LANDINGS
News & Views from Maine's Lobstering Community
September 2018 | Vol. 26, No. 9

400-HUNDRED-YEAR TRADITION UNDER THREAT IN PORTLAND

By Melissa Waterman

Would you like to live next to a pig farm? Or a rock and gravel pit? Probably not — the smell or the noise would make your quality of life poor. That’s why municipalities use zoning districts, to determine the kinds of uses to which properties within a district can be put. It allows residential, industrial, and commercial uses to co-exist with others of their own kind, making all at least theoretically happy.

What happens, however, if multiple types of uses want to exist in the same zone? Then a town must decide what the preferred use for that zone should be through its zoning regulations. Portland made that decision about its Waterfront Central Zone, a mile-long section of the city bordered by Commercial Street and the harbor, back in 1987. It was conversion of Chandler’s Wharf’s into residential condominiums that lead to a citizen’s referendum asking Portland residents if they wanted to ensure that marine-related businesses were given preference in that zone. The answer was a resounding “Yes.”

Thirty years later, that designation has come under threat. New, large-scale residential and retail projects have been proposed that could alter the character of Portland’s waterfront forever. And the fishermen who have long called the waterfront home fear that they will be displaced for good.

The Waterfront Central Zone is home to the Portland Fish Pier, 14 private piers, the U.S. Coast Guard, the Gulf of Maine Research Institute, the majority of the city’s commercial fishing fleet, the tourist excursion vessel fleet, and multiple marine and non-marine businesses. The Waterfront Central Zone regulations protect marine businesses, restricting non-marine-related businesses to the upper floors of buildings along Commercial Street.

In 2009, citing a need for increased revenues, eleven commercial pier owners in the zone asked the city to relax restrictions on development in order to increase income and maintain pier infrastructure. In 2011, the Portland City Council approved changes to the regulations, permitting expanded non-marine uses.

One of the key requirements of the amended regulations is that at least 55% of ground-floor space be reserved for marine uses for properties on the water side of Commercial Street. Forty-five percent of a building’s ground floor could have non-marine tenants, but only after the space was marketed to marine businesses for at least 60 days at a reasonable rate. Developers had to invest

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BAIT DEALERS NERVOUS ABOUT HERRING CUTS

By Melissa Waterman

What do you do if your business sells bait to lobstermen and suddenly your highest volume product — fresh herring — is in short supply? You adapt.

In recent years Maine bait dealers have faced sharp declines in the volume of herring landed due to a combination of reduced quotas and under-harvesting of the offshore quota, putting a kink in how they managed their businesses. In 2019 they will encounter the most significant drop in herring supply to date.

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When June comes around the summer seems endless, full of long days, clear nights and the roar of the annual Lobster Boat Races. Then, in the blink of an eye, you turn your head and the swamp maples are showing tinges of red, the ospreys have left the coast and school children are waiting along the roadways for the bus.

It’s September and while the days are getting slightly cooler, the Maine lobster season is in full swing. Lobstermen are hauling in their catches at a breakneck pace while worrying about a fundamental element of their business: bait.

As we highlight in this issue of Landings, the availability of fresh herring, both for the remainder of this year and throughout next year, continues to be a cause of concern among lobstermen and bait dealers. The quota for herring will be reduced sharply in 2019, causing ripples throughout bait markets. Maine bait dealers have faced tightened availability in previous years, resulting in a shift to “hard,” meaning frozen, species such as rockfish. But, as one dealer noted, a lack of 57 million pounds of fresh herring next year is not something that can be made up easily. Lobstermen would be wise to consider steps to mitigate the coming scarcity.

As if worries about bait weren’t enough, Portland lobstermen also have to face the possibility of losing the most basic of a fisherman’s needs, access to the water. The city of Portland is considering giving a variance to Bateman Associates, a development firm that plans to construct a hotel, retail and office complex at the base of Commercial Street. The property falls in the Waterfront Central Zone, where non-marine dependent uses are restricted. Additional projects along the street have prompted concerns among fishermen, who have seen their ability to park their trucks or store their gear diminish steadily in recent years.

Unlike last summer, thus far no North Atlantic right whales have been reported dead in U.S. or Canadian waters. The measures taken in Canada to protect those whales that migrate to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, including fishing closures and new regulations regarding gear, appear to have been successful. In Maine, lobstermen already have fished for many years under a suite of regulations designed to prevent entanglement with the endangered right whales. Jarod Bray of Matinicus is a young lobsterman who has always recognized one day while in Gloucester that the wooden lathes, time they could be out fishing. In 1979, James Knott Sr., who served 50 years as a member of the board of the Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance (MLCA), passed away after a long battle with cancer. Knott was a key figure in the development of the organization and a strong advocate for the industry. He was instrumental in helping to guide the MLCA through its early years, during which time the organization faced numerous challenges. Under Knott’s leadership, the MLCA established a strong foundation that has allowed it to continue to evolve and thrive to this day.

MLCAlliance is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization, established in 2010, which achieves its charitable mission through programs in education, research and charity.
In the early 1980’s I was an Air Force pilot flying tactical airlift and Special Operations missions from a base in Germany. One of these sent my crew and me to Kenya doing a variety of flights and missions. One day we were assigned to resupply a forward-deployed Kenyan Army unit.

On a normal airdrop mission in Germany, crews were given detailed information about the drop zone and weather, comprehensive maps of the low-level approach route, a weapons brief, radio codes for the mission, and most importantly, box lunches. In Africa, there was none of this information, and at that time there were no cell phones to Google anything. The only map we could find was one I picked up from the rental car outlet at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi. We had a scheduled “time over target” so off we went. We followed the map as best we could and got to the drop zone. We were very near the Ugandan border when, careful not to stray over it, we slowed down, opened the back doors, and dropped the food and ammunition to the Kenyans on the ground. They radioed that they got the cargo and so we flew back to Nairobi.

The point of the story is that we did not have great data. We did not have the normal information, but we flew anyway to get the load to the folks who needed it. Our only measures of success were the radio call from the ground saying they got the load and the fact that we landed safely back at the airport.

Similarly, when the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC) started, we looked for the “normal” information most branding efforts have when they develop a strategy. There was none. We didn’t have any information about lobster sales volume, locations, products. We didn’t know specifically who the consumers of lobster were. Because the lobster supply chain is complex and opaque and there is a culture of silence in the industry, that information just wasn’t available.

Together with our partner Weber Shandwick, we set out to see what information was available to us. We found that Maine lobstermen catch 70% of all landed lobster between the 4th of July and the 1st of November. We also noted that prices throughout the supply chain, as best we could tell, were the lowest during those times of high volume (when supply is high, the price is under the most pressure). We got information from the National Restaurant Association (NRA) which showed that about 80% of all seafood consumed in the U.S. is eaten in a restaurant. From that we guessed that it was an even higher percentage for lobster since many find it challenging to prepare.

We also learned from the NRA that the four drivers that induce chefs to include a seafood item on the menu were seasonality, sustainability, the boat-to-table-story, and culinary versatility. We found in a survey of upscale casual restaurants that “Maine lobster” was specified on only 4% of menus. In short, we had just enough information — like that car rental map I found at the airport in Nairobi — to find the target and take off.

The one hard piece of information the MLMC did have was its budget. The board knew that $2.2 million, while a lot of money, wasn’t much for a broad campaign to market a consumer product. We decided that whatever we did, our marketing actions needed to be hyper-focused so that the money we spent would have the biggest impact.

