



# LANDINGS

News & Views from Maine's Lobstering Community

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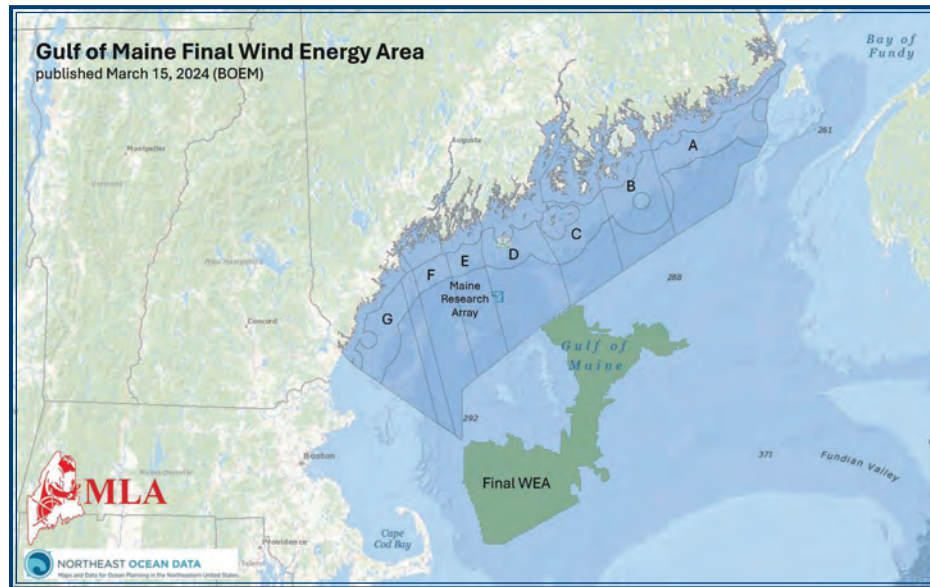
## FINAL FEDERAL WIND LEASE AREA EXCLUDES LMA 1

By MLA staff

On March 15 the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) announced the Final Wind Energy Area (WEA) for the Gulf of Maine. BOEM plans to auction off leases within that area for offshore wind energy projects later this year. The area excludes all of Lobster Management Area 1.

The final WEA encompasses approximately 2 million acres off the coasts of Maine, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire, ranging from 23 to 92 miles from the coast. The final WEA is 43% smaller than the draft WEA released last fall. According to BOEM, the designated area has the potential to support 32 GW of wind energy, which is significantly more than the stated offshore energy goals of Massachusetts and Maine (Maine: 3 GW; Massachusetts: 10 GW).

Response to the BOEM announcement was immediate.



“The Maine Lobstermen’s Association (MLA) appreciates that BOEM’s Final Wind Energy Area (WEA) removes Lobster Management Area 1. MLA worked tirelessly with Maine’s fishing industry, our congressional delegation, and Governor Mills to ensure prime lobster fishing grounds are spared from industrial development. We are proud that so many lobstermen have constructively engaged in this process and grateful that the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management has listened to their concerns,” the Maine Lobstermen’s Association said in a press statement.

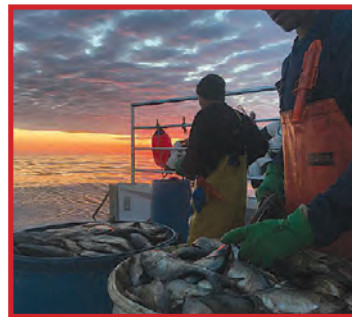
“But there is still much work to do. Secondary Area C, an area where many endangered North Atlantic right whales are sighted, is included in the Final Wind Energy Area. MLA remains steadfast in its position that no area of the Gulf of Maine should be industrialized with offshore wind. There are still

too many unanswered questions about the impacts of offshore wind on the marine environment, commercial fishermen and our fishing heritage.”

Continued on page 4

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## DMR'S 2023 LOBSTER SURVEYS GIVE REASON FOR OPTIMISM

By Melissa Waterman

The Department of Marine Resources (DMR) announced at the Maine Fishermen’s Forum preliminary 2023 commercial fisheries landings figures and reviewed results of the department’s 2023 lobster surveys.

According to DMR’s preliminary landings data, Maine commercial fishermen landed \$611,277,692 in value in 2023, up \$25 million from 2022. The jump in overall value came from a strong boat price for lobster. The price paid to lobstermen increased from \$3.97 per pound in 2022 to \$4.95 per pound in 2023. The pounds of lobster landed, however, decreased in 2023 to 93,734,116, down from 98,753,758 pounds in 2022.

DMR’s marine resource scientist Kathleen Reardon opened the lobster science session with a review of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission’s (ASMFC) Addendum 27 to the lobster fishery management plan, which requires a minimum gauge size increase in January 2025.

The increase is based on a trigger set in the lobster management plan. If the three-year average in abundance of sub-legal lobsters (71-80 mm in size) decreases by 35% or more, then management action is triggered. The abundance of sub-legal lobsters is determined from three different surveys — two trawl surveys and the ventless trap survey. It is not based on landings or the lobster settlement index. That average showed a 39% decline based on data from 2020, 2021, and 2022 and continues to show a 39% decline with the addition of the 2023 data.

