



LANDINGS

News & Views from Maine's Lobstering Community

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STATE AID DISPERSED SWIFTLY TO REBUILD WORKING WATERFRONTS

By Melissa Waterman

The back-to-back coastal storms that pummeled the Maine coast last January dealt a tremendous blow to wharves, piers, and many other critical parts of the state's working waterfront. The scale of the damage along the coast was historic. Many feared that it would take years for private owners and municipalities to rebuild what had been lost.

In response, the Maine Legislature in May authorized \$60 million in the state's supplemental budget to address the storms' damages. Twenty-five million dollars went to a new Working Waterfront Resilience Grant program, overseen jointly by the Department of Transportation (DOT), the Department of Marine Resources (DMR), and the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future (GOPIF). Those harmed by the storms submitted their applications for rebuilding grants by the end of June; \$22.4 million was awarded in early August.

"The need to design and execute the Working

Waterfront Resilience Grant Program as quickly as possible was an opportunity for three State agencies with different areas of expertise to collaborate on a goal that none of us could have accomplished alone," said Deirdre Gilbert,

director of DMR's Bureau of Policy and Management. "DMR brought its knowledge of specific working waterfront properties and businesses, DOT brought their knowledge of marine construction, and GOPIF brought their expertise in improving resilience, resulting in a program that made significant, targeted, and pragmatic investments in this critical infrastructure."

Moving such a large sum of money to individual property and business owners swiftly posed an administrative challenge. To meet that challenge, the DOT drew on its existing Locally Administered Project program, which uses a municipal partnership agreement with towns to disperse money. "It's tricky to develop a program to move state money to private entities," said Chris Mayo, DOT director of ports and marine transportation. "By using

Continued on page 4



Chipman's Wharf was one of many heavily damaged by the January storms. C. Clegg photo.

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NEW GRANT TO BUILD RESILIENCY WITHIN LOBSTERING COMMUNITIES

By MLCA staff

No one can really predict the future. Maine's lobstermen, however, are well positioned to have a better sense of the future than most others. They see the changes that a warming climate has caused in the Gulf of Maine and they experience the effects of more frequent and intense storms.

A recent \$1.4 million grant to the Island Institute in Rockland aims to help lobstermen and their communities remain resilient in the face of rapidly escalating environmental change. The grant, requested by Senators Susan Collins and Angus King, will fund the Future of Fishing, a collaborative effort designed to expand economic opportunities in fishing communities.

"There's so much change on the horizon," said Sam Belknap, director of the Island Institute's Center for Marine Economy. "Lobstermen need to be able to access more support for their business. This is about how to bring existing resources in the state to bear on the fishery sector."

Belknap references the U.S. Department of Agriculture's successful Farms of the Future program, which advocates for and provides resources to commercial farms. "We want to weave together a network of business support in the state to help fishermen and communities," Belknap said. The three-year grant will focus on entrepreneurship, business support, and skills training. The Island Institute will collaborate with existing institutions and businesses to expand business support in Maine specifically for fishermen.

Continued on page 4

Inside

Page 2
COASTAL OUTLOOK
Thoughts from the MLCA president

Page 3
MAINE INNOVATIVE
GEAR LIBRARY

Page 5
GUEST COLUMN: *Maine scallops deserve more recognition*

Pages 6-9
MLA UPDATE

Page 10-11
SAVE MAINE
LOBSTERMEN DONORS

Page 18
TO YOUR HEALTH: *Take care of your knees today*

Page 20
THE MLA CELEBRATES
ITS 70TH!

Page 22
IN THE NEWS



COASTAL OUTLOOK *Thoughts from MLCA President Patrice McCarron*

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With this issue *Landings* closes a tumultuous year. The past winter was marked by back-to-back coastal storms that caused unprecedented damage up and down the coast, leaving many to wonder if there would even be a lobstering season. The summer months were particularly hot followed by a much warmer and dryer than usual fall. The Presidential campaign roiled the water for many Mainer while an historic offshore wind energy auction in the Gulf of Maine left lobstermen feeling deep unease about the future. And it brings to a close the 70th anniversary year of the Maine Lobstermen's Association.

One hallmark of Maine's lobstering world is its astonishing resilience. Resilience is a word tossed about these days so often that it has largely lost its meaning. But to Maine's lobstermen and their families, resilience is not merely a word, it is a way of life. When the January storms dealt a one-two punch to hundreds of wharfs, docks, bait sheds, and other critical infrastructure, some thought it would take years for the coast to recover. Yet in a matter of months, communities pulled together to get lobstermen back on the water, loading and offloading traps and lobsters at mostly functioning docks.

Through the Working Waterfront Resiliency Grant program, funded with money authorized by the Legislature in May, \$22.4 million has gone to repair what was damaged in January. The money moved more swiftly into the hands of businesses, towns, and individuals than many familiar with government bureaucracy would have thought possible.

The rebuilding was done in full recognition of the effects of climate change on the coast and the need to rebuild the infrastructure that supports Maine's fishing communities to withstand the wrath of future storms. As Chris Mayo, Department of Transportation director of ports and marine transportation, who helped oversee the grant program, said, "The purpose is to ensure the longevity of the traditional working waterfront for decades, not for five years."

Resiliency comes in other forms as well. For lobstermen, keeping an eye not only on the weather but on the future is a crucial part of running a successful small business. But for many who are just working to survive all of the new regulations, reporting requirements, and the day-to-day

scramble to pay their bait and fuel costs, thinking about the future may not be a high priority. This fall the Island Institute in Rockland received \$1.4 million in federal funds to help build resiliency among lobstermen and their communities in the face of a rapidly changing Gulf of Maine and their own uncertain futures. The three-year grant will focus on entrepreneurship, business support, and skills training in order to help fishermen plan ahead as the Gulf continues to warm.

December is the start of Maine's scallop fishing season and this month we hear from Togue Brawn, owner and founder of Downeast Dayboat Scallops, about the market for Maine scallops. Brawn makes clear that the scallops harvested on day trips by scallopers in state waters have a distinct flavor and quality that separates them from the scallops harvested on multi-day trips largely landed in New Bedford. The problem is, the public doesn't know it.

Making sure that consumers request Maine scallops as a premium item will require aggressive education, Brawn writes.

The Department of Marine Resources (DMR) received a \$5.1 million award in November 2023 to test ropeless fishing gear in the lobster and gill-net fisheries, specifically studying the effectiveness of acoustic systems. With a portion of the funds, DMR created the Maine Innovative Gear Library. The Library provides lobstermen access to different gear types to test while fishing, at no cost. In this

issue DMR's Briony Donahue answers questions about the new program.

Don't forget to register for next month's U.S.-Canada Lobster Town Meeting. The annual event, which takes place from January 28 to 30 in Bar Harbor, will bring together lobstermen and scientists from both sides of the border to discuss the pending U.S. lobster gauge increase, lobster stock assessments, and other crucial topics.

We extend warm wishes for a relaxing holiday season.

Patrice



Maine's state scallop fishery produces superior quality product, but consumers are not yet aware of the differences. K. Milan photo.

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YOUR QUESTIONS, ANSWERED: *Which whale-safe gears are being tested in Maine?*

The Department of Marine Resources (DMR) received a \$5.1 million award in November 2023 from NOAA and the nonprofit National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to test ropeless fishing gear in the lobster fishery, specifically looking at the effectiveness of acoustic systems. Part of the funding went to creation of the Maine Innovative Gear Library. The Library provides lobstermen access to different gear types to test while fishing, at no cost. We asked Briony Donahue at DMR several questions about the new program.

When did the Library begin to loan gear out? How long can lobstermen use the gear?

This summer the DMR started testing on-demand fishing gear through its Maine Innovative Gear Library (MIGL). DMR holds an Experimental Fishing Permit for testing on-demand and other alternative gear in federal waters for up to 65 participants and a Maine Special License for testing in state waters. This includes both lobster and gillnet fishermen. The MIGL loans out two units of gear to participants and maintains one endline on each trawl during testing. Each unit acts to replace one endline in pair/triple/trawl configurations.