In 2015, the board decided that the best way to create demand for Maine lobster was to mount a public relations campaign in order to get more people interested in the product. We decided to focus on influential chefs and food media — not to drive sales directly, but to drive awareness and stories in the media. The assumption was that if more people read about Maine lobster and saw stories that answered questions about seasonality, sustainability, boat-to-table connections and culinary versatility, then more chefs would put it on their menus and more people would order it and eat it.

To gauge success, the board spent many hours discussing how to measure... Continued on page 4
RETIRING MLA BOARD MEMBERS LEAVE STRONG LEGACY

Lobsters have the ability to replicate their cells nearly infinitely without damage or deterioration. That means a healthy lobster, if it avoids a trap or predators, can live to a really, really old age. Unlike lobsters, members of the Maine Lobstermen’s Association board of directors do not last forever. During the past few years, several people from different parts of the coast together. “It’s a great group of people with great representation. All of us were there because we wanted to be. If we didn’t, we wouldn’t put it in the time.” Gamage devoted his time to numerous activities that benefited the lobster and the shrimp fisheries, including serving on the shrimp advisory committee for the ASMFC and attending Large Whale Take Reduction Team meetings. He received the MLA’s Golden V-notch Award in 2005 for his years of service to the lobster fishery. “If anyone calls me up to ask about what is going on, I always make time to answer their questions and let them know what is happening. I don’t think I’m only sharing what I know. I would never, ever do anything to hurt the lobster fishery in Maine. Everything I do is what I feel is best for the industry,” he said.

JAY SMITH

Jay Smith of Nobleboro served on the board from 1990 to 2016. During the 1990s, the board faced a lot of controversy about trap limits, limiting licenses, and changes to the gauge size. Smith believed that more people should be involved in the decision-making process of lobster management and the best way to do that was to join the MLA. “When people see what’s going on with the industry and see what the MLA has done for us, they should see how beneficial becoming an MLA member is,” he said. “I’ve seen a lot of good board members over the years,” Smith said. “They take their responsibilities seriously.”

ELLIOIT THOMAS

Elliott Thomas of Yarmouth served on the board since 2007, stepping down in 2016. “The best part about attending all the MLA meetings was that you started to develop friendships up and down the coast and to understand how things work in different ports,” said Thomas. Thomas was also active in numerous other groups and projects, including the eMolt study of water temperature changes conducted by Jim Manning at the Northeast Fisheries Science Center. He was proud of the service the MLA provided to the lobstering industry. “It would be good to have more people join the MLA. I don’t have any kids in the fishery, no grandkids, but I still want to see it last and see people make a living fishing. MLA is the way to ensure that happens.”

JACK YOUNG

Jack Young, a fourth-generation Vinalhaven lobsterman, was a board member from 1988 to 2017. Ensuring a healthy industry for the next generation was an important issue to Young during his tenure. “We need to work together to make sure the younger generation has the skills and knowledge and ability to enter the industry,” he said. People often came to him with questions about information they’d heard second-hand wanting to know what was really going on with the MLA and the industry, and Young was happy to fill them in. “Not everyone agreed with the decisions we made, but if people want to stay in business in the future they should stand behind the MLA,” said Young.

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Over time, you’ve seen the results — more than 3.2 billion impressions in the U.S. from people who have had an opportunity to see a story about Maine lobster and lobstermen in newspapers, via on-line outlets, and on traditional TV. We have reached hundreds of millions more with our social media efforts and still more at our events and with our videos.

It would have been great to have started out with a really good map, impeccable data, and a few box lunches. Yet it is a measure of the skill and expertise of our partner Weber Shandwick coupled with the courage of the MLMC board to execute our plan without deviation that we have reached so many people with the story of Maine lobster in such a short time. Our Maine lobster marketing experiment has been going for five years now, three of those at our fully-funded budget of $2.2 million. It is time for us to re-view where we’ve been and map out the strategy for the next several years. At the MLMC’s board meeting this month, we will discuss these issues again. The MLMC meetings are open to the public. We welcome anyone who is interested and would like to understand more about where we are headed.

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ARNIE GAMAGE

South Bristol lobstersman Arnie Gamage served on the MLA board from 1984 to 2018. He served as the MLA’s Secretary/Treasurer and one of its only shrimp fishery and can make a decent living. It’s time for the next generation to step up. “I want to make sure it’s good for younger guys the way it has been for me.” Gamage devoted his time to numerous activities that benefited the lobster and the shrimp fisheries, including serving on the shrimp advisory committee for the ASMFC and attending Large Whale Take Reduction Team meetings. He received the MLA’s Golden V-notch Award in 2005 for his years of service to the lobster fishery. “If anyone calls me up to ask about what is going on, I always make time to answer their questions and let them know what is happening. I don’t think I’m only sharing what I know. I would never, ever do anything to hurt the lobster fishery in Maine. Everything I do is what I feel is best for the industry,” he said.

Dwight Carver served on the MLA board from 1996 to 2017. Carver comes from a long line of Beals Island fishermen. During his fishing career he has been involved in nearly all Maine’s many fisheries, from groundfishing to scalloping. His father was a founding member of the MLA. “I don’t remember why they asked me to join [the MLA Board], but I did because I was interested in the business,” Carver said. “I’m very proud of the MLA. The organization is on top of things and it has more clout than ever. If not for the MLA, fishing would be difficult. The industry has been good to me, so I want to pay it back.” Currently Dwight serves as vice-chair of the Zone A lobster council, he is on the board of the Maine Center for Coastal Fisheries and represents Maine on the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team.

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people to see the fishing industry but they don't necessarily want to coexist with it," said Monique Coombs, director of marine programs at the Maine Coast Fishermen's Association. "People have a liking for the authentic but that's exactly what Portland will lose as it moves forward."

Maine's Shoreland Zoning Act prohibits certain activities in the coastal zone (250 feet from the high-water mark) Although the law states that its purpose is, among other things, to conserve public access to the water and protect commercial fishing and the maritime industry, its regulations are primarily directed at ensuring the quality of adjacent waters and conserving shore cover.

"The state can't really protect 'authenticity,'" Coombs continued. "It really isn't something you can measure. It comes from the culture of fishing. We must recognize the value of fishermen."

"You can't have mixed use," Turner said. "It just doesn't work. The developers can pay so much money for the property and we can't. You know the fish are out there. The haddock quota has gone up. Maybe when the fish come back, there will be no infrastructure here to support it."

Editor's note: We reached out to the Portland Planning Department for comment for this story but did not receive a response by press time.
TO A YOUNG LOBSTERMAN, CHANGING FISHERY IS JUST A FACT OF LIFE
By Melissa Waterman

Jarod Bray, 34, is a matter-of-fact man. He and his father, Joe Bray, fish the waters around Matinicus Island, as both his grandfathers did before him. He began lobstering when he was 16 and slowly built up his business, buying increasingly larger boats until he was able to purchase his current 42-foot Young Brothers boat Volition. He fishes hard, staying inshore in the summer and moving offshore in the fall and winter months. Bray treats the regulations imposed on Maine lobstermen to protect North Atlantic right whales as he does his cystic fibrosis diagnosis: it's just a fact of life.

"The whale regulations are not that bad. It's a cost of doing business. When I overhaul my gear I look at everything, check out the red marks on the lines," he said. When the requirement was put in place that most Maine lobstermen switch out the floating line used between traps on the bottom for sinking groundline Bray and others had to swallow that expense and that, said Bray, "cost quite a bit! But now I'm all set up so it's not so hard." He finds that re-marking his rope with the mandatory red marks is more of a nuisance than an expense. "I've spray-painted them, inserted red twine, and they always wear out. It's just a yearly thing I have to do to.

