One of the things that I love the most about my job is the chance to see so many different aspects of the lobster industry. I have the opportunity to see the good, the bad and the ugly — the behind-the-scenes of the lobster supply chain in Maine and Canada. In the last few weeks, as I’ve traveled around Maine spending time on docks learning from fishermen and dock workers alike, I’ve seen it all. I’ll start with the bad so we can get that over with and move on.

I was standing on one wharf recently, talking with a colleague about some of the incredible handling practices I have seen in the field. “I was watching boats unload the other day. If a lobster was accidentally placed in a crate on its back, crew on the wharf were taking the time to turn that lobster over and make sure that they were all settling into the crate nicely,” I explained. “That’s really important,” a dock worker interjected as he weighed lobsters. I looked at him and nodded in agreement, and then I saw the lobster in his hand. He was holding a new shell lobster by one claw on a sunny, 77-degree day in August. Just beside him, there was a crate of select sitting on the float — flaps open, exposed to the sun and noticeably drying out. He pulled the crate off the scale by one becket until — THUD! — it hit the float. The crate sat there for a few more minutes while boats unloaded, until another dock worker came along, picked it up and pressed the top of the crate against his chest. All of the lobsters that had been placed in the crate nose-to-tail were now standing on their tails or noses, until the crate was dropped again on the other side of the float before coming.

By Annie Tselikis

The question among lobstermen and researchers alike is: what is “normal” when it comes to water temperatures in the Gulf of Maine? Are the hot temperatures of last year the new normal or will the Gulf of Maine retain its character as a cold-water marine environment in the future?

The New England states experienced their share of truly hot days this summer. In the Gulf of Maine, water temperatures were again above average, according to J. Ru Morrison, executive director of the Northeastern Regional Association of Coastal and Ocean Observing System (NERACOOS). “Looking at the buoy data since 2001, in terms of surface water temperature 2012 was the warmest year thus far, 2013 appears to be the second warmest but we haven’t gone through the whole year yet,” Morrison said.

Based on air temperatures, Maine and the rest of New England endured quite a few heat waves in 2013. In July Maine hit the 90’s; Boston surged to 100° F. The blazing temperatures were due to deep undulations in the atmospheric jet stream. Meteorologists have noted that the jet stream in North America has been behaving abnormally for a few years now. That abnormality is linked to the increasing lack of ice and snow in the Arctic region. The Arctic is warming faster than mid- and low-latitude parts of the world. As a result, the jet stream has begun to slow down.

According to Rutgers University climate scientist Jennifer Francis, the jet stream in North America is 14 percent slower in the fall now than it was in the 1990s. Instead of zipping straight to the east, a slower jet stream will undulate to the north and south. The slow-
September marks the official start of the fall season. As cooler air, choppy seas and fewer license plates from away become the norm, lobstermen are hauling traps and landing big catches of lobster. Much about the world of lobstering remains the same. But, then again, much of it is changing, often because of factors well beyond anyone’s control.

In this issue of Landings, we feature stories about some of these changes. Marine invasive species have been a problem in many other coastal states for some time. Now some of those species are turning up in Maine, causing trouble for lobstermen and other commercial fishermen in the state. Increasingly warm water temperatures in the Gulf of Maine are also causing changes in the marine environment, although, as the story in this issue points out, water temperatures in the Gulf this year have been closer to the norm than last year.

And of course, we are keeping you up to date on issues affecting lobster prices.

Our monthly series, “Trap to Plate,” covers the complexities related to the live storage of lobster on land in closed holding systems. Geoff Irvine from the Lobster Council of Canada offers his perspective on the importance of the Canadian Committee which is investigating how lobster prices are set. And Annie Tselikis gives an update on her work visiting with lobstermen and dock workers to talk about how lobsters are being handled.

Although many lobstermen and the communities in which they live are now concentrating on getting thousands of pounds lobsters to the dock, they still need to know the regulatory changes that are happening at the state and federal levels. To this end, Landings is packed with updates on many pressing issues. We include a summary of the four meetings held in August by National Marine Fisheries Service to get lobstermen’s feedback on proposed whale protection rules. Although not heavily attended, those who did attend admirably represented Maine lobstermen and the industry’s concerns about preding vertical line regulations. Lobstermen can offer comments in writing to NMFS until September 13.

Landings also continues its exploration of the impact to lobstermen and their families of the Affordable Care Act, which comes into force next year. The MLA has received a federal grant to work with lobstermen to help them understand the requirements of the new law. Kevin Lewis explains how the state’s new health insurance co-op, Maine Community Health Options, is taking a different approach with its health insurance offerings.

Another major change happening this fall is the start of the new Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative. The new entity, funded by fees from lobstermen and seafood processors, will promote Maine lobster in the national and international markets. The DMR is seeking suggestions from lobstermen of people to serve on the Collaborative’s board. Maine’s lobster zone councils will meet in September and are responsible for generating a list of nominations. Lobstermen who have names of those they think might be suitable to represent them on the new marketing organization should get those names to their local zone council.

In the Maine Lobstermen’s Association pages you will find updates on the outcome of the recent ASMFC meetings, DMR’s new bait regulations, the herring fishery and other issues. We have included a notice to Casco Bay lobstermen with information on the upcoming dredge project scheduled to begin in early November and be completed by April. The Portland Harbor Commission is seeking lobstermen to assist with the lobster relocation project during that time period.

And in response to many questions from lobstermen regarding shell disease lobster, Landings features an article with practical advice for lobstermen on what you should do if you catch a diseased lobster.

It’s a rich menu of topics to cover in one newsletter. That only goes to show the varied and complex nature of lobster fishing in the state right now. While the act of baiting, setting and hauling a lobster trap remains very much the same as it ever was, the world in which lobstering takes place is changing, and will continue to do so at an accelerating rate.

Thoughts from MLCA President Patrice McCarron

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MLCalliance is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization, established in 2010, which achieves its charitable mission through programs in education, research and charity.
By Geoff Irvine

When the creation of the current Maritime Panel to Review Pricing Structure of Canadian Lobster was announced by the three provincial Ministers of Fisheries in June, virtually all members of the Canadian lobster fishery let out a collective gasp “Have we not studied this industry enough in recent years?” You could include this writer in this incredulous reaction. The Lobster Council of Canada has been at the forefront of this type of analysis since its inception in 2010 and has been involved in the two major studies of the sector since that time, “From Trap to Table – A Long Term Value Strategy for the Canadian Lobster Industry” and the follow-up report on the working groups which focused on issues highlighted in that report, “Building an Integrated Plan for the Canadian Lobster Industry.”

After that initial reaction, however, I began to think about where we are today in this complex and fragmented North American lobster industry and how far we have come in a few short years. I realized that the latest review by three well-known industry veterans could be the most important piece of the puzzle and just what we need. Let me explain.

In many ways the panel’s focus on pricing – how prices are established, who controls what, how the “shore price” market system works and what the options are for reform – is a natural step in the process being undertaken by the lobster sector in Canada. After convening extensive working groups in 2012, the Lobster Council of Canada made a conscious decision to focus its efforts on quality and branding, leaving the challenge of price for action at a later date. Our analysis showed that changing the way lobster is priced on the shore will take dramatic structural change and we felt (and still do) that action on brand and quality should happen first. As such our priority for 2013 is establishing quality grading standards and a Canadian lobster brand.

Coffee shop talk every morning in ports from Port Sapin to Souris, however, does not focus on quality and branding – it focuses on price. What will it be for this season, next season and why isn’t it higher? A Canadian dollar on par with the U.S. dollar and 80% more Homarus americanus coming into the market during the past ten years certainly have a lot to do with those questions.

Fast forward to the Maritime panel which is composed of three bright and capable industry veterans, Lewie Creed from Prince Edward Island (a former senior provincial government official), Gilles Theriault from New Brunswick (a consultant and former harvester organizer) and John Hanlon from Nova Scotia (retired from a career with the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans). The panel has been tasked with bringing forward recommendations on pricing options that will augment the work recently completed but, most importantly, it will bring acute political focus to the issues at hand today. This is the key difference between the current “study” and those of the recent past. This panel is being watched carefully by everyone who relies on lobster for a living. Recommendations made through this process will receive attention at the highest political and industry levels, both provincially and federally, and therefore have a very good chance to lead to positive action.

The Maritime panel will conclude its work in late September, with a report to be submitted to the provincial governments in October. I would expect that these governments as well as the Federal government are preparing themselves for how they will respond to the recommendations since action taken then will be the most important outcome from this process.

As part of the consultations the Lobster Council of Canada presented a brief to the panel focused on four action areas with six recommendations:

• Lobster sector discipline (tighten up loose talk in the media about prices and volumes, better coordination of trade missions, the establishment of a market research mechanism and options to decrease the paralyzing effect of cheap selling and giving product away);

• Understanding the lobster value chain (internal education to ensure that all industry participants understand the value chain, their position in same, varying qualities of lobster in different areas and historical percentage of market price shared by all in the value chain);

• Marketing and promotion (the importance of a coordinated and professional marketing and promotion campaign for Canadian lobster – not Nova Scotian or Prince Edward Island lobster – Canadian lobster to drive demand in all markets in both processed and live forms);

• Options for a mechanism to fund marketing and promotion (how we levy the sector to fund a marketing campaign and other key industry priorities).

I am certain that all stakeholders engaged with the process are weaving these themes throughout their discussions and that some consensus will emerge.

The political and industry focus on shore price setting in 2013 may be just what the sector needs to make changes occur that are necessary for real reform and for better ways to share the value of this rich resource among shippers, processors and harvesters. The real challenge will occur when the panel makes its report; will the lobster industry sector finally agree to try something new or simply go back to the old ways once again? It will take courage and leadership on the part of all industry leaders and politicians to bring meaningful change to the way that lobster is priced from harvester to first buyer – I hope that 2013 brings that change.

Geoff Irvine is the executive director of the Lobster Council of Canada. He is based in Halif, Nova Scotia.

Guest Column: Maritime Lobster Panel sign of political will

Climate change offers opportunities

To the Editor:

“Message to Maine Fishermen: Adapt to Climate Change” was the headline I read in the Portland Press Herald on the second day of the Climate of Change symposium I attended in July and it piqued me off. As a harvester, that is absolutely NOT the message I took away. I also know how fishermen perceived that headline...and it’s not the message I felt was intended. I passed the headline around the room to a lot of disgust, eye rolling and commentary about how the “PPh” convention ever seem to get any discussion involving the fishing industry right. (Anyone remember the article about how lobstermen can breathe easier now, the crisis is over?)

