By Melissa Waterman

John Kingsley doesn’t mince words. One of three managers of the Perishables Division at OceanAir Inc. in Boston, he speaks rapidly and to the point. “It’s a challenging business, moving live lobsters around the world. Sometimes I want to wear my five-year-old son’s firefighter’s hat to work,” he said.

Kingsley is in the business of freight forwarding. A freight forwarding company acts as the intermediary between a shipper and various transportation services such as cargo ships, railways, or airplanes. For Maine lobster dealers who sell lobsters to overseas customers, freight forwarding companies are vital to their success.

Once upon a time, Maine lobsters were packed into wooden casks and shipped to Boston or New York via train. Later refrigerated trucks took the lobsters to market up and down the East Coast. Now, however, Maine lobsters have a global appeal, as anyone who has attended an international seafood show can attest. Live lobsters are shipped in boxes of sophisticated design to places like Abu Dhabi, Hong Kong, or Paris every day. Getting them quickly to their destination with minimal shrinkage and at the least cost is the job of the freight forwarder.

“‘There’s just massive demand for lobster across the globe.’

Once upon a time, Maine lobsters were packed into wooden casks and shipped to Boston or New York via train. Later refrigerated trucks took the lobsters to market up and down the East Coast. Now, however, Maine lobsters have a global appeal, as anyone who has attended an international seafood show can attest. Live lobsters are shipped in boxes of sophisticated design to places like Abu Dhabi, Hong Kong, or Paris every day. Getting them quickly to their destination with minimal shrinkage and at the least cost is the job of the freight forwarder.

‘Over the years there have been aerial surveys and biopsies of the whales that have shown this differentiation,’ explained David Gouveia, Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Program coordinator in NOAA’s Greater Atlantic Region office. “It has been a big undertaking.”

NOAA must conduct an assessment of the status of any species listed under the ESA every five years. That status review report features current science on the species.

By Melissa Waterman

Seven years ago, two fishing boats sank within months of each other in Cobscook Bay. Five fishermen lost their lives that winter and the community of Lubec mourned.

The Lost Fishermen’s Memorial looks over the bay in which many men have died. LFMA photo.

By Melissa Waterman

In September, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) officially removed nine different populations of humpback whales from the federal endangered and threatened species list. Humpback whales have been listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Conservation Act (precursor to the 1973 Endangered Species Act [ESA]) since 1970. Four other populations around the world remain threatened and one is considered endangered.

Humpback whales, known for their complex singing patterns and distinctive long white flukes, were removed from the endangered species list due to a combination of conservation efforts and new scientific data. Over time researchers have shown that humpback whales are not all part of one global population, but in fact form fourteen different populations spread out across the world’s oceans. Those groups may overlap in certain feeding areas but they do not breed together. And most of those groups are doing quite well in terms of numbers. 

SHIPPING LOBSTERS ABROAD NO EASY TASK

By Melissa Waterman

By Melissa Waterman

Continued on page 19

Continued on page 17
Coastal Outlook

Thoughts from MLCA President Patrice McCarron

If the fall weather and the world’s economies hold their courses, it looks like this year will be another good one for Maine lobsters. Demand for Maine lobster continues to increase across the globe. Maine sold more than $103 million worth of lobster in the first half of this year alone, twice as much as was sold during the same period in 2015. Hooray!

An increasing portion of that demand comes from countries located in the Far East, such as China, South Korea, and Malaysia. But, as Matt Jacobson, executive director of the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative, notes in a column this month, much of that demand is coming from within the United States, specifically from restaurant chefs. This summer the Collaborative staged educational events with renowned chefs in three major cities on the East Coast and brought to those events the most persuasive salesmen available: Maine lobstermen. The participating lobstermen talked to chefs and other food professionals about the fishery, their conservation practices and the day-to-day details of lobster fishing and, according to Jacobson, wowed the crowds.

Getting Maine lobster to customers around the world requires sophisticated logistics. The lobsters, after all, are alive; delays in delivery can have dire consequences. That’s why freight forwarding companies are so vital to Maine’s lobster industry. Freight forwarders make sure that lobsters and other seafood have all the proper documentation to go abroad. They will store thousands of pounds of lobsters before transporting them to cargo planes for shipment around the world. It’s a fast-paced business and, as this month’s article shows, key to the success of Maine lobster companies.

This month Landings also looks at a new bait that is under development by a North Carolina company. Herring, the preferred bait for many lobstermen, has been in short supply this summer causing the price to skyrocket. Kepley BioSystems has created a small calcium-based disk imbued with the scent of rotting fish for use in lobster traps. It is compact, does not spoil, and may be the next thing in lobster bait. The product is being tested in Nova Scotia this fall. This summer also saw a major hydrographic survey take place in Penobscot Bay. The survey, conducted by Fugro Inc., of San Diego, involved aerial overfl ights, jet drive boats and a multiarray of multi-beam LIDAR arrays aboard the Westerly and the JAB. Prior to the start of the project, lobstermen in the area were worried about the possibility of snarled or lost traps as the ship conducted its work. Dean Moyle,

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Landings is published monthly. It is provided for free to all Maine lobstermen thanks to the support of newsletter sponsors. This month’s edition is sponsored by the Stonington Lobster Co-op.

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LOBSTER LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE RETURNS NEXT YEAR

By Antonina Pelletier

In May 2014, the Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance (MLCA), the non-profit sister organization to the Maine Lobstermen’s Association (MLA), conducted its first Maine Lobster Leadership Institute. The idea behind the Institute was simple: give young lobstermen and women the tools they need and encourage them to step into positions of leadership in an industry dominated by those over 50. The twelve men and women who took part in the first Institute spent one week learning about the management, science, and marketing of lobster before traveling to Prince Edward Island to see for themselves how lobstermen to the north operate. Now it is time to do it again.

The MLCA will reprise the Lobster Leadership Institute beginning in January of 2018 and 2019. Thirteen Maine lobstermen to the north operate.

The participants in the 2014 Maine Lobster Leadership Institute pose during their visit to Prince Edward Island. The next Institute will take place in spring, 2017. MLA photo.

By any measure, the first Institute proved hugely successful. In the two years since, some participants, such as John Tripp of Spruce Head, Chris Welch of Kennebunk, Dustin Delano of Monhegan and Herman Coombs of Orrs Island, became MLA board members. Others, such as Genevieve McDonald of Stonington, now serve on the state’s Lobster Advisory Council. Still others, such as Cyrus Sleeper of South Thomaston, became board members of the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative.

“The Leadership Institute taught me to plan for the future. I have 50 years ahead of me to fish and I know things are going to change. It’s good to think ahead,” Tripp commented.

The MLCA will reprise the Lobster Leadership Institute beginning in January 2017. With funding from the Lobster Research, Education and Development Board, the MLCA is recruiting 15 to 20 lobstermen and women under the age of 40 to take part in the training program in the winter/spring of 2017. The program takes place over several months, allowing for in-depth exploration of the various topics and hands on learning. Participants will study lobster industry fundamentals – such as science, management and marketing – and take part in on-site learning experiences to reinforce those fundamentals. Finally, participants will travel to Canada in early May to be part of a lobster exchange program. “The breadth of the curriculum allows participants to explore the range of information necessary to join industry meetings and discussions and feel confident as future leaders of the lobster fishery,” said Patrice McCarron, MLCA president.