The timeline for how long they will be testing gear is mostly up to the fishermen themselves. We don't have a specific clause about a minimum/maximum time-frame, or minimum/maximum number of hauls each participant must complete. Participants can phase out when they'd like. We will continue to collect data on use and performance of different systems until at least 2027 and potentially through the regulatory process leading up to potential changes in 2029.

How many different types of gear do you have and are you adding more?

DMR has a variety of gears for testing including 85 on-demand, 21 timed release, and 21 spring release systems. The six different on-demand systems that use acoustically triggered releases are stowed rope and liftbag technologies. Stowed rope systems, such as Edgetech, Sub Sea Sonics/Guardian, and Ashored, all have contained rope on the ocean floor. The line and buoy are released when an acoustic trigger is sent. Liftbag technologies, such as Ropeless Systems and SMELTS, use varying sizes of SCUBA cylinders to inflate a liftbag, which brings the system to the surface. We also have both timed and spring release alternatives produced by Nova Robotics, which also use stowed rope.

The sophistication of the systems runs the gambit from one-way acoustics to systems that are able to integrate with a chart plotter and have the capability

to range to the unit and report back the location of the unit on the sea floor. We continue to expand the library with different types of systems, such as spooled rope, and more units as participation increases.

How many lobstermen have checked out gear from the Gear Library?

We have five fishermen testing on-demand gear and three fishermen currently testing other alternative gear such as timed and spring releases. The privacy of our participants is very important, and we don't share names or where they fish. There are an additional eight fishermen who are in the process of being brought into the program.

What are you hearing from them?

Without a large sample size for the testing, it's hard to generalize. Feedback varies, but in general fishermen are finding that the systems do work and come to the surface, but the time it takes for the acoustic trigger to occur, haul the gear, and get it ready to set again can vary. Fishermen have identified issues with battery components and suggested improvements for some rope stowage system designs to improve device reliability. We have seen manufacturers be very responsive to fishermen's concerns, with newer models incorporating changes. We are also sending any safety concerns back to the manufacturers as well.


We need participants that represent the various bottom types, currents, fishing configurations, and inshore and offshore areas to give their input so that we have a much broader understanding of the different capabilities of the technologies in the diverse fixed gear fisheries in Maine.

What is it that you want lobstermen to know about the Library?

The bottom line is that if any of these systems may be needed for fishermen to access areas closed to vertical lines to meet risk reduction mandates, we want to make sure that their voices are heard and that they are able to give feedback to the manufacturers. We do want fishermen to have confidence in device performance when choosing products that allow access to those restricted areas.

Learn more about DMR's Innovative Gear Library at www.maine.gov/dmr/science/right-whale/gear or contact Briony Donahue at DMRgearlibrary@maine.gov.

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Working waterfronts continued from page 1

the municipal partnership we can fund rebuilding projects at the municipal level. It's a pass-through process for reimbursement."

Applicants were required to show that their project served at least 10 commercial fishermen or people involved in aquaculture. In addition, they also needed to provide a 1-to-1 financial match toward the cost of the work.

Mayo said that using the municipal partnerships worked extremely well. "We wanted to make it easy for small towns," he said. "The town accepts invoices for a project. They make sure the math is good. They send it to me for a final review and I submit it to the finance office. Then DOT sends the money to the town and they pay the grantee."

Kathleen Billings, Stonington town manager, also felt the process went well. "The state turned it around fairly quickly. We were pretty torn up last winter," she said. "Everyone got their stuff together, their itemized bills. I copied them and sent them to Chris, who looked it all over. There was about a three week wait after I turned in the invoices. The [grant] money went into the town checking account and out again. It was a nice program to help these guys."

Thus far 20 projects have received reimbursement through the program. Others are due to be paid this year. Some towns, such as Harpswell, which was severely hit by the two storms, did not have a municipal partnership agreement in place, which has delayed receipt of grant money. The town put a municipal agreement up for vote during the November election. It passed. "I'm really excited to get Harpswell going, now that the agreement has been approved. Now their projects can go forward," Mayo said.

Occasionally paying for a rebuilding project might be too costly for a business or individual to do all at once, regardless of the fact that the costs would be

Island Institute continued from page 1

Lobstering takes a lot of time and attention. A lobsterman may not have the time or the inclination to think strategically about the future, whether to incorporate as a business or not, what to do to plan for retirement, or any of the other questions small business owners typically grapple with. He might wonder about fishing for a new species lately found in the Gulf or perhaps delving into aquaculture, but not know quite how to go about getting information, much less funding.

"There's opportunity and need within fishing families to think about the future," Belknap said. "We want to get organizations to think of them and how to offer resources tailored to those needs."

reimbursed. "We try to be flexible to help get the project done," Mayo said. "Break it into smaller parts, like \$5,000 of work at a time. We don't mind reimbursing multiple times, that's OK."

The goal of the grant program was not simply to fund rebuilding but to encourage reconstruction that will last against a rising Gulf of Maine and more intense and frequent storms. "The purpose is to ensure the longevity of the traditional working waterfront for decades, not for five years," Mayo said.

Many lobster co-ops took significant hits from the two storms. The Stonington Lobster Co-op lost one of its piers in the storms and received nearly \$600,000 through the program. The new wharf, rebuilt in time for the fishing season, is two feet higher than the original; the base of the wharf was heavily reinforced to withstand future wind-driven waves and storm surges.

The New Harbor Co-op was awarded more than \$500,000. The storms destroyed the two docks' pilings, broke fuel lines and damaged its office building as well as bait freezer. The co-op rebuilt its docks two feet higher, relocated the office to a better location, and repaired extensive electrical damage.

The heavily damaged Corea Lobster Co-op received slightly less than \$330,000 to repair its wharf and other structures wrecked by the storms. Other co-ops, including the Vinalhaven Fisherman's Co-op, the Georgetown Fisherman's Co-op, the Spruce Head Co-op, the Port Clyde Co-op, and the Cranberry Isles Fishermen's Co-op, also received resiliency grants.

"These co-ops are really crucial for the state," Mayo said. "All things considered, to launch a new program and funding mechanisms this quickly is pretty outstanding. In terms of government, this is super fast."

By partnering with local organizations and businesses, such as the Sunrise County Economic Council in Washington County or Maine's Small Business Development centers, the project will be able to respond to the specific issues of different parts of the coast. "The aim is to seed fishing business-centric services within these communities," Belknap explained. "This will create opportunities to keep communities successful but at different scales. The banks are a key component."

"The goal is to get more organizations to offer assistance of value to fishing families in the near and long term, so that fishermen can be able to make a living on the water in the future," he said. For more information, contact Sam Belknap at sbelknap@islandinsitute.org or 992-7726.

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GUEST COLUMN: *Maine scallops deserve more attention from consumers*

By Togue Brawn

Each November calls start coming in from people wondering if I have any insight into what the scallop price will be when Maine's season opens in December. I tell them all I can do is consult the latest New Bedford Auction prices, because sadly that's still what determines what Maine scallopers will get paid. Why do I say sadly? Because Maine fishermen are paid a commodity price for their premium dayboat product, which is what led me to quit my job at the Department of Marine Resources back in 2011 to launch a company to differentiate Maine's superior dayboat product. But more on that later...for now, let's stick with commodity pricing.

Commodity pricing is, by definition, driven by supply and demand, and until recently scallops were coming over the docks in New Bedford in record numbers. Closures originally crafted to protect groundfish led to huge growth in the scallop biomass. This enabled the implementation of rotational management, where areas (access areas) with a high percentage of juveniles were closed to allow scallops to grow to premium market size before harvest. Fisheries managers call this maximizing yield per recruit, which is a fancy way of saying getting more bang for your buck. A scallop harvested as a U10 (fewer than 10 scallops per pound) weighs twice as much as it would if you'd taken it when it was just a 20 count, so by letting it sit around for a year or two, you doubled your weight. You'll also get paid more per pound thanks to the premium for larger scallops. This year, that premium has been particularly impressive: as much as a \$20 difference in the price paid for U12's compared with 10-20's (10 to 20 scallops per pound).