I enjoyed the climate change conference a lot. It was a great opportunity to see data, meet people and for me to talk with my future professors at University of Maine. The message I took away was “What if?” It was a venue for people to come together and share what they had seen, recorded and experienced. No new regulations or PPhs were discussed and no agenda was formed. I was not told to change how I conduct my fishing operation.

Climate change is attributed to a variety of factors. Some fishermen believe the changes we’re experiencing run on a cycle. Could be. Whatever the reason, do we have the ability to adapt as these changes occur? As some fish stocks potentially move north and other species emerge from the southern, can we utilize them?

We are at the southern range of northern shrimp. In years past shrimp have shifted north then returned after a cold spell. Do we have flexible in our management plans to consider these types of occurrences? If squid move up from the south and become an economically viable product, do we have a licensing plan to allow Maine fishermen to harvest them? I’d rather have these conversations now than wait until these shifts have already happened.

Federal permits are bundled together. If you have a permit for black sea bass, squid and red hake you cannot sell one of those permits individually. Would a fisherman in New Jersey even be willing to part with one of those permits if he hopes the fish may return? What changes can be made to take these factors into consideration?

Climate change is not the end of our fishery, it’s just a change. How can we adapt to use these changes to our advantage? I didn’t realize how much effort goes into promoting fishing. Often we have treated the scientific community like the enemy. In Maine there are people who understand the economic value of our industry. I mean, come on, what would they study without us? There’s no guarantee these changes will occur or that the right choices will be made if they do, but at least ideas are being discussed.

If I had to rewrite that headline I would say “Message to Maine Fishermen: Climate Change May Present New Opportunities.”

Genevieve McDonald
F/V Hello Darlin’ #11370
Stonington, ME
Guest Column: Priorities of the new health care plans

Over the next several issues we will be featuring a series of articles on the new Affordable Care Act which goes into effect in January, 2014, and its implications for Maine’s lobstermen.

By Kevin Lewis

As a nonprofit working for its members, Maine Community Health Options (MCHO) is focused on the best use of its resources – the premium dollar we collect from members for health insurance coverage. As a result, we are focused just as much in trying to avert tomorrow’s health care crises as we are in response to the necessary care for today’s acute events. This in turn informs our dedication to supporting the provision of the right care at the right time in the right place.

As a new health care player that is nonprofit, Maine-based and member-led, we operate with the conviction that we must do things differently to achieve different results than what we’ve experienced over the last decade; a doubling of health care costs in Maine. Our newly-created, Value Based Insurance Design model for both individual and small group products reflects this conviction. These products will be available both on and off the Health Insurance Marketplace beginning October 1, 2013.

Value Based Insurance Design boils down to paying for what matters, and tending to fundamental health concerns before they cause more problematic and expensive conditions.

Chronic Illness Support Program – MCHO has identified four major chronic conditions for our value based insurance design: asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, and hypertension. For each of these conditions, we have reduced members’ out-of-pocket costs in order to make the routine management of these conditions – office visits, medications, lab tests, self-management classes, equipment and supplies – less costly and therefore financially feasible. The ultimate testament to this approach will be in the number of people who use this program over the long term. By reducing emergency room (ER) visits and avoidable hospitalizations, the program is meant to save lives and save money. Plus cost-sharing for disease management under our Chronic Illness Support Program is significantly reduced when compared to benefits and coverage for products that do not include this program.

Behavioral Health Access – Maine Community Health Options supports the integration of behavioral health and medical care. To that end we will Value Based Insurance Design boils down to paying for what matters and tending to fundamental health concerns before they cause more problematic and expensive conditions.

pay for same-day services and facilitate immediate referrals by not imposing administrative roadblocks. In fact, MCHO will pay 100% of the first three outpatient behavioral health visits within a year in order to facilitate early care.

Tobacco Treatment – Rather than use the newly allowable “tobacco rating band” which charges higher premiums for smokers, we emphasize tobacco treatment – Nicotine Replacement Therapy, counseling, and Chantix (up to 90 days) if necessary – at no cost to the member when prescribed by a plan provider. Quitting smoking is one of those things that anyone can do for his or her health and also has long-term financial benefits for both the member and the plan. While the added premium for smokers might make sense as an incentive to quit, the actual administration to truly monitor compliance is cumbersome and costly. So, too, is the unintended consequence that some individuals who smoke may select the non-smoking status to obtain a lower premium. This, in turn, could prevent the very same people from accessing the much-needed benefit of tobacco cessation programs.

Shared Decision Making – MCHO will work with members and providers to ensure members’ full understanding of treatment options, possible side effects or negative consequences and relative value of available options. This effort, which has been initiated by the health provider community in Maine, will put the consumer in the driver’s seat as they contemplate different choices of treatment.

These plan features combine with our overall benefit design and the goals of increased transparency to provide dependability in budgeting for you and your family’s health care spending. To make it easier for our members to track spending against their deductible, we have adhered to a single deductible that never exceeds maximum out-of-pocket limits. And while adhering to the actuarial value limits set by the Health Insurance Marketplace, MCHO has favored co-pay education whenever possible so that our members know their out-of-pocket expense in advance. Not all co-pays are uniform, however. We have built in lower co-pays for services with a big payoff (i.e., primary care, behavioral health, generic drugs) and much higher co-pays for ER visits, for instance, to reflect the true costs of such care (we will waive co-pays for ER visits that result in hospital admission).

We offer our Chronic Illness Support Program and Behavioral Health cost sharing in all but two of our individual plans and all but one of our small group plans. These exceptions are due to the cost share requirements of both our Health Savings Account-compatible Bronze-level plan (Community Option HSA) and our Catastrophic plan (Safe Harbor).

Maine Community Health Options will offer Bronze-level, Silver-level, and Gold-level plans. Each of these categories offer the same set of essential health benefits, but consumers will be able to compare premiums and costs with various co-pays, deductibles, and out-of-pocket limits to make informed decisions about their health coverage. MCHO will also offer Catastrophic plan coverage for those eligible.

To check out plan comparison information on our website, visit www.mainereoptions.org. Coverage for all of Maine Community Health Options’ health plans begins on January 1, 2014.

Next month: how to use the Health Insurance Marketplace to compare Qualified Health Plans, and tools and resources to facilitate enrollment.

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By Kevin Lewis

Kevin Lewis is the CEO of Maine Community Health Options, a non-profit, Maine-based and member-led organization. Photo courtesy of MCHO.
By Melissa Waterman

Cutler, Maine, is not a big town. The population of this tiny community on the coast of Washington County is slightly more than 500. Like many other small towns in this part of the state, life in Cutler revolves around boats and fishing, as it has for many, many decades.

Trevor Jessiman is part of that tradition. The 24-year-old lobsterman grew up surrounded by fishermen. “All the men in my family fished,” he said matter-of-factly. “I started out as a kid, lobstering with my uncles and cousins.” Trevor’s father scaled many decades. “I started out as a kid, lobstering with my uncles and cousins,” Trevor explained. “I now feel comfortable doing repairs, large and small, on his own boat. “It saves a lot of money to be able to do things myself,” he said.

Like many lobstermen, Trevor has little to say about the many regulations that now govern a fisherman’s life. While he has attended gatherings like the annual Maine Fishermen’s Forum, he’s no fan of management discussions that now govern a fisherman’s life. “The knowledge in that shop is just incredible. I learned more this winter than I have in the past five years,” Trevor said. He now feels comfortable doing repairs, large and small, on his own boat. “It saves a lot of money to be able to do things myself,” he said. Like many lobstermen, Trevor has little to say about the many regulations that now govern a fisherman’s life. While he has attended gatherings like the annual Maine Fishermen’s Forum, he’s no fan of management meetings. “I try to stay away from the [zone] council stuff,” he admitted. “I’m just too opinionated.” When asked for his opinion on the upcoming vertical line regulations designed to keep endangered whales safe from gear, Trevor doesn’t hold back. “It’s stupid. We don’t get whales around here. The people who start these laws have never spent a day on the water in their lives.”

This fall will see the launch of the new Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative, funded by fees levied from lobstermen and processors. Trevor isn’t holding his breath on the Collaborative’s success. “Any marketing effort has to be by the fishermen for themselves,” he said. “You have to cut out those ten middlemen. There are so many things that could be done but you’ve got to have the backing.”

Trevor’s season has been good thus far. He’s looking forward to the fall, to lobstering, hunting and other annual activities. “Sometimes when I’m out there fishing, it doesn’t seem that it’s going that good. But I like where I am, what I’m doing,” he said.

Trevor Jessiman on board Miss Behavin. Photo by Abby Rock.

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By Melissa Waterman

It was a picture of the Damariscotta River in a University of Maine college catalogue that captivated Jim Manning, the Massachusetts native was in school at Boston College in the mid-1970s when he happened upon the catalogue and spied the iconic picture. “It caught me,” Manning admitted.

In fact, Manning had been intrigued by the ocean well before his college years. As a child he had camped on the Cape Cod shore with his family each summer. Wandering around on the beaches along Truro and Provincetown, young Manning noticed the strong waves and tides. “I couldn’t help but wonder about what drives these things,” he recalled.

Thus after two years at Boston College, Manning transferred to the University of Maine and began to dabble in oceanography. After graduating with a degree in mathematics in 1979, he decided to help a friend build a 40-foot sailboat. They then sailed the boat across the Atlantic Ocean. “We spent about three weeks in the Azores and then went on to Madeira and the Canary Islands,” Manning said. “And then we sailed to the Caribbean.” After months roaming the world on a sailboat, Manning decided it was time to head back to school. He enrolled in the University of Rhode Island’s School of Oceanography but after one year, the urge to travel hit again. “It took me six years to get my master’s,” Manning explained. He graduated in 1987 with a degree in physical oceanography.

With his degree in hand and a wife and new baby, Manning took a position with the Acadia Institute of Oceanography in Seal Harbor, Maine, teaching oceanography courses to children. Although he delighted in working with children, his wife’s family lived on Cape Cod. When a job for a physical oceanographer at the Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) in Woods Hole became available, Manning applied. “I’ve been here ever since,” he said.