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# COASTAL OUTLOOK *Thoughts from MLCA President Amber-Jean Nickel*

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 207-967-6221  
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The month of March zoomed by with yet another major storm striking the coast. Fortunately, the damage from this third winter storm was not nearly as devastating as the two events in January. On March 21 President Biden announced a major disaster declaration for Maine as a result of those two storms, unlocking funds through the Federal Emergency Management Agency for rebuilding public infrastructure and initiating programs to help private property owners as well.

In addition, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) announced earlier in March the contours of the final Wind Energy Area (WEA) in the Gulf of Maine. The final WEA encompasses approximately 2 million acres off the coasts of Maine, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire, and is 43% smaller than the draft WEA released last fall. Through the concerted efforts of Maine lobstermen, Congressional delegation, and Governor Mills, Lobster Management Area 1 was excluded from the final WEA. We have compiled a selection of letters from lobstermen submitted to BOEM last fall that vehemently argued for the LMA 1 exclusion.

The Maine Fishermen's Forum in early March included an entire day of sessions about offshore wind energy developments in the Gulf of Maine, which we summarize in this issue of *Landings*. A portion of the discussion focused on the Mills administration's wind energy research array application to BOEM for ten floating turbines capable of generating 144 megawatts (MW) of electricity. In addition, staff from BOEM spoke about the complex permitting process for both the Maine research project and larger commercial scale projects that may be developed in the Gulf of Maine WEA.

Department of Marine Resources staff presented an optimistic report on the status of the lobster resource based on the 2023 results from a multitude of lobster surveys conducted each year. Lobster landings in 2023 declined compared to 2022, from 98,753,758 pounds to 93,734,116.

Survey data showed that juvenile lobster settlement, however, had increased throughout the Gulf area, as had lobster larvae numbers. The number of sublegal lobsters remained stable in the west but continued to decline in the eastern region. Both areas remain well below historic highs.

Staff from the federal science and management branches of NOAA Fisheries and the New England Fishery Management Council attended the Forum, as they do each year, to answer questions from the public. This year the panel comprised Michael Pentony, Regional Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service GARFO; Jon Hare, Science and Research Director, Northeast Fisheries Science Center; Eric Reid, chair of the New England Fishery Management Council; and Cate O'Keefe, Executive Director of the New England Fishery Management Council. Attendees asked questions on the various issues now facing New England fishermen, including NMFS's mandate to complete a new Biological Opinion on the lobster and crab fisheries by 2028. Pointed questions from the Maine Lobstermen's Association about how the agency plans to meet that deadline and the assumptions it will use to craft the Opinion livened up the session.

In other news, individuals and organizations throughout Maine continue to find ways to support the Maine Lobster

Community Alliance (MLCA) and the lobster fishery. The second annual "Chowder's On" event in Kittery drew 200 people to the STAR Theatre for lobster stew, music, and a live auction and raffle organized by Betsy Wish, Charlene Hoyt, Holly Dupuis, Tammy Melcher, Laura Baxter, and Kittery lobsterman Dave Kaselauskas. When the gala afternoon ended, more than \$24,000 had been raised to support the lobster industry.

Finally, the MLCA would like to congratulate the Maine Lobstermen's Association on

its 70th anniversary. The MLA has been in the trenches for Maine lobstermen and their communities since 1954. The MLA's 70th annual meeting drew an overflow crowd this year to celebrate the organization's remarkable achievements in 2023 and to prepare for the work ahead. As Curt Brown, marine biologist at Ready Seafood, pointed out in a commemorative video produced by the MLA, "No one comes to Maine to eat chicken."

We hope you enjoy this issue of *Landings* and look forward to your thoughts about future issues.



*B. Wish photo.*

*Amber-Jean*

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# FISHERMEN PRESS REGULATORS WITH TOUGH QUESTIONS AT FORUM

By *Melissa Waterman*

Each year at the Maine Fishermen's Forum, a cadre of staff from the federal science and management branches of NOAA Fisheries and regional management council representatives, gather to answer questions from those attending the Forum. This year the panel comprised Michael Pentony, Regional Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service GARFO; Jon Hare, Science and Research Director, Northeast Fisheries Science Center; Eric Reid, chair of the New England Fishery Management Council; and Cate O'Keefe, Executive Director of the New England Fishery Management Council.

Questions ranged widely during the session. Dana Morse, Maine Sea Grant, asked about the effect of climate change on Gulf of Maine fisheries and access to new species for commercial fishermen. "The Council has a set of species that it manages," responded Eric Reid. "There are only two that we co-manage with the Mid-Atlantic Council. It's an issue that the East Coast Climate Change group is discussing. As the biomass moves north and east how are we going to manage and catch them?"

"There's been a decline in participation on the Council from commercial fishermen. How can the Council re-engage with fishermen?" asked Ben Martens, executive director of Maine Coast Fishermen's Association. "It's a real problem," said Cate O'Keefe. "Where are the opportunities to bring back more fishing opportunities? Also, too much negative news dampens involvement." Reid added, "The question is at what point is it worth it for me, a fisherman, to become involved in this process. We are all frustrated but the solution isn't to stay home and be mad."

Another audience member asked specifically about abrupt changes in quota for species such as haddock. "They don't swing that much year-to-year," Jon Hare responded. "It's levelling out variability."

