other information regarding the rest of a ship's life which was basically nonexistent, such as where did she sail, her master(s), owner(s), and what was her fate. A major source for this information is in old newspapers and magazines. Reading and transcribing all the maritime related articles takes hundreds of hours for each newspaper or magazine published, but in the end it is well worth the time spent.

The more one researches this material the more one will realize just what else needs to be done. The state of Maine is well known for those who went to sea, especially the deep sea voyagers. Information on these people, especially those who became masters, is lacking. Obituaries did not contain a lot of information until the late 1800s. Reading through old newspapers helps, but a lot of information unfortunately is not documented. A trip through a coastal cemetery can give you a lot of basic information on captains and those lost at sea, but adding to that can be very challenging.

Maine is also well-known for boatbuilding, but there is not a lot of early documentation. Fortunately some newspapers found boatbuilding interesting enough to write articles about it. What can you find about the early lobster boat builders and the boats they built? Are there any photographs?

There is some documentation of fishing vessels in the newspapers. Last winter I spent a vast amount of time documenting the Grand Banks fishing vessels sailing out of Gloucester, Massachusetts. These files include not only the vessels, but also the masters, owners, outfitters and lost vessels as well as crew members.

IML, which is a non-profit organization, is dedicated to the collection, computerization and preservation of all maritime information, such as books, periodicals, documents, personal papers and photographs. Making all this maritime information easily available is the backbone of IML’s mission. I’m constantly adding basic information to create more useful databases. In years past, extremely in-depth research generally resulted in academic books, but that is not a logical product today. Now one writes the text, illustrates it and publishes it on the Internet. The upside is that there is little to no cost and if you need to make corrections, or have learned additional information, you can easily correct it.

I was told by Tim Hodgdon of Hodgdon Yachts, who recognized the amount of work needed to get this information computerized, that I will not live long enough to complete this project. I hope to prove him wrong, but if not, I at least will have made a big dent in it!

To become a member of the International Maritime Library, visit the Web site at www.internationalmaritimelibrary.org; e-mail igmatats@aol.com; or call 207-223-8846.

Thank you!

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Garbo Lobster
We put our name on it

Garbo depends on the hard work and stewardship of Maine lobstermen.

Vessels in Monhegan Harbor. Photo courtesy of the Penobscot Marine Museum.

Photo courtesy of the Penobscot Marine Museum.
“A 25% fail rate is normal,” Smith said. “Vessels that have never had an exam before tend to be more deficient. There’s been very little pushback. Most say that they should have done it before.”

Typically the safety inspectors find simple things, such as fire extinguishers and first aid supplies, are out of date. However, some vessels lack more serious items, such as survival suits or crew training in flooding, collision or fire procedures. Moores has visited several boats that have survival suits aboard but no one on the vessel has ever tried them on. “These are $300 suits. I said, ‘You go to Walmart to get a new pair of $40 shoes, you generally try them on first.’ And these are things that can save your life. You should make sure they fit and you know how to use them.”

If major life safety items are not in compliance, the inspectors can’t give a safety decal and the boat owner must reschedule for a second exam. Smith doesn’t anticipate being overwhelmed as the October 15 date draws closer. “If someone has passed the exam in the last three years [since January 1, 2013] then their decal will be valued for five years rather than the regular two years,” he explained. “That makes a difference.” Moores, on the other hand, recognizes that not all the boats in his area will have passed the exam by the deadline. “We’re not going to get to all of them in time,” he said.

Kevin Plowman, Coast Guard safety examiner for the coast from New Hampshire to Boothbay, said that those boats not in compliance could face a fine as of October 16. “But it’s likely that someone would get a warning the first time. You’d have 30 days to take the exam and pass. If a safety exam takes place at sea, however, and there are real issues, you might have the trip terminated then.” For those who continue to flout the requirement, a fine of up to $5,000 per violation can be levied.

Plowman also strongly encourages all fishermen to go through the Commercial Fishing Vessel Checklist at www.FishSafe.info before the inspector shows up at the dock. “I had a guy in Boothbay Harbor, he’d gone through the checklist and found a few problems. He fixed them before the exam. Basically it was painless and we were done in 40 minutes,” he said.

The Commercial Fishing Vessel Checklist asks the boat owner to answer questions about his boat. At the end it will print out a list of safety equipment required. Plowman recognizes that this is a busy time of the year for most lobstermen. “You should have gotten it done.”