The 2017 program will build on the success of the first program, and offer additional opportunities,(67,884),(944,988)
that if we can create demand among chefs and restaurant customers, more money will flow through the supply chain and all the players will benefit. An increase in prices at the wholesale level is a great outcome for the Maine lobster industry.

Since our target audience was primarily influential chefs, we had to find a way to tell our story to them when they had the time to listen. So the MLMC created exclusive events, primarily for chefs and selected media, to tell our story and give them a chance to experience new-shells. The key to success was to make time for our guests to meet and talk with Maine lobstermen. Since the chefs get off work around 10 p.m., we decided to start our events at 11 p.m. and run them until 2 a.m. At each event we had stations designed so that our guests could have a side-by-side taste test of new-shell vs. hard-shell Maine lobster.

The hosts for these events were lobstermen and sternmen: Mark Jones, Tad Miller, Cyrus Sleeper, Chris Welch, Brian Rapp, Sonny Beal, Polie Beal, Merritt Carey, Dustin Delano, Peter Miller, Bruce Fernald, Jim Dow, and John Jordan. If you see any of these folks, thank them. They were absolute rock stars and great ambassadors for the whole Maine lobster industry and our state. To see what took place, check out this video (www.youtube.com/watch?v=W8PXkaqIACc) made by Tastemade (Tastemade is an online food channel with more viewers than any other food channel on any platform).

The lobstermen traveled to three cities for these Maine After Midnight events. The first was in Atlanta. We had about 100 chefs and media attend, and they got a first-hand look at Maine lobster. We had Anne Quatrano, who owns six restaurants in Atlanta, including one that is lobster-themed, host. Nearly every chef in Atlanta has worked for her at some point in their careers. We had a who’s-who list of chefs and media. Brian Rapp also co-hosted a cooking segment with a local chef on the “Good Morning Atlanta” TV show! We were very fortunate in that Tad’s wife Julie and Mark’s wife Deb participated. These ladies were right in the middle of the event talking to and helping our guests.

I hope your summer is going well and your MLA members are doing well with the summer catch. I am writing to thank you and some selected lobstermen in that regard!

I recently attended the Maine After Midnight event in Atlanta on July 10 and 11. I had the good fortune to meet and work with Mark, Tad, Cyrus, Chris, and Brian. Their help and input for the event made it the success it was. MLMC along with Weber-Sharpwick planned and executed a first-class marketing event.

Your members who attended really put it over the top and impressed major restaurant chefs, owners and operators with their “hands on” explanations of new shell and hard shell and how to make the best use of this very uniquely Maine product. They were busy from 9:30 p.m. until the last guests left at 1:00 a.m.! Media was present in full force and all of the lobstermen did an excellent job in responding to and answering questions.

We were very fortunate in that Tad’s wife Julie and Mark’s wife Deb participated. These ladies were right in the middle of the event talking to and helping the restaurant folks see the great value in new shells and the Maine lobster industry. You could not have sent a better or greater group of Maine lobster emissaries to the Deep South!

Patrice, thanks so much for all you do for Maine’s lobster industry and in turn the Great State of Maine. I hope your members have one of the best seasons on record!

With respect,
Vaughn Stinson
MLMC Board member
Director, Maine Tourism Association
New England Aqua Ventus I is a 12 MW floating offshore wind pilot project proposed for the Gulf of Maine, which will provide clean, locally-produced renewable energy.

The project developer, Maine Aqua Ventus (MAV) is a partnership of Emera Inc., Cianbro Corp., UMaine’s Maine Prime Technologies and DCNS. In addition, more than 25 Maine contractors, suppliers and vendors are supporting the MAV team in developing the New England Aqua Ventus I Project, and more locally-based companies are expected to provide professional and maritime expertise to MAV during construction and operation.

New England Aqua Ventus I draws from UMaine’s success installing and operating a small-scale version of a 6 MW floating platform in waters off Castine, Maine, from June, 2013, to November, 2014. The project, the first grid-connected offshore wind turbine in the Americas, proved a great success. It was the first in the world to use a concrete hull and an advanced composites materials tower.

With New England Aqua Ventus I, MAV plans to build, install and operate two 6 MW wind turbines attached to floating semi-submersible VolturnUS concrete hulls. The project is to be located in the state-designated test site approximately 2.5 miles south of Monhegan Island. The system will be held in position by four mooring lines anchored to the seabed, and will send clean, locally-produced energy to the Maine power grid by subsea cable.

Recent Developments

In May, 2016, the U.S. Department of Energy announced that Maine Aqua Ventus was eligible to receive up to $40 million to build a full-scale demonstration project if it met certain benchmarks. Over the next year, the New England Aqua Ventus I Project will advance through final engineering design, permitting and financing. Community outreach activities will continue with regular meetings to keep area fishermen, community members and others apprised of the project’s progress and to solicit input. Maine Aqua Ventus is privileged to bring this first-of-a-kind project to Maine waters and to work with Maine contractors, suppliers and vendors to make this project a success.

For more information on Maine Aqua Ventus, contact Nathan Johnson, director of business development and environmental affairs, at Ocean Renewal Power Company in Portland, 772-7707.

PENOBSCOT BAY HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEY COMPLETED

Dean Moyles is a project manager and senior hydrographer at Fugro Pelagos Inc., an international offshore services company based in San Diego, California. This summer Moyles has been project manager of NOAAs hydrographic survey of Penobscot Bay. Many portions of Penobscot Bay charts are based on data from the 1950s. The new survey will provide valuable data to update the nautical charts for the region, particularly in regard to any new navigation hazards such as wrecks and other obstructions. We asked Moyles a few questions about the project as it closed down in September.

Where specifically did the survey take place?

The survey area covered the regions of Spaulding Island to Mosquito Island, Rockland Harbor, and North Haven Island to Vinalhaven Island.

What was the methodology used to conduct the survey?

Speaking strictly from the survey side, once the area had been assigned we reviewed it and made a list of challenges there and mitigations for each. In Penobscot Bay, for example, the high density of lobster traps and rigging posed the biggest concern. Others that were high on the list were the complexity of the coastline, uncharted submerged rocks, tide range and currents, weather, range in water depth, etc. We approached this project in a similar manner to many of our previous NOAA charting projects in Alaska, where the topography is very comparable to Penobscot Bay.

To overcome the biggest hurdle and mitigate entanglements with fishing gear, we decided very early on in the planning process to use jet drive vessels that could also handle adverse weather conditions and had good maneuverability. From there, we developed a detailed multi-sensor survey plan which included a vessel-based multi-beam echosounder (MBES) and Airborne Lidar Bathymetry (ALB) survey approach. The ALB technology would obtain least depths on shallow waters (less than eight meters) and the MBES would cover depths from eight meters and seaward.

It is Fugro’s normal operating procedure when conducting a multi-sensor survey to conduct field operations in two stages: ALB followed by the vessel-based MBES. The ALB portion, which was conducted in early to mid-July, provided critical information that was used by the vessels to ensure safe navigation while providing required data coverage. The vessel-based MBES portion, which commenced on July 20 and concluded at the end of September, provides high density and very accurate bathymetric coverage of the seafloor.

What steps did the company take to make sure mariners knew what was going on?

For the everyday mariner we sent the Coast Guard a local notice to mariners, but because Penobscot Bay is very commercially active location we reached out to the MLA, Fugro set up a meeting with MLA members and any other lobstermen who wished to attend in early April. The purpose of the meeting first and foremost was to start a line of communication and introduce Fugro to the fishing community. We also wanted to show how we were planning to conduct the survey, type of survey vessels, installation of equipment, and general methodology. From day one we had a very open communication line among Fugro and the MLA and other lobstermen, which has been fundamental in the success of the project.