Patrice McCarron, policy director for the Maine Lobstermen's Association (MLA), asked a question related to the timeline for new whale rules, and a new Biological Opinion, both due by the end of 2028, and lobstermen's chance to engage in those processes. "There is an opportunity for NMFS to fill data gaps. DMR has been clear about how it will spend its money on research. What are you doing and what are your milestones?" she asked.

Jon Hare referred to the \$26 million available through the 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act which went to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission for right whale conservation efforts and the \$20 million to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for on-demand (ropeless) gear work, noting that those are the funds that DMR has already discussed a workplan

for. NMFS itself has also received additional funds. There hasn't been as much detail released about this since spending plans are still in development. Hare provided a high level overview. NMFS has \$3 million for monitoring, which Hare said will be used for aerial coverage in the Gulf of Maine and mid-Atlantic. The Inflation Reduction Act provided \$82 million for right whale conservation activities. Of that \$20 million goes to addressing entanglement risk through development of ropeless gear; \$20 million goes to develop technology to reduce vessel strike; and \$25 million is dedicated to improved computer modelling and increased monitoring.

Michael Pentony addressed the agency's timeline to reach the 2028 deadline for a new Biological Opinion on the lobster and crab fisheries. "Concerning the Biological Opinion, we have two conflicting legal opinions on that. We have to reconcile those," he said. McCarron pointed out that the 2023 legal ruling from the MLA's appeal was very clear, and most of the rulings in the environmental lawsuit have been vacated, leaving no room for "conflicting legal opinions."

In the last Biological Opinion "we weren't able to analyze or understand the implications of measures that Canada has taken over the last several years to reduce their risk, we didn't have and unfortunately still don't have a final rule for vessel speed, we weren't able, in our final Biop, to understand or give any credit to the reduction from risk from a new speed rule," Pentony continued. "Canada has done things that have reduced risk to some degree so we're able to incorporate that into the next Biop as well as fully understand and evaluate the impact of the measures we took in 2021."

Mary Ann Mason, the MLA's attorney, asked a follow-up question concerning the Biological Opinion. "The Court of Appeals noted that risk scenarios [considered in the Biological Opinion] should be 'reasonably likely' to occur, not worst-case scenarios. Where will the Biological Opinion be focusing to comply with guidelines from the court?" she asked.


"We don't have clear guidance. We have to look at the ruling. We don't have a playbook for how to do that," Pentony responded. "It puts us back at the drawing board. How do we characterize scenarios in light of the court decision? We will figure out a path forward and we will inform the TRT (Take Reduction Team) as that happens."

"While you are doing that, don't stay behind a screen," Mason said. "Don't just show up with something at the end of the timeline. It is important to share your principles with the public."



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Final WEA continued from page 1

“We appreciate that the bureau has heeded our concerns and the majority of the concerns of Maine’s fishing communities in its final designation of wind energy areas for the Gulf of Maine,” Governor Janet Mills, U.S. Rep. Chellie Pingree, and Sens. Susan Collins and Angus King said in a statement. “This decision preserves vital fishing grounds and seeks to minimize potential environmental and ecological impacts to the Gulf of Maine... We look forward to reviewing the final map in detail and urge the Bureau to continue to engage with Maine’s fishing industry, coastal communities, Tribal governments, and other key maritime users and stakeholders as the commercial leasing process moves forward.”

Seventeen fisheries organizations from throughout New England signed a joint statement taking BOEM to task over the final WEA. “The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management’s (BOEM) final designation of an enormous Wind Energy Area (WEA) for the Gulf of Maine is the culmination of a rushed development process that is poorly informed on economic, scientific, environmental and cultural issues of paramount importance. Without adequate consideration of these issues, leasing in BOEM’s WEA designation should not be pursued.”

## LOBSTERMEN SHOW UNITY IN COMMENTS ON WIND ENERGY AREA

The MLA put out a call to Maine lobstermen to tell BOEM that we don’t want offshore wind in the Gulf of Maine and that BOEM must keep it out of Lobster Management Area 1. Lobstermen quickly registered their concerns about BOEM’s draft Wind Energy Area (WEA) during the public comment period last fall. There was unanimity among the 300+ letters received during the public comment period, which ended November 20, 2023, that LMA 1 should not be included in any Gulf of Maine lease area. And when BOEM announced the final WEA on March 15, LMA 1 was no longer under consideration. Below is a sampling of lobster industry comments submitted to BOEM.

### Thomas Bell, Gouldsboro

I’ve been lobster fishing in Downeast Maine since 2003. No future offshore wind project should be developed inside LMA 1 due to the potential risk to all fisheries in the area. There are plenty of other areas to develop that would not put current industries and people’s jobs and heritage at risk.

The groups registered particular alarm about inclusion of the one remaining secondary area of interest in the WEA. “Despite improvements, the Final WEA leaves a large area open to offshore wind development which directly imperils commercial fishing, sensitive habitats, and maritime communities that depend on the fishing industry. The portion of the WEA formerly called “Secondary area C” is particularly concerning because it encompasses prime groundfishing territory, now slated to close permanently to fishermen who are ably stewarding it.”

BOEM will begin preparing an environmental assessment about the effects of offshore wind development in the area. The public will have an opportunity to comment on the draft and final environmental assessments. The agency indicated that it would be six to eight years after the lease auction before a developer has the multiple state and federal permits needed to construct an offshore wind energy project in the WEA.