Bray isn't afraid to do things differently. When he was 25 he and his father set up a business based on "green" principles of lobstering. Eco-Lobster Catch promised its customers that the lobsters they purchased would be caught in an environmentally sound manner. Bray's boat was powered with biodiesel, the gear oil was biodegradable, packaging was compostable or biodegradable and Bray made it himself.

Years later, he is still aware of the environment in which he works and the perilous state of North Atlantic right whales. "I don't want to kill off a species. No one does. We need to figure out where these whales are travelling and when," Bray said. He noted that Canadian agencies have made a successful effort to ensure that the whales, which now frequent the Gulf of St. Lawrence in the summer, have not become entangled in lobster or snow crab gear this year. The Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans instituted mandatory temporary fishing closures when one or more right whales were sighted in the region, causing grumbling among New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island fishermen but so far also preventing any whale deaths. "I'd really like to see some data on where and when these whales are around," Bray said. "Blanket regulations just don't make sense.

Bray credits his father for helping him learn the skills necessary to become a successful lobsterman yet admits that he and his father have different styles of fishing. "My dad is not super competitive. I am pretty competitive but not overboard. He taught me one thing that I took to heart: it's not how much money you make, it's how much money you save.'

Bray knows that his business as a lobsterman will undoubtedly change as the years go by, but it's still one that he plans to pursue for as long as he can. The fact that he has cystic fibrosis doesn't dampen his enthusiasm for fishing. Each day he performs vibration therapy on himself to loosen the mucus that could suffocate his lungs. "I just have to get up a little earlier in the morning to do the treatment. It's OK for right now. Some people have it so much worse than I do," he said.

IF YOU BUILD IT, THE ALEWIVES WILL COME
By Mike Thalhauser, Science and Leadership Advisor, Maine Center for Coastal Fisheries

You have probably noticed that in the springtime newspapers and other publications are peppered with stories about millions of small silvery fish returning to rivers and lakes from the open ocean. These fish are called alewives, and this annual event has taken place in coastal communities since colonization, and of course long before. But in an increasing number of towns, these are "new" fish runs.

Alewives are in ponds and streams they haven't been in for decades, thanks to construction of fish passages, mostly associated with dams and culverts that had cut off these seasonal visitors from their spawning habitat. While hundreds of thousands, even millions, of fish showing up out of the blue and landing smack dab in a fishing community is a spectacle in itself, there's a great deal more to these fish and their annual migration.

So what is it that alewives mean to Maine and its communities? Some older residents can remember streams running black with more fish than water. While we aren't there yet, the situation along the coast is definitely changing. The most significant example lies within the Penobscot River, where millions of dollars have been spent removing dams, restocking fish, and ultimately unlocking 1,000 acres of potential spawning habitat.

Here's the other remarkable thing about alewives: If you build a fishway (or rip a down a dam), they will come. About 140,000 fish were reintroduced to ponds and lakes above these newly opened fishways in the Penobscot River, and within three to four years, 2.17 million of the small silvery fish were back. And that's not even close to the Penobscot's full potential, which is estimated at nearly 20 million fish. Those alewives are food for every predator imaginable, from fish and birds to humans.

The Penobscot River is just one of Maine's many rivers connecting upland headwaters with the Gulf of Maine. Even the smaller ponds can support nearly 500,000 breeding adults which come back each year. The potential is huge. The bad news is that dams and culverts are just as prevalent in the smallest streams leading to the smallest ponds. The amazing ability of these fish to rebound, however, makes towns enthusiastic about restoring passage for the alewives. Maine's coastal culture is tied to these fish, which jumpstart the food chain, serve as bait for other commercial fisheries, and provide economic opportunity for small towns.

The Maine Center for Coastal Fisheries recognizes that communities which feel connected to alewives also have little power to affect fish management. So coalitions among towns are forming to help them make their voices heard at the state and federal levels. Alewives are one of only two marine species that towns have the right to manage locally in cooperation with the Department of Marine Resources (the other is softshell clams).

If a town works to restore fishways, it must also spend eight to ten years prov-
It's hard to believe that another summer has come and gone. With the month of September comes long days on the water for lobstermen and the transition into a very busy season for the MLA.

We say good-bye this month to our health insurance Navigator Bridget Thornton. Bridget has worked with many lobstermen and their families over the past year helping them in the complex world of health insurance – answering questions, solving issues and assisting with enrollments. The MLA has been extremely fortunate to have had a health insurance Navigator on staff for the past five years. Due to deep financial cuts in support of the Health Insurance Marketplace by the current Administration, the MLA sadly lost its Navigator funding in July. Health insurance is one of those things that is extremely important if you become sick or injured, yet easy to ignore until you actually need it. The MLA is proud to have helped so many lobstering families understand their health insurance options so they could make the best choice for their family.

Health insurance is one of those things that is extremely important if you become sick or injured, yet easy to ignore until you actually need it. The MLA is proud to have helped so many lobstering families understand their health insurance options so they could make the best choice for their family. MLA will continue to monitor changes in the Health Insurance Marketplace and will keep lobstermen informed of any resources that become available to assist our industry with health insurance moving forward. In the meantime, we wish Bridget all the best in her future endeavors and will truly miss her!

In the fall, everyone seems to get busy, not just lobstermen. The Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative Board will hold a strategic planning session in mid-September to review its past efforts and strategize on devising goals and tactics to promote Maine lobster during the next five years. This is an important next step for the Collaborative to ensure that future marketing efforts are as effective as possible given the unknowns caused by the rapidly changing ocean environment and the uncertainty in domestic and global markets created by a volatile political landscape.

Later in the month, the New England Fishery Management Council will meet in Plymouth, Massachusetts to discuss changes to the herring management plan proposed through Amendment 8. Based on the results of the 2018 herring stock assessment, the 2019 herring quota will be reduced to at least 28,900 metric tons. Through Amendment 8, however, fishery managers are considering changes to how Atlantic herring is managed which could lead to deeper, long-term reductions in the quota. Following the Council meeting, the lobster industry will finally know with certainty what we will be facing for the 2019 herring quota.

In October, the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team (TRT) will meet in Providence, Rhode Island. In preparation for the meeting, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) will release a draft Biological Opinion determining if the operation of the northeast lobster fishery and other fixed gear fisheries jeopardize the recovery of the right whale. With these findings, TRT members will be asked to submit draft proposals to modify the whale plan to further reduce the risk of serious injury and mortality from entanglement.

According to NMFS, the “goal for the October meeting is to get clear guidance from the Team on which proposals are most promising toward our goal of reducing the impacts of U.S. fixed gear fisheries on large whales. The Team will select options that warrant further analysis by NMFS... Our intention is not to identify a “winning” proposal in October. Rather, it is to thoughtfully consider a range of possible proposals and identify promising options that warrant further evaluation and consideration by the Team either as stand-alone recommendations or as elements of a package of recommended actions.”

NMFS plans to convene a follow-up meeting in February or March, 2019, to review and discuss these analyses and to work toward improved management. Following the October TRT meeting, we will have a much stronger sense of what our industry is facing on the whale front. The MLA is deeply involved in the TRT process and will keep the industry updated as this process unfolds.