Continued on page 20

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**Dismissed:** when a District Attorney makes the decision not to move forward with a charge based on the merits and or evidence presented by the investigator.

**Convicted:** the person charged was judged guilty of committing the crime or misdemeanor.

**Adjudicated:** the case against a person has been settled and a judgment given.

**Default:** neglect or failure of a person to take a step necessary to stay within a process. The person is assessed a fine the same as if found guilty.
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Advocating for a sustainable lobster resource and the fishermen and communities that depend on it since 1954.

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Oct. 5, 5 p.m.
Nov. 9, 5 p.m.

Maine Lobstermen’s Association UPDATE

STEAMING AHEAD

Maine’s lobster fishery is not without its share of challenges. Some are management-related, such as the short age of herring this summer and restrictions due to the federal whale rules; some are profit-related, such as escalating costs to run your boat; others are stemming from activities long ago, such as the mercury contamination found at the mouth of the Penobscot River.

Who can keep up with all of these things on their own? For most of us, it’s a daily challenge to remember to put gas in the car and change the oil filters on the boat. Lobstermen and those in businesses related to lobstering are fortunate to have an organization like the Maine Lobstermen’s Association (MLA), staying on top of current issues, looking ahead at what obstacles might pop up down the road, and constantly advocating for the well-being of Maine lobstermen. Honestly, if the MLA wasn’t in the room, any issues stemming from activities long ago, such as the mercury contamination found at the mouth of the Penobscot River would still be as much of an issue.

Maine’s lobster industry is lucky to have a state agency that is committed to working with lobstermen to ensure that this fishery remains successful. Since Commissioner Keliher took the helm of the Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR), lobstermen have experienced an excellent working relationship with DMR. The Commissioner has led countless meetings along the coast to engage directly with lobstermen on hard topics. The Commissioner cares what fishermen have to say, and he listens.

Earlier this summer lobstermen faced a real crisis in terms of bait. It was clear early on that herring were not going to be landed in large volumes from Area 3, creating a strong likelihood that the quota from the inshore fishery could be caught by mid-July. The Commissioner took the position that the state would not risk having no fresh bait for lobstermen at the peak of the season, which would have happened if the inshore herring fishery continued as it was.

The DMR implemented emergency rules to put the brakes on inshore herring landings, which prompted many phone calls, lots of rumors and criticism and a great deal of stress among lobstermen, the herring fleet and bait dealers. The Commissioner responded by bringing people together, explaining the situation and his vision for a solution, and then listening to the industry’s feedback. In response to that feedback, DMR changed its regulations to allow the herring fleet more flexibility in how and when they landed the fish. This resulted in stretching the Area 1A quota and ensuring that the lobster industry had a supply of fresh herring through mid-September. This was an end result that no one thought possible back in early July.

Commissioner Keliher also showed great leadership in regard to the lower Penobscot River lobster and crab closure. The DMR implemented an emergency rule to extend the boundary of the original closure due to the results of the state’s testing of lobster and crab in that area. The DMR held a public hearing and accepted written comments. The closure was quietly supported by the lobster industry with the understanding that this was not an issue that anyone wanted to attract attention to and yet it was the right thing to do to protect public health and Maine lobster’s reputation.

The Maine Lobstering Union (MLU) did not see it that way. Though local lobstermen did not want to challenge the department’s action, the MLU submitted comments opposing the expanded boundary of the closure and requested a public hearing. By contrast, a local lobsterman testified that opposing DMR on this closure could jeopardize the marketing efforts that benefit the entire industry. The MLA, Downeast Lobstermen’s Association, Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative, and the Maine Lobster Dealers Association supported the expanded closure and thanked the Commissioner for his leadership on such a sensitive issue.

With the same certainty as death and taxes, Maine’s lobster industry will continue to face many more issues like these, some that we can’t even imagine today. We are sure to become upset and frustrated and, more than likely, we are going to pick up the phone to complain. Maine lobstermen are lucky to have a DMR Commissioner who listens to them and is willing to make tough decisions to benefit the industry. We may not agree with every decision but, from my perspective, we can honor these decisions because we’ve had a voice in the process, and we’ve been listened to.

“The challenge of leadership is to be strong, but not rude; to be kind, but not weak; to be bold, but not bull-y; to be thought-ful, but not lazy; to be humble, but not timid; to be proud, but not arro-gant; have humor, but without folly.”

Jim Rohm, entrepreneur

As always, stay safe on the water.

Patrice McCarron
Patrice provided an update on the good news and bad news regarding large whales. On the good news side, humpback whales have been removed from the endangered species list. While they are still protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), the delisting will make them less of a management concern for the Maine lobster fishery.

On the bad news side, the National Marine Fisheries Service will soon publish its 2016 draft marine mammal stock assessment report (SAR). The North Atlantic right whale SAR likely will note a recent decline in reproductive rates, worsening health and a population decline. MLA will review and comment on this report. The Associated Press recently ran a story on an opinion piece published by Scott Kraus of the New England Aquarium stating that an increase in entanglement in fishing gear is causing reproductive failure in right whales. MLA submitted a letter to the editors of the Portland Press Herald and Bangor Daily News rebutting this assertion (reprinted here). It is too early to know if or how changes might impact the federal whale plan and Maine’s lobster fishery. The last round of whale rules was implemented in 2015, and NMFMS has a 5-year monitoring plan in place to track the effectiveness of the overall plan.

NMFMS is also moving forward with its ban of seafood imports from countries that don’t have equivalent marine mammal protection measures in place. There is a 5-year phase-in period, so it will be some time before we understand how this might affect the seafood trade between the U.S. and Canada, as well as with other nations.

Maine DMR held a public hearing on the expansion of the Penobscot River closure. DMR had expanded the closure...
MAINE LOBSTERMEN’S ASSOCIATION UPDATE

Sure in June through emergency rulemaking due to state monitoring results. The Maine Lobstering, represented by Kim Tucker, submitted lengthy comments to the state opposing the expansion of the closure. The Union also requested a public hearing. The MLA supported both the existing closure as well as the small expansion in order to avoid any sort of public health advisory on lobster and to protect the Maine lobster brand. Representatives from the Maine Lobster Dealers Association, Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative and Downeast Lobstermen’s Association also testified in support of the closure.

Herring supplies remain tight. The Area 1A quota is projected to close in mid-September and will reopen to both seine and trawl vessels on October 1. No herring are being landed from Area 3. Supplies of hard baits seem to be holding, but prices have skyrocketed. It is unclear how long the frozen bait supply will last without herring coming in from Area 3. MLA will continue to monitor the situation.

DMR is moving forward with a proposal to require all lobstermen to double tag traps fished outside a declared home zone. The Commissioner raised this issue for discussion over a year ago and solicited feedback from the Lobster Advisory Council and the lobster zone councils. The purpose of the proposed rule is to help Marine Patrol with enforcement. The MLA Board discussed the proposal’s benefits -- that Marine Patrol needs tools to enforce our laws and the industry needs to support that – and the its negative aspects -- will it actually help with enforcement; it’s an added cost to the industry; double tagging can be very difficult to manage especially for those live on a zone line and regularly fish both sides. The MLA directors’ overarching concern is the lack of enforcement and the lack of fairness stemming from that. The directors voted to support the double tagging proposal and to highlight their concerns.