### Jimmy Wotton, Friendship

I will be directly affected if development occurs in Secondary Area A. Some years I fish the majority of my lobster gear inside Secondary Area A for a few months. The amount of gear, gear location and the duration of time spent there each year depends on the migration trends of lobsters in that year. The ability to move freely within that area is crucial to my business model, as well as to the others that fish there. If development of wind power displaces me and the others that fish there, the economic impact will not only affect us. It will be felt by all lobstermen in all the zones that development occurs in. The ripple effect will be immense, everyone will be affected. The small coastal towns will be especially affected. Lobstering and lobstering related activities account for the majority of jobs and businesses in these towns. Any disruption of fishing activity will be felt by all.

### Erik Benner, Friendship

I am a 4th generation lobsterman. I am 21, I have two full time crew members that are also around my age. We fish year-round. Having windmills in the Gulf of Maine will cripple this industry and our families and our towns. When you ask anyone out of the state what they think of when you say Maine, they say Maine lobster. It won’t just affect us as lobsterman but will hurt the whole state.

### Shaun McLellan, South Thomaston

I think the biggest question is, Why here? Why would you put anything in the Gulf of Maine that could potentially have a negative impact? One of the richest and most diverse fishing grounds in the world. Lobster, crab, scallops, groundfish, shrimp, pelagic fish, bait fish, etc. The Gulf of Maine is not the area for a windmill experiment. .... Go run this experiment somewhere else. Not in the Gulf of Maine.

### Dwight Staples, Deer Isle

Please take the two draft areas in LMA 1 out. Both those areas are sensitive to the Maine lobstering industry. It will push fishermen into other zones that already have fisherman in it. You can’t keep taking bottom away from the hard working men and women that fish. Also having them this close would be a terrible eye sore to the coastal communities that look out there every day. This will also impact local economies. So I would say, as I’m sure you’ve heard over and over, don’t put the windmills there.

### Travis Doughty, Cushing

I’m a lobsterman from Cushing, Maine. I’m opposed to all wind farms in the Gulf of Maine. These grounds are a huge resource for the people of the United States, not only Maine. These grounds feed numerous communities as a source of income and as a food resource. The bad outweigh the good far too much to consider this type of effort in the Gulf let alone on this scale. ... I feel like it needs more time and research with unbiased sources. Maine lobstermen are all opposed to this. You will be hard pressed to find one who isn’t.

### Andrew Havener, Friendship









... I am a fifth-generation lobsterman from Friendship Harbor. I fish in econdary area A from November until sometime in April or May, depending on the year. I typically fish 20 trawls throughout the winter, which equals roughly half of my gear. If I were unable to fish in this area, I would be forced to squeeze into a much smaller area closer to shore. It would greatly affect my profitability in the winter months, which would not only impact my family of five, but my stern men and their families, of equal size, as well.

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**Marshall Spear, Yarmouth**

This area [Gulf of Maine] is a public resource. It's not for sale or to be sold to private corporations for the benefit of very few. This area has been used by the people of the United States to produce and make a very healthy form of income and independence. How do we want the Gulf of Maine to look like in the next 20 years? To sell this off to BOEM and let them carve it out as theirs is ridiculous and absurd. ... The ocean is not for sale and the people of New England are going to prove that to you.

**Michael Dawson, New Harbor**

I am a commercial fisherman and have been for over 45 years I fish out of New Harbor, Maine. I strongly oppose windmill leases in the Gulf of Maine! ... I fish several months in the secondary area A and feel this should not even be on the table of any lease as it is a very productive fishing area and would be critical to our winter and spring fishing efforts.

**Wayne Delano, Friendship**

I'm a lobster fisherman out of Friendship. I strongly urge you to remove the secondary areas from consideration for possible offshore wind leasing. I fish 400 traps inside this area for 8 months of the year, that's half the traps I'm allowed to fish. This will have devastating impact on myself, my family and my community. ... If this area is leased out for offshore wind it will cause a severe ripple effect to the surrounding areas, forcing guys to move from traditional fishing areas to other already crowded areas. This just doesn't happen. We cannot just move to fishing grounds we do not normally fish. This will cause gear conflicts that will make the national news. ... Please eliminate these secondary areas being considered, both of them.

**Madison, Alyssa, Maya, and Kara, Class of 2023, Deer Isle-Stonington High School**

I would be concerned about the impact on local businesses and how much the lobstering industry influences our local economy. It would cause a lot of arguments and fighting on the water, which already happens. We have trap wars going on and what happens when we add more to the mix? With more people in one spot, there won't be enough resources for people to make money. ... My dad would lose his job and his mind. My dad didn't finish high school. What is he going to do if he can't keep lobstering? Our parents are going to struggle to get a job. It would tear apart our community. We would move away. That is the only reason my mom lives around here is to go lobstering.

**Jonathan Achorn, Friendship**

Windmills in the ocean is not the answer and will cause more harm than any possible good. I'm a lobster fisherman in zone D and fish not far from the secondary area A which I would like to fish in the future. ... I have an 11-year-old boy who lives and breathes all types of fishing and I want him to have a healthy thriving ocean to grow up on. I have 12-year-old that has different dreams but he still relies on lobster fishing to make money and I always want him to have that opportunity. Putting windmills in the ocean is going to change the ocean and not for the good! Please reconsider and save the ocean, the animals and all people that rely on the ocean...