As if that is not enough, let’s not forget that November will bring big changes for Maine when the state elects a new Governor and state Legislature. The MLA is partnering with several other fishing groups to host the Seafood Industry Gubernatorial Forum on October 4 at 5 p.m. at the Strand Theatre in Rockland. Obviously, the lobster industry has a lot at stake right now and will look for strong leadership and support from Maine’s newly elected officials.

It may feel at times that we are like a gerbil running endlessly around in its cage and getting nowhere. But the fact is that the MLA is at the table ensuring that the practical, down-to-earth perspective of Maine lobstermen is front and center as these momentous issues unfold.

Though we often talk about the same topics time after time — whale protections, bait allocations, government regulations of all types and flavors — the MLA continues to work tirelessly to ensure that Maine’s lobster industry continues to be strong and healthy for future generations. Thankfully the MLA has a truly dedicated board of directors, many of whom have joined in just the past few years. These young lobstermen bring their vigor to our fight.

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In the meantime, we wish Bridget all the best in her future endeavors and will truly miss her!

In the fall, everyone seems to get busy, not just lobstermen. The Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative Board will hold a strategic planning session in mid-September to review its past efforts and strategize on devising goals and tactics to promote Maine lobster during the next five years. This is an important next step for the Collaborative to ensure that future marketing efforts are as effective as possible given the unknowns caused by the rapidly changing ocean environment and the uncertainty in domestic and global markets created by a volatile political landscape.

Later in the month, the New England Fishery Management Council will meet in Plymouth, Massachusetts to discuss changes to the herring management plan proposed through Amendment 8. Based on the results of the 2018 herring stock assessment, the 2019 herring quota will be reduced to at least 28,900 metric tons. Through Amendment 8, however, fishery managers are considering changes to how Atlantic herring is managed which could lead to deeper, long-term reductions in the quota. Following the Council meeting, the lobster industry will finally know with certainty what we will be facing for the 2019 herring quota.

In October, the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team (TRT) will meet in Providence, Rhode Island. In preparation for the meeting, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) will release a draft Biological Opinion determining if the operation of the northeast lobster fishery and other fixed gear fisheries jeopardize the recovery of the right whale. With these findings, TRT members will be asked to submit draft proposals to modify the whale plan to further reduce the risk of serious injury and mortality from entanglement.

According to NMFS, the “goal for the October meeting is to get clear guidance from the Team on which proposals are most promising toward our goal of reducing the impacts of U.S. fixed gear fisheries on large whales. The Team will select options that warrant further analysis by NMFS... Our intention is not to identify a “winning” proposal in October. Rather, it is to thoughtfully consider a range of possible proposals and identify promising options that warrant further evaluation and consideration by the Team either as stand-alone recommendations or as elements of a package of recommended actions.”

NMFS plans to convene a follow-up meeting in February or March, 2019, to review and discuss these analyses and to work toward improved management. Following the October TRT meeting, we will have a much stronger sense of what our industry is facing on the whale front. The MLA is deeply involved in the TRT process and will keep the industry updated as this process unfolds.

As if that is not enough, let’s not forget that November will bring big changes for Maine when the state elects a new Governor and state Legislature. The MLA is partnering with several other fishing groups to host the Seafood Industry Gubernatorial Forum on October 4 at 5 p.m. at the Strand Theatre in Rockland. Obviously, the lobster industry has a lot at stake right now and will look for strong leadership and support from Maine’s newly elected officials.

It may feel at times that we are like a gerbil running endlessly around in its cage and getting nowhere. But the fact is that the MLA is at the table ensuring that the practical, down-to-earth perspective of Maine lobstermen is front and center as these momentous issues unfold.

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As always, stay safe on the water.
MAINE LOBSTERMEN’S ASSOCIATION NEWS

It’s MLA membership renewal time! If you care about whales, bait or the future of the Maine lobster industry, please support the MLA. The MLA membership campaign is on, and we need your support more than ever to keep ahead of the serious issues that threaten our industry. The MLA is the only industry organization with the knowledge and experience to effectively advocate for Maine lobstermen on these important issues. Call the office at 907-4555 or join online at www.mainelobstermen.org. Don’t wait — join the MLA today!

MLA Navigator Program to End — MLA learned that funding to support Maine’s health insurance Navigators has been dramatically cut. As a result, the MLA will not be able to offer lobstermen support in finding health insurance plans and enrolling in health insurance through the Health Insurance Marketplace. MLAs Navigator support will end on August 31.

Seafood Industry Gubernatorial Forum October 4 in Rockland — the MLA is partnering with Maine Coast Fishermen’s Association and several other industry groups to sponsor a forum with the candidates running for Governor. Shawn Moody, Janet Mills, Alan Caron and Terry Hayes have been invited to attend. Candidates will respond to questions regarding issues important to Maine’s seafood industry. The event is free and open to the public on October 4 from 5 to 7pm at the Strand Theatre in Rockland. Please RSVP if you plan to attend. FMI: www.mainecoastfishermen.org.

COMMISSIONER KELIHER’S REMARKS ON ZONE B LOBSTER TRAWL LIMIT RULES

“...The Maine Department of Marine Resources has adopted the rule proposed by the Zone B Council titled Chapter 25.04 Lobster Trawl Limits which limits the area of lobster trawling to a maximum of five within the waters of Zone B from the six-mile line to the Loran-C 25675 line. The rule becomes effective on October 1, 2018, to allow fishermen time to modify their gear in compliance with the rule.

Unlike most rule-making, this rule was not done for reasons of resource management. Unfortunately, it had the effect of creating conflict between fishermen, both within and outside of Zone B. Because of this conflict, this rule was one of the more difficult decisions that I have made as Commissioner. I attended the public hearing, and understood and appreciated the arguments made by both sides regarding how and why they fish the way they do. I also gave a lot of thought to the impacts this rule would have on fishermen who use that area, both positive and negative.

The standard in the law for the adoption of rules proposed by Zone Councils is: to a Board in order to improve collaboration with the New England Fishery Management Council. If the Section became a Board, NOAA Fisheries, US Fish and Wildlife, and the NEFMC could have a seat. Ultimately, the Section recommended the Policy Board change the Atlantic Herring Section to a Management Board, and invite NEFMC to have a voting seat. This recommendation is contingent upon NEFMC adding an ASMFC seat to its Herring Plan Development Team and Herring Committee. Finally, the Section approved Beth Casoni and Gerry O’Neill to the Atlantic Herring Advisory Panel.

Atlantic Menhaden — The Atlantic Menhaden Board met to consider a postponed motion from its May 2018 meeting to find the Commonwealth of Virginia out of compliance for not fully implementing and enforcing the mandatory provisions of Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan. Specifically, the Commonwealth has not established the reduced Chesapeake Bay reduction fishery harvest cap of 51,000 metric tons. After extensive deliberations, and with the understanding that the Cap is unlikely to be exceeded in 2018, the board decided to further postpone the motion to its February 2019 meeting to allow the Commonwealth legislature an opportunity to implement the Cap when it reenacts in January.

NOAA FISHERIES REDUCES 2018 ATLANTIC HERRING CATCH LIMITS

NOAA Fisheries reduced the sub-annual catch limits (ACL) for the four Atlantic Herring Management Areas for the rest of 2018 based on an updated stock assessment and a recommendation from the New England Fishery Management Council. NOAA reduced the ACL to 49,900 mt, which is 3,775 mt below the Council’s recommendation. NOAA expects this reduction to reduce the probability of overfishing in 2018, increase the estimated herring biomass in 2019-2021, and provide for greater accountability. The Management Areas will close when 92-percent of the sub-ACL is projected to be harvested.