The 11th International Conference and Workshop on Lobster Biology and Management will be held in Portland, Maine, June 4-9, 2017, at the Holiday Inn by the Bay and www.11thicwl.com.

The MLA continues to monitor the development of the Omnibus Coral Amendment by the New England Fisheries Management Council. The draft document includes proposed coral zones off of Mount Desert Rock, Schoodic Ridges, and Jordan’s and Georges Basin. The MLA also continues to monitor the development of the regional ocean plan and the renewed interest it has generated in mapping and collecting data on the Maine lobster fishery.

The MLA summer membership campaign is going well. The MLCA is holding several fundraising events this fall and is announcing recruitment for the next Maine Lobstermen Leadership Institute in this issue of Landings. The program will kick off in early 2017.

Enrollment for health insurance will run from November, 2016, through January, 2017. The penalty for not having health insurance in 2017 starts at $695/individual and could be as high as 2.5% of household income. The MLA will not hold local candidate meetings this year; instead the MLA will send a mailing to candidates. MLA also will not conduct its annual V-notch survey this year. Participation has been down in large part due to the difficulty in managing the survey with such large volumes of lobster being landed. In addition, DMR already collects this data through sea sampling. The board will revisit this and consider conducting the survey every three to five years instead.

HERRING UPDATE

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To recap how this all began:

The Council went through a public scoping process for Amendment 8 from February 26 to April 30, 2015, to consider long-term harvest strategies for herring through an ABC control rule. After reviewing the scoping comments, in June, 2015, the Council expanded the reach of Amendment 8 to “include consideration of the spatial and temporal availability of Atlantic herring” in order to address public concern about localized depletion. The Council plans to approve the range of alternatives on localized depletion and ABC control rule measures in January, 2017.

The Council is continuing to work on potential modifications to the haddock accountability measures (AMs) for Atlantic herring vessels fishing with midwater trawl gear in the Georges Bank AM area through Framework Adjustment 5. AMs come into play when the herring fishery’s haddock catch cap is reached. Framework 5 will be discussed further in November.

NEFMC CORAL ZONE AMENDMENT

The New England Fishery Management Council clarified the range of fishing gear restrictions that will be analyzed under its Deep-Sea Coral Amendment. The Council is considering alternatives to restrict trawl and dredge gear only or all fixed and mobile bottom-tending gears in the Gulf of Maine and Georges
Bank coral zones. Previously, the Council had not taken a position on how to address the lobster and Jonah crab fisheries, which are not managed by the Council but rather by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. In a move that eliminated this ambiguity, the Council asked for additional analyses from its Habitat Plan Development Team (PDT) about the potential economic and biological impacts of restricting lobster and crab traps in coral zones. The Council then added an alternative to the amendment to potentially exempt these trap fisheries from gear restrictions. Updated NOAA Fisheries policy guidance, which states that restrictions in coral zones “may apply to... state-regulated fishing that is authorized in the Exclusive Economic Zone,” enabled the Council to take this step.

On September 15, President Obama designated the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument, which overlaps portions of the area covered under Council’s Coral Amendment. The Council considered, but ultimately postponed to November, a motion to remove canyons and seamounts that fall within the monument’s boundaries from further consideration in the Coral Amendment. The Council first wanted additional information from NOAA Fisheries about how regulations related to the monument designation will be developed and implemented as well as additional analyses from the PDT before taking action. In addition, the Council approved:

- Boundary adjustments to the Central Jordan Basin coral zone in the Gulf of Maine based on updated information from the PDT; and
- Adding a 600-meter depth-based broad zone to be considered alongside the other broad coral protection contour zones of 300, 400, and 500 meters that currently are under analysis.

Several workshops, meetings, and public hearings will be held prior to the Council taking any final action on this issue or other Coral Amendment issues.

DELEGATION SPEAKS OUT ON POTENTIAL EU LOBSTER BAN

Senator King and Representatives Pingree and Poliquin, along with Dr. Bob Steneck and lobster industry members held a press conference on the Maine-based lobster industry’s concern. The media event was in response to the EU’s announcement in February that it will conduct a more extensive review of the proposal after a change in the European Parliament. Th e Council taking any final action on this issue or other Coral Amendment issues.

PUBLIC HEARINGS ON DOUBLE TAGGING LIGHTLY ATTENDED

DMR solicited feedback from lobstermen during the seven zone council meetings held in September on how the department should manage requests from lobstermen to transfer between zones. Currently those lobstermen are placed on the waiting list along with Apprentices in the order that the request was made. However, lawmakers recently changed that process. Apprentices will remain on a waiting list subject to the zone’s exit/entry ratios; DMR is now required to manage zone transfers through a separate process established through rule-making.

DMR generated a variety of proposals on how best to do this including a match system, where DMR would allow lobstermen to swap zones if there was a matching request. Another approach would be to have DMR allow each zone to give entry to a transfer request parallel to the waiting list: for example, for every five Apprentices who enter, one transfer would be allowed in. There has also been discussion of a hybrid system incorporating both concepts. The DMR is still in the brainstorming phase and is seeking input from the industry on how best to manage requests from lobstermen to transfer between zones, while ensuring that a zone’s limited entry program remains in place.

MLA’S COMMENTS ON LOBSTER/CRAB CLOSURE IN THE LOWER PENOBSCOT RIVER

The MLA strongly supported DMR’s proposed rule to expand the fishery closure due to recent sampling and data analysis of mercury found in lobster and crab in the lower Penobscot River, continuing its support of the original closure in order to protect public health and Maine lobster’s reputation with the public. The MLA reviewed all of the data and reports pertaining to this issue. MLA also attended the relevant public hearings and consulted extensively with both DMR and Center for Disease Control staff.

MLA’s position is based on the understanding that DMR has both the authority and responsibility to protect public health. There is precedent for DMR’s actions: in July, 2008, Commissioner Lapointe issued a consumption advisory on lobster tomatalley, in consultation with Maine CDC, due to elevated PSP levels. This consumption advisory was a reissue of the longstanding tomatalley advisory and was based on new information obtained through the DMR’s PSP testing program. DMR consumption advisory was picked up and widely advertised by the FDA. This resulted in a ban on imports of Maine lobster to Japan and major market and financial losses for the industry.

The MLA is not in the business of advocating to close fishing grounds. Historically, the MLA has been adamantly opposed to the use of closures as a management tool. However, the contamination in the lower Penobscot River presents a unique circumstance. The MLA recognizes that this closure poses a hardship for area fishermen and we do not take our support of the closure lightly. However, the MLA strongly believes that this small closure is necessary to protect the Maine lobster brand and the lobster industry as a whole. With no traceability in place, many buyers and consumers would choose to avoid Maine lobster rather than figure out whether or not they are purchasing or consuming lobster from the affected area.

Experience has demonstrated that consumption advisories, even if only in place for vulnerable populations, like children and pregnant women, very often lead to consumers avoiding the product. The MLA continues to strongly oppose issuing a consumption advisory on lobster from the affected area.
would create extreme confusion among consumers of Maine lobster and damage our brand. The MLA’s main concern is to protect Maine lobster's reputation for being a sustainable, wild-caught product from pristine Maine waters. Consumers need to trust that all Maine lobster is safe to eat.

The MLA commends the DMR for finding funding to move forward with analysis of its most recent year of data collected from the affected area. If the findings confirm lower contamination levels in crabs, the MLA strongly supports developing a crab-only fishery for this area.