**Zach Drehobl, Bailey Island**

I am 32 years old and working as a sternman in Mackerel Cove on Bailey Island. I have worked on many boats in the area starting full-time from the age of 17. That's 15 years of my life dedicated full time, year round to growing and learning this industry. I have grown to love the lobster industry and have decided to make it my career in life. I have been waiting patiently on the Zone F waitlist for close to 12 years learning the way of life and honing my skills as a fisherman. I am now #4 on the Zone F wait list and plan to start my own operation within the next year or two. ... These new regulations will destroy these life aspirations that my family and myself count on for EVERYTHING. ... TO US, LOBSTERING IS NOT JUST A JOB, IT IS LIFE.

**Andrew Spalding, Cumberland**

As a commercial lobster fisherman from Maine who fishes in the Gulf of Maine, I can't stress enough how opposed I am to any offshore windmills. The long-term effects of installation of the windmills and then the cables that will run to shore to the delicate ecosystem will be disastrous. Commercial fishing will be negatively affected.

**Abraham Philbrook, Bar Harbor**

I fish 75-100% of my gear in the secondary area B for 5-6 months out of the year. Leasing this area for windmills will have a major impact on my lobster practice. I stand against any attempt to lease any area that is used for fishing to a wind developer. Wind farms and fishing will not be able to coexist. ... Dozens of dead whales have been washing to shore where wind development has been happening, bringing into question the government's commitment to protect the very whales that us fishermen have been blamed for killing, forcing us to rework our entire fishery to reduce our risk by the smallest margins.

**Mack Kelley, Steuben**

How can anyone look at this and think it's a good idea? These windmills hardly work on land and you want to stick them in the worst environment possible. They will not be able to be maintained and they will turn into giant eye sores rotting away into the ocean. ... I'm a lobster fisherman and my biggest concern is what will happen to lobster? Will they be able to survive? Will I be able to survive and provide for my family like generations before me have? Will there be anything left for my children? ... This is a huge mistake and it will be remembered as nothing but a huger mistake.

**Willis Spear, Jr, Yarmouth**

I'm Willis Spear, Jr., a commercial fisherman who's fished the Gulf of Maine for over 60 years. BOEM has failed to listen to Maine lobstermen and fishermen in their opposition to floating wind farms in the Gulf of Maine because BOEM has put wind farms in very important fishing and lobstering grounds. BOEM has failed to read or even interpret documents and papers written by Walter Riches "Fishing Grounds of the Gulf of Maine," which states that every piece of the 119 fishing grounds in the Gulf of Maine is part of the whole. The Gulf of Maine cannot be divided into parts. Henry Bryant Bigelow's *Fishes of the Gulf of Maine* epitomizes the value of the Gulf of Maine's fishery in providing food for mankind. George Brown Goode's *The Fisheries and Fishery Industry of the United States Sec.3*, states very clearly it is one of the richest fishing grounds in the world. ... The offshore wind farms are not worth the gamble of destroying such a fragile ecosystem. I'm greatly opposed to the proposed wind farms.

**John Waldron, Kittery**

I am a lobster and tuna fisherman, 80 years old and have been commercial fishing most of my life. There should be no windmills in Maine or anywhere in New England because of the danger to whales and upsetting our way of life. All you have to do is look at places in Europe where they are and commercial fishing does not exist. The price of electricity has skyrocketed. With all the advances that have been made to make nuclear energy safer anybody that has any COMMON SENSE would know that is the way to go. I think somehow that there is something that is happening in our colleges that is killing COMMON SENSE in the professors and students!

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## MAINE LOBSTERMEN'S ASSOCIATION UPDATE

### Maine Lobstermen's Association

Advocating for a sustainable lobster resource and the fishermen and communities that depend on it since 1954.

President: Kristan Porter  
Cutler, 460-0560  
Vice-President: Craig Stewart  
Long Island, 653-6914  
Treasurer: Jarod Bray  
Matinicus, 542-8961  
Secretary: Chris Welch  
Kennebunk, 205-2093

Directors  
Bob Baines, Spruce Head, 596-9121  
Joshua Beal, Milbridge, 479-9624  
Sonny Beal, Beals Island, 356-1684  
Laurin Brooks, Kennebunk, 468-2165  
Herman Coombs, Orr's Island, 807-8596  
Gerry Cushman, Port Clyde, 372-6429  
Dustin Delano, Friendship, 542-7241  
Jim Dow, Bass Harbor, 460-2565  
Jamien Hallowell, S. Bristol, 380-7976  
Robert Ingalls, Bucks Harbor, 271-7199  
Jason Joyce, Swan's Island, 526-4109  
John McCarthy, Vinalhaven, 863-9984  
Jack Merrill, Islesford, 244-7884  
Troy Plummer, Boothbay, 350-7280  
John Tripp, Spruce Head, 691-9744  
Thomas Werner, Cape Elizabeth, 807-1048  
John Williams, Stonington, 367-2731

#### Staff

Chief Operating Officer  
Amber-Jean Nickel  
amberjean@mainelobstermen.org

Policy Director  
Patrice McCarron  
patrice@mainelobstermen.org

Director of Advancement  
Kevin Kelley  
kevin@mainelobstermen.org

Office Administrator  
Mindy Coath  
mindy@mainelobstermen.org

Membership Director  
Sunshine Mechtenberg  
sunshine@mainelobstermen.org

**Maine Lobstermen's Association**  
2 Storer St., suite 203  
Kennebunk, ME 04043  
207-967-4555  
www.mainelobstermen.org



## STEAMING AHEAD BY KRISTAN PORTER, MLA PRESIDENT

I don't think anyone likes getting older. Your knees hurt, your shoulders ache, your hearing is shot, and getting out of bed in the morning is no fun at all. Decades of fishing sure take their toll on you.