Why the big spread? Well, the 2013 year class that yielded large numbers of big scallops has petered out, and the good old days of the access areas are in the rearview mirror, at least for now. With fewer large scallops on the market, the price has hit historic highs. But it's not just big scallops that are scarce: scallops in the mid-Atlantic have declined precipitously, most likely due to warming waters. With the mid-Atlantic and access areas unproductive, boats have focused on the open areas off New England, so they've been fished hard. There really aren't many bright spots in federal waters. There's hope on the horizon in signs of recruitment, but right now it's slim pickin's on federal scallop grounds, so the scallop quota is much lower than in past years. And when the supply is low, the price is high.

This means the boat price will likely be high this winter, which is good news for Maine scallopers. But that small bit of good news obscures an important point, which is the price paid to Maine fishermen for their premium dayboat scallops is still set by the much larger offshore fishery. And that needs to change, because all scallops are NOT equal.

How are Maine scallops so different? Well, 95% of U.S. sea scallops come from large boats fishing federal waters, often for a week or more at a time. Their catch is stored in cloth bags buried in ice. The cloth allows gases to escape as the scallops age, but it also permits melting ice to reach the scallops, which absorb it like sponges. Added water means extra weight, and while that water weight fetches more money, it also dilutes flavor.

There's nothing wrong with these scallops. This fishing is sustainable and produces high quality protein at an affordable price, but it's a commodity product. Maine scallops are different, and they should be priced as such. Because Maine scallopers will always produce a tiny fraction of U.S. supply, if we can increase demand through differentiation, prices will follow.

In Maine, our state-licensed boats must stay within three miles of shore and are limited to no more than 15 gallons of scallops per day (roughly 135 pounds), or 10 gallons in Cobscook Bay. Their trips last hours, not days. Maine scallopers store their catch in five-gallon buckets, so there's no direct contact with ice. That means Maine scallops come ashore quickly, in pristine condition with no added water. I started Downeast Dayboat on that simple fact – who wouldn't prefer a fresh, pure scallop to an old waterlogged one? But I soon discovered something even more interesting about Maine scallops: not only are our scallops fresher and purer, they also come in many varieties.

You're likely aware that oysters develop different flavors depending on where they grow. An oyster from the Chesapeake Bay tastes dramatically different from one grown in Penobscot Bay. Some people can even discern differences from one part of a bay to another. But you probably don't realize the same is true of scallops. Scallops and oysters are both filter feeders, so they draw everything they need from the waters they grow in. So where they grow matters. But most people don't realize this fact, since they've only tasted generic offshore scallops whose flavor has been diluted by water.

An old fisherman once told me, "Togue, I've fished from Digby, Nova Scotia to North Carolina, and I can't explain why but there's something about a Maine scallop. It's just better." It's understandable that Maine's cold waters would produce exceptional shellfish. But it's fascinating that our deeply crenulated coast produces such a rich variety of scallop flavors and textures. Among our many varieties, there are standouts: In 2015 I brought scallops from three areas to chefs in New York, and nine of the eleven pointed to the Gouldsboro Bay scallop

as the one they'd most want to serve raw due to its "intense gaminess and firm texture."

So with Maine scallops being fresher, purer and more delicious, why aren't our fishermen paid more for them? It's simple: because people don't know about them. For decades, we've been shipping these scallops out of state to be mixed in with the stuff from the offshore boats. That's like pouring a bottle of Dom Perignon into a vat of Barefoot Bubbly, and it needs to stop.

A few years back, a chef explained, "I know these [Downeast Dayboat] scallops are worth \$35 a pound. They're the best scallops I've ever tasted. But to pay \$35 a pound, I have to charge \$60 a plate. If I put a \$60 steak on my menu, customers will assume it's a super premium cut, because they know that level of quality exists in beef. But because they don't know this level of quality exists in scallops, they'll just think I'm overcharging them."

So what does this mean? It means we Mainers need to spread the word. If you have out-of-state guests coming for Christmas this year, feed them Maine scallops, and tell them why they're so special. There's more information on www.givemaineseafood.com and other reputable sites. If you need help finding a fisherman who'll sell you scallops, check out the Maine Fish Direct Facebook page. And of course, if you'd like to ship scallops out of state, I'd be happy to oblige, because that's my specialty.

Elevating Maine scallops will benefit all Maine fishermen, because the waters that produce better scallops also produce other superior-tasting seafood. It's just more obvious with filter feeders like scallops and oysters, so they're an easier way to get folks on board to demand Maine seafood. We need to do a better job of showing folks outside Maine just how amazing our seafood is. So this winter, let's spread the word about Maine's dayboat scallops!

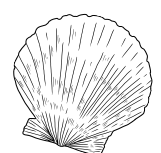


Togue Brawn is founder and owner of Downeast Dayboat Scallops.

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207-967-4555
www.mainelobstermen.org



STEAMING AHEAD BY PATRICE MCCARRON, ACTING COO

December marks the close of the MLA's 70th anniversary year. To remain in existence for 70 years is a truly remarkable achievement. To be a successful advocate for fishermen is even more remarkable. The MLA's cumulative impact on the lobster fishery over seven decades is nearly impossible to measure.

Since 1954, Maine's lobster fishery has transformed itself from a 21 million pound fishery worth just over \$8 million (boat price, 37 cents per pound) to a 94 million pound fishery worth nearly \$465 million (boat price, \$4.95 per pound). Though the number of licensed Maine lobstermen is surprisingly similar — 5,794 in 1954 compared to 5,372 in 2023 — the importance of the fishery to Maine's coastal communities is significantly different.

In 1954, lobster comprised 8% of Maine's commercial landings and accounted for 48% of value. In 2023, lobster accounted for 46% of Maine's catch and a whopping 76% of value. Gone are the days when the majority of Maine's seafood was landed at a large harbor like Portland. Instead, Maine's highest value ports today are the small harbors scattered along the coast, such as Stonington, Vinalhaven, Beals, Friendship, Milbridge, and Harrington. And it is all fueled by lobster.

It might not have ended up this way. Maine's lobster fishery would not be the backbone of the coastal economy if not for the stewardship practices of Maine lobstermen, many of which were put forward by the MLA. What would the industry be like today had lobstermen not banded together in 1954 to establish the Maine Lobstermen's Association?

Because the MLA has remained true to its members' concerns over the years, our accomplishments are second to none among fishing groups in Maine, in New England and nationally. What many don't realize — or often forget — is that because of the MLA's steady presence, all the efforts to chip away at the fishery's conservation practices have failed.

Lobstermen should not overlook that it was the MLA that fought long and hard for the core conservation measures we now take for granted: we are an owner-operated fishery; there is no dragging for lobster in Maine; we protect small lobsters so that they reproduce before they are commercially harvested; we V-notch egg-bearing females to give our proven breeders a chance to do it all again; we protect oversize lobsters; and we fish with traps so that all the lobsters we can't land go back alive.

As amazing as our work was in the early days, the MLA has evolved to take on new and more complex issues. Take offshore wind. When the MLA was pressured to talk about co-existing with wind farms because they were coming anyway, we said "No!" When we were told we shouldn't oppose wind farms because they bring good jobs, we said "No!" and fought to keep the \$1 billion of jobs and revenue

currently produced annually by the fishery.

Think about right whales. When lobsterman after lobsterman told the MLA that they do not see right whales where they fish and that the government is exaggerating the lobster fishery's role in the right whale decline, the MLA listened. We did the tedious work of pouring through the data, counting the number of cases where Maine lobster gear harmed right whales. We did the hard work necessary to counter the National Marine Fisheries Service's plan that would have gutted the Maine lobster fishery. When the agency brushed us aside, we consulted our membership and we sued. A few years and many dollars later, we won an historic legal victory against the federal government! Because of that win, many of you are still fishing today.

Of course, you know all this. These incredible accomplishments have become very ordinary to Maine lobstermen — but in fact it is actually extraordinary that a group of lobstermen who banded together could accomplish so many things that most would have thought impossible.