It proved a good fit. The NEFSC focuses on applied research, studies that have meaning in the world of fishermen as well as to oceanographers. “I was more interested in applied oceanography than in theoretical,” Manning explained. As part of the research team in the center’s oceanography branch Manning conducted studies of temperature, salinity and currents on the Northeast Shelf, spending weeks at sea dropping CTDs (a conductivity, temperature and depth gauge) and other instruments over the side of a ship. He took part in the multi-institutional Gloocean (Global Ocean Ecosystems Dynamics) project on Georges Bank during the 1990s, which tracked young cod and haddock populations over time. In general, Manning kept his hands wet.

But even the most applied scientist runs into certain intractable obstacles. Manning’s research cruises were a week or so in length, taking place perhaps twice or three times a year. He just wasn’t on the water often enough to get a good grasp of what was happening beneath the waves. Until one night, a bold idea came to him. “I was on the midnight watch [during one research cruise] and saw all these lights. There were fishing boats out the hundreds of miles from shore,” Manning recalled. “I realized that they were noticing things too. They went out there every week all year and I was making do with a week or two of sampling per year.”

So he decided to enlist fishermen to gather the data that he wanted. Manning started showing up at meetings of various fishermen’s associations on the Cape. In 2001 he convinced lobstermen in the Atlantic Offshore Lobstermen’s Association to attach simple sampling devices to their traps to provide temperature data throughout the year. The eMOLT program was born.

eMOLT stands for Environmental Monitors on Lobster Traps. In the world of multi-million dollar research studies, eMOLT is science on a shoestring, “Jim’s a heck of nice guy and handy,” said Bobby Ingalls, a Bucks Harbor lobsterman who has participated in the program since 2001. “He can make something out of PVC pipe and glue and make it work.” Manning’s temperature sensors, which are made in Canada, are inexpensive and durable. They are attached to a lobster trap; when the trap is hauled, the sensor wirelessly transmits data to a recording system on the boat.

During a research cruise at the mouth of Penobscot Bay in 2002, Manning was taken aback by all the lobster buoys he saw around the bay and quickly decided to recruit Maine lobstermen into his program. The number of eMOLT participants rapidly grew to 150 fishermen scattered throughout New England. Manning found most lobstermen were amenable to putting the sensors on their traps. “The ones I’ve talked to really want to learn everything they can about the ocean. They want to know why things change from week to week or from year to year,” he said.

Lobstermen are asked to place the trap with the sensor in the same place and at the same depth each time they set. The data is downloaded at the end of the year. “The goal is to get long-term data at the maximum number of sites,” Manning said.

Making sure that the data comes in from each trap is important to Manning. Ingalls recalled a time when one of the eMOLT traps in his area seemed to have disappeared. “They have a tag on them so you can trace them no matter what,” Ingalls explained. This particular trap appeared to be on land somewhere around Bucks Harbor. So Manning pestered one lobsterman he thought might have the trap with phone calls. Exasperated, that lobsterman told Manning that he didn’t have it but suggested another lobsterman down the road might. So Manning called that man three or four times until he reached him. Sure enough, he had the trap. “Jim’s going to track them down no matter what,” Ingalls said.

The eMOLT program has expanded to include low-cost current drifters, first built by students at Southern Maine Technical College in South Portland and now being built by students throughout New England. The drifters provide consistent data to physical oceanographers on the movements of currents in the Gulf of Maine throughout the year. Manning also is developing a low-cost temperature sensor for lobster traps that would provide real-time data on an hourly basis. “Ocean forecast modellers, like weather forecasters, want all that sort of data,” Manning explained.

Part of the pleasure that Manning obviously takes in his work comes from interacting with lobstermen and students. “I like the enthusiasm of the fishermen. I know that people are really interested in the eMOLT data,” Manning said. “When I first did oceanography in the 1990s, I did papers and never knew if anyone read them or cared. Now I’m having such a good time at work, I don’t do my chores at home and my house is falling down!”
flect them. NMFS staff provided a brief overview of the mandate for these new wholesale rules and data on current which entanglements in fishing gear. NMFS explained that the agency is mandated by both the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to promulgate additional regulations to protect endangered species. Under the MMPA, the number of serious injuries and mortalities cannot exceed the Potential Biological Removal (PBR) established for each species. For right whales, the PBR is 0.9, meaning that fewer than one right whale can be seriously injured or killed each year. Last year, serious injury and mortality for right whales equaled 1.6. The serious injury and mortality rate for humpback whales is 5.2, which exceeds the PBR of 2.7 for that species. Therefore, NMFS must put forward new management measures.

According to NMFS, entanglements in fishing gear are still occurring with some resulting in serious injury and mortality. Preliminary entanglement data for 2012 identified 42 new confirmed entanglements; five of these were right whales; 27 humpback whales, eight minke whales and two finback whales. The majority of these entanglement cases (26 of the 42) were either disentangled or believed to be non-life threatening. Preliminary data have confirmed four new entanglements (as of 7/15/13); three of these were humpback whales and one right whale. None were believed to be life threatening.

In 2003, the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team agreed to manage entanglement potential by first reducing the risk associated with groundlines and then reducing the risk associated with vertical lines.

The proposed rule to reduce the risk associated with vertical lines contains six alternatives, including a status quo option which was put forward for comparison purposes only. The agency is seeking public comments on each of the alternatives which contain combinations of management measures such as gear marking, minimum traps per trawl and seasonal closures. The agency can only consider management options included in the alternatives. They stressed that public comments will be considered before final rules are put forward.

NMFS identified Alternative 5 as its “preferred alternative.” The agency explained that this would be the “worst case scenario” for lobstermen, as it contains a combination of management approaches put forward by stakeholders. Alternative 5 proposes that Maine lobstermen trawl up beginning in non-exempt state waters, adding more traps per trawl as they fish farther from shore. The trawling up measures vary by zone and distance from shore, changing at three, six and more than 12 miles. Alternative 5 includes significant seasonal closures on Jeffrey’s Ledge and Jordans Basin, and has new gear marking requirements in exempted waters and expanded gear marking in non-exempted waters.

NMFS estimates that Alternative 5 will remove more than 32% of vertical lines from the Northeast region, and will reduce the co-occurrence of whales, 27 humpback whales, eight minke whales and two finback whales. Most lobstermen attending the meetings echoed these comments. The strongest opposition from the industry was in response to the proposed closures. Lobstermen strongly opposed using closures as a management approach, noting that they show little benefit to whales based on NMFS’ own risk reduction figures. At the Portland meeting, lobstermen were concerned that the Jeffrey’s Closure combined with the proposed wind farm would combine to greatly limit the amount of fishing area available in that area of the coast and would result in a massive cluster of gear east of Jeffrey’s. Other lobstermen noted that the any closure would result in a wall of gear around the edges and would dramatically increase gear conflicts. Closures should be an option of last resort.

Lobstermen at all meetings opposed the proposal to mark gear inside exempted waters, and opposed changes to gear marking in non-exempt waters. They explained that lobstermen generally have one set of gear that is lengthened and fished across all water depths. Complying with the proposed gear marking schemes would require lobstermen to purchase a second set of endlines which would be costly. Others noted that any requirement to mark ropes three times with 12-inch marks would be extremely labor intensive. As marks wear off and fouls over the season, it would be impossible to keep all ropes properly marked. Furthermore, gear marking does not provide any conservation benefit to whales. Lobstermen urged NMFS to keep the current gear marking requirements. Lobstermen also opposed the fall as an implementation date because changing gear during the peak of the fishery would be impossible. Instead, lobstermen urged a winter or spring implementation date.

The majority of lobstermen did not oppose the trawling up requirements included in the preferred alternative. NMFS clarified that none of the trawling up requirements would affect lobstermen in exempted state waters. There were, however, a few issues raised. At the Rockland meeting, several raised concern regarding the trawling up requirements for islands located outside the exemption. Lobstermen stated that two traps per trawl would not be operationally feasible in the shallow rocky waters around these islands. They urged NMFS to look at setting a minimum depth of water before requiring trawls, noting that it is very dangerous when short wars get hung down. This issue was also raised at the Portland meeting by lobstermen who fish around Boon Island.

There was also a concern raised at the Portland meeting regarding younger lobstermen fishing in small boats beyond twelve miles because these boats could not safely fish the required trawl minimums. They warned that if the current proposal moves forward, they would need to get bigger boats and more traps, forcing them to fish further offshore. The unintended consequence would be an increase in fishing effort and added expense for these vessels.

At the Ellsworth meeting, Zone B lobstermen expressed concern over the placement of the 6-mile line. They noted that the trawl minimums proposed on the outside edges of Mount Desert Rock, particularly in the area around the beak, would be very dangerous and nearly impossible to fish five trap trawls due to hard bottom. They proposed that the 6-mile line be relocated outside the rock. Lobstermen at the Rockland meeting urged NMFS to make sure that the pocket waters for non-listed state waters rules to ensure that the trawling up requirements can be safely implemented and keep rules consistent with Maine’s enforcement of these waters.

NMFS will solicit comments from fishermen along the entire Atlantic Coast through public meetings held during August. The agency will accept comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) until September 13 and on the Proposed Rule until September 16.
Maine Lobstermen’s Association

Advocating for responsible resource management and prosperity for Maine’s commercial lobstermen since 1954.

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS’ MEETING SCHEDULE
All meetings take place at Darby’s Restaurant, Belfast.

Sept. 10, 5 p.m.
Oct. 1, 5 p.m.
Nov. 5, 5 p.m.
Dec 2, 5 p.m.

STEAMING AHEAD

Once a year I have the unenviable task of asking Maine lobstermen for money. It’s never been something that has come easy to me, and given the reality of lobster prices, it’s certainly not getting any easier! But, the reality is that the MLA is a membership organization, founded by lobstermen to work on behalf of Maine lobstermen. It’s a simple concept with a very complicated reality.

I am painfully aware that Maine’s lobstermen share vastly different perspectives on most issues. Some of you take the time to let me know when you don’t agree with what the MLA is doing. And as tough as that can be to hear, I truly appreciate the feedback. The MLA cannot be effective if folks don’t participate.

Participation is essential because the MLA is the sum of its members. MLA’s harvester members elect the Board. MLA’s Board governs this organization and determines its policies. MLA members choose the leaders, and those leaders set the course.

With the financial squeeze felt by everyone in this industry, the MLA has been under extra scrutiny this year. As the old kid on the block, we are viewed by many as Goliath, not David. People are quick to pin anything that is not working in the lobstering world on the MLA. While it may look like criticism, I believe it is actually a testament to how effective the MLA has become. Whether or not folks like the MLA, they certainly have an opinion about the organization and the work that we do. The MLA works on the important issues, and everyone knows that the MLA’s position matters.