Q. Why is NOAA Fisheries taking this action?
A. The 2018 stock assessment concluded that the Atlantic herring stock is in decline due to poor recruitment into the population and projected that large cuts in the 2019-2021 ACL reductions, the Council recommended we cap the 2018 Atlantic herring harvest.
The ASMFC Atlantic Herring Section from Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts agreed to maintain current effort controls for the Area 1A herring fishery. These effort controls are projected to extend the Trimester 2 fishery through the middle of September. Landings will be monitored closely, and the fishery will be adjusted to zero landing days when the trimester’s quota is projected to be reached.

NOAA Fisheries in-season quota adjustment for the 2018 herring fishing reduced the Area 1A sub-anual catch limit (ACL) to 27,743 metric tons (mt) after removal of the 295 MT fixed gear set-aside. The Section allocated 72.8% of the sub-ACL to Trimester 2 and 27.2% to Trimester 3. After incorporating the 8% buffer (Area 1A closes at 92% of the sub-ACL), the seasonal quotas are 18,581 mt for Trimester 2 and 6,942 mt for Trimester 3.

**Area 1A Days Out and Weekly Landing Limits (Trimester 2)**

- Area 1A vessels with a herring Category A permit may land herring five (5) consecutive days a week, with one landing per 24 hour period. Landings in Maine begin on Sunday of each week at 6:00 p.m.
- Small mesh bottom trawl vessels with a herring Category C or D permit may land herring seven (7) consecutive days a week.
- Vessels with a herring Category A permit may harvest up to 450,000 lbs (166 trucks) per harvester vessel, per week.
- 160,000 lbs (4 trucks) out of the 450,000 lbs weekly limit can be transferred to a carrier vessel.

**Area 1A At-Sea Transfer and Carrier Restrictions for herring category A permits and carrier vessels**

- A harvester vessel may transfer herring at sea to another catcher vessel.
- A harvester vessel is limited to making at-sea transfers to only one carrier vessel per week.
- Carrier vessels are limited to receiving at-sea transfers from one catcher vessel per week and can land once per 24 hour period.

**ASMFC AREA 1A HERRING UPDATE**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Cumulative Catch YTD</th>
<th>Original Quota 2018</th>
<th>REVISED 2018 Quota</th>
<th>% Revised 2018 Quota</th>
<th>2017 landings as of 8/24</th>
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<td>43,763</td>
<td>11,318</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25,050</td>
<td>100,843*</td>
<td>49,900</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>25,058</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Quota June 1 thru Sept 30 ~18,581; Oct 1 thru Dec 31 ~6,942

Q. Why did NOAA reduce the sub-ACLs below the New England Council’s recommendations?

A. The Council’s recommendation was intended to mitigate the impacts of estimated 2019 reductions on the herring industry. NOAA Fisheries agrees with the Council’s intent to reduce these impacts but felt that further reductions were necessary to lessen the risk of overfishing in 2018. The stock assessment projected that the Council’s recommended level of catch was likely to result in overfishing for 2018, so we chose to reduce the Council’s recommended catch so that we would meet the 50 percent probability of overfishing target that was used in previous specifications for setting the overfishing limit (OFL). We reduced the sub-ACLs from the Council recommendation by a total of 3,775 mt, which results in sub-ACLs for the four management areas totaling 49,900 mt. Based on the 2018 stock assessment projection, we expect this reduction to reduce the probability of overfishing in 2018, increase the estimated herring biomass in 2019-2021, and provide for more catch for the fishery.

Q. Why did NOAA Fisheries distribute the reductions the way they did?

A. NOAA subtracted the additional 3,775 mt from the Council’s proposed sub-ACLs for Area 3 (14,134 mt to 11,318 mt) and Area 1A (28,862 mt to 27,743 mt). Area 3 catch has dropped in recent years and there has been minimal catch there.

Dr. D. Stearns

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**Carrier vessel**

- A carrier vessel may land up to 160,000 lbs (4 trucks) per week. The carrier limit of 4 trucks is not in addition to the harvester weekly landing limit.

**Harvester vessel**

- A harvester vessel has no gear on board capable of catching or processing fish.
- A harvester vessel is a vessel that is required to report the catch it has aboard as the vessel fishes on the Federal Vessel Trip Report.
- Fishermen are prohibited from landing more than 2,000 pounds of Atlantic herring per trip from Area 1A on no landing days.
- Eastern Maine Spawning Closure: The Eastern Maine Spawning closure will be in effect August 28 through September 24, 2018. During the closure, 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 the area.

**LOBSTERMEN ASKED TO DO ONLINE SURVEY TO SUPPORT IMPROVED WHALE REGULATIONS**

DMR is asking lobstermen from Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut, and Area 3 to complete a survey to inform future whale protection regulations by the end of September.

Without a better understanding of vertical lines, regulators are more likely to implement sweeping regulations which might not be any more effective at protecting whales. Good information from industry, including these surveys, will increase the likelihood of targeted, effective regulations. Lobstermen are asked to complete a brief survey on how vertical lines are rigged and fished. Information will include rope type and diameter, trap configuration, distance from shore, depth, and type of surface system. Participation should take less than 10 minutes.

Personal or identifying information will be kept confidential and removed prior to distribution of survey results; however, we ask for your name, phone number and, in the case of Maine harvesters, your landings number, so we can contact you if necessary to confirm information provided in the survey.

The survey is available on the DMR website www.maine.gov/dmr/science-research/species/lobster/lobsterandwhale/largsurveylandingpage.html or by contacting Caitlin Cleaver with FB Environmental at 207-706-9466.
THE MLMC’S PEAK SEASON EFFORTS UNDERWAY WITH LIVE SHOW FROM NEW YORK

Maine Lobster Live event highlights New Shell, start of season and the industry’s sustainability efforts

The MLMC kicked off peak season with our first-ever live broadcast and culinary industry event held in Brooklyn, New York on July 16. The live event was hosted by culinary tastemaker Dana Cowin and included star chef partners and Maine lobstermen. The live event featured the tastemakers and lobstermen discussing their experiences fishing together and creating new recipes featuring Maine New Shell Lobster in front of a live online and in-studio audience of culinary fans.

Check out a recording of the show as well as the chefs’ recipes at www.LobsterfromMaine.com/live. The livestream has had more than 290,000 views to-date and was attended by a live audience of chefs, influencers and media members.

Following the event, the MLMC kicked off a four-episode video series, which will air throughout the peak season on the MLMC’s Facebook page, Lobster from Maine. The video series features the MLMC’s culinary partners learning about fishing and the industry’s sustainability efforts, and returning the hospitality by sharing unique recipes featuring Maine New Shell Lobster.

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Alan Caron      Janet Mills      Shawn Moody      Terry Hayes

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<td><strong>Sea Rose Trap Co</strong></td>
<td>Portland, ME – 5% off list price on traps. Must show MLA card. 207-730-2063</td>
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<td><strong>Smithwick &amp; Mariners Insurance</strong></td>
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<td>Falmouth, ME – Discounted vessel insurance plus 5% discount with proof of CG approved Drill Conductor course w/in the last 5 years. Wooden boat, Builders coverage, no lay up period, discounted electronics deductible, and automatic coverage of researchers and more! Call Scott Smithwick 207-370-1883</td>
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MLA SELECT BUSINESS MEMBERS
Show your support for these businesses!
Based on the Northeast Science Center’s final herring stock assessment, the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) next year will limit the landing of Atlantic herring to no more than 28,900 metric tons, a reduction of 57.5 million pounds. The 2019 figure is a significant drop from the 2018 quota which was reduced to 49,900 metric tons and a league away from the 105,000 metric ton quota originally allocated for 2016-2018.