Additional safety requirements coming in 2016

Additional safety requirements for fishing vessels will come in to force in 2016. On February 16, commercial fishing vessels will be required to carry survival craft capable of keeping the user out of the water. Buoyant apparatus and life floats do not meet this requirement. Those vessels required to carry survival craft will be required to carry an inflatable buoyant apparatus, a life raft or a life boat, depending upon your vessel’s area of operation. On March 1, commercial fishing vessels 65 or more feet in length will be required to carry an Automated Identification System (AIS). Commercial fishing vessels may install a Class B AIS device versus a Class A device if the vessel operates at a speed of less than 14 knots.
This month the Maine Lobstermen’s Association (MLA) says good-bye to April Gilmore McNutt. April, 34, started working for the MLA in February, 2011, as an educational assistant involved with the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program. The MLA administered the TAA program, which provided business training for lobstermen and sternmen impacted by foreign imports, for nearly three years. More than 1,850 lobstermen completed the program. April then went on to become trained as a health insurance Navigator, assisting lobstermen and their families to apply for health insurance plans through the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

So it’s safe to say that April has had a very thorough experience of federal programs and bureaucracies. Despite that, she has remained a cheerful and very capable presence within the MLA office. “April has been a tremendous asset to the MLA. She’s just one of those people who gets it — she understands lobstermen and their families — you really can’t teach that,” commented Patrice McCarron, MLA’s Executive Director. “April is smart, personable and has a great sense of humor. And on top of that, she’s a hard worker and willing to put in the time and jump through all the hoops necessary to successfully administer federal programs to an industry that really doesn’t fit any of the molds.”

“I was really so excited to get the position [in 2011],” April recalled. “I always wanted to work with the lobstering community. It was close to my heart because I grew up around it.” April was raised in Bath where her family has operated Gilmore Seafood for many years. Friends from the area as well as relatives were fishermen and lobstermen. “I have always had a lot of respect for the hard work they do,” she said.

“April has been a tremendous asset to the MLA. She’s just one of those people who gets it — she understands lobstermen and their families — you really can’t teach that.”

Jumping into a world as complex as the TAA program proved to be a bit daunting but April soon got her feet under her. “Working with Annie [Tselikis, program coordinator] was a lot of fun. She was the teacher and I was the assistant,” April said. Through her work, April met many lobstermen and their families, connections that would prove valuable in her next assignment. “April has an incredible way of working with people. She is patient and kind and an excellent listener,” Tselikis commented. “The TAA process was new to us in Maine and not without challenges in the program administration. April was a pro at all of this and she was so fun to work with, whether we were in the office in Kennebunk or on the road running trainings.”

The ACA kicked off in October, 2013, with a malfunctioning Web site and a whole lot of confusion among potential participants as well as the Navigators whose job was to help them. “Oh my gosh, we were really overwhelmed,” April said. “I worked to get myself up to speed and had great help from a network of people in the state.” She credits staff at Maine Community Health Options, Maine Health Access Foundation and Maine Primary Care Association with connections that would prove valuable in her next assignment. “I always wanted to work with the fishing community. I’m grateful I’ve had this experience because I did so many different things,” she said.

During this time April also experienced some major changes in her personal life. In 2013 she and her partner Dan McNutt bought their first house together in South Portland. The next year the couple married; in 2015 they welcomed their first child, a son named Walter, into the world. “Yup, we’re wasting no time here,” April laughed. She is looking forward to spending more time at home for the next few years yet recognizes the pleasure she has drawn from her experiences at the MLA. “I like working with people in the ways I’ve done here. I’d really like to stay working with the fishing community. I’m grateful I’ve had this experience because I did so many different things,” she said.
Commissioner Kelihner explained to lobstermen, “We need to create a function-
ality entry system, but the resource is already fully exploited so we don’t want to
increase effort into the fishery,” he continued. “But people on the waiting list
are looking for a predictable time frame to receive a license so that they can
plant the table. Instead, we’re looking at making simple changes to the existing
system.” The Commissioner explained that resolving latency remains a priority
for the department, but previous proposals have been met with a lot of resist-
ance from lobstermen. Instead, through a series of small changes, the depart-
ment reasons that latency will slowly resolve itself.

Kelihner made his case for simple reforms to create a more functional entry sys-
tem through three potential actions: 1) change how we approach ratios, 2) in-
crease opportunities for students, and 3) address retirement. A potential fourth
reform would address future latency.