My wish is that instead of casting stones and judging from the sidelines, more lobstermen would get involved. I am not naive enough to think that all lobstermen would or should join the MLA. There are so many wonderful philosophies and values among lobstermen; clearly the MLA cannot possibly appeal to everyone.

But for 59 years the MLA has worked staunchly, consistently, and quietly to build a healthy and sustainable fishery for Maine lobstermen. I can say with confidence that the lobster industry is in a better place because of the MLA. And I can say with equal confidence that Maine lobstermen would be hurt greatly if the MLA did not continue to exist.

We sent out a list of 10 reasons to support the MLA in this year’s membership appeal, and frankly, we could have come up with a lot more! The MLA’s expertise and effectiveness is unmatched by any other industry group in the state. The board and staff have built strong relationships across all political levels, from Maine’s Governor and Legislature and our federal delegation to federal, regional and state agencies.

The sheer number of issues the MLA deals with is actually staggering. The expectations that the industry has for the MLA are equally incredible, given the limited financial investment individuals have made to it.

Whether it is fisheries policy on lobsters, herring, menhaden or even Northern shrimp, Maine lobstermen, whether they are members or not, expect the MLA to be up to speed. And we are. This is no minor accomplishment. Each of these species is unique, its management and science is distinct and all of it is extremely complicated.

Then there are whale issues. The MLA is fully versed on all aspects of the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan, its history, whale stock assessments, disentanglement work, gear research and the politics of it all. The whale management process truly takes the cake for complexity. I know many of you feel like you have been screwed by the sinking line rules, but I can assure you, it really would have been a lot worse had the MLA not been at the table.

During the past few years, the MLA has been thrust into the world of industry profitability and lobster price issues. The MLA has responded by offering hundreds of training seminars to lobstermen through the TAA program. I’m proud to say that as a result of MLA’s work, nearly 2,100 have completed 12 hours of business training, and a surprising 1,900 have worked with a business counselor and completed a long-term business plan. We’ve all learned a lot about lobster pricing and how the markets work.

Now we are looking at ways for lobstermen to take control of their economic future. To this end, MLA has pushed hard to increase our investment in marketing and we are working with lobstermen to continue that we handle our lobsters with the utmost care, which is especially important due to our high volume of shredders.

Most recently, we’ve been getting up to speed on the Affordable Care Act so that we can help Maine lobstermen cope with the requirements of the new health insurance law. This is yet another complex web of federal regulations that we are just now becoming acquainted with in order to serve as a resource for you.

And let’s not forget all of the everyday things that many take for granted, like publishing a newsletter every month, mailing it to 6,500 people, getting information out to the industry on a weekly basis, monitoring lobster prices, bait and fuel prices, dealing with a barrage of media and informational requests, and serving on industry-related boards and committees.

I am proud of the work that the MLA does. I am proud to work for Maine lobstermen, and especially to have the honor of working closely with the MLA Board. The MLA is a tremendous resource for all Maine lobstermen.

So let’s take a look at the big picture. For 59 years the MLA has been doing what needed to be done to make sure Maine lobstermen continue to make a living from fish and have the opportunity to watch their children do the same. It has done that by being loud when it needed to, using diplomacy when called for, and making damn sure that the views of our lobstermen were recognized by the powers that be.

It’s clear that Maine lobstermen need a strong MLA. But the MLA needs your support to stay strong. So, this year, get your neighbors to join the MLA. And send in your own membership renewal right away! As always, stay safe on the water.

Patrice McCarron
President Maine Lobstermen’s Association

MLA STATEMENT ON PROPOSED VERTICAL LINE RULES

Good evening. My name is Patrice McCarron and I am the director of the Maine Lobstermen’s Association. The MLA is Maine’s oldest and largest fishing industry organization, established back in 1954, whose mission is to advocate for a sustainable lobster resource and the fishermen and communities that depend on it.

I want to thank the National Marine Fisheries Service for holding four meetings along the Maine coast to allow Maine lobstermen the opportunity to learn more and understand what this proposed rule will mean for them, and to provide their feedback to you. I also want to thank the DMR and the administration for working so closely with the industry to find an approach to meet the mandates of the whale plan in a manner that minimizes safety risk and is operationally and economically feasible.

While I fully understand that the purpose of tonight’s meeting is to discuss the proposed vertical line rule, I would be remiss not to take a moment to remind the agency that Maine lobstermen continue to struggle with the existing sinking groundline regulations. The sinking groundline requirement poses ongoing safety, operational and economic challenges for lobstermen.

With that said, the MLA has been very encouraged to see NMFS move away from its one-size-fits-all, broad-based rulemaking approach for all fixed gear fisheries from Maine to Florida -- which characterized the
sinking line rule. We are encouraged by your efforts to seek a more area-specific, risk-based approach for the vertical line rules. We commend the agency for soliciting broad feedback from stakeholder to guide the development of this rule, and agree with your approach to place the most onerous management measures in areas where the risk is greatest.

The MLA will continue to solicit feedback from our members on this proposed rule, and will provide full written comments for the record. However, we would like to provide our initial feedback on the management measures put forward through the various alternatives.

To date, the MLA has received mostly positive feedback and support for the fishing gear component proposed in Alternatives 3 and 5. This proposal submitted by the state of Maine reflects a lot of input from the industry, and attempts to remove a significant amount of gear from the line in a manner that allows our fleet to operate safely and without excessive cost.

However, there have been a few concerns raised that the association will work to address.

Lobstermen who fish around the islands in Maine’s non-exempted state waters express concern about the potential for closures and safety concerns over their ability to fish pairs in these areas. These waters are extremely shallow and the bottom extremely rough and rocky. MLA will be exploring ways to address this concern.

Also critical to the trawling up requirement is the placement of the 6-mile line. The line must be located at a point where the bottom transitions from the rough rocky area which characterizes our inshore waters to a less rugged, gravel and mud substrate more typical of offshore areas. Locating the line where this substrate transitions will allow Maine lobstermen to add additional traps to their trawls and fish them safely.

With regard to closures, the MLA views this tool as a management measure of last resort. Given the lack of data to distinguish the origin of fishing gear removed from waters, we do not feel that closures are justified as a risk reduction in Maine. MLA is particularly concerned with the Jeffreys’ Closure. This closure is massive and its conservation benefit does not justify the economic hardship it would cause displaced lobstermen. This is prime fishing grounds for affected lobstermen during the fall and winter months. Not only does the closure itself not provide significant risk reduction in the co-occurrence model, but lobstermen have consistently stated that they would be forced to fish their gear around the edges of the closure, in effect creating a wall of gear, and potentially increasing the risk to whales.

The MLA believes that the proposed Jordan Basin closure is based on sound data and methods, and that the Jeffreys’ closure, however, we do not support the boundary of this closure extending into Area 1. The majority of the whales which would be protected through this closure are in Area 3. Extending this closure into another fishing management area would cause unnecessary operational issues for Area 1 lobstermen and would be extremely difficult to enforce.

The MLA strongly opposes the gear marking scheme proposed for our exempted state waters. This proposed attempt to provide a marking scheme that would differentiate gear already in the exempted non-exempted waters but it does not achieve this. The proposed scheme is operationally impossible because Maine lobstermen fish and shift the same gear from exempted into non-exempted waters. To comply with this proposal, Maine lobstermen would need to have a purchase and rig a second set of endlines with a second color scheme. This would be cost prohibitive and extremely time consuming. MLA is also concerned about the requirement to expand the size and frequency of gear marking outside the exemption line.

Finally, we urge the agency to use June 1 as the implementation date for any new whale regulations. This is the date that lobstermen must have their trap tags in place for the season and allows lobstermen the time they need to make gear adjustments to comply with any new regulations. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.

**ASMFC MEETING SUMMARY**

**American Lobster Board**

ASMFC’s American Lobster Management Board approved Addendum XXI to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster and moved issues pertaining to single and aggregate ownership caps in Lobster Conservation Management Area (LCMA) 3 into Draft Addendum XVII for public review. Addendum XXI implements changes to the transferability program for LCMA 2 (Southern Newfoundland) and 3 (offshore waters). These changes are designed to allow for flexibility in the movement of traps as the consolidation program for LCMA 2 and 3 is implemented to address latent effort (unfished traps) in the fishery. The measures are also intended to provide a mechanism for industry to maintain a profitable fishery as trap reductions occur. Through Draft Addendum XXII, the Board will further explore the issue of single and aggregate ownership caps in LCMA 3 as well as clarify resulting trap limits after trap reductions are implemented.

Under Addendum XXI, LCMA 2 and 3 fisherman purchasing traps with multi-area trap history may fish those traps in any area the traps have history. Previous regulations required recipients of partial trap transfers to choose a single LCMA the transferred traps are authorized to fish in. This new measure allows the trawl fishers to purchase part of the local trap fishery and implement rules for the sale of part of those traps with those for full business sales of multi-area history traps. For LCMA 2 only, the Board approved a single and aggregate ownership cap of 1,600 traps (800 active and 800 banked). The ownership cap allows for the purchase and accumulation of traps over and above the current LCMA 2 trap cap of 800 active traps. The single ownership cap sunsets two years after the last trap reduction occurs under Addendum XVII. For LCMA 3 only, the Board approved an active trap cap of 2,000 traps, which will be reduced over five years to 1,548 traps (5% per year). The management measures contained in Addendum XXI will be implemented by November 1, 2013.

**Atlantic Herring Section**

– ASMFC’s Atlantic Herring Section approved Addendum VI to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Herring. The Addendum improves alignment between state and federal Atlantic herring management by allowing the use of consistent time periods across all four management areas of the species range. The Addendum includes measures to: (1) seasonal splitting of the annual catch limit sub-components (sub-ACLs) for Areas 1A, 1B, 2 and 3; (2) to 10% rolo/ver of a sub-ACL for all management areas; (3) the establishment of triggers to initiate the closing of directed fisheries; and (4) using the annual specification process to set trigger levels.

Addendum VI was developed to implement the New England Fishery Management Council’s Framework 2, which was released as a proposed rule on August 2, with a comment period ending on September 3.