In addition to the cuts based on the stock assessment, the amount of available herring could be further reduced depending on which Amendment 8 alternative to the Council’s herring management plan is approved this month.

Maine bait dealers have faced reductions in the quota for herring before, though none so severe as this. As Wyatt Anderson, bait manager for O’Hara Corporation in Rockland said about previous quota decreases, “We acquired it from wherever we could get it. We didn’t get much from Canada because it’s too expensive. But we have relationships that came through.”

When the amount of herring available dropped by 30% after 2008, Maine lobstermen began to shift from fresh herring to menhaden, known as pogies. When further reductions took place, dealers began to supply lobstermen with frozen bait composed of species from around the world including redfish, tuna heads, rockfish, alfonsino racks, and more. O’Hara built a frozen bait storage facility in Rockland; other dealers followed suit.

Being nimble and having tried and true connections with suppliers around the country and the globe helped Maine bait dealers in the past. But the huge deficit anticipated in 2019 has even the largest companies concerned. “We have two boats active in the herring fishery now,” explained Wayne Reichele at Lund’s in New Jersey. “Menhaden has been strong the past couple of years and there are substitute products, but yes, I am worried.”

The problem is the magnitude of the poundage to be made up. Regardless of a lobsterman’s preferred bait, the shortfall in herring supply will spike demand for all available baits creating shortages and price increases. O’Hara has frozen inventory in place, Anderson explained, and additional facilities to store frozen bait on the West Coast. But neither O’Hara nor the other prominent bait companies in the state have enough storage space to make a dent in the anticipated shortfall. “There’s nothing out there to replace a 40 to 50-million-pound shortage,” Anderson said. ‘And believe me, all your frozen bait suppliers are aware of that. Price will reflect supply and demand. We’ve never seen a situation like this before.”

As one midcoast bait dealer who asked not to be identified said emphatically, “I am sure the lobstermen will survive. They are not the only ones in crisis.”

The problem is the magnitude of the poundage to be made up.
This month the MLA says good-bye to Bridget Thornton, the MLA’s health insurance Navigator. Thornton came to the MLA just eleven months ago from the Massachusetts Chapter of the ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis) Association, where she was the care services coordinator. She successfully took over the complex task of assisting Maine lobstermen and their families to find affordable health insurance plans. Federal funding for health insurance Navigators was cut sharply this year, effectively eliminating Thornton’s position.

“I learned a lot in a short period of time,” Thornton said. “There are a lot of health insurance resources here in Maine, a really good group of people. I could shoot a question to the [Affordable Care Act] network or the Consumers for Affordable Health Care help line at any time. That was huge.”

During her time at the MLA, Thornton, whose family lives on Long Island in Casco Bay, learned even more about the state’s lobster fishery and the issues currently facing it. “I’ve been around lobstermen since I was a kid. They were my neighbors and friends. But this was different,” Thornton said. “I saw that through the MLA, lobstermen throughout the state have the opportunity to have input in what happens. No one is just sitting around in the MLA office making decisions. Every lobsterman literally has a way of being a part of this and having their voices heard through the board.” During her tenure, lobstermen have faced major issues, including the possibility of additional federal regulations to protect right whales and the looming bait crisis.

Thornton received her graduate degree in social work from the University of New England, which gave her a different perspective on her work as a health insurance Navigator. “Health insurance in general is really complicated, even for those who get insurance through work. That’s why this position was so great, to be able to find answers to people’s questions,” she said. Thornton has mixed feelings about the Health Insurance Marketplace and the plans available to those who get insurance through work. “Right now they are not spending enough time fixing real problems in the system and are just applying Band-aids. ‘The program’s purpose was well intentioned but now prices are way up, ‘ she noted.

During her time as health insurance Navigator, Thornton worked with lobstermen from all along the coast. Sometimes the issues were complex and took many hours on the phone to resolve. Other times she was simply an encourager, helping a lobsterman fill out complicated forms. “One gentleman on Vinalhaven was just so grateful to be able to go through the process with me. He was appreciative because I understood his community. Another guy down in Port Clyde told me after we finished up that I should come down there and he’d put a ‘bucket of bugs’ in my car.” The straightforwardness of the people she worked with and the sense of being helpful provided Thornton with a lot of satisfaction during her months with the MLA. “They are honest and they want you to be honest as well. Lobstermen are blunt and I love that,” she said.

“We are so sad to have to say good-bye to Bridget. She has done an amazing job helping so many lobstermen and their families understand health insurance. Everyone who dealt with her benefited from her smartness and sense of humor combined with genuine kindness and patience. We are really going to miss her,” said MLA’s executive director, Patrice McCarren. “And unfortunately, we won’t have anyone on staff this fall to help lobstermen with health insurance.”

Continuing to help people is the primary motivation for Thornton as she moves forward in her career. Public health is a broad field in which she believes her social work skills can be usefully applied. She notes that the World Health Organization defines health as not solely the absence of disease or infirmity but “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being.” “We don’t often look at the many aspects of health,” she said. “It has to do with how you are in your community and in your environment as well as your physical health.”

Medicare deadlines coming up

The enrollment period for changing your Medicare policy is fast approaching. The Open Enrollment period is October 15 until December 7. During the enrollment period you can make changes to various aspects of your coverage. You can switch from Original Medicare to Medicare Advantage, or vice versa. You can also switch from one Medicare Advantage plan to another, or from one Medicare Part D (prescription drug) plan to another.

And if you didn’t enroll in a Medicare Part D plan when you were first eligible, you can do so during the general open enrollment, although a late enrollment penalty may apply.

To find out more, visit www.medicare.gov/sign-up-change-plans/index.html.

Open Enrollment for Affordable Care Act health insurance will be from November 1 to December 15. Stay tuned for more information.
For Sarah Redmond, 38, seaweed is a passion. During her childhood in Litchfield, Maine, Redmond grew fond of gardening. Her family spent summers camping on Hermit Island near Bath and at other sites along the coast, and that's where Redmond first encountered Maine's diverse species of seaweeds. "Something really drew me," she recollected. In high school, it became clear to the enterprising student what she wanted to become. "I wanted to be a seaweed farmer," Redmond said. And so she did.

The path to that goal took time. Redmond attended Unity College and later the University of Maine to study aquaculture as an undergraduate. But the field of aquaculture at that time focused primarily on the cultivation of shellfish and salmon, two high-value species for which Maine was well known. When Redmond graduated from UMaine, she felt unsure about what to do next. So she went to sea.

"I worked as a NOAA fisheries observer on all sorts of fishing vessels for a time. It was work that put me on the water but it was not growing seaweed," she said. "I wanted to be with the plants near the shore. I felt like every observer there was always off shore and I didn't want that." Eventually Redmond came to work for a mussel farm company near Portland.

The company founders were interested in growing seaweed as another source of revenue. Through their endeavors, Redmond came in contact with seaweed biologist Charlie Yarish at the University of Connecticut, who had long been involved in seaweed aquaculture research. "I up and moved to Connecticut," Redmond said with a laugh. She became a graduate student of Yarish's, studying techniques for growing sugar kelp seed.