The first change that Kelihner proposed was to use licenses as the currency for
the exit ratios and cap ratios at 3 to 1. This issue was given the most atten-
tion and was most controversial. The DMR presented data for each zone on the
net increase or decrease in licenses and tags from 2008 to 2014, as well as a hypoth-
cal scenario on the change in licenses and tags had the ratios been
based on licenses. The net change reflects the number of licenses sold in 2008
compared to the number of licenses sold in 2014, so it encompasses all of the
licenses retired and all of the new entrants to the fishery.

DMR’s analysis shows that Zone C, the state’s only open zone, had a minimal in-
crease of 11 licenses and 29,000 tags during the six-year period. All other zones
showed a net decrease in both licenses and tags as a result of the limited-entry program.

In Zone D, licenses have decreased by 15% (168 licenses) under the 5:1 ra-
tio based on tags. However, had the exit ratio been based on licenses rather
than tags, licenses still would have decreased by 13% (142 licenses). The
Commissioner reasoned that if the zones used licenses for the exit ratios rather than
tags, they would have still achieved their goal of reducing effort.

Additionally, using licenses rather than tags would allow more opportunity
for entry for those on the waiting list. DMR’s analysis indicates that 45 people
would have entered the fishery from the waiting list as opposed to 30 when the ratios
were 5:1 based on license. The DMR concluded that this simple change—based the exit
ratios on licenses rather than tags—would create a more fluid entry system which
would reduce effort to zero.

The Commissioner told a group of more than 50 lobstermen at the Machias
meeting that Zone A has already implemented these changes and is the poster
child for creating a more functional entry system. Zone A voted to change its
ratio to 3:1 based on licenses. “I'm not trying to drive a wedge [between the zones],” Kelihner said. “I’m just trying to point out that we can make a big differ-
ce with small changes. Zone A has had 22 people come off the waiting list in the
last two years.” By contrast, Zone B, which also changed its ratio from tags to
licenses, the size of the Zone D waiting list would have been reduced from approxi-
mately 60 to 33. The DMR concluded that this simple change—based the exit
ratios on licenses rather than tags—would create a more fluid entry system which
would reduce effort to zero.

Feedback varied widely across the zones. Lobstermen from Zones A, B and C
generally supported the change, while the other zones worried about creating
more effort on the water. Lobstermen at the Deer Isle and Vinalhaven me-
tings, both located in Zone C, were confused about what the DMR was trying to
solve. A Deer Isle lobsterman asked, “If Zone C has only gained 11 licenses since
2008, what’s the problem? Why do zones have ratios?” “That’s a good question,”
responded the Commissioner. Ironically, Zone C lobstermen recently completed
a non-binding questionnaire to gauge opinion on closing the zone; the non-offi-
cial results, with a 5:1 ratio, were 5% with a 3:1 ratio 5% 2:1 4%.

Zones A and B offered similar feedback. Rock Alley, a Beals Island lobsterman,
said, “What’s the harm in opening them [the zones] all up?” Jack Merrill, an
Islesford lobsterman, asked the room, “How many of you guys had to wait seven
years to get your license? No one should have to wait that long. It’s not fair.”

Zone A lobstermen wondered why the Commissioner continues to hold meet-
ings to discuss things that don’t need fixing. John Drouin, a Cutler lobsterman
who serves on the Zone A Council, asked the Commissioner, “Why are you talk-
ning about these things in a way that is meant to create fear? There are no 20, 30
or 40 year waiting list. The GMR report said the average time on a waiting list
is only six years.” Richard Alley, an Addison lobsterman, asked, “Why do you
keep coming out trying to fix things that aren’t broken? Those [latent] licenses aren’t a problem. They pay for them, which benefits the state and doesn’t take
anything from the resource.”

Feedback about from Zone D and Zone F was more heated. These lobstermen were
confused about why the DMR would recommend changing the currency from
tags to licenses when the zones already have the authority to use either meth-
od. They voiced strong concern that this would result in the Legislature under-
mining the zones’ authority.

Gerry Cushman, a Port Clyde lobsterman, stated, “I’m out on the water every
day and your numbers don’t make sense. You [Commissioner Kelihner] say we’ve
lost 168 licenses, but I have not seen any reduction in the number of traps in the
water. There are traps set on top of traps. We are still on the edge with bait.
There is already too much effort. How can you say that you are going to increase
time and not increase effort? You are taking latent effort out and putting active
effort in. None of this makes sense.

Based on its analysis, DMR staff argued that the increase in effort lobstermen
are seeing on the water is not coming from latent effort or from new licenses.
Rather, the increase in effort is coming from within the fishery — from
lobstermen changing how and where they fish.