The MLA's first president, Leslie Dyer of Vinalhaven, wrote in his welcome message to MLA's first annual convention in Rockland in 1955, "We are an association of Independent Maine Lobstermen, controlled and managed by lobstermen who carry out the wishes of our members, without outside influence interfering in any way with the individual lobsterman's way of fishing."

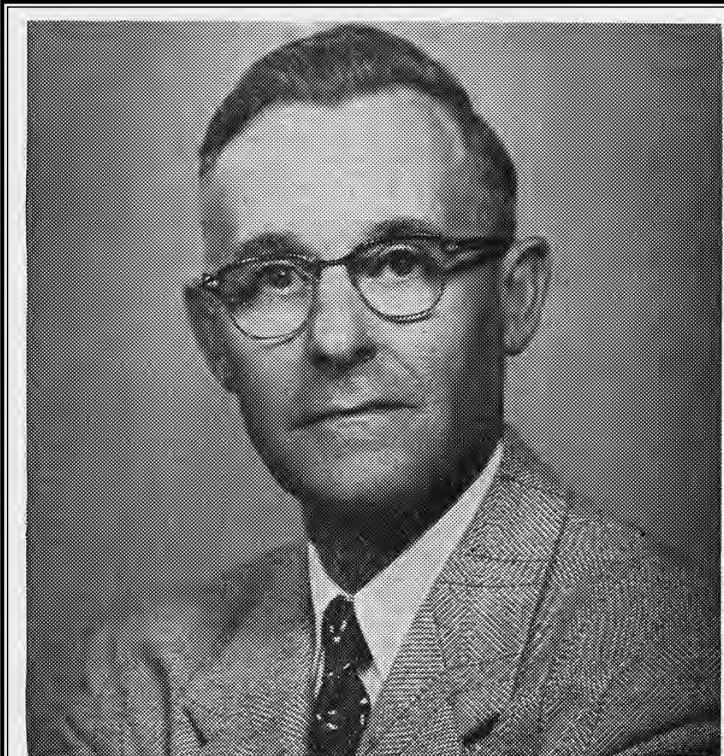
That is as true today as it was then. It is exactly what makes the MLA so special. The MLA is still a membership organization and is still governed by lobstermen. The MLA has never been beholden to outside influences — not to a labor union, not to wealthy summer people, not to green organizations, and not to the government. The vast majority of our funding comes from the lobster industry through memberships, donations, our vessel insurance program, and merchandise sales. We have certainly had our share of lean times over the years, but this mix of support has allowed the MLA to avoid the trap of taking funding for things that are not important to lobstermen.

So ask yourself: if the MLA disappeared tomorrow, how worried would you be about your future?

For those of you who steadfastly support MLA, thank you. None of these amazing accomplishments would have been possible without you. If you are not an MLA member, I hope you will take this moment, today, to celebrate the MLA's 70 years of service to the fishery by becoming a member.

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. And as always, please stay safe on the water.

Patrice



As president of your association, I extend a cordial welcome to your first annual convention. At this time I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the officers, executive committee and members, for the loyal support they have given to make our organization a success.

Also, in behalf of the Association, I want to express our appreciation to Stanley R. Tupper, Commissioner of Sea and Shore Fisheries, and to A. Alan Grossman, our Attorney, for their support and valuable assistance to us.

We are an association of Independent Maine Lobstermen, controlled and managed by lobstermen who carry out the wishes of our members, without outside influence interfering in any way, with the individual lobstermen's way of fishing.

I extend a cordial invitation to all Maine Lobstermen to join with us in this Association, that we may all work together for the future of our industry.

With the help of God, let us go forward in the common cause.

LESLIE DYER, President,
Maine Lobstermen's Association.



MAINE LOBSTERMEN'S ASSOCIATION UPDATE

THE MLA CELEBRATES 70 YEARS

The Maine Lobstermen's Association (MLA) celebrated seven decades of successful advocacy on behalf of Maine lobstermen and their families on November 2 at SaltWater Fields Event Barn in South Thomaston. MLA members, friends, and supporters gathered for a special anniversary dinner, music, and camaraderie.

The MLA is the oldest fishing industry association on the East Coast. Founded in 1954, the MLA has spent 70 years steadfastly committed to protecting the state's lobstering heritage and way of life. Most recently, the MLA achieved one its highest profile victories when, in June 2023, the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C., ruled that NMFS's Biological Opinion and ten-year right whale conservation plan were no longer valid. NMFS was required to develop a new Biological Opinion and Final Whale Rule by the end of 2028 without skewing scientific data against the Maine lobster fishery.

The evening event also served to recognize the many businesses and individuals who helped raise the funds required for the MLA to win this historic legal case.

After dinner, special guests Governor Janet Mills, Senator Angus King, Representative Chellie Pingree, and Representative Jared Golden all spoke, each commending the MLA's efforts over the years, from blocking construction of an oil refinery to stopping dragger-caught lobsters being landed in Maine. The cumulative impact of the MLA is hard to measure, yet the speakers made clear that the MLA has been critical to protecting Maine lobstermen and preserving the lobstering industry.

THANK YOU, JACK MERRILL!

As MLA's 70th year draws to an end, it is important to recognize the efforts of all those who have given their time to the association over the years.

The MLA extends special thanks to its longest serving board member, Jack Merrill of Islesford, who stepped down earlier this year after 40 years of service to the organization. He served many of those years as MLA's vice-president. Even in 1984, Merrill recognized how important the MLA was to the future of Maine's lobster industry. "The MLA was the only voice I could see that would stand up for the fishermen and our livelihood," Merrill said, recalling how he became a board member. "We were being told back then that the fishery was close to collapse, but I saw that wasn't the case and other fishermen saw it too."



Jack Merrill served on the MLA board of directors for 40 years.

Merrill was on the front lines of many of the pivotal fights that have made the fishery what it is today. He helped lead the charge to keep draggers from landing lobsters, prevent dealers from eliminating Maine's maximum gauge, and ensure that Maine's lobster fleet remained a locally-owned fleet with no corporate ownership. Merrill stood out not only for his tireless advocacy, but also for his vision in pioneering collaborative research and working with independent scientists. This work helped to prove what lobstermen already knew – they were not overfishing the resource.

While much has changed in 40 years, one thing remains the same, according to Merrill: government over-regulation. "We had a tremendous victory last year against NMFS on the right whale regulations. At least common sense will prevail for a few years," he said. "The MLA represents lobstermen everywhere along the coast. The threats to our way of life won't stop."

Thanks to the efforts of lobstermen like Jack Merrill, the MLA is stronger and more credible and influential than ever. And the MLA has no plans to stop.

MAINE LEGISLATURE TO RECONVENE IN JANUARY

The First Regular Session of the 132st Maine Legislature will reconvene in January 2025. A recount of 11 of the races were expected to conclude on November 25. The recounts involve two Senate races and nine House races.

The Maine Senate elected Mattie Daughtry (D-Brunswick) to serve as the next Senate President of Maine. The Maine House of Representatives will not elect its Speaker until all election results are finalized. Membership of the Marine Resources Committee has not yet been decided.

ELECTRONIC TRACKER LAWSUIT DISMISSED

A federal district judge in Bangor dismissed a lawsuit filed by five Maine lobstermen challenging Maine's regulation requiring federal lobster permit holders to run a tracking device on their vessels. "The Court GRANTS Defendant Patrick Keliher's Motion to Dismiss in its entirety and accordingly DISMISSES as moot Plaintiff's Motion for Preliminary Injunction," Judge Woodcock ruled.

However, the judge writes that "this case raises significant Fourth Amendment issues, and the court encourages the lobstermen to appeal this decision to the Court of Appeals for the First Circuit for an authoritative ruling."

The plaintiffs, lobstermen Frank Thompson, Joel Strout, Jason Lord, Christopher Smith, and Jack Cunningham, sued Department of Marine Resources Commissioner Patrick Keliher in January 2024, asserting that the tracking requirement is not legal.