The current Interstate Atlantic Herring FMP provides states the flexibility to split quota in Area 1A, it does not include provisions for seasonal splitting in Areas 1B, 2 and 3. The Addendum allows for up to 10% of unused sub-ACL for all management areas to carry over from one year to the following year after final landings data have been released. This provision also allows unused quota to be rolled from one season to the next within the same fishing year. The Addendum establishes triggers to close directed fisheries in a management area when 95% of a sub-ACL is projected to be reached and stock-wide when 95% of the ACL is projected to be reached. A 2,000 pound bycatch allowance continues directed fisheries are closed. The 10% rollover provision is intended to provide greater flexibility to herring industry, while the triggers are intended to prevent overharvesting in individual management areas and coastwide. States must implement Addendum VI’s measures on or before January 1, 2014.

**Menhaden Management Board**

ASMFC’s Atlantic Menhaden Management Board met to revise the terms of reference for the upcoming benchmark stock assessment, and review progress on the assessment, the Technical Committee’s report of a proposed aerial survey design, and the 2013 Fishery Management Plan Review and state compliance. The revised terms of reference included a...
Top Ten Reasons Why You Should Support the MLA

Reliable
Things that don’t work, don’t last. Maine lobstermen organized the MLA in 1954, forming the largest fishing organization in the state. Nearly 60 years later, the MLA remains accountable to its membership and has maintained a track record of advocating for Maine’s lobster industry.

Progressive
After 59 years of representing Maine lobstermen, the MLA knows the industry and understands the issues. So that’s why we are always staying one step ahead of the game, thinking about where you and your children and your grandchildren want to be in the years ahead.

Tradition
It’s important to know where you come from. The MLA is part of the centuries-old traditions of Maine lobstermen: independent, self-sufficient stewards of the resource who share values of family, fairness and hard work. The MLA’s efforts reflect these traditions every day.

Grassroots
The MLA is governed by a board of 23 commercial lobstermen who were elected by the membership to represent the industry. MLA board members travel to monthly meetings and attend a variety of events around the state on their own time and on their own dime because they are deeply vested in our future.

Effective
MLA’s actions have positively affected every Maine lobsterman. Whether it’s passage of the law that made sternmen self-employed workers, a prohibition on oil and gas refineries off Maine’s coast, or crucial lobster conservation measures, the MLA has led the industry in getting things done. The MLA remains the “go to” source for reliable information on issues that affect Maine’s lobster industry.

Accountable
The door is always open: the phone is always answered. The MLA is accessible to all its members, through its monthly board meetings and annual meeting every March. MLA meetings are open for members to attend.

Relevant
To make a difference in this constantly changing world, the MLA has to stay on top of the issues. The MLA facilitated a study on factors affecting the profitability of the industry and provided seminars on business training, marketing, and lobster quality to give lobstermen the tools they need to remain profitable.

Transparent
MLA understands that its work reaches beyond its membership and may affect all Maine lobstermen. That is why the association mails its newsletter each month to every commercial lobstermen in Maine through Landings, and makes it available on the web for the general public to enjoy.

Clout
With the support of you, our members, the MLA makes things happen in Augusta, regionally and in Washington, D.C. The power of one lobsterman is limited; the power of many is tremendous.

Collaborative
It’s hard to make a difference if you work alone. So the MLA works with industry, science and other organizations to ensure that the needs and perspectives of Maine lobstermen inform our advocacy work. In addition, MLA started the non-profit Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance to further education, research and charitable work in Maine’s lobster industry.

Time to renew your MLA membership

MLA Membership Form

Individual Membership Levels:
- Highliner $225
- Harvester $125
- Harvester Family* $200
- Junior/Senior Harvester $65
- Friend of the MLA $50

Business Members Levels:
- Select $500
- Keeper $175

Additional Contributions:
- MLA Legal Defense Fund

Mail with payment to MLA, 203 Lafayette Center, Kennebunk, ME 04043

Phone: 207-967-4555, INFO@MAINELOBSTERMEN.ORG
WWW.MAINELOBSTERMEN.ORG!
At Riverdale Mills, we know that our Aquamesh® is the highest quality, strongest and most durable trap wire in the world. Aquamesh® is constructed here in the USA from high-grade premium steel that is galvanized after welding and PVC coated making it completely corrosion resistant unlike the imported wire pictured here. Not only does Aquamesh® resist corrosion, peeling and cracking it also easily outfishes and outlasts all other imported wire.

For over 30 years Aquamesh® has been the top requested, highest performing and most trusted marine wire in the marketplace. Experience the Aquamesh® difference and leave the imported wire for the birds.
Committee recently identified forty targets and thresholds. The Technical Committee recently identified forty potential fishery-independent data sets for inclusion in the assessment model. The relative abundance indices include both regional and state surveys with most targeting juveniles and some targeting adults. A proposed aerial survey design by Dr. James Sulikowski and his colleagues at the University of New England was previously reviewed by the Technical Committee for its merit as a tool in surveying menhaden abundance. The Technical Committee reported that this proposal is unlikely to produce biomass estimates with a high degree of confidence or to provide data that will be applicable to the 2014 stock assessment and that adequate statistical justification for the proposed survey methodology was not presented. The Board agreed with the Technical Committee’s recommendation that the authors conduct further simulation and power analysis work.

The Board was presented a review of the 2012 fishery. Total coastwide landings of Atlantic menhaden in 2012 were 224,200 metric tons; a 2% decrease from 2011 landings. Generally, bait landings have continued to increase recently while landings for reduction purposes have remained constant. At its May 2013 meeting, the Board approved de minimis status for New Hampshire, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida as part of their Amendment 2 implementation plans. The Plan Review Team plans to work with states in early 2014 to assist them in compiling compliance reports for the Amendment 2 adopted for the 2013 fishery.

HERRING SPawning CLOSURE IN EASTERN MAINE

The Maine Department of Marine Resources announced that herring spawning closure regulations which affect the capture of spawning herring in state and federal waters in the Eastern Maine Spawning Area will be in effect August 27 through September 23, 2013. It shall be unlawful to fish for, take, possess, transfer, or land in any State of Maine port or facility, or to transfer at sea from any Maine registered vessel, any catch of herring harvested from that area. Herring taken legally outside the Eastern Maine Spawning Area may be transported through the area only if all of its fishing gear has been stowed.

For more details, please contact your local Maine Marine Patrol Division Headquarters (Div I 633-9595, Div II 667-3373) or your local marine patrol officer, or call the DMR Boothbay Harbor Laboratory (633-9500).

DMR SEeks FEEDBACK FOR BAIT REVIEW

Maine DMR is conducting an initial evaluation of all current and potential bait sources to determine if they pose risk to the marine environment. All non-reviewed baits will be prohibited after this initial review has concluded. Kennebec River Biosciences will conduct this review to include a literature review, database development, hazard identification and characterization, and risk evaluation of each bait. Once the risk assessment is complete in early September, the Commissioner will make a decision on which baits will be prohibited for use in the lobster fishery. In the future, additional reviews can be easily requested, free of charge, and the Department will review them within 60 days.

Current List:
- alewife (Maine)
- alphonso (New Zealand)
- Atlantic herring (US & Canada)
- carp (Vietnam, Asia, central Canada, central US)
- catfish (Vietnam, Asia, flatfish (Pacific))
- flounder (Southern New England)
- hake (US West Coast)
- horseshoe crab (Asia)
- mackerel (Southern New England)
- mudshad (Virginia)
- mullet (central Canada)
- orange roughy (Australia & New Zealand)
- pogie (Southern New England)
- redfish (PEL, Iceland, Eastern Canada, North Atlantic, & Pacific)
- rockfish (US West Coast & Canada)
- sole (US West Coast)
- sucker fish (Maine)
- tilapia (Vietnam)
- tuna (Pacific Northwest)

This regulation became effective on July 25, 2013, to establish a review process and classification system for lobster and crab baits. Dealers may only sell baits that have been reviewed by the Department. Dealers are prohibited from selling any bait source that has not been reviewed, or has been categorized as “prohibited” by the Department. The Department is required to annually review bait sources and update the classification in response to new information.

Lobster and crab bait dealers are required to obtain a free endorsement on their wholesale dealer license that identifies them as a lobster/crab bait dealer. Lobster/crab bait dealers are required to annually provide the Department with a list of baits sold the previous year and baits they anticipate selling the following year. Dealers are not restricted to sell only species on their anticipated lists and may sell any approved bait. The endorsement and bait lists will allow the Department to keep track of lobster/crab bait use.

MAINE DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES

MLA DIRECTORS MEETING SUMMARY

The MLA Directors did not meet in August. The next meeting will be held September 10 at 5 p.m. at Darby’s restaurant in Belfast.

MLA SEEKING INPUT ON NEW MARKETING BOARD

The Zone Councils will be meeting in September to discuss nominations for the newly formed Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative. Each of the seven zone councils can nominate up to three candidates. These candidates will represent harvesters on the new marketing board, but they do not need to be lobstermen. If you have any ideas of potential candidates for the new board, please contact the MLA or your local zone council representative. The new Marketing Collaborative will be organized in late October.

NOAA planning Penobscot Bay survey

NOAA is planning a hydrographic survey operation of Penobscot Bay this winter or early spring of next year. They are seeking feedback from lobstermen on when to conduct this survey in order to minimize interactions with lobster gear. NOAA will deploy the Thomas Jefferson, a 208-foot, white survey vessel which deploys two 31-foot, aluminum survey launchers. Survey vessels carry NOAA markings, can be identified on AIS, and will be monitoring VHF channels 13 and 16. Survey operations will be conducted 24-hours a day from the ship and from 0730 through 1800 with survey launches. When towing hydrographic instrumentation is deployed, Thomas Jefferson will be restricted in her ability to maneuver. An overview of the survey area is shown below. Questions or concerns can be addressed to the ship’s Field Operations Officer via phone at: 757-647-0187 or 808-434-2706; or via email at: ops.thomas.jefferson@noaa.gov.

MLA Update continued from page 9 clarification to address where the stock is relative to the management targets and thresholds. The Technical Committee recently identified forty potential fishery-independent data sets for inclusion in the assessment model. The relative abundance indices include both regional and state surveys with most targeting juveniles and some targeting adults. A proposed aerial survey design by Dr. James Sulikowski and his colleagues at the University of New England was previously reviewed by the Technical Committee for its merit as a tool in surveying menhaden abundance. The Technical Committee reported that this proposal is unlikely to produce biomass estimates with a high degree of confidence or to provide data that will be applicable to the 2014 stock assessment and that adequate statistical justification for the proposed survey methodology was not presented. The Board agreed with the Technical Committee’s recommendation that the authors conduct further simulation and power analysis work.