Bob Barnes from South Thomaston asked, “So what do you think will happen
if the offshore fishery falls off and all of those boats come back inshore?” Carl
Wilson, director of DMR's Bureau of Marine Science, answered, “It would be a
mess.”

It comes down to how one defines effort. For lobstermen, effort equals traps in
the water. For DMR, effort equals licenses and trap tags sold. Based on the level
of emotion expressed during the meetings, these are clearly not the same thing.

Bar Harbor lobsterman Jon Carter said that the ratios were put in place at a
time when managers were demanding that Maine control its effort because the
lobster population was thought to be in decline. “We weren’t supposed to go to
1:1 once we reached our goal! Maybe we need to rethink why we are keeping
down the number of licenses because the population has changed,” he said.

“Is this not the same fishery and not the same resource that we had when this
system was put in place over 15 years ago,” noted the Commissioner. Since 2000,
statewide lobster landings have more than doubled, from 57 million pounds to
124 million pounds. While landings have increased, two zones have had people
on the waiting list for 10 years; five zones have had people on the waiting list for
at least eight years.

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At the Portland meeting, Chebeague Island lobsterman Jeff Putnam warned,
“You shouldn’t undermine the zones. There will be more effort in the water if
you change to licenses.”

Long Island lobsterman Steve Train asked the Commissioner, “If the Legislature
decided to do this anyway, will you at least consider not counting those latent
licenses [with no tags] when they are retired?” Another Zone F lobsterman
asked if the Commissioner had considered how many more people will sign up for
the Apprentice Program if time on the waiting list is shortened.

“You know, if we just leave the existing system alone, effort will be cut in half
in just 10 years as lobstermen retire. Have you considered that?” asked Donny
Young, a Cushing lobsterman. He suggested that if the DMR insists on changing
all the exit ratios to licenses, they should consider putting a cap on the number
of licenses at each zone.

The DMRs second proposal, to improve student entry by increasing the age
to obtain a commercial license from under 18 to under 23, was well received
across the state. “It’s not right that kids need to choose their career by the time
they are 15 to get into this fishery, and it’s really not right that kids would have
to drop out of school to complete their time,” said David Cousins of South
Thena. lobstermen agreed. “It’s the right thing to do and it’s about time. We need to give a person time to
grow up before they decide what they want to do.” DMR noted that this change
will help alleviate pressure on the waiting list. “We hope that by getting more
students through by increasing the age, we would move a lot of people off the
waiting list,” added DMRs marine policy director Deitch Gilbert.

The Commissioner raised the question of whether this sort of reform should be
revenue. “What do you think about going through the list and letting anyone
who had completed their Apprentice Program before they turned 23 in?” That
would really move some people off the list.” DMR staff stated that, depending

Continued on page 23
GOOD SEASON ON P.E.I.

Fall lobster landings on Prince Edward Island are on par with those of last year. The price, however, is much higher. Most lobstermen are receiving $5.25 a pound for canners and $5.75 a pound for market size; both prices have risen a quarter since the season began in August. At $5.25 and $5.75 cents a pound, fall lobstermen are averaging $1.75 more per pound than last year. Fall prices on the island have generally lagged behind spring lobster prices. This year, however, the fall lobstermen are receiving 75 cents more a pound for canners and 50 cents more per pound for markets than the spring lobstermen did at the end of their season.

SEARSPOINT DREDGING PERMIT PROCESS HALTED

The Army Corps of Engineers withdrew its permit application to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection to dredge parts of Searsport harbor in September.

The Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT), which is co-sponsoring the project, said the withdrawal was likely temporary and that a revised application would probably be resubmitted. The federal agency and MDOT have just ironed out an agreement on matching funds, with each side contributing an additional $150,000 to the application process.

The state would like to improve cargo ship access to Mack Point where the shallowest part of the channel is believed to be about 31 feet deep. The channel has not been dredged since it was first dug in 1964. Since then ships have gotten bigger, in part because of safety requirements such as double hulls, and the channel depth means ships can only come in at high tide. If the channel is deepened to 40 feet, it will allow ships to dock more frequently and not have to wait for a high tide.

DMR RECOGNIZES STAFF MEMBERS

Department of Marine Resources staff received awards from Commissioner Patrick Keliher during the Department’s annual meeting on Friday, September 11 at the Department’s Boothbay Harbor facility. Marine Resource Scientist Heidi Bray received the Employee of the Year Award for work implementing a new online licensing system; Secretary Specialist Jessica McKay received a Special Commendation for organizing the Department’s move to its new location; and Marine Resource Scientist David Libby received the Manager of the Year Award for serving as Interim Bureau of Marine Science Director after the retirement of previous Director Linda Mercer.