First, they argued that the "requirement of a twenty-four-hour-a-day vessel tracker is an unreasonable search and seizure in violation of due process protections in the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution." Second, they argued that Maine's tracker regulation "violates Plaintiffs' equal protection rights" under both the U.S. and Maine Constitutions such that "the Court should find it to be void for vagueness." Lastly, the lobstermen argued that the tracker regulation is arbitrary and capricious under Maine law.

The Court sided with the state on each of these arguments but was sympathetic to lobstermen's concerns regarding the collection of data when lobster boats are not fishing in federal waters or are being used for purposes other than fishing. The Court acknowledges, "Lobstermen are not always fishing on their boats. They have their own lives. Even though they use their boats to fish for lobsters, they also use these vessels to perform personal errands, to visit family and friends, and even in some cases to live on."

Nevertheless, the Court sided with the state's arguments that trackers do not violate lobstermen's privacy because the industry is subject to tougher standards and conservation measures that are meant to protect the fishery and "are 'necessary' to advance the long-term health and stability of the Maine lobster fishery." The Judge pointed out "that all people operating vessels at sea, independently of whether or not they are engaging in a commercial enterprise, 'are subject to a network of regulations that allow officials to board and inspect vessel.'"

The Court upheld the state's position that it "has the legal authority to enter onto a lobster boat without a search warrant to inspect the boat for compliance with the numerous regulations that constrain lobster fishing," in part because



Lobster boats are used for more than fishing. MLA photo photo.

MLA WORKS TO REMOVE THE "24/7" REQUIREMENT FOR ELECTRONIC TRACKERS

The MLA submitted a letter to ASMFC in April 2024, requesting that the 24/7 provision be dropped so that trackers are only required when a federal lobster vessel is used for fishing.

The MLA wrote, "We are entering a new era in management where the lobster industry is trying to find a way to provide managers with the data needed for responsible marine resource management without invading fishermen's privacy or other protected interests."

According to MLA President Kristan Porter, the courts are an expensive and unpredictable way to solve regulatory issues. He said, "the MLA cannot support any policy that impinges upon individual privacy, especially when there are ways to address this concern." He stated, "Lobstermen should not be tracked if they are using their boats for family time and other personal reasons."

The MLA previously raised concern over the 24/7 provision with ASMFC in its January 2022 comment letter opposing electronic trackers on lobster vessels. Porter has attended several ASMFC Lobster Board meetings to keep this issue front and center with ASMFC. While ASMFC unanimously supported considering taking future action so trackers are not required unless the vessel is fishing, they have not yet identified a solution.



MAINE LOBSTERMEN'S ASSOCIATION UPDATE

MLA Update continued from page 7

“there is no indication in this record that the system could be altered so that it begins to collect data once a lobster boat crosses the three-mile limit into federal waters and then stops collection when the vessel re-enters state waters.”

The Court also agreed with that state that it gave lobstermen proper “notice that data regarding the location of their fishing vessels is being collected” and that its confidentiality is being protected. Vessel location data collected by the trackers is transmitted to the ACCSP which “has protected confidential information relating to fisheries—including self-reported Vessel Trip Report data—for years using the same electronic transmittal systems (approved by NMFS) and SAFIS database, as described in Addendum XXIX... and the vessel location data is ‘designated as confidential through Maine law and regulation.’”

With regard to the twenty-four/seven provision, the Court acknowledged the legitimacy of the lobstermen’s frustrations, but wrote, “the First Circuit has explained that ‘when an entrepreneur embarks upon such a business [in a closely regulated industry], he has voluntarily chosen to subject himself to a full arsenal of government regulation,’ and thus a warrantless search to enforce that regulatory regime is not unreasonable.”

The Court ruled that that federal court did not have jurisdiction over the Plaintiff’s challenge of a state regulation. “Precedent is clear that the court lacks jurisdiction over this claim.” Therefore, the case was dismissed.

MAINE DELEGATION ANNOUNCES \$1.9 MILLION FOR LOBSTER RESEARCH IN MAINE

On November 20, the Maine Congressional delegation announced that NOAA’s Sea Grant Office awarded more than \$1.9 million to fund seven lobster research projects in Maine. Sea Grant’s American Lobster Initiative funded 15 projects totaling \$5.4 million to further innovative research and outreach in support of the lobster industry and fishing communities. This program funds projects that address critical knowledge gaps about American lobster and its fishery in a dynamic and changing environment.

Maine’s 2024 American Lobster Research Program Recipients

Maine Center for Coastal Fisheries, \$146,784 – *Changing economic efficiency in the U.S. American lobster fishery and implications for management.* This research provides the needed lobster harvester cost and effort data to assess the economic implications of and adaptations to ecosystem and/or regulatory changes for the Gulf of Maine American lobster industry.

University of Maine, \$272,084 – *Characterizing hormone dynamics in the American lobster to predict molting probability: Insights for addressing knowledge gaps in the molt process.* The study aims to develop a novel approach to assess molt probability in American lobsters based on key hormonal indicators.

University of Maine, \$190,493 – *Characterizing socioeconomic processes and impacts of change in the American lobster fishery.* This research project aims to provide timely socioeconomic information to the American lobster industry, science community and managers to inform and support effective decision-making that helps to bolster the resilience of lobster fishing communities in the face of environmental change and economic uncertainty.

Maine Department of Marine Resources, \$360,853 – *Recruitment building blocks: Understanding American Lobster (Homarus americanus) growth and environmental effects during the first year.* This research will expand and reexamine aspects of tDMR’s Larval Lobster Survey and Lobster Settlement Survey.

Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve, \$187,954, – *The role of foraging and diet in determining energetic availability for female lobsters.* In American lobsters and other crustacean species, evidence suggests that not all eggs are created equal. Larger eggs often lead to more successful larvae. Nutritional condition is indicative of the amount of energy available for investment in growth or reproduction yet is currently overlooked in many studies of lobster populations.



J. Waller photo, DMR.

MLA Seeks Nominations for Board of Directors

MLA Members -- Don't miss your opportunity to influence the future of your organization and your industry!

Did you know?

- MLA Directors are elected for a 3-year term
- MLA Directors meet monthly (except August)
- Board members expected to attend at least 4 meetings/yr

Overview of MLA Board

- Maximum # of Board members: 21
- Current Board: 21 members
- **Number of Directors with Terms expiring: 7**
- Average age of MLA Board: 48
- Youngest MLA Board member: 29
- Oldest MLA Board member: 76

MLA Board representation

- Zone A 4 (2 expiring)
- Zone B 3 (1 expiring)
- Zone C 4 (1 expiring)
- Zone D 3
- Zone E 2
- Zone F 2 (2 expiring)
- Zone G 3 (2 expiring)
- Islands represented: 5

2025 Board Priorities

- Dedicated lobstermen who care about the future of the industry
- Lobstermen who can talk about the industry’s needs and priorities
- Balanced industry representation across the state

MLA Director Nomination Form (detach and return)

Nomination Requirements

- To make a nomination, you must be an MLA member in good standing.
- All nominees must hold a Maine lobster license & be an MLA member in good standing.
- Deadline for nominations: January 31, 2025.
- Feel free to nominate yourself, or someone else.

Nominee Information (must be MLA member)

Name: _____

Fishing Port: _____

Zone: _____ Town of residence: _____

Please let us know how this nominee could contribute to the MLA Board:

Person submitting nomination (must be MLA member)

Name: _____

Lobster Lic. #: _____



**Thank you
for helping to keep
the MLA strong!**

Mail your nomination to the MLA office: MLA, 2 Storer St, Ste 203, Kennebunk, ME 04043
Or feel free to call in your nomination to 967-4555 or email: patrice@mainelobstermen.org.



MAINE LOBSTERMEN'S ASSOCIATION UPDATE

BAIT FISHERIES CLOSE FOR 2024

Maine's menhaden episodic event set aside fishery closed on October 31. The state prohibited the commercial harvesting of menhaden until further notice while DMR assesses landings and the potential for quota transfers. Individuals holding non-commercial licenses may continue to harvest subject to the non-commercial limit through to November 30.