On the other hand, there's a lot to be said for getting older because you get smarter and overall, a little wiser. You don't make the same mistakes you did when you were young (you make different ones!) and you are more thoughtful, and even more cautious, about what you say and do.

That's why it was a sad moment to see some of the longest serving members of the MLA board of directors step down at our annual meeting in March. These guys brought a lot of wisdom to the MLA over the years. That wisdom came from the years they have spent on the water, at meetings, and just being alive.

John Williams, always accompanied by his wife Judy, made it to every board meeting where he shared his common sense and open-mindedness. Jack Merrill — MLA's longest

men who bring varying points of view to the organization. Each person who serves on the board comes from a specific part of the coast which you can bet they know like the back of their hands. They bring that knowledge and perspective to the board when we have to deal with hard topics, like offshore wind development or gauge changes, yet are able to focus on what's good for the fishery as a whole when decisions have to be made.

The older board members provide historic knowledge as they can remember what it was like before the Gulf of Maine's lobster boom when just about no one fished offshore. It was a different world. Think of it: just 40 years ago we harvested around 19.5 million pounds of lobster. That's really not that long ago.

The younger board members represent our future. They bring an understanding of social media, new technology, and marketing that's so important today. They have a different take on the lobster fishery and a deep anxiety about its future.



*The 2024 Maine Lobstermen's Association Board of Directors.*

serving board member — has helped to guide the association during the tenures of Ed Blackmore, David Cousens, Pat White, Patrice McCarron and now me on so many difficult issues that I can't even name them all. Dustin Delano isn't old in years but he really stepped up in a big way and provided thoughtful leadership, helping the MLA to push boundaries on some issues. Jamien Hallowell filled the big shoes left by his mentor, Arnie Gamage, and was a quiet but thoughtful member of the board. These gentlemen have left their mark on our industry and we will miss them.

Now the MLA is happy to welcome some new faces and perspectives to the board with new board members Richard Howland of Islesford, Brian Billings of Deer Isle, Andy Havener of Friendship, and Adam Gamage of South Bristol to the board. These guys will bring a jolt of new blood to the board, and I'm looking forward to working with them to guide the MLA and its future.

These changes are part of what makes the MLA so strong. MLA has always attracted leaders, well-respected lobster-

men who bring varying points of view to the organization. Being part of the MLA, as a board member, business supporter or member, means you are part of its long and rich history. Decade by decade, the MLA has made sure that Maine lobstermen, their families, and their communities can make a living on the water. Each decade has presented different challenges, calling for different skills and commitment from the board and members. But as the decades keep rolling by, the MLA always gets the job done, whatever the crisis is at the time.

I want to welcome our new board members and everyone who has joined the MLA for the first time. You are joining an old but wise organization that I am extremely proud to be a part of.

Some faces may change, but we are as strong as ever!

## Your Membership Matters.



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## MAINE LOBSTERMEN'S ASSOCIATION UPDATE

### ASMFC APPROVES ADDENDUM 30 FOR PUBLIC COMMENT TO CLARIFY IMPORT BAN ON UNDERSIZE LOBSTER

The ASMFC American Lobster Management Board approved draft Addendum 30 at its January meeting. The purpose of the addendum is to clarify that Addendum 27, approved in May 2023, would not allow imports of American lobster smaller than the U.S. minimum size.

The "Mitchell Provision" of the Magnuson-Stevens Act was passed to prevent imports of lobster smaller than what the U.S. fishery can harvest. It prohibits imports of whole live lobster smaller than the minimum possession size in effect under the ASMFC's American lobster management program.

At issue is how ASMFC will interpret the Mitchell Provision. Currently, the ASMFC lobster management plan (Amendment 3) has a coastwide minimum gauge of no less than 3 1/4", which is the standard currently used for the import ban. ASMFC intends to implement the Mitchell Provision with the minimum possession size "in effect at the time under the lobster management program," which will be 3-5/16" as of January 2025.

Under Addendum 27, a series of gradual changes to gauge and vent size will begin January 1, 2025, starting with an increase to the minimum gauge size in LCMA 1 from 3 1/4" to 3-5/16" and increasing to 3-3/8" as of January 1, 2027. The changes to the current gauge and escape vent sizes in LCMA 1 were required when scientists determined the resource surpassed the 35% decline in recruit index established in Addendum 27.

ASMFC will schedule public hearings with an at least 60-day public comment period to solicit public input and allow Canada adequate time to comment. The Lobster Board will take up this issue again at its August meeting, following the public comment period.

### MAINE DMR RESPONDS TO ELECTRONIC TRACKER LAWSUIT

On March 1, the Maine attorney general's office filed a brief on behalf of DMR Commissioner Keliher, who was sued by five lobstermen over federal tracker requirement in January. They are seeking a preliminary injunction barring the rule, which took effect in December.