For those familiar with the Maine coast, it might appear that kelp and other marine algae are pretty easy to grow, given their abundance along the shore. But seaweeds have complicated reproduction patterns, according to Redmond. Getting them started and flourishing in a lab is a complex task.

"Sugar kelp has a two-part life cycle," she explained. "First it is a sexual, microscopic, separate male and female phase, where it must reproduce to develop into the sporophyte stage, which is accomplished on a seed string in the nursery. After that you can put them in the water to grow out. Every seaweed species is different, however." Keeping tiny sugar kelp seed growing involves constantly checking on the temperature and salinity of the water, protecting the seed from microscopic pests, and other problems. "It is farming," Redmond said dryly. "Something always goes wrong."

After graduating with a master's degree from the University of Connecticut, Redmond returned to Maine as a University of Maine Sea Grant Marine Extension agent. Based at the University's aquaculture facility in Franklin, Redmond focused on spreading the word about seaweed farming. "We built a seaweed nursery in Franklin and started new crops and new ways of growing them," she said. Redmond traveled along the coast, educating fishermen and others about seaweed aquaculture and distributing seed to novice growers. She and fellow Marine Extension agent Dana Morse began a free aquaculture training program, called "Aquaculture in Shared Waters," to teach new shellfish and seaweed farmers about the business. "We really created a lot of interest and excitement about seaweed aquaculture. Now there are incredible educational programs going on in schools as well [through the 4-H program, Island Institute, and others]," Redmond said.

Two years ago Redmond left her position at Maine Sea Grant to start her own seaweed aquaculture company, Springtide Seaweed, LLC. "The company grows sugar kelp, skinny kelp, alaria, and dulse, which are dried and made into other products. Redmond also offers educational programs for those interested in starting a seaweed farm, and nursery kits and supplies.

"Everyone should eat seaweed every day," Redmond said. "It has nutrients and minerals not found in land-based food. It's so versatile in its uses. You can feed it to livestock, your pets, the soil. It can be applied to nearly every aspect of our lives."

She took on a business partner in 2017 and began the Maine Seaweed Exchange. The Exchange is a collaborative organization whose goal is to connect people involved in the industry with each other. "We are really working to professionalize the industry, with standards and training and a certificate program. The Exchange also is a way to let growers and buyers connect with each other," Redmond explained.

In addition to running her company and overseeing the Exchange, Redmond will be partnering with the College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor this winter to set up a seaweed nursery on the college campus. The idea is to make the seaweed nursery part of a student's studies in whatever form the student envisions.
**EXPORT-IMPORT BANK CAN TAKE THE UNCERTAINTY OUT OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS DEALINGS**

*By James Barrows, Senior Vice President, EXIM Office of Small Business*

Maine is famous for delicious lobsters, and people all over the world crave these crustaceans. With such high demand, exporting is a great way to expand a business by increasing market size, providing the opportunity to sell to more buyers, and handle any oversupply as well. Plus, international buyers are often willing to pay more per pound than domestic consumers.

While many business owners are interested in the opportunities offered by exporting, one common question arises: How do I know that I will get paid by these international buyers? Getting paid is the primary concern of U.S. companies that are selling goods and services beyond our borders. If they don’t pay, there is very little recourse for the seller, and the financial hit can be significant. Consequently, many small businesses are wary of wading into international waters.

**Thousands of U.S. businesses benefit from EXIM programs for selling their products and services internationally, including Maine lobster companies.**

Another obstacle to exporting is the need to offer open account credit terms for international payment. The extension of credit terms is extremely common outside of the United States. Buyers expect them and requiring a foreign buyer to pay cash in advance can jeopardize foreign sales. Thus, Maine lobster dealers who are unable to extend credit may lose out on valuable opportunities.

There is an excellent solution to these two payment concerns: the Export-Import Bank of the United States (EXIM). EXIM, a U.S. federal government agency, empowers U.S. companies to compete and win more international sales. With demand for Maine lobsters expanding, EXIM is here to make sure they can appear on tables around the world.

EXIM export credit insurance is an insurance policy that covers foreign accounts receivable generated by the sale of goods and services from U.S.-based companies to international customers. The insurance covers up to 95 percent of the sales invoice against nonpayment due to commercial (e.g., bankruptcy, protracted default) and political (e.g., war, insurgency) risks. It is designed to take the worry out of exporting so companies can enter new markets and boost sales with confidence.

Thousands of U.S. businesses benefit from EXIM’s programs for selling their products and services internationally, including Maine lobster companies. Maine companies exported more than $22 million of lobsters with EXIM support, capturing the business by offering open account credit terms (e.g., 30 or 60 days), which made them more competitive in the marketplace. The accounts receivable generated by these international sales were covered by EXIM’s export credit insurance, mitigating the risk of nonpayment by their foreign buyers.

Having an EXIM’s export credit insurance policy can also expand a company’s borrowing power, providing additional liquidity. For lobstermen or dealers with cash flow constraints, as well as those who need funds for boat repairs, this is extremely helpful. The lender adds the insured foreign receivables to the company’s borrowing base.

You can learn more about how EXIM helps companies of all sizes boost sales while protecting financial assets. Visit www.exim.gov or email ExportHelp@exim.gov to get started today.
James Milne Knott, founder of Riverdale Mills Corporation, passed away on August 16 at the age of 88. Knott was born in 1929 in Brighton, Massachusetts. He starred as a high school wrestler at The Governor’s Academy in Byfield, studied mechanical engineering at Northeastern University, and earned an economics degree from Harvard College in 1954. He then served three years as a lieutenant in the U.S. Army where he earned the Army Commendation Medal for meritorious service. Upon discharge, Knott founded Coatings Engineering Corporation which he sold to the Gilbert & Bennett Mfg. Company of Georgetown, CT in 1962. In the summer of 1947 in Gloucester, Knott met his wife Betty Davis. They married in 1951 and moved to Wellesley where they raised four children. In Gloucester, Knott saw firsthand how much time lobster fishermen spent fixing their wooden traps. He was convinced there had to be a better way. So, he set out to build a more durable lobster trap to reduce the downtime for fishermen and improve their annual catch rate. In 1979, Knott founded Riverdale Mills Corporation to manufacture Aquamesh®, the first-of-its-kind marine-grade coated wire mesh. Today 85% of all lobster traps in North America are made with Aquamesh. In 2006, Knott was awarded an honorary Doctor of Science degree by the University of Maine for his “commitment to the future of the lobster industry, innovative spirit, perseverance and positive leadership, willingness to share his knowledge and ideas and his outstanding support of UMaine’s Lobster Institute.”

Knott was always concerned for the welfare of the community and the industries his business served. His employees, many of whom have worked at Riverdale Mills for decades, loved his quiet, unique approach and novel ideas. He was a visionary and had a different perspective on manufacturing. The company soon expanded to more than 200 employees. Knott served as President and CEO of Riverdale Mills from 1979 to 2014.
NEW REGS FOR TRAWLS IN ZONE B START IN OCTOBER

A new rule limiting the number of traps on a single trawl line to five in a specific Zone B area from the six-mile line to the Lorcan-C 25675 line will go into effect on October 1. The new rule has been controversial with lobstermen who fish across the zone line from Zones C and A, and amongst some Zone B lobstermen. In a letter to Maine lobstermen, DMR Commissioner Patrick Keliher explained that the rule will sunset on December 31, 2019 to encourage fisherman to come together in good faith to find potential compromise. Depending on the outcome of the discussions, DMR will either propose an amended rule, the same rule, or let the rule sunset.