According to DMR, reporting non-compliance remains an issue in menhaden fishery. Non-compliance with the daily reporting requirement for menhaden results in overages and consequently lost harvesting opportunities statewide.

ASMFC announced the closure of the directed Area 1A herring fishery, effective November 12, when herring landings were predicted to reach 92% of the allocation. The Area 1A directed fishery will remain closed until further notice.

During a closure, vessels participating in other fisheries may retain and land an incidental catch of herring that does not exceed 2,000 pounds per trip or calendar day. In addition, directed herring vessels traveling through Area 1A must have all fishing gear stowed.

The fishery in herring Areas 1B, 2 and 3 remains open with nearly 10,000 MT of quota yet to be landed. The fixed gear set-aside of 30 metric tons will continue to be available to fixed gear fishermen operating in Area 1A west of Cutler through December 31, 2024.

BOEM SELLS OFFSHORE WIND LEASES IN GULF OF MAINE

On October 29, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) auctioned off eight leases encompassing 850,000 acres of the Gulf of Maine. Fourteen companies were eligible to bid on the eight lease areas, however, only two offered bids on just four leases.

Avangrid Renewables successfully bid on a 98,565-acre tract for \$4,928,250, and a second 124,897-acre site for \$6,244,850. Both lease areas are approximately 29.5 nautical miles from Massachusetts. Invenery NE Offshore Wind bid \$4,892,700, for a 97,854 acre-tract approximately 46.2 miles from Maine and \$5,889,000 for a second 117,780-acre site approximately 21.6 miles of Cape Cod. Each company was limited to no more than two leases.

As part of their bids, the two companies also committed to more than \$5.4 million in bidding credits. Bidding credits are binding agreements to invest over \$2.7 million in workforce training and domestic supply chain development and \$2.7 million for fisheries compensatory mitigation.

The leases do not authorize the construction or operation of any offshore wind facilities. Rather, they provide the right to submit a project plan for BOEM's review.

MLA JUNIOR HARVESTER

Ezra Miller, 15, took to lobstering as if he was born to it. And, in the Miller family, that is largely true. The St. George family is bursting with lobstermen. His uncles, cousins, grandfather, and oldest brother all lobster full-time and his two older brothers held student lobster licenses for many years. The youngest of the four boys, "I was eight when I got my license," he recalled. "My whole family does it."

His father, Jake Miller, lobstered when he was a young man. When he was 18, Jake's father Dan gave him a choice: he would help set him up in a boat and traps or help him attend college. Jake took the second option and is now senior vice-president of First National Bank. "I taught my boys how to lobster with my recreational license," he said. "It's a family tradition."

Ezra, a sophomore at Camden Hills Regional High School, lobsters from a 19-foot Pointer skiff handed down by his oldest brother, Silas. He tends his fifty traps each weekend during the lobster season and plans to increase to 150 next year.

When he was a child, he learned to fish in that skiff, called *Whistle Trigger* in honor of Tim Holmes, a well-loved Tenants Harbor resident now deceased. His brothers kept an eye on him as he learned the ropes. "I was pretty competitive with them," he admitted. "I wanted to come out on top and do the best."

The 2024 lobster season turned out well, Ezra said, largely because the price was higher. "The catch wasn't as good, but I did alright because of the price." He lobsters from the Tenants Harbor Fisherman's Co-op, home base for so many of the Miller clan. "There's competition with the other guys my age. You want to be one up on them, to be able to brag. But it's all friendly," he said.

Now that winter is here, Ezra practices and plays high school basketball as part of the Camden Hills basketball program. Come spring he will move into baseball as a member of the school's baseball team. Being an athlete and working on the water are what he really loves. "I love being outside. I love being my own boss and setting my own schedule," he said. "I'm worried that I won't be able to do it in the future, because of whale regulations, the gauge change, and offshore windmills."



Ezra Miller.

MLA BUSINESS MEMBER OF THE MONTH: SOFTPOINT INDUSTRIES

It's quickly obvious that Van Macomb likes his job. President of SoftPoint Industries in Allentown, Pennsylvania, Macomb talks enthusiastically about SoftSand, a rubber particle that can be added to any paint to provide a non-skid surface. The particles, about ¼-inch in size, are made using a proprietary process and will work in most urethane, epoxy, and acrylic coatings.

"We used it with Pat Feeney up in Cutler in 2016. He was finding the glued-down mats were just no good and wanted to try something different," Macomb said. "They have the open transom boats around there and you don't want to fool around."

The trick, said Macomb, was making sure that there was good adhesion between the particle and the covering. SoftSand particles can be added to paint before application or sprinkled on afterward. They add a little bit of cushion for the feet and do not chafe and cut as smaller sand particles do. Unlike sand, which abrades with a lot of traffic, SoftSand wears well.



A lobster boat at Pat Feeney's shop with a SoftSand deck. SoftPoint Industries photo.

"Pat Feeney has eight years with it now and sure, it will eventually wear out. But it's easily repairable," Macomb said.

While attending the Maine Boat Show in Portland some years ago Macomb met a Hamilton Marine sales representative. Soon he was taking a trip with company president Wayne Hamilton to see some of the fishing boats using his product. Hamilton Marine is now the exclusive distributor of SoftSand in Maine.

"I like coming to Maine," Macomb said. "I've been up three times this year. I talk to lobstermen all the time. They are under all sorts of pressure. I think the threat of new regulations related to the right whales is really paralyzing to them. They don't feel they have a secure future."

Softpoint Industries
Van Macomb, president
sales@softsandsubber.com
484-225-3710



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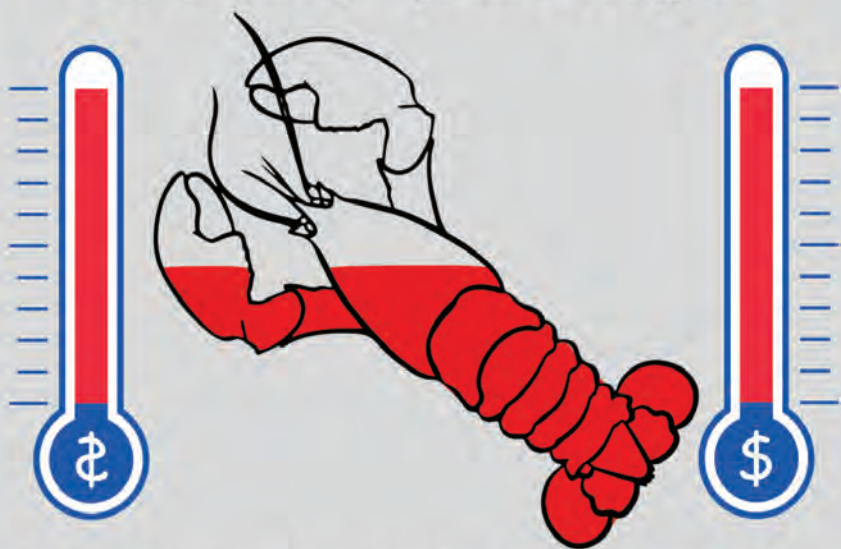
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honor of the Steele family*

Time is running out to make a year end contribution to the Legal Defense Fund. Donate today.