The lobstermen argue that requiring electronic trackers aboard federal lobster vessels will reveal trade fishing secrets and violate their Fourth Amendment rights against unreasonable searches and seizures. They further argue that the tracking requirement violates their privacy because they don't use their boats exclusively for fishing but "the device must be installed directly on the vessel and remain activated" to always transmit data, even when docked.

The state disagreed, arguing that the trackers are needed to "improve assessment of the potential effects on the lobster fishery of competing uses, such as aquaculture, creation of new marine protected areas, offshore wind energy development, and offshore oil and gas exploration" and provide data to reduce the risk of harm to large whales.

According to the state's brief, "it is especially difficult to comprehend how the location of plaintiffs' lobster traps could constitute sensitive trade secrets considering that (1) traps must be marked for identification, and (2) traps are placed in the open ocean, where marker buoys are subject to visual identification by anyone in the vicinity." The state also argues that the Fourth Amendment has a narrow application and that an "administrative search" is a warrantless search that serves a "special need" other than conducting criminal investigations.

### GOVERNOR SEEKS LEGISLATIVE APPROVAL OF \$50 MILLION TO REBUILD WORKING WATERFRONT

The Mills Administration brought *LD 2225, An Act to Provide Funding to Rebuild Infrastructure Affected by Extreme Inland and Coastal Weather Events* to the Legislature's Appropriations Committee to provide \$50 million to rebuild and repair Maine's critical working waterfronts harmed during the back-to-back January storms. This bill would get critical funds to those who need it quickly and provide the flexibility to support both public and private infrastructure projects. The funds would prioritize addressing safety and economic needs and allows infrastructure to be rebuilt in a manner that will ensure resiliency when faced with future storms.

Estimates are that close to 60% of Maine's working waterfront infrastructure was lost or severely damaged. With only 20 miles of working waterfront along Maine's 5,000-mile coastline — and just 16 miles dedicated to commercial fishing activity — swiftly rebuilding this infrastructure is critical to get Maine's fishermen on the water for the upcoming season. Estimates are that more than half of Maine's working waterfront is privately owned.

The MLA testified in support of this bill. The Appropriations Committee voted to move this bill forward, adding \$10 million in additional funds. The MLA continues to advocate for its passage in the House and Senate.

### FEDERAL MAJOR DISASTER DECLARATION FOR JANUARY STORM DAMAGE

On March 20, the Biden Administration approved the State of Maine's request for a Major Disaster Declaration to help coastal counties recover from the back-to-back severe January storms that brought significant flooding and damage. The declaration covers Maine's eight coastal counties: Washington, Hancock, Waldo, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, Cumberland, and York. This declaration provides federal assistance to help Maine cover the cost of public infrastructure repairs resulting from the January storms. The federal government also approved Individual Assistance that can provide direct relief to certain eligible individuals and families that experienced severe property damage.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in partnership with Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and other State agencies, will establish Disaster Recovery Centers in impacted areas. FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance (DSA) Teams will be deployed to help impacted individuals and families apply for Federal assistance that may help them pay for temporary housing, home repairs, and other needs resulting from the storm.

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) is expected to make low interest loans available to help impacted businesses of all sizes — as well as eligible homeowners, renters, and non-profit organizations — repair or replace property damage resulting from the storm. Businesses may also be eligible for working capital loans. U.S. Small Business Administration staff will be on site at Disaster Recovery Centers as they are established. The Governor continues to urge Maine people to apply for assistance. More information on how to apply can be found at [www.maine.gov/flood](http://www.maine.gov/flood).

### SENATOR COLLINS SECURES \$15 MILLION TO REBUILD WORKING WATERFRONT

Senator Collins secured \$15 million to help communities recover from coastal infrastructure damage. The legislation includes \$10 million through the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission to repair and renovate infrastructure affected by recent storms and \$5 million to establish a new program at the Economic Development Administration (EDA) for working waterfronts. Following the damaging storms of December and January on Maine's coast, Senator toured some of the storm damaged sites in Harpswell and Bailey Island, accompanied by fishermen and town officials.

This funding supports the Working Waterfront Preservation Act, bipartisan legislation introduced by Senator Collins last November to create this new grant program at the EDA to help municipal and state governments, nonprofit organizations, and participants in maritime industries purchase or improve working waterfront property in coastal states.

"This investment aims to revitalize working waterfronts across the country, allowing communities like Harpswell to recover from severe storm damage whose financial toll exceeds the capacity of local government to meet," said Senator Collins.

### NO OFFSHORE WIND LEASING IN LOBSTER MANAGEMENT AREA 1

On March 15, 2024, BOEM designated the Final Wind Energy Area (Final WEA) in the Gulf of Maine. The WEA is located entirely offshore of Lobster Management Area 1. The Final WEA is approximately 2 million acres and has the potential to support generation of 32 GW of offshore wind energy. BOEM continues to evaluate a phased leasing approach. The MLA released the following statement in response to the announcement.

"The Maine Lobstermen's Association (MLA) appreciates that BOEM's final Wind Energy Area (WEA) removes Lobster Management Area 1. MLA worked tirelessly with Maine's fishing industry, our congressional delegation, and Governor Mills to ensure prime lobster fishing grounds are spared from industrial development. We are proud that so many lobstermen have constructively engaged in this process and grateful that the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management has listened to their concerns.