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- hake (US West Coast)
- horseshoe crab (Asia)
- mackerel (Southern New England)
- mudshad (Virginia)
- mullet (central Canada)
- orange roughy (Australia & New Zealand)
- pogie (Southern New England)
- redfish (PEL, Iceland, Eastern Canada, North Atlantic, & Pacific)
- rockfish (US West Coast & Canada)
- sole (US West Coast)
- sucker fish (Maine)
- tilapia (Vietnam)
- tuna (Pacific Northwest)

This regulation became effective on July 25, 2013, to establish a review process and classification system for lobster and crab baits. Dealers may only sell baits that have been reviewed by the Department. Dealers are prohibited from selling any bait source that has not been reviewed, or has been categorized as “prohibited” by the Department. The Department is required to annually review bait sources and update the classification in response to new information.

Lobster and crab bait dealers are required to obtain a free endorsement on their wholesale dealer license that identifies them as a lobster/crab bait dealer. Lobster/crab bait dealers are required to annually provide the Department with a list of baits sold the previous year and baits they anticipate selling the following year. Dealers are not restricted to sell only species on their anticipated lists and may sell any approved bait. The endorsement and bait lists will allow the Department to keep track of lobster/crab bait use.
Even in the highly traditional world of lobster fishing, things are changing rapidly. Not only is the ocean altering, becoming more acidic and warmer decade by decade, but ways of selling lobsters are changing as well. To help lobstermen better understand the market mechanisms that affect the price paid for their catch, we continue this series focusing on the movement of lobster from the trap to the plate.

Holding lobsters outside of their natural environment was once considered fairly simple. You take the lobsters, place them in a pound through which the tide rises and falls, give them food when necessary, and ship them when an order comes in. Or, as is still common, you place the lobsters into plastic crates, float them off the wharf and when it’s time, haul those crates from the water and ship them out on a waiting truck. No problem.

But there is a problem, and that problem is shrinking. Ensure that lobsters brought to the dock make it to their final destination requires attention and equipment. That translates into money.

Tim Harkins operates Rocky Coast Lobster Company in Boothbay Harbor. The company stores its lobsters in a 20,000-square-foot holding facility which Harkins describes as a closed system or “a big fish tank.”

“A closed system has refrigerated water [rather than water used directly from the ocean]. The temperature is better for the lobsters because water holds more dissolved oxygen than air. So the biggest thing you can do is control the temperature when the product comes out of the tank and goes to the grading room. Then you want to get the graded product back to the tank or iced down,” he explained. “The box in the truck has to be chilled down too.”

One of the key factors to consider in a closed holding system is that lobsters excrete ammonia. Too much ammonia in the “big fish tank” and the lobsters will die. A closed system must have monitors to keep track of ammonia levels and biological filters to scrub the water clean. A biological filter is a container filled with small pebbles or other material that provides such surface area as possible for bacteria to grow on. Those bacteria in turn eat the ammonia.

None of this is inexpensive. “The cost for a closed system] will vary by size and type of equipment. Pumps and titanium chillers are not cheap. You have to replace the refrigerant in the compressors each year and that’s not cheap either,” Harkins noted.

Alonzo Allen is a 37-year-old Beals Island lobsterman. Two years ago he started a company called Island Tank Systems which installs aeration and cooling systems in new as well as older lobster tanks. The company just finished installing these systems in the new 550-crate tank building at Maine Fair Trade Lobster in Prospect Harbor.

“It’s not complicated,” Allen said, re-ferring to the conditions that keep a lobster healthy. “Better air and colder water means a better lobster.”

The seawater in which lobsters are held should be kept between 38 and 42°F, according to Allen. One of the problems he encounters in the older tank buildings is turbulence in the holding tanks. “You need an insulated tank,” Allen said. “Best is if you have a tank surrounded with foam and then you back fill around it. The earth is usually about 50°F ambient temperature. So the biggest thing you have to do is insulate the bottom on the tank.”

Keeping thousands of pounds of lobsters cool and aerated around the clock costs money. Allen wouldn’t know how much he charged for his recent work at Maine Fair Trade Lobster but he did say that his company put in about 70 hours of work each week from April to mid-July. “Pumps, chillers, the aeration system, these guys have to spend massive amounts of money,” Allen said.

Existing lobster companies with old-fashioned holding systems who upgrade will get a better price, Allen argued, as will individual lobstermen. “They all know big chillers cost money,” he said.

A lobster is a vulnerable creature, particularly after it molts. Allen recalled a buyer in his area who purchased 100 crabs that had been kept off the wharf overnight. “Thirty of the 100 were no good because of broken claws or cracked shells and dead lobsters,” he said. To ensure that a lobster’s value remains high to customers, buyers need to keep that in mind.

Continued on page 22
## DMR ADJUDICATION REPORT, JUNE TO AUGUST 15, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Town</th>
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<tr>
<td>BEAL</td>
<td>JOSHUA</td>
<td>MILBRIDGE</td>
<td>ENGAGED IN THE ACTIVITY OF LOBSTER FISHING WITHOUT REGISTRANT ONBOARD</td>
<td>03-Jun-2013</td>
<td>250 DEF</td>
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<tr>
<td>CARLSON</td>
<td>SEAN</td>
<td>SAINT GEORGE</td>
<td>6 UNTAGGED LOBSTER TRAPS</td>
<td>14-Aug-2013</td>
<td>550 DEF</td>
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<td>SOUTH THOMASTON</td>
<td>POSSESSION OF 480 V-NOTCHED/MUTILATED FEMALE LOBSTERS</td>
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<td>BREMEN</td>
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<td>W. ROCKPORT</td>
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<td>ADAM</td>
<td>KENNEBUNK</td>
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<td>130 DEF</td>
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<td>GEORGETOWN</td>
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<td>BAR HARBOR</td>
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<td>PEMAOUD</td>
<td>WET STORAGE OF LOBSTER GEAR</td>
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<td>SHAWN</td>
<td>YARMOUTH</td>
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<td>ROBBINS</td>
<td>ERIC</td>
<td>LITTLE DEER ISLE</td>
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<td>ROGERS</td>
<td>JON</td>
<td>ORRS ISLAND</td>
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<td>STEUBEN</td>
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G = guilty; DISM = dismissed; NG = not guilty; DEF = deferred

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### MLA MEMBERS DISCOUNT DIRECTORY

**Accutech Marine Propeller**
Dover, NH -- 20% off propeller repair; discounts vary by manufacturer for new propellers, shafting and other hardware.

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

**Bessy Bait, LLC**
Seabrook, NH -- $5 off each barrel on multiple barrel purchases at the Seabrook NH location with proof of MLA membership.

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

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

**Friendship Trap Company**
Friendship, ME -- 5% off list price on traps when you show your MLA membership card.

**Harold C Ralph Chevrolet**
Waldoboro, ME -- 10% off parts and labor.

**Hews Company**
South Portland, ME -- 10% off hydraulic components and cable craft cables.

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

**Maine Lobstermen's Association**
Kennebunk, ME--10% off to harvesters on MLA merchandise.

**Maine Maritime Museum**
Bath, ME -- Free admission.

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

**National Fisherman**
Norfolk, Hollywood, CA -- Special annual subscription rate of $12.95, use J12MLA code for discount.

**Newcastle Chrysler Dodge-Jeep**
Newcastle, ME -- 15% off parts and service. Receive $200.00 additional discount on all new and used vehicles. Please bring ad copy in at time of sale.

**Nicholas H Walsh, PA**
Portland, ME -- 25% off legal services.

**North Atlantic Power Products**
Exeter, NH -- 10% off service repairs of owin disc transmissions.

**Penobscot Marine Museum**
 Searsport, ME -- Free admission.

**Sea Rose Trap Co.**
Scarborough, ME -- 5% off trap list price.

**Sea Side Rope**
Warren, ME -- Show MLA membership card to receive discounts off retail pricing.

**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 -- Show MLA card to receive $500.00 discount on a new hull or toop.

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

**Wesmac Custom Boats**
Surry, ME -- 25% discount on fiberglass components.

**Winter Harbor Co-op**
Winter Harbor, ME -- 10% off fresh picked lobster meat.

Present your MLA membership card at the following businesses and receive generous discounts!
SAUCE TO MANAGE TRANSITION FROM MLPC TO NEW MLMC

John Sauve, managing partner of the Portland-based Food and Wellness Group, and a veteran of over 40 years in the corporate and commodity sectors of the food industry, will guide the transition of Maine Lobster brand marketing into a new and more aggressive era targeting increased global demand.

The new effort begins officially in October with the replacement of the Maine Lobster Promotion Council by a new marketing entity, the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC), established by the recently passed Maine Lobster Advisory Council.

“Thjis is an exciting time in the Maine Lobster industry,” said Governor LePage. “Thе Maine Lobster marketing bill has set the stage for a global marketing effort that will increase the demand necessary to support this vital segment of Maine’s economy.”

Retained by Patrick Keliher, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Marine Resources, to direct the transition, Sauve brings a wealth of leadership experience in strategic business and marketing counsel in the food service industries. In addition to leading the marketing efforts of the Wild Blueberry Association of North America (Maine and Canada) for the last 20 years, Sauve’s experience includes recent work for the Maine Lobster Advisory Council.

In 2011 Sauve worked with the Council to develop and communicate a marketing-focused approach that would address the ongoing issues of supply, demand, and industry profitability, with increased boat price being the primary objective. The marketing initiative was called Project Maine Lobster and became the basis for the structure and funding for the new MLMC.

“Thеm is pleased to have a professional with John’s depth of knowledge and experience directing this crucial phase in the new marketing effort for Maine lobster,” said Keliher.

Sauve will lead the development of the new three-year Strategic and Operating Marketing Plan, which will be presented to the legislature in January. He will also provide direction and guidance to the MLMC in the search and selection of a new advertising and promotion agency, as well as helping create a new management and operating structure for the MLMC.

“I’m grateful for the hard work and commitment of the MLPC board and staff,” said Commissioner Keliher. “They’ve provided a strong foundation for this transition.