In closing, the MLA urges the DMR to make this emergency rule permanent so that all consumers can enjoy Maine lobster without any worry of consumption limitations or where in Maine their lobster was harvested. Closing this area is the only management approach the MLA supports at this time.

In the years since Maine lobstermen implemented these changes, the right whale population has rebounded significantly. In the 1990s, the population of North Atlantic right whales was estimated by New England Aquarium scientists to be only 295. In October 2015, the New England Aquarium’s best estimate was 526 whales, a 78% increase. Minimizing human impacts on whales, such as injuries from strikes by ships or fishing gear, coupled with more successful right whale reproduction have given us hope for a bright future for right whales.

Given the tremendous positive growth in the right whale population since the 1990’s and corresponding changes in how we fish, it is unlikely that fishing gear is the cause for a recent slower rate of right whale reproduction. A more likely explanation is the rise in ocean temperatures and changing ocean conditions that have significantly altered when and where right whales frequent their traditional grounds in the Gulf of Maine. These temperature shifts have impacted the abundance, availability and quality of zooplankton right whales depend on, and correspondingly their health and reproductive success.

Maine’s lobster industry will remain vigilant in its efforts to reduce interactions with right whales. While we remain committed to doing our part to aid their continued recovery, we hope that the scientific community will focus on the real problem threatening the full recovery of right whales – climate change. If we don’t understand the global factors driving the significant changes observed in the population, our efforts to minimize human impacts such as ship strikes and fishing gear entanglements could be in vain.

Sincerely,
Patrice McCarron, MLA executive director

MLA LETTER TO THE EDITOR ON RIGHT WHALE DECLINE

On behalf of the members of the Maine Lobstermen’s Association, I would like to respond to recent articles about a perceived decline in the number of calves since 1997. Since that time we have significantly changed how we fish. Maine lobstermen now use gear that has been modified to reduce the risk of whales becoming entangled. The changes include the costly switch to sinking groundlines; incorporating weak links in buoy lines; marking traps, rope and buoys; and reducing the number of endlines fished in our offshore waters where whales are known to be prevalent.

In closing, the MLA urges the DMR to make this emergency rule permanent so that all consumers can enjoy Maine lobster without any worry of consumption limitations or where in Maine their lobster was harvested. Closing this area is the only management approach the MLA supports at this time.

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This optimism has been dampened somewhat as changes in climate patterns have significantly impacted right whale behavior. For as long as researchers have studied the species, you could set your watch as to when right whale aggregations would show up to known feeding grounds. In recent years, however, these patterns no longer hold true. Right whales have been nearly absent from feeding grounds in the Bay of Fundy in late summer while appearing in record numbers in Cape Cod Bay in the spring. A shift is occurring and it is not one that we are in control of.

A recent study published by Scott Kraus of the New England Aquarium suggested a link between fishing gear entanglements and the short-term reproductive decline in right whales. The Associated Press quotes Kraus, “And it looks like [heavy fishing gear] affects their ability to reproduce...” The study suggests this link, however, it provides no evidence substantiate it.

Given the tremendous positive growth in the right whale population since the 1990’s and corresponding changes in how we fish, it is unlikely that fishing gear is the cause for a recent slower rate of right whale reproduction. A more likely explanation is the rise in ocean temperatures and changing ocean conditions that have significantly altered when and where right whales frequent their traditional grounds in the Gulf of Maine. These temperature shifts have impacted the abundance, availability and quality of zooplankton right whales depend on, and correspondingly their health and reproductive success.

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Sincerely,
Patrice McCarron, MLA executive director

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A huge thank you to all the Harvesters, Friends, and Business Members who renewed or joined this summer. You keep us working for you and your future.

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ARTIFICIAL BAIT MAKES A SPLASH

By Shelley Wigglesworth

OrganoBait is a synthetic bait product developed by Kepley BioSystems of North Carolina. The company’s publicity materials state, “It’s not an animal product, but instead a calcium-based tablet made with synthetic materials that replicate the smell of decaying fish to attract lobsters and crabs.” The artificial bait looks like a small white hockey puck and, according to the company, may represent the future of lobster bait.

Anthony Dellinger, a research scientist at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and company president, said research and development of OrganoBait began in 2014. “The idea of this synthetic bait came about when lead inventor Terry Brady conceived the idea and proposed the technology to Professor [Christopher] Kepley and myself. We incorporated to form Kepley BioSystems and soon won our first grant,” he said. “That helped take it to the next level for us to apply for our patent.”

OrganoBait is made of calcium and other minerals which are poured into a mold. The tablet is imbued with engineered scents that mimic the reek of rotting baitfish like menhaden and herring. “OrganoBait replicates the biochemistry of decaying fish that characterizes the odorant-based attractant mechanism for crustaceans,” Dellinger explained. The product merely attracts the animals and is not consumed by lobster or crabs, therefore it poses no health risks.

“All of the components used to manufacture OrganoBait are distinct inorganic materials available through well-defined supply chains worldwide. The compounds utilized for OrganoBait are safe, environmentally neutral and of pristine food grade,” he continued. Other distinctive features of OrganoBait are that it is time-released, requires no refrigeration or freezing, and will never spoil.

Dellinger and his team sent OrganoBait to fishermen in Florida, North Carolina, California and the British West Indies in 2014 to test how it performed. The fishermen set around 180 traps, split among blue crab, stone crab and spiny lobster. Half of the traps contained OrganoBait and the other half contained traditional bait, such as menhaden, mullet or pigs’ feet. OrganoBait performed as well as the natural bait, according to an article by Dellinger and colleagues in the July 2016 issue of Global Ecology and Conservation.

Bait dealer Allen Daggett, owner of Cape Porpoise Lobster Company, believes the renewed interest in the artificial bait market is a direct result of limited supplies of traditional bait. “It’s all about supply and demand. The supply [of herring] is controlled by the feds and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. So far, in my experience and in listening to the lobstermen about other alternative baits that have been used, such as rawhide, they do catch lobsters if they are used with other natural bait in the bait bag,” he said. “I know a few lobstermen who use [rawhide] alone. This past six months herring and pogies have doubled in price and I believe that is why rawhide is getting used more than in the past.” As far as health risks with alternative or synthetic bait are concerned, Daggett said, “If something is all-natural, you can be sure there is no health risk involved. As far as anything else goes, it all depends what they put into it. I think in the long run that our old-fashioned lobster bait will always be used.”

Massachusetts lobsterman John Barrett, who is a member of the Massachusetts Lobstermen’s Association board, agreed with Daggett. “I never had much luck with synthetic or hide-type baits. I wish the bait industries would explore more natural bait sources,” he said. “This may be a safer bet for the environment and the fishermen.”

“Th e bait [OrganoBait] has been tested extensively throughout the East Coast of the United States and Canada for nearly every species indigenous to these areas including blue crab, American lobster, spiny lobster and stone crab,” Dellinger said. “We are comparable in attractive capabilities to fish. We do not outperform traditional bait, but are approaching equality in many species and have achieved it with stone crabs.” OrganoBait will be tested in 200 traps set by Nova Scotian lobstermen in November.

With this season’s shortage of Atlantic herring, many people turned to other bait sources, including hide bait. DMR staff has received questions regarding the existing law prohibiting the use of carcasses, waste parts, renderings or remains of wild or domesticated animals. This law has been in effect since 2005. The only exception the law provides to this prohibition is for “hairless hides.”