NEW ENGLAND AQUARIUM GETS GRANT TO TEST ROPELESS LOBSTER FISHING

The New England Aquarium has been awarded a $227,000 grant to test a ropeless fishing prototype to eliminate large whale entanglements in pot fishing gear. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries announced. The federal agency awarded more than $2.3 million to 14 groups to support bycatch reduction research projects. Ropeless fishing involves securing ropes to the seafloor where traps are being fished, and when the trap is ready to be hauled to check for catch, ropes are released to the surface by an acoustically triggered device.

CANADIAN LOBSTER SALES TO CHINA PICK UP

A Chinese freight forwarder is now offering twice-weekly flights from the capital of Nova Scotia, Canada, to the central Chinese city of Changsha in order to export more lobsters there. The seafood freight forwarder First Catch is sponsor of Nova Scotia, Canada, to the central Chinese city of Changsha, which is the capital of China’s Hunan province. The flights, operated by SkyLease Cargo, use a Boeing 747-400 freighter aircraft and can carry 120 metric tons of seafood.

LOBSTER COMPANY PROPOSES SEAFOOD CENTER ON PORTLAND WATERFRONT

Shucks Maine Lobster asked the Portland Fish Pier Authority board of directors for a 30-year lease on a quarter-acre city-owned lot in August. The company plans to put up a two-story, 16,000-square-foot building that will be a combination lobster processing plant, raw bar, marine heritage display and test kitchen called the Maine Sustainable Seafood Center. In a written statement, Shucks Maine Lobster owner John Hathaway said that the center would be “a seafood processing and industry business designed to service Maine’s seafood economy and help the fishing community to connect with the visitors who come to Maine to eat seafood, but have no point of access to learn about the men and women who provide the catch.” The center would have space for chefs to try out new recipes, teach classes and hold events, and an education center to demonstrate the history and legacy of Portland’s working waterfront.

HEAT WAVE IN THE GULF OF MAINE

This year the Gulf of Maine has been especially warm, and scientists at the gulf of Maine Research Institute in Portland reported that the Gulf of Maine officially experienced its second warmest-ever day on August 8. On that day, the average sea surface temperature in the Gulf of Maine reached 20.52°C (68.93°F), as measured by satellites operated by NOAA and NASA. This is only 0.03°C (0.05°F) shy of the record set in 2012. Moreover, this year parts of the Gulf officially crossed the threshold for what scientists call a marine heat wave. This phrase describes an area of the ocean that experiences temperatures above the 90th percentile for more than five consecutive days.

SEALS IN NEW ENGLAND TEST POSITIVE FOR AVIAN FLU AND DISTEMPER

Some of the first batch of sampled seals that stranded in Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts during the last several weeks have tested preliminarily positive for either avian influenza or phocine distemper virus. In addition, four seals so far have tested positive for both viruses. These are preliminary results based on the first set of samples analyzed by the Tufts University and University of California, Davis laboratories. There are many more samples to process and analyze, so it is still too soon to determine if either or both of these viruses are the primary cause of the mortality event. Past seal mortality events in northeastern U.S. coast have been linked to avian flu and phocine distemper virus. However, avian flu and phocine distemper virus have also been detected at low levels in seals along the northeastern U.S. coast in non-outbreak years. If you see a new sick or injured seal, please call the NOAA hotline: 866-755-3200. Please be patient, as the stranding response teams are very busy.

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THE MLA WORKS FOR YOU

“Whether it’s whale rules, bait issues or lack of profitable marketing, MLA is in the forefront of those issues. I wanted to be a part in shaping that voice.”

Bob Baines, Spruce Head
September 1-2
Eastport Salmon and Seafood Festival

September 5
Maine Lobstermen’s Association board meeting, 5-8 p.m., Nautilus restaurant, Belfast.

September 6
Aquaculture Advisory Council meeting, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., DMR office, Augusta.

September 8
Maine Open Lighthouse Day, throughout the state.

September 14
Maine Lobstermen’s Community Alliance Relief Fund benefit, 11:30 a.m.-8 p.m., Cook’s Lobster and Ale House, Bailey Island. FMI: www.mlcalliance.org.

September 19
Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative strategic planning board meeting, 11-4 p.m., Island Institute, Rockland.

September 25-27

UPCOMING

October 4
Seafood Industry Gubernatorial Forum, 5-7 p.m., Strand Theatre, Rockland. Hosted by the MLA, the MLDA, the Maine Coast Fishermen’s Association, MLU, Alevine Harvesters of Maine, and the Maine Aquaculture Association. Free.

October 13
Maine Lobster Boat Racing Association annual meeting, 5-7 p.m., Robinson’s Wharf, Southport.

October 21-25
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission fall meeting, New York, TBA

V-notching is a conservation practice that lobstermen have been employing since the early 20th century. Researchers of UMaine, NOAA and the Gulf of Maine Research Institute estimate that the increase in the Gulf of Maine lobster population in recent decades was more than double what it would have been without such conservation methods. Industry leaders want to ensure that newly licensed lobstermen understand the importance of vnotching in maintaining a sustainable lobster resource so we keep Maine’s vnotching tradition strong. Thanks to the efforts of an anonymous lobsterman and Brooks Trap Mill, all newly licensed lobstermen in Maine will receive their own V-notch tool in the mail this summer.

Working with the Maine Lobstermen’s Association (MLA) and with the Department of Marine Resources (DMR), Brooks Trap Mill arranged for each tool to be engraved with the lobsterman’s license number. “We felt if the tool were something they were proud of, they would be more likely to use it,” said Stephen Brooks of Brooks Trap Mill. The engraved V-notch tool will arrive with a ‘Welcome to the Industry’ packet. It will include information on the history and practice of V-notching, a free membership to the MLA and some free items. “We are hoping to make this an annual giveaway,” said MLA membership director Andi Pelletier. “Making the transition to captain is something to be proud of. We want new license holders to have the tools they need to be successful. Literally!”

The project has received praise from the Bureau of Marine Patrol as well. Marine Patrol Colonel Jon Cornish said that identification of a proper V-notch is an issue for Marine Patrol Officers as well as lobstermen. Cuts made with knives can result in tearing. That can leave the next lobsterman who hauls a female up confused as to whether or not she is actually notched. “The confusion is understandable, given that there is no specific definition other than a V-notch of any size or a mutilation that could hide that notch makes that female lobster illegal to possess,” Cornish said. The MLA included a handout with images of accepted V-notches in the packet.

“We want new lobstermen to take advantage of the benefits of MLA membership right away,” said MLA president Kristan Porter. “As the lead advocate for Maine lobstermen, the MLA makes sure that the perspective of its members is heard, not just at the state level but also at the regional and federal levels. Partnering with Brooks Trap Mill was a natural fit. Brooks has been an MLA business supporter for over 20 years.”

Both Brooks Trap and the MLA are deeply grateful to the anonymous lobsterman who started the project. “Maine lobstermen believe in vnotching because they know it works,” said Patrice McCarron, MLA’s executive director. "This tool is important to the fishery,” added Brooks.
THE MLA VISITS THE MAINE LOBSTER BOAT RACING CIRCUIT
MLA staff set up camp at several of the lobster boat races this summer, catching up with local members and talking with race attendees about the organization. The lobster boat races bring out the young and old to enjoy the excitement of the races and the pleasure of a day on the water. Photos by A. Pelletier.

Returning to the harbor, Winter Harbor.

Winter Harbor volunteers kept race fans fed throughout the day.

End of the day, Pemaquid.

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