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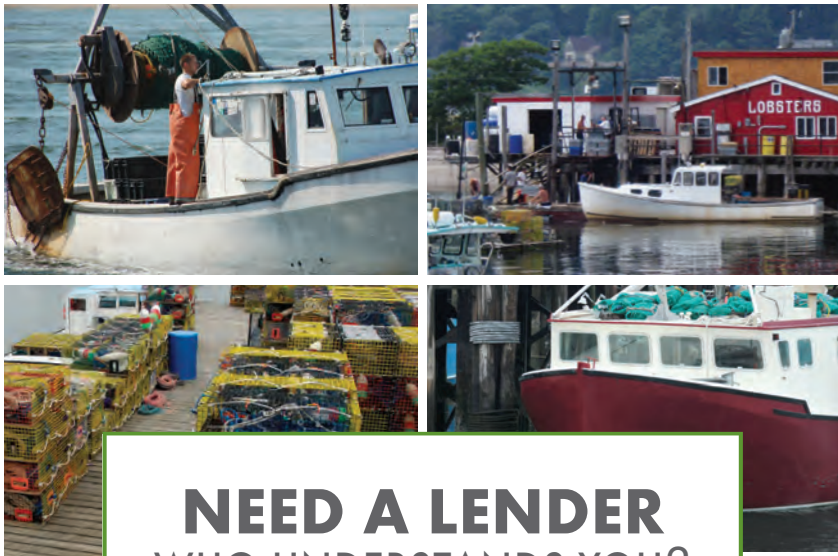
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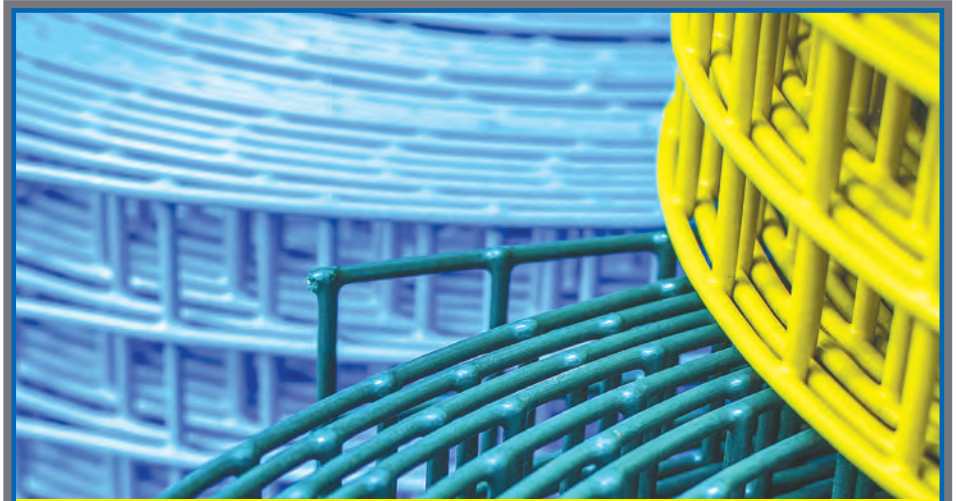
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2

OUR ANNUAL NATIONAL LOBSTER DAY AND MAINE LOBSTER WEEK

promotions were amplified through partnerships with micro and nano food influencers and our owned social media channels this year. **1.05MM** consumers saw our content spurring exciting social conversations, **35K** engagements, and grassroots community posts by big names like Forbes, PBS, Red Lobster, and more, all amplified on our social channels.

3

OUR MAINE LOBSTER TRAIL CAMPAIGN

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TO YOUR HEALTH: *Strengthen, protect your knees for the long haul*

By Tiffany Tam, MD, and Ann Backus, MS,
Harvard Chan School of Public Health

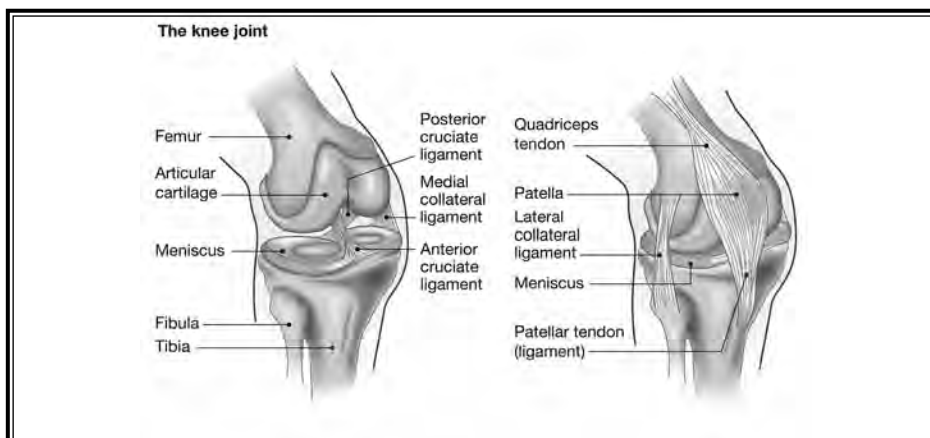
For many Maine lobstermen, the Gulf of Maine is more than just a work environment. It's a way of life. But the unpredictable nature of the ocean and the strenuousness of lobstering place significant demands on the human body, especially the knees.

Standing all day on a slippery, rocking deck while hauling traps may seem like second nature to lobstermen. However, the knees are actually working overtime to maintain balance and stability, even more so in rough seas.

Consider a typical day on a lobster boat. You are already at sea by sunrise, checking traps. The ocean is constantly in motion. As the deck pitches and rolls with the waves, your knees act as shock absorbers, adjusting constantly to keep you upright. Lobstermen's work involves more than just standing. Hauling traps may require bracing your knees on the rail and kicking wet rope off to the side as it accumulates on the deck, adding a torquing motion and force to the knee. These actions may seem small but the strain on the knee adds up, increasing the risk of knee injury.

According to the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons (AAOS), repeated strain on the knee—especially from standing and adjusting to an unstable surface—can lead to overuse injuries. Conditions include patellofemoral pain syndrome, where pain is felt around the kneecap, and tendinitis, which involves inflammation of the tendons. These injuries of the knee occur when the muscles, tendons, or joints are overworked without enough time to recover. When the knee is constantly in motion without rest, the cartilage that cushions the bones can wear down.

More acutely, sudden shifts on a rocking deck, especially when it is wet and slippery, can result in a meniscus tear or ligament injury. The meniscus cushions the space between the bones of the lower and upper leg and distributes weight evenly across the knee joint. Ligaments connect bone to bone, or cartilage to bone. A tear in either a meniscus or a ligament is very painful and can require medical or surgical intervention. The direct pressure of the



knees against the rail when hauling traps can result in bursitis, a swelling of the fluid sac cushioning the knee joint.

While the sea may be unpredictable, there are steps lobstermen can take to help protect their knees. Here are some simple strategies you can use to prevent knee injuries:

- **Stretch and strengthen your knees:** Before a day on the water, take time to warm up and stretch your hamstrings, quadriceps, and calves. Stretch after returning to the wharf, too. At home, perform squats and lunges to strengthen muscles around the knee.
- **Wear proper footwear:** Non-slip boots with good arch support and shock absorption can reduce the risk of slipping and better cushion each step to prevent knee pain.
- **Move mindfully:** Avoid repetitive, forceful movements when possible. Consider shifting weight from one leg to the other when bracing against the rail.
- **Take rest breaks:** Give your knees a chance to rest when possible, even for a few minutes. Find a lobster trap or rail to sit on safely.
- **Use protective equipment:** Consider a knee brace or knee pads for extra stability and protection during heavy-duty work.

For the lobster boat, knee protection recommendations include installing a rope locker or rope bin to avoid having to kick rope out of the way and adding an anti-slip mat with beveled edges near the hauler and along the rail. Some fishermen have cut away a semi-circle in the rail where they stand to haul, which provides a stabilizing curve for the body and reduces the reach to the davit.

Finally, if you have knee pain that is severe, are unable to move the knee, the knee gives out while walking, or you have knee pain that is not getting better with the RICE protocol (rest, ice, compress, elevate) please seek medical attention.

As you head out to sea this winter season, remember that your knees work hard for you. Strengthen and protect them now for the future.

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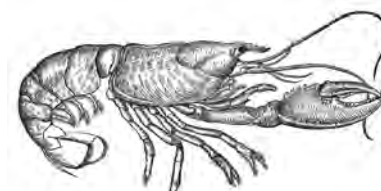
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Members and friends of the MLA gathered for a festive evening on November 2 to celebrate the organization's 70th year. The evening at SaltWater Fields Event Center and Barn in South Thomaston featured food, drinks, music and camaraderie. Senator Angus King, Representative Chellie Pingree, Representative Jared Golden, and Governor Janet Mills each spoke about the importance of the MLA

over the years and its significant contributions to the vitality of the Maine lobster industry. MLA President Kristan Porter thanked the many businesses, communities and individuals who have provided so much support during the MLA's tenure, particularly during the past four years.