DMR is currently aware that some companies attempting to market hides as bait are leaving significant amounts of fat attached to the hide. This is not allowed, and the producers of these baits have been told that fishermen may not legally fish fat as lobster bait.

Marine Patrol is educating fishermen about this prohibition and encourages buyers to beware. If you have any questions about the legality of a specific hide bait, please contact your local Marine Patrol Officer to avoid purchasing a bait that may not be legally fished.

BEWARE OF ILLEGAL LOBSTER BAIT
From Maine Marine Patrol

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Shelly Tinker decided that something had to be done to make that loss, and the dozens of losses in years past, visible. "My next door neighbor died [in 2009]. We had to let people know that we care," she said. Shelly and her sister, Wanda Corey, began organizing to create a memorial in town to fishermen lost not only in Washington County but also in Charlotte County, New Brunswick, just across the bay. Finally, after seven years of effort, the Lost Fishermen’s Memorial was dedicated on August 21 before a crowd of several hundred people.

The monument, a granite sculpture created by renowned sculptor Jesse Salisbury, forms the shape of waves overlapping. On it are engraved the names of 102 fishermen lost at sea since 1900. One additional name, that of 28-year-old lobsterman Jon Popham of Machiasport, who died in July, remains to be etched on the stone.

Corey, began organizing to create a memorial in town to fishermen lost not dozens of losses in years past, visible. “My next door neighbor died [in 2009]. Someone will have a yard sale and then come to the door and say, ‘Here, take this money,’ Tinker said. Local businesses, such as the Seaview Campground and Pleasant Lake Campground, organized lobster suppers for several years and donated the proceeds to the Association. Local golf tournaments, raffles, and running marathons all brought money into the Association’s account.

Memorial continued from page 1

The granite memorial, created by sculptor Jesse Salisbury, gives the impression of successive waves. Photo courtesy of LFMA.

The March King Neptune’s Bride fundraising gala was the brainchild of Tinker and her sister. The festivities started in 2014. People attending the fundraiser must be attired in a ball gown, wedding gown or other formal wear. King Neptune’s Brides gather for a parade through Lubec prior to the party. “People really bought into it,” Tinker said. “It’s amazing and a lot of fun. It’s a great way to get through that part of winter.”

The Association negotiated a 30-year lease with the town in 2011 to situate the memorial adjacent to the Lubec public landing. The selected site looks north across Cobcook Bay and eastward to Campobello Island. Still, they remained tantalizingly short of their fundraising goal of $130,000.

Then, in February, 2014, Bar Harbor Bank and Trust presented the Association with a challenge. The bank would donate $10,000 toward the memorial if the Association raised $20,000. The community met that goal in less than five months.

“Nobody wants these men to be forgotten.”

Although preparation work began in July. Materials and labor for site landscaping were donated by several local companies. Salisbury oversaw installation of the sculpture in early August. At the August 21 ceremony, the names of those lost over the years were read aloud while Tinker rang a bell as each name was spoken. The Association also is creating a database that will allow people to find information about each man through referencing his name. It’s part of the Association’s effort to ensure this aspect of the community’s history is not lost. "Nobody wants these men to be forgotten," Tinker said.

The granite memorial, created by sculptor Jesse Salisbury, gives the impression of successive waves. Photo courtesy of LFMA.

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Facto
export by customs agents then pass through review by the Transportation Safety Authority. There are insurance requirements, bills of lading, health certificates and more. All the paperwork associated with those reviews is handled by the freight forwarder.

"First, you have to be a known shipping company to put stuff on a plane," Kingsley said. "Your company has to be vetted." The freight forwarding company ensures that all health inspections are completed and labelling and packing specifications met before it transports the lobsters, which have been kept in a refrigerated holding area, to the airport. "We have chain of custody responsibilities," Kingsley said. At the airport, the lobsters will be placed in reserved space within a cargo plane. "Ninety-nine percent of the time lobster will move in booked space. We are a lot like a travel agent in that way," he added. Typically a freight forwarder will book space on a cargo flight a week or less in advance, although occasionally the company will pre-buy that space during times of high demand, such as holidays in China.

The cost to the lobster company for that transport varies based on the length of the flight and overpack, the amount of additional packaging necessary for the lobsters to arrive at their destination alive. "It could be anywhere from 75 cents per pound to $2.50 per pound," Kingsley said.

When the plane lands in Rome, the freight forwarder's chain of custody responsibilities end. There the customer's agent must shepherd the lobsters through that country's customs office and any other regulatory reviews.

It's a fast-paced world and one fraught with crises. "We have 16 to 18 staff here. We are open every day of the year, typically from 3 a.m. to 6 p.m. but sometimes 24 hours a day. Dealing with problems when they do arise is critical. That's when we rely on the relationships we've developed over 25 years," Kingsley said. It's not uncommon for a scheduled flight to be cancelled or a shipment held up due to a missing bit of paperwork. "You have to think outside the box and you have to move fast," he said. OceanAir consolidates shipments and thus, said Kingsley, can keep the cost to its customers down. "We're doing volume. That means the cost for everyone is less," he said. "It makes it hard for smaller companies to succeed because of all the effort and cost involved."

The need for freight forwarders has never been greater in the world of seafood. With increasing demand from Asia, exports of lobster to the Far East have shot up in recent years. Companies such as Maine Coast in York report demand continuing to strengthen in Malaysia, South Korea and Vietnam as well as China. According to the Department of Commerce, lobsters continue to be a top export product from Maine, growing from 7.6% to 12.2% of total exports between 2012 and 2015. It has been the top export commodity of the state since 2013. "There's just massive demand for lobster across the globe," Kingsley said.

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“Since the late 1990s and early 2000s, NOAA and its collaborators have gathered the genetic data on humpbacks which resulted in the delisting,” Gouveia said. Part of that research was done during the Years of the North Atlantic Humpback (YoNAH) project. YoNAH was an international collaboration to study North Atlantic humpback whales across most of their known range. The Center for Coastal Studies in Provincetown, Massachusetts, was the lead research institution for the multi-year research effort. A subsequent project, known as MONAH (More North Atlantic Humpbacks), was undertaken in 2003 to 2005 to further understand the species range and behavior.

NOAA’s 2015 status review report noted that genetic data taken from biopsies of whale blubber, tagging and photographic-ID data, demographic information, and stranding data indicated that humpback whales were not one homogenous population spread across the globe. In fact, they were distinct sub-species. Humpback whales found in the Gulf of Maine are part of the West Indies population, the West Indies humpback whales breed in an area from the Antilles and Cuba to northern Venezuela, and feed in the Gulf of Maine, eastern Canada, and western Greenland.

In 2013, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) received a petition from the Hawaii Fisherman’s Alliance for Conservation and Tradition to delist humpback whales. After all, in the waters around Hawaii more than 10,000 humpback whales gather in the winter months to breed before returning to the waters off Alaska to feed during the summer. That petition resulted in the recent delisting decision.

In its statement, NOAA noted that the nine populations taken off the list were robust enough to suffer mortality from ship strikes, fishing gear entanglement and other human activities without dropping to extinction levels. Although overall numbers are up in most parts of the globe, particularly in the southern hemisphere, biologists estimate that there are no more than 100,000 humpback whales in the world at this time. Humpbacks found in United States waters will continue to be protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

“ ‘It is very expensive to do this type of research,’ Gouveia said. ‘It takes place offshore, you have to have a research platform, and then there’s a lot of analysis of the genetic material. Remember, humpbacks were listed globally [as endangered]. It took a lot of time.’”