“Thhis transition to a new marketing era is a major milestone in the long and storied history of Maine lobster,” said Keliher. “John’s work will begin immediately as I want to ensure that the MLMC can help meet the growing demand.”
ing to its resting place in the water. With practices like these at the wharf, it’s easy to understand how the industry lost $8 million in value due to shrinkage in 2012. But the failures of this particular wharf are countered by real investments in improving quality at others. About a month ago, I walked onto the wharf at the Fishermen’s Heritage Co-op in Friendship unannounced on a Monday at noon. I couldn’t have picked a worse time. I introduced myself to the manager, Steve Thompson, and explained that I was in the process of developing a product quality and handling training program for fishermen, dock workers and shippers. I had heard about some of his wharf’s techniques to maintain quality and wanted to see for myself. I watched as Steve and his crew unloaded boats in a steady stream. After each boat tied up, one of Steve’s two additional crew members would hop on the boat and start unloading the tanks. One lobster for one hand; if they are lively the next day, they move through the supply chain. Otherwise they get tossed. Though when I asked him about it, he laughed. “Well I don’t know if we’re trained, but we do what we can.” I asked Steve how long he’s been doing this. “I’ve been co-op manager for 13 years and we’ve been doing it as long as I’ve been here,” he explains. “We don’t buy dead lobsters off of the boat.” When lobsters arrive at the dock weak, they will be crated overnight; if they are lively the next day, they move through the supply chain. Otherwise they get tossed.

A crate of selects sits drying out on the wharf on a hot day in August. Lobsters must be kept cool and moist through every step of the supply chain. Photo by Annie Tselikis.

At the Spruce Head Lobster Co-op, changes to their handling practices have come about within the last year at the suggestion of the Board of Directors. Members have been working on reducing the shrinkage with better handling practices on the boats Lobsters were placed, not dropped into crates, and were graded as they unloaded the tank.

and at the dock with the hope of increasing the price. “We have recently started a pilot program with five of our members in conjunction with one of our buyers. We are grading lobsters on our boats, and if it’s successful, we’ll try expanding to all of our members,” explained co-op president Bob Baines.

I spent a day at the co-op at the end of July. Handling there is nearly perfect. Fishermen offloaded their tanks carefully while the crew made sure lobsters settled into crates well. On several occasions, they picked out select lobsters that accidentally ended up in run crates. Crates were handled by two becket, with one man per becket. Co-op dock manager Jeff Roman explained that they have stopped hoisting crates by only one becket on the hook, “now we only hoist them in stacks using two becket.”

The industry has an incredible chance to adapt to the current landings: with 80% of lobsters coming ashore as softshells, Maine in fact has little other choice. There are fishermen, wharves and buyers who are making incredible strides in improving the quality of the product that is delivered to market.
er it goes, the deeper the undulations. This leads to unusual weather – very hot air is pulled north from the deep south and cool Canadian air is dumped onto northern Texas. Furthermore, these deep jet stream waves create atmospheric blocking patterns that lock extreme weather in place.

Despite the hot air moving across it, the Gulf of Maine did not see the extreme high temperatures that it experienced in 2012. Still, the water was warmer than its seasonal average, according to NERACOOS buoy data. “Summer surface water temperatures have been near or above the 11 year monthly averages for those locations such as buoy A (in Massachusetts Bay).”

“July appeared to be well above average at some locations such as buoy A (in Massachusetts Bay).” said Tom Shyka, a NERACOOS researcher. “July tended to be well above average at some locations such as buoy A (in Massachusetts Bay).”

According to a study conducted by the American Meteorological Society, the Gulf of Maine experienced a long-term water warming trend from 1880 to 2000. There was an abrupt long-term water warming trend from the American Meteorological Soci-ety’s buoy A (in Massachusetts Bay). “The NERACOOS buoys give us the most information you can get [about temperature changes]. It allows us to see the warming and if it is statistically significant,” Morrison said. “Certainly there’s variability each year but we are seeing that gradual increase.”

One marine organism that cannot handle high surface water tempera-
tures is Calanus finmarchicus, a tiny species of copepod. Warmer surface and intermediate water tempera-
tures influence the life cycle of these planktonic animals which are the preferred food of the endangered North Atlantic right whale. Researchers believe that Calanus finmarchicus will be gone from the Gulf of Maine by 2050 based on projected warmer sea surface temperatures.

Lobsters like environmental stability. They prosper in cool water with high dissolved oxygen and thus during much of the year are found at depths in which those two conditions pre-vail. Morrison will present a paper in October that looks at temperatures at different depths across the Gulf to better understand the changes happen-
ing there. He, too, questions what “normal” is coming to mean in the Gulf of Maine. “If things are always changing then there is no normal. Are things changing so much now [in the Gulf] that we can no longer hold a predictable view of the environ-
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tures influence the life cycle of these planktonic animals which are the preferred food of the endangered North Atlantic right whale. Researchers believe that Calanus finmarchicus will be gone from the Gulf of Maine by 2050 based on projected warmer sea surface temperatures.
Shell disease has been a popular topic in the media recently, accompanied by the usual gruesome photos. But Department of Marine Resources (DMR) lobster biologist Carl Wilson says that what the stories don’t say, is that shell disease isn’t really a disease. “The lesions seen on a lobster with shell disease are caused by bacteria that are actually found on all lobsters,” he said. The lesions affect only the shell, not the animal’s tissues.

So what should you do if a lobster with shell disease comes up in your trap? “Do not destroy the lobster,” said Wilson. “That won’t help anything. Lobsters with visible lesions will molt through it. All but the most severe cases will have a healthy shell after they molt.” Wilson feels there is good communication between the DMR and lobstermen which gives the agency an accurate idea of how many lobsters have been seen with shell disease this year.

Reports of shell disease have reached DMR from Kittery to the Canadian border, but sampling programs have not seen any significant concentrations of lobsters with shell disease. “We are watching it, but want to know what lobstermen are seeing. There are still a lot of unknowns,” Wilson said. “If a lobsterman sees a handful of lobsters with shell disease a day, it’s of note, but not alarming. If he sees two handfuls a day, we want to know.” Wilson said the rise in shell disease sounds like a big increase, but there is in fact a very small percentage of lobsters in Maine with shell disease.

This past May, DMR contracted with the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) to further investigate shell disease. “We send them lobsters with and without shell disease from Casco Bay, Boothbay, and Mount Desert Island.” Wilson said. VIMS professor Jeff Shields receives the live lobsters and runs a number of tests on them to help characterize shell disease. “It is important that the animal is alive when we receive it,” Shields said. “The tissues of animals change rapidly upon death and can make some of our analyses more difficult.”

The first step in analyzing the lobsters is to look over the whole animal and to take measurements and photos. Shields draws the lobster’s blood which is sampled for various bacteria. “Then, the lobster is killed (humanely, Shields added) and dissected. Most of the lobsters from Maine don’t have any issues,” he said. Shields said that previous studies indicate that a certain suite of bacteria are present in lobsters with shell disease.

“It is important that the animal is alive when we receive it,” Shields said. “The tissues of animals change rapidly upon death and can make some of our analyses more difficult.”

“Most of the lobsters that increases shell disease. Shields explained. By analyzing both healthy and infected lobsters, VIMS researchers will be able to provide a baseline for a healthy lobster. “It will provide good reference for the future,” noted Wilson.

To date, researchers have not been able to transmit shell disease from one lobster to another, but they are still not completely sure whether or not shell disease is contagious. “We want to know what is going on with the lobsters that increases shell disease,” said Shields. “We tend to point at temperature, and while that’s important, I don’t think that’s the only thing affecting the lobsters.”

If you do find a lobster with shell disease, you should let DMR know. If the lobster is not legal, do not keep it. Make sure to note the size and condition of the lobster as well as the location, depth, and substrate where it was caught. Lobsters can be dropped off at the DMR lab in Boothbay Harbor or DMR staff can arrange to pick them up. Lobstermen are urged to call Carl Wilson at 207-633-9538 with their observations about shell diseased lobsters they find in their traps.

SO YOU WANT TO KNOW: What do you do with a shell diseased lobster?
INVASIVE MARINE SPECIES POSE SERIOUS PROBLEMS

By Andy O'Brien

This article first appeared in The Free Press in August, 2013. Reprinted with permission.

When Jeremy Miller began monitoring fouling communities along Maine’s coast in the early 2000s, there was not much awareness of the problem posed by marine invasive species, but with warming water temperatures, he says they’re “spreading like wildfire.”

Miller coordinates teams of volunteers for the Marine Invader Monitoring and Information Collaborative (MIMIC), a network of trained citizens, scientists, and state and federal workers who monitor marine invasive species. At a recent workshop held at Maine Sea Grant’s Marine Beaches Conference, Miller took a group down to a marina in South Portland to inspect the fouling communities below the docks.

Fouling communities on Maine docks and piers are home to a range of marine organisms, from small as well as displace native seaweed that has been washed up along beaches in Massachusetts. The red algae was first identified in Japan over 90 years ago, but it spread to Europe in the 1980s, into New England in 2009, and was first spotted off the coast of Maine in 2011. The worst part for beachfront residents is that the plant has a horrendous stench, like rotten eggs, when it rots on the beaches.

“I wake up with nightmares I’m in a sewer system,” one resident of Manomet Beach in Plymouth told the Boston Globe.

Beach towns in Massachusetts have reportedly been exploring a number of options to deal with the problem, including spraying herbicides, burying it, composting it, and pushing it into the ocean. However, Miller says the red algae that has been found in Maine has fortunately shown up in much lighter amounts.

According to Beth Bissone, assistant director for outreach and education at Maine Sea Grant, advocacy groups, researchers and government agencies are currently focused on raising awareness, starting collaborations between various stakeholders, and discussing potential management tools. Although MIMIC does not reach as far as the midcoast, the Gulf of Maine Research Institute’s Vital Signs program has a website to help connect students, citizen scientists, and researchers around a research question relating to all types of invasive species in Maine.

According to the organization, about 60 scientists and species experts, 70 citizen scientist group members, 250 teachers, and thousands of students collaborate to answer the questions. Students and teachers are then encouraged to go out in the field to gather evidence and upload it to professional researchers from across the country, who review the findings and offer their comments. The website pinpoints areas across the state and identifies the invasive pests found there. Last fall, South Portland High School students volunteering with Vital Signs were the first to discover heterosiphonia japonica onshore in Maine.

“The more eyes we have out there on the shoreline, the better because there aren’t enough state agencies or volunteer monitoring groups to be out there all of the time,” said Bissone. “We can identify beaches most likely to be affected and really target management issues there, that will be wonderful.”

During the last legislative session, a bill was passed to create the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC). The MLMC is charged with promoting and marketing Maine lobsters in state, regional, national, and international markets. The MLMC replaces the Maine Lobster Promotion Council, which will be dissolved when the law goes into effect in October 2013.