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A VERY L-O-N-G LOBSTER ROLL

As part of the P.E.I. International Shellfish Festival in September, the Prince Edward Island Fishermen’s Association prepared one continuous lobster roll just under 23 meters (75.5 feet) in length. It took almost ten hours to bake and assemble the mighty roll, which required 32 local lobstermen plus a police escort to be carried to the festival’s main tent. About 34 kilograms of lobster meat (75 pounds) was mixed with 11 kilograms of mayonnaise (24 pounds) and 11 kilograms of vegetables. The roll, which beat the previous 22-meter (72.1 feet) record for length held by Shediac, New Brunswick, served 400 people.

After the story made headlines, Michel Boudreau, the president of the Shediac lobster festival, quickly reached out to CBC News to dispute the lobster roll record. “As the Shediac Lobster Festival president … I am proud to report that this year’s lobster roll record was 85 feet, 6 inches which is 26 metres in length,” Boudreau wrote in an e-mail. “I am happy to see that this event has stirred up some friendly competition.” The giant Shediac lobster roll was made — and enjoyed by many — during the town’s July festival.
on the zone, this would move from four (Zone E) to 15 (Zone D) additional people off the waiting list. Some liked this idea, some did not. Others questioned how this helped the older Apprentices. In Zone B, lobstermen asked what more could be done for Apprentices on the list: “Can they get a token amount of tags to fish like students, to keep them interested?” Can DMR use tax records and give credit for time as a sternman?” and “Can’t you do something to get full-time lobstermen from other zones off the list?”

There was no consensus from the industry on how to deal with lobstermen who are winding down their careers. The DMR proposed creating a new limited commercial license which would be offered with fewer tags and at a lower cost. The license would be available to purchase voluntarily, “If you allow lobstermen to purchase only the tags they want to fish each year, and remove the provision that you can only increase by 100 tags each year, you wouldn’t need a limited license and you would get rid of a lot of latent tags.”

The final idea offered for discussion was a “use it or lose it” concept for new entrants. “Should we be looking at preventing the creation of new latent effort in the fishery?” asked Commissioner Keliher. “I know many Apprentices have been frustrated when licenses are awarded and not fished.” The Commissioner also asked if new entrants should be required to report their landings. Most lobstermen agreed with requiring new entrants to use their lobster licenses within a specified time range; there was virtually no support for requiring them to report.

“The department believes these changes can create a more functional entry system without incurring effort,” Keliher said. “We need to continue to get industry feedback, but we will be putting a department bill forward for the upcoming session in January.” House Marine Resources Committee Chair Walter Kumienga noted, “There should be time for DMR to take this bill out to the zones councils for feedback. They would need to meet in January, February at the latest.”

UPCOMING
November 3-6

November 4-5
North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium Annual Meeting, New Bedford, MA.

November 10
Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative meeting, Island Institute, Rockland. FMI: 541-9310. MLA Directors meeting, 5 p.m., Darby’s in 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.

Source: Maine DMR (data presented at outreach meetings)
THESE ARE NOT YOUR GRANDFATHER’S BAIT BAGS

In the old days, when lobster traps were made of wood and that wood was often cut and milled by the fisherman himself, human hands made bait bags. Knitting a net was a skill taught early on to the young by older men and women. It is a specialized form of knitting requiring a mesh board (a board with short rods that govern the size of the mesh), a needle, and a fair bit of patience. Now bait bags often come in a roll of pre-knitted nylon which a lobsterman can cut and shape to the size he wants.

On Vinalhaven, Stephanie Crossman is still knitting bait bags the old-fashioned way but for a modern purpose. She creates bags, purses, shawls and three-dimensional sculptures using the net stand, hand-carved needles, and mesh board given to her years ago by her husband’s great-grandmother. Three decades ago, at age 92, Gram J, as she was known, taught Crossman the traditional method of making net when she moved to the island to marry Matthew Crossman. Now she uses those skills to make airy sculptures of the natural world. Moving into three-dimensional figures required a different approach to knitting. Crossman learned to stiffen the twine and knit over a form that could be retracted when the sculpture was completed. The resulting creations have a lacy, almost levitating, look about them. Crossman’s sculptures and other works are available at fine craft shows around the country and online at www.mainenetbags.com.