Patrice McCarron, executive director of the Maine Lobstermen’s Association, characterized the humpback delisting as great news for the lobster industry. “Maine lobstermen have made significant changes in how they rig their gear over the last 20 years to aid in the recovery of large whales. The MLA is proud of all the work our lobstermen have done to protect whales and it’s nice to see those efforts pay off,” she noted.

In Washington, D.C., chef Kwame Onwuachi was our host. You’ll know Chef Kwame from “Top Chef” where he was a finalist last year. At his event we had a ton of Top Chef alumni, yet our lobstermen managed to steal the show, especially Polie Beal! He absolutely held court with the audience. Kwame made a lobster pot pie that the press raved about. Chef Kwame’s creativity gave all the other chefs something to think about for their own menus.

Finally, in New York City, chef Marc Forgione was our rock star host chef. We had so much media attention in New York that we opened a little early just to accommodate them all. And of course the lobstermen wowed everyone. Bruce Fernand and Jim Dow in particular impressed the New York City media and made us all proud. With their help, we managed to get more than 170 stories in the local media alone! We also did a podcast on Heritage Radio all about Maine lobster and the men and women who work in the industry that was heard by more than 1 million people.

But that’s not all we did! In each city, we lined up training sessions led by our lobstermen for specific restaurants. In New York City at a restaurant called Betony we trained 40 chefs and 40 wait staff on the Maine story and new-shell lobster. Since Betony is such a leader in the restaurant world, many of these people will likely graduate to their own restaurants or other culinary opportunities and bring our story with them.

These exclusive events targeted our audience very carefully. We educated chefs and restaurant staff about our product and who Maine lobstermen are. We appeared on radio and TV in each market. The lobstermen were the leaders at each event. And we got great results. We knew we would – everybody loves a Maine lobsterman!
LOBSTERMEN FIND MORE THAN LOBSTERS IN A TRAP
By Sarah Puquette

This time of year lobstermen haul their traps with the expectation (or at least hope) that each trap will be full of lobsters. But sometimes, they find a surprise in the trap, whether it’s a tiny sea spider with long spindly legs or a $10 bill. Unusual finds such as sea horse and blue crabs became more common in 2012, when waters were warmer than usual.

This year has seen its share of interesting finds. A lobsterman fishing out of the Rockland area reported finding weird blobs of jelly in his traps earlier this year. The blobs turned out to be sea salps, a barrel-shaped tunicate that filter-feeds strangle-looking salps can significantly alter the marine ecosystem. "History

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) website. Mike Ford, a biological oceanog-

which look like a gelatinous barrel, according to the National Oceanic and

Unusual finds such as sea horse and blue crabs became more common in 2012,

in the trap, whether it’s a tiny sea spider with long spindly legs or a $10 bill.

This time of year lobstermen haul their traps with the expectation (or at least

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So keep your eyes open – who knows what you might find next in your traps!

During field operations it is critical that if we discover a danger to navigation

(DtoN) that a DtoN report is issued as soon as possible. To date we have issued

25 such reports to NOAA’s Atlantic Hydrographic Branch, which are processed

and registered by the Marine Chart Division (MCD) and made available to the

public via print on demand charts or local notices to mariners.

Were there any incidents with lobstermen?
We have had only a few minor incidents, which were handled promptly by

working with the MLA and by Fugro being very proactive. Even though these

incidents were with lobstermen who weren’t members of the MLA, I was able to

make contact with Patrice’s [McCarron, executive director of the MLA] help

and work things out very quickly. To be honest, the fishermen that our vessels

have come across during field operations have been very positive and many

have visited our vessels to take a closer look at our set-up and ask questions.

When our vessels arrive on location our crews make a point to acknowledge

any fishing vessel in area via VHF radio or by pulling alongside to chat, at which

point most of them know who we are and why we are there. Again, this all

comes back to the open communication with Patrice and the MLA getting the

word out via social media, Landings and word of mouth.

What happens next?
The survey wrapped up toward the latter part of September after which the

vessels will be demobilized and field operations concluded. Regarding future

NOAA work in the area, unfortunately I’m not sure where the 2017 priority ar-

eas will be located.
AFFORDABLE CARE ACT HEALTH INSURANCE SIGNUP NEXT MONTH

by Alisha Keezer, MLA Health Insurance Navigator

It’s that time of year again. Open enrollment for health insurance is right around the corner. Open enrollment for 2017 starts on November 1st and goes through January 31st, 2017. If you want to buy individual or family health insurance for 2017, now is a great time to start your planning.

Under the Affordable Care Act, most people can only sign up for health insurance in the Marketplace health insurance exchange during the annual open enrollment period. However, if you have a “qualifying life event,” such as getting married, having a baby, or losing your health coverage, then you can be given special permission to sign up for a health insurance plan when open enrollment is closed. The Marketplace is a vehicle for searching for health care coverage that will fit your budget and meet your and your family’s needs. Every health plan offered through the Marketplace is required to make available the same set of essential benefits, including doctor visits, preventive care, hospitalization, prescriptions, and more. This makes it easy to compare plans based on price, benefits, quality and other features important to you and your family before you make a choice.

The 2017 Marketplace for Maine offers plans from three health insurance carriers, all of which provide coverage at hospitals and from health care providers across the state: Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield, Community Health Options, and Harvard Pilgrim. Mainers are able to select from 33 plans for the 2017 coverage year. As in recent years, consumers will be able to browse plans within the Marketplace and compare levels of coverage before choosing a plan. The health care plans are categorized as Bronze, Silver, and Gold; in addition there are catastrophic plans for those under 30. In order to get ready to enroll in a health insurance plan, here are some good things to think about:

What is your budget? How much can you afford to pay each month for health insurance?

What is your income, and what do you think it will be next year? (Remember, you can always make changes to your income throughout the year in your Marketplace account.)

Are there any specific doctors, services, or medications that you want your plan to cover? Make sure to bring a list of these for your enrollment appointment.

Gather basic information about your household: Social Security numbers, birthdates, incomes, and tax returns.

The Maine Lobstermen’s Association provides assistance for Maine fishermen and their families so that they are well informed about the Affordable Care Act requirements, subsidies, and penalties. The penalty for not having health insurance in 2017 is $695 per individual or up to 2.5% of household income – whichever is greater. MLAs Health Care Navigator is here to make sure that fishermen and their families who are interested in learning more about insurance options and health care have access to the right information, and to assist them with their health insurance options and enrollment.

If you find a plan through the marketplace that you want to sign up for, it is important to have all of your information ready before you begin the application process. To prepare for your enrollment appointment, consider the following:

• If you already have a Marketplace account, make sure to bring your username and password with you.
• If you do not have a Marketplace account, make sure you have an email address and know how to log into your email account. You will need an email address to create your Marketplace account.
• Estimate your income by referring to previous years of tax returns and W-2s. You will need to estimate your household income for the upcoming year in order to enroll. How do you file your taxes: jointly or individually?
• What deductions do you take when you file your taxes? (For example, student loan interest, alimony you pay, moving expenses, and contributions to retirement accounts.)
• How many dependents are in your household? Do you have dependents who are not your children living with you? Does someone else claim your child as a dependent, but you cover the medical costs?
• For each individual you are seeking health insurance for, you will need: Social Security number and date of birth. Be sure to visit www.healthcare.gov to see what plans are available.