The Lobster Zone Councils and the Lobster Advisory Council (LAC) play an important role in the creation of the new MLMC, by providing nominations for the nine appointed seats (see below). Each lobster zone council shall prepare a list of up to three nominees from its zone for consideration by the Commissioner to fill the four appointed seats. The LAC will prepare a list of up to five sits to represent lobster dealers and processors and public members. In making the zone council appointments, the Commissioner will select members to ensure a geographic distribution of representation from the zones.

The Commissioner has requested that the zone councils and the Lobster Advisory Council generate a list of names to fill those seats. The list of nominees thus generated will be used by the Commissioner to make his appointments to the MLMC. Individual lobstermen and industry associations should forward nominees through their local zone council.

The individuals selected for inclusion on the Collaborative will be instrumental in shaping the work plan to ensure that the industry sees the greatest return on the investment being made by all license holders. This group needs to hit the ground running in October to make sure that no time is lost in beginning these new efforts.

The new Collaborative will have an eleven-member board of directors, each serving 3-year terms. Nine of the eleven members are appointed by the Commissioner. The representation on the board will include:

Three seats that represent the lobster dealer/processors (List prepared by LAC):

Two of the dealer seats can be owned by managers or officers of business entities operating in the State that hold valid wholesale seafood licenses with lobster permits.

The third dealer seat is one who represents the interests of lobster dealers and processors.

Two seats that are public members (List prepared by LAC):

Two seats that are individuals who are public members with experience in marketing and promotion, retail sales, food service or food science.

Four seats that represent the lobster zone councils (List prepared by Lobster Zone Councils):

The lobster zone council seats will be from a list of up to three nominees prepared by each of the seven lobster zone councils. The names put forward to best represent the harvester seats DO NOT need to be members of the zone council, or even be a lobsterman. The names could include wives, a marketing expert from the area, or anyone that would best represent the harvester seats.

The two remaining seats are the Commissioner’s designees of Marine Resources and Economic and Community Development. The Commissioner strongly urges lobstermen to do your best to consult with industry members and others in your area, and bring your recommendations to the September zone council meetings.

Please contact Sarah Cotnoir with any questions at 624-6956 or sarah.cotnoir@maine.gov.
DMR SCIENTIST RECOGNIZED

Department of Marine Resources scientist Margaret Hunter received the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission’s Annual Award of Excellence in July. Hunter, who has worked for DMR for more than 30 years, was commended for her scientific, technical and advisory contributions to the Commission. Hunter has served on the Commission’s Northern Shrimp Technical Committee for more than a decade. At DMR she has conducted research on northern shrimp, Atlantic herring, sea urchins, groundfish and other species. Since 2000, she has been responsible for the monitoring and assessment of Maine’s sea urchin and northern shrimp fisheries.

PRIVATE DREDGING PROJECT RAISES LOCAL IRE

Southport residents and conservationists lambasted seasonal resident Paul Coulombe’s plans to blast a ledge and dredge a nearby cove to allow his 29-foot yacht access to his home. The Lobster Conservancy. Cowan pointed out that the cove is home to one of the most significant juvenile lobster nurseries on the northern East Coast. Cowan and volunteers have sampled the area for juvenile lobsters for nearly two decades. The application for the project went to DMR in August.

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT COUNCILS TO PROTECT DEEP-WATER CORALS

DEEP-WATER CORALS

The Chairmen of the South Atlantic, Mid-Atlantic, and New England Fisheries Management Councils signed a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in August to coordinate protection of deep sea corals off the east coast of the United States, from Maine to eastern Florida. Over the past three decades, marine researchers have discovered highly diverse deep sea coral communities on the continental shelf and slope off much of the east coast. Most deep sea corals are slow-growing and fragile, making them particularly vulnerable to damage from bottom trawls.

PORTLAND HARBOR DREDGING BEGINS THIS FALL

Dredging of Portland Harbor from Veteran’s Bridge to Bug Light will begin on or about November 1, 2013 and must be conclude no later April 1, 2014. The Portland Harbor Commission is seeking lobstermen to assist with the lobster relocation project during that time period. For more information please contact the Portland Harbormaster Jeff Lück - 772-8121, phm@maine.rr.com

HAMILTON MARINE EXPANDS

HAMILTON MARINE

Hamilton Marine of Searsport has opened a new warehouse/store to service commercial fishermen and boatbuilders who often purchase bulk items in large quantities. The 16,000-square-foot facility is stocked with buoys, rope, netting, trap supplies, totes and structural composites used by fishermen and builders.

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Events Calendar

September 6
Maine Lobster Promotion Council Board, Hallowell, 1 p.m.

September 6-8
Eastport Pirate Festival. FMI: (207) 853-4343; (207) 773-7000.

September 8
Lobster Boat Race, Eastport.

September 10
MLA Directors Meeting, Darby’s Restaurant, Belfast. 5 p.m. FMI: 207-967-4555.

September 13
Comments Due of Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Whale Rules. FMI: Kate Swails 978–282–8482, Kate.Swails@noaa.gov

September 16
Comments due on Proposed Rule for whale rules. FMI: Kate Swails 978–282–8482, Kate.Swails@noaa.gov

September 23-26
OCEANS 2013: An Ocean In Common conference, San Diego, CA.

MLA RECEIVES NAVIGATOR GRANT

Starting October 1, 2013, Americans will be able to choose new health insurance options through a Health Insurance Marketplace. Some states are setting up a state-based Marketplace; Maine will have a federally-facilitated Marketplace. Two businesses will offer health insurance planes within Maine’s Health Insurance Marketplace: Anthem Blue Cross and Maine Community Health Options, a non-profit health insurance cooperative.

In August, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) awarded $67 million in Navigator Cooperative Agreements to 105 entities across the country to serve as educational resources for those who want assistance in shopping for and enrolling in plans through the Health Insurance Marketplace beginning this fall.

In Maine, the Maine Lobstermen’s Association (MLA), in cooperation with the Fishing Partnership Health Plan (FPHP) operated by the Massachusetts Fishermen’s Partnership and Western Maine Community Action, received a Navigator Award. The MLA will work with FPHP to help lobstermen understand their health insurance options. Western Maine Community Action, Inc. will create a network of eight offices in Maine that will provide education, outreach and enrollment assistance to uninsured and under-insured individuals in Maine.

“It’s quite an honor to be selected as a Navigator,” said Patrice McCarron, executive director of the MLA. “It’s incredibly important that lobstermen know about the insurance programs available to them, the financial incentives offered to make that insurance affordable, and the penalties if they choose not to purchase insurance. We’re looking forward to starting work this month.”

April Gilmore, who has been involved in the Trade Adjustment and Assistance program for lobstermen, will be the MLA’s liaison for this new program.

The role of Navigator organizations is to help consumers prepare electronic and paper applications to establish eligibility and enroll in health coverage through the Marketplace and potentially qualify for an insurance affordability program. They also will raise awareness about the state’s Health Insurance Marketplace, and refer consumers to consumer assistance programs when necessary.

LOBSTER ZONE COUNCILS TO MEET, SUGGEST MARKETING BOARD MEMBERS

Maine’s seven lobster zone councils will be holding their meetings in September. On the agenda of each is creating a list of candidates to serve on the new Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative. The final board members will be selected by DMR commissioner Patrick Keliher. All of the meetings are scheduled for 6 p.m.

Tuesday, September 17
Zone D Rockland Ferry Terminal

Wednesday, September 18
Zone F Log Cabin, 196 Main Street, Yarmouth

Tuesday, September 24
Zone A Washington Academy-Library, East Machias

Wednesday, September 25
Zone B Mount Desert Island High School-Library, Bar Harbor

Thursday, September 26
Zone C Deer Isle-Stonington High School-Cafeteria, Deer Isle

VIDEO CONFERENCING available with North Haven Community School and Vinalhaven School

Monday, September 30
Zone G Kennebunk Town Hall-Room 300, Kennebunk

Tuesday, October 1
Zone E Lincoln County Communications Center, Wiscasset

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MAINE LOBSTERMEN'S COMMUNITY ALLIANCE:
Acoustic herring survey enters second year

By Sarah Paquette

This fall, the Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance (MLCA) will manage the second year of a pilot inshore herring acoustic survey of the inshore herring population with the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI).

The project began last fall with ten lobster boats spread along Maine’s coast conducting weekly acoustic surveys of Atlantic herring populations found in Gulf of Maine near shore waters. Atlantic herring are at the center of the Gulf of Maine’s ecological and economic food webs. They are the dominant forage fish in the region and account for nearly three-quarters of the bait used by Maine’s lobster industry. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has not surveyed inshore herring populations for many years. Without accurate knowledge about inshore abundance, scientists cannot accurately assess overall herring stock health.

The data gathered through this survey could influence future herring stock assessments and hence, overall quota allocations.

For three months, the participants followed a pre-determined track during overnight hours once a week, collecting data on herring stocks for an eight-hour period. The tracks generally ran from close to shore out to the 50-fathom mark. A total of 69 individual surveys were completed. Each transect covered 60 miles, totaling 4,140 miles covered during those three months.

This year, the survey will again run from September through November with the same ten lobstermen making only three trips each along the tracks they ran last year.

Curt Brown, a research technician at the GMRI and a southern Maine lobsterman, said there was so much data collected last year that it has taken most of the spring and summer to analyze it. “Installing and operating sophisticated equipment on commercial vessels creates many technical challenges,” said Adam Baukus, research associate at GMRI. Collecting and analyzing that data presents another set of challenges, he explained. “GMRI is taking every step possible to ensure the quality of the data.”

Before the survey began last year, GMRI personnel visited each boat to calibrate the Simrad echosounders to make sure each instrument was working the same way. “We can compare and combine the data from one boat to the next and look for any patterns and trends in the fish schools,” Baukus said. Based on last year’s performance, the echosounders have been further calibrated to improve the data.

GMRI is also working with acoustic experts from NOAA to make sure they are using the best methods to analyze the data collected by the ten lobstermen. “This not only helps us, but will allow us to directly compare our survey data to the NMFS acoustic surveys,” explained Baukus.

“Data analysis is tedious and slow and we are all eager for results,” he said. “But with this information affecting so many stakeholders in the region, we are taking the time necessary to be thorough and precise.”

Restrictions on herring landings have an immediate impact on lobstermen. NOAA photo.

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

Thank you!

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