MLA President Kristan Porter. MLA photos.



Left to right, Sen. King, David Cousens, Patrice McCarron, Willis Spear, Gov. Janet Mills, Kristan Porter.



Left to right, Rep. Chellie Pingree, Curt Brown, Rep. Jared Golden, MLA board member Johnny McCarthy.



MLA board member Chris Welch and wife Stevie.



Left to right, Ali McCarthy with brother Sam and his partner Lindsay.



Left, MLA board member Jarod Bray and wife Leslie; right, MLA board member Andy Havener and his wife Cecily.

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- Advocated to keep offshore wind farms out of LMA 1
- Opposed increasing the lobster measure
- Opposed mandatory trackers on federal lobster boats
- Opposed 100% harvester reporting
- Sued Monterey Bay Aquarium over red listing of Maine lobster



Be a part of the Maine Lobstermen's Association!

The MLA is your staunch advocate, fighting to keep you fishing!

The MLA has a proven track record of success and is the only fishing group that has the expertise, knowledge, and unwavering determination to safeguard Maine's lobster fishery.



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In the
NEWS

CLF PLANS TO SUE COOKE AQUACULTURE OVER MAINE SALMON OPERATIONS

The Conservation Law Foundation announced in November that it intends to sue an aquaculture giant for allegedly polluting Maine waters. The Conservation Law Foundation said Cooke Aquaculture's Downeast salmon pens release fish feces, fish food, and pieces of dead salmon, polluting the water column and the ocean floor. CLF claims Cooke's aquaculture operations in Maine have violated conditions of its Maine Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits and the Federal Clean Water Act. Cooke responded immediately to the allegations, stating CLF's claims that the company has violated the Clean Water Act and its permits are "false, misleading, and lack any substantiating evidence." The CLF lawsuit is targeting 13 different Cooke sites: three sites near Swans Island, three sites near Eastern Bay, four sites in Machias Bay, and three sites in Cobscook Bay.

MAINE WIND RESEARCH AREA BOTTOM TRAWL SURVEY BEGINS IN JANUARY

The bottom trawl survey of the Maine Research Array Wind Energy Area, previously scheduled to begin on October 15, 2024, has been re-scheduled to take place between January 13 and March 1, 2025. The actual sampling period is not set; the survey will be conducted during 7-10 days within this timeframe. The exact dates will be weather dependent. Operations will be conducted during daylight hours. The F/V Northern Lights, a 55' trawler, will transit from Portland to the sampling area. The crew will conduct approximately 37 tows over 7-10 days of sampling.

U.S. SEAFOOD LANDINGS, VALUE DOWN IN 2022

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's "Fisheries of the United States," lobster was the second most valuable commercial fishery in the nation in 2022. Seafood landings and value at U.S. ports,

however, were down. Landings fell 2.6% to 8.4 billion pounds while the value of the catch dropped 11% to \$5.9 billion. The port with the highest volume of catch was Dutch Harbor, Alaska, for the 25th consecutive year. The port with the highest value catch was New Bedford, Massachusetts, for the 22nd consecutive year. U.S. consumers ate slightly less seafood in 2022. Per capita consumption fell about 3% to 19.8 pounds. However, 2021 was a historically high year for seafood consumption. In 2022 the top ten most consumed species made up 79% of total consumption, showing that consumers are diversifying their seafood choices.

MAINE'S LAST SEAFOOD CANNERY TO CLOSE

Bar Harbor Foods, Maine's oldest seafood cannery, will cease operations on December 14. Sea Watch International, which bought Bar Harbor Foods in 2016, operates a more efficient processing plant in Milford, Delaware, and that plant will produce Bar Harbor Foods products. The cannery, located on the shore of Machias Bay, produced clam juice, tins of fish and other seafood products for more than 100 years. In the past, hundreds of canneries operated along Maine's coast, employing thousands of workers. But the industry began to decline in the decades after World War II, and by the 1980s the vast majority had closed. The state's last sardine cannery, in Prospect Harbor, closed in 2010.

WHALE-SAVING SHIP SPEED RULE REMAINS IN LIMBO

A proposed federal rule seeking to limit speeds of ocean-going vessels 35-feet and longer during the annual North Atlantic right whale calving season is awaiting final action by the Biden administration. The amended rule, intended to protect the critically endangered species from deadly ship strikes, is in the Office of Management and Budgets and is listed online with a final action date of "11/00/2024," giving rule proponents and opponents no indication of its fate in the final months of the Biden administration. Proponents of the rule say slowing ships 35-feet and longer to 10 knots is the most effective way to protect the whales from ship strikes. Opponents of the rule, which already applies to ships 65-feet and longer, say it is too restrictive and will hurt businesses, such as charter fishing operations.

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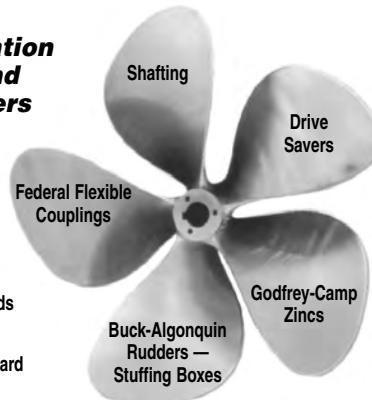
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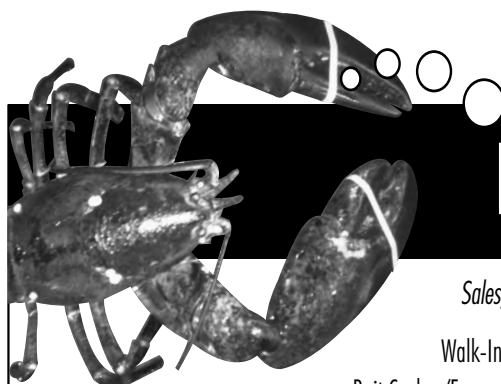
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Events Calendar

More details on all of these events can be found online at www.maine lobstermen.org

December 2
Central Regional Shellfish Meeting, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Waldo County YMCA, Belfast.

p.m., hosted by Maine Sea Grant at Kittery Community Center. Register at seagrant.umaine.edu/workingwaterfrontstorms.

December 3
Community conversation about working waterfront preparedness and resilience, 5-7 p.m., hosted by Maine Sea Grant at Gulf of Maine Research Institute, Portland. Register at seagrant.umaine.edu/workingwaterfrontstorms.

December 10
Community conversation about working waterfront preparedness and resilience, 5-7 p.m., hosted by Maine Sea Grant at Washington Academy, East Machias. Register at seagrant.umaine.edu/workingwaterfrontstorms.

December 3-5
New England Fishery Management Council meeting, Hotel Viking, Newport, RI.

December 11
"Sea State: Hope and the Gulf of Maine," 5:30-7:30 p.m., Gulf of Maine Research Institute, Portland.

December 4
Maine Lobstermen's Association board meeting, 5 p.m., Darby's restaurant, Belfast.

December 12
Community conversation about working waterfront preparedness and resilience, 5-7 p.m., hosted by Maine Sea Grant at Peabody Library, Jonesport. Register at seagrant.umaine.edu/workingwaterfrontstorms.

Eastern Regional Shellfish Meeting, noon-2 p.m., University of Maine Machias Reynold Center, Machias.

Aquaculture Public Scoping Session, Norumbega Oyster, 1 p.m., South Bristol Town Hall.

ASMFC Shrimp Advisors and Shrimp Section, 9 a.m.-3p.m., Westin Harborview Hotel, Portland. FMI: www.asafc.org.

December 5
Southern Regional Shellfish Meeting, 12:30 p.m.-2:30 p.m., Curtis Memorial Library, Brunswick.

December 20
Aquaculture Public Scoping Session – Stewart Hunt, 3 p.m., Yarmouth Town Hall.

Community conversation about working waterfront preparedness and resilience, 5-7

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