Please contact me at 207-967-4555 in the Maine Lobstermen’s Association office if you would like to set up an appointment or you may email alisha@mainelobstermen.org

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Attention Maine Lobstermen

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (MA DMF) has begun an Industry-Based Trawl Survey for Gulf of Maine cod (cod IBS). The survey area includes federal waters off of the coast of Maine, specifically in lobster zones: E, F, and G. Four months of surveying were completed from April 2016 through July 2016; the survey starts again on October 1st, 2016 and ends on January 31st, 2017. Tow locations will be announced monthly on MA DMF website, social media, and the MA DMF listserv. To receive real time text message updates of the survey go to the MA DMF Website and sign up or call Maren Olsen at 978-282-0308 ext 167. Additionally, daily announcements of activity will be broadcasted on VHF channel 16. In order to avoid gear conflicts, MA DMF respectfully requests that fixed gear be temporarily removed from the tow locations.
MAINE LOBSTERMEN CHARGED WITH ILLEGAL FISHING

A fisherman accused of trying to secretly catch lobsters and his sternman have been charged with multiple fishing violations, according to state officials Duston Reed, a 34-year-old lobsterman from Waldoboro, was arrested Aug. 18 by the Maine Marine Patrol and taken to the Two Bridges Regional Jail in Wiscasset. The arrests of Reed and his sternman, Jeremy Yeaton of Friendship, came after a seven-month investigation, according to a news release from the Maine Department of Marine Resources. Reed was charged with fishing lobster traps that were not marked with a buoy, fishing untagged lobster traps, falsifying physical evidence and tampering with a witness. A total of 40 unmarked, untagged traps allegedly owned by Reed were recovered by Marine Patrol officers after an investigation determined where they were being used.

FIRST ATLANTIC COAST MARINE NATIONAL MONUMENT DECLARED OFF GEORGES BANK

In September President Obama established the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument as the first marine national monument in the country. The National Monument, 4,913 square miles of the Atlantic Ocean at the southern edge of Georges Bank, protects the area from human activities. The Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument encompasses three deep submarine canyons and four seamounts which rise more than 7,000 feet above the ocean floor. The area is known for its deep-sea corals and rich array of marine species. President Obama acted under the 1906 Antiquities Act. The Act allows a President to protect areas of “historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest.” The proclamation means that fishermen targeting whiting and other fish species must transition out of the area within 60 days. Offshore lobstermen and those who fish for red crab have seven years to move out of the area.

EUROPEAN UNION TO CONSIDER FATE OF U.S. LOBSTERS

In early September, a European Union (EU) science panel determined that Sweden’s risk assessment which contends that American lobster is an invasive species warrants further review. The opinion of the European Union’s Scientific Forum on Invasive Alien Species sets in motion a broader review of the proposal to ban American lobsters. The review is anticipated to be completed by next spring. The U.S. and Canada sell about $200 million worth of live lobster to EU countries each year.

MAINE MARITIME MUSEUM OPENS OVER EAST EXHIBIT

In September the Maine Maritime Museum in Bath opened a new art exhibit entitled Over East, an Artist’s Journal: Paintings by Robert Beck of the contemporary maritime communities. The exhibit is a collection of more than 40 paintings of the working life and landscape in Downeast Maine communities. Beck paints the fishing and boatbuilding communities of the coast, specifically Jonesport. In Over East, these images of working life in Maine coastal towns are on exhibit together for the first time, forming a “visual essay” about Maine’s fishing communities. The exhibit will run through January 22, 2017.

NEW SWIPE CARD SYSTEM IN PLACE FOR SEA URCHIN HARVESTERS

Maine’s 2016-2017 sea urchin season will be a repeat of last season in terms of the number of fishing days and daily landing limits. However, harvesters and dealers will be equipped with new technology to track the daily harvest. DMR is launching a new swipe card system for the sea urchin fishery. Similar to the elver dealer’s card reader, each time urchin harvesters sell their product, they will swipe their card in the urchin dealer’s card reader. The dealer will enter the sales information into a computer loaded with customized reporting software. Each transaction, including the harvesters’ information encoded on a magnetic strip on the back of the card, and pounds and price entered by the dealer, will be uploaded from the dealer computer to a secure server accessed by DMR managers. In 2015, Maine’s 305 urchin harvesters landed 1.5 million pounds valued at $4.3 million.

Kudos to Cook’s Lobster House!

Cook’s Lobster & Ale House on Orr’s Island raised $4,276 during its September fundraiser in support of the MLCA Relief Fund. The event featured a Silent Auction and Cook’s donated a portion of evening’s sales. Mary Coombs organized this amazing event. MLCA extends a heartfelt thank you to Mary and everyone at Cook’s, as well as all of the businesses who donated items, lobstermen who donated lobster and guests and friends who dined and bid at the silent auction.
**KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR TAGGED LOBSTERS, JONAH CRABS**

*from the Atlantic Offshore Lobstermen’s Association*

**Lobsters**

In the summer and fall of 2015, over 3,000 lobsters were tagged on Georges Bank. A small number of lobsters continue to be tagged via a partnership with scallop surveying by Coonamessett Farm Foundation. We hope to track these animals throughout the Georges Bank and Gulf of Maine region to better understand how lobsters move in the new joint stock area. We also hope to collect information about lobster growth rates, given changes in the ocean environment.

If you find a lobster with a yellow t-bar tag marked with “AOLA” please release it with tag intact and contact Heidi Henninger at the Atlantic Offshore Lobstermen’s Association at the number on the tag, heidi@offshorelobster.org, or 774-251-9454. Phone reports can be via voice or text.

WHAT TO REPORT: date, location, tag number, lobster sex, whether the lobster has eggs or v-notch tag, heidi@offshorelobster.org, or 774-251-9454. Phone reports can be via voice or text.

**Jonah Crabs**

There are also 4,000 tagged Jonah crab (rock crab) on the loose across Southern New England, Georges Bank, and western Gulf of Maine. Massachusetts’s Division of Marine Fisheries is actively tagging crabs, in collaboration with AOLA, to investigate migration patterns and growth. Information will be used for Jonah crab stock assessment.

If you find a crab with a green t-bar tag and/or orange knuckle tag marked with “AOLA” please contact Heidi Henninger at 774-251-9454 or heidi@offshorelobster.org.

WHAT TO REPORT: date, location, tag number, crab sex, egg status and whether you kept or released the animal. For green tags only, if you have a way to measure carapace length in millimeters, that information would be valuable. If not, please consider taking a photo of the lobster next to your gauge. It is best if the gauge is in line with the lobster’s carapace, as if you were gauging the lobster. AOLA is working with Maine DMR on a new tool to obtain size information from photographs.

REWARDS: Every tag report will qualify as one raffle entry. Rewards will be drawn July 1, 2017: 1st place - $500, 2nd place - $300, 3rd place - $200.

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Green tag reports with width measurement will be additionally entered into high value cash raffles drawn July 1, 2017 and 2018: 1st place - $1,000, 2nd place - $500.
The Maine lobster boat racing season has come to a close. It was a bright and sunny summer as most of these pictures indicate. From all reports the racing was wonderful!

LOBSTER BOAT RACES OF 2016  
Clockwise below, from left to right: Boothbay Harbor race; Portland tug boats out in force; Stonington race; Long Island race. Photos courtesy of J. Johanson.

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