But there is still much work to do. Secondary Area C, an area where many endangered North Atlantic right whales are sighted, is included in the Final Wind Energy Area. MLA remains steadfast in its position that no area of the Gulf of Maine should be industrialized with offshore wind. There are still too many unanswered questions about the impacts of offshore wind on the marine environment, commercial fishermen and our fishing heritage."

The MLA joined 16 other industry groups in a joint statement recognizing several improvements in the BOEM process — including the removal of LMA 1 — but also expressing concern over the final WEA "is the culmination of a rushed development process that is poorly informed on economic, scientific, environmental and cultural issues of paramount importance. Without adequate consideration of these issues. The group urged BOEM to "delay its ill-  
*MLA continued on page 8*



## MAINE LOBSTERMEN'S ASSOCIATION UPDATE

MLA Update continued from page 7

suited timeline to avoid front-running science and real world experience that should guide this important natural resource management decision” in order to “avoid wasteful over-development and ensure responsible planning for any potential offshore wind development in the Gulf of Maine.”

### APRIL 17 DEADLINE FOR COMMENT ON BOEM NOTICE TO PREPARE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

BOEM is accepting public comment on its planned environmental assessment (EA) to consider the potential environmental impacts associated with issuing wind energy leases in the Gulf of Maine Final Wind Energy Area (WEA). Public comments are due April 17 through [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), Docket No. BOEM-2024-0020.

The EA will consider project easements and grants for subsea cable corridors associated with leasing. The EA also will consider the potential environmental impacts associated with site characterization activities (i.e., biological, archaeological, geological, and geophysical surveys and core samples) and site assessment activities (i.e., installation of meteorological buoys) that are expected to take place following lease issuance. The EA's proposed action does not include the installation of meteorological towers because developers prefer meteorological buoys to collect data. In addition to the no-action alternative, other alternatives may be considered, such as exclusion of certain areas. The environmental impacts of any proposed wind energy projects will be assessed after a lease is issued and before BOEM decides whether or not to approve any lessee's project construction and operations plan.

### RIGHT WHALE UPDATES

NMFS held a webinar for the Take Reduction Team (TRT) on March 19 to provide updates on right whales.

#### Entanglement

NMFS reported the following right whale entanglements:

- 2020: 4 RW entanglements [1 Canada (orange marking)]
- 2021: 2 RW entanglements [none identified through gear marking]
- 2022: 5 RW entanglements [1 Maine (purple marking) – is RW 5120 found deceased in 2024]
- 2023: 6 RW entanglements [2 Canada (orange and yellow marking)]

All large whale entanglements (right, humpback, and minke):

- Maine gear marking: 9 (1 right whale, 4 humpback 4 minke)
- Mass. gear marking: 7 (6 humpback, 1 minke)
- Canada gear marking: 3 (3 right whales)

#### Calving

NMFS reported 19 new calves this season. The mothers ranged in age from 16 to 41. The fate of two calves is uncertain. Two mothers (1301 and 3780) have since been sighted without their calves. The calf of RW 1612 (Juno) was found dead as a result of injury from vessel strike. The 2023 calf of right whale 4340 was found dead off of George in February 2024 due to vessel strike.

#### Decision Support Tool

NMFS reported that the agency followed up on DST Peer Review recommendations and these results will be published in a Tech Memo in March 2024. NMFS is working to update data inputs for the DST including updating fishing effort data through 2022, incorporating a vertical whale distribution model adapted from the vessel speed rule model, updating right whale density data (spring 2025), and has plans to incorporate federal lobster tracker data into the model.

#### Enforcement

NOAA Office of Law Enforcement inspected 1,288 vessels in 2023 and found 87% (1,116) fully compliant with federal Whale Plan requirements. Compliance was lowest in Quarter 2 (78%) largely due to wet storage violations. Compliance was highest in Quarter 4 at 92%.

#### On Demand Gear Research

NMFS reports 38 trap/pot fishermen collaborating on ropeless gear research: 21 in Massachusetts, 11 in Maine, 5 in Rhode Island and 1 in Maryland. In 2023, 32 vessels tested trap/pot gear from seven manufacturers for a total of 2,720 hauls and an 85% success rate. So far in 2024, there are 24 trap/pot vessels testing gear from six manufacturers. NMFS is also evaluating methods to visualize on-demand gear on chart plotters, comparing accuracy of GPS marking with acoustic positioning, and comparing haul times of on-demand versus traditional gear.

#### Right Whale Monitoring

NMFS continues to partner with multiple institutions to conduct aerial surveys to monitor the right whale population to produce the population esti-

mate, monitor injuries and health, assess distribution and inform model development. In 2023, NEFSC conducted 627 flight hours in the Northeast, including the Gulf of Maine and Canada, and sighted 773 right whales. Efforts will be expanded in both the Gulf of Maine (450 hours) and Mid-Atlantic (150 hours) in 2024. Maine DMR will play a key role in expanding coverage in the Gulf of Maine.

There are currently approximately 135 passive acoustic monitors along the Atlantic seaboard listing for right whales through the work of 16 institutions. This infrastructure includes 125 archival moorings, six near-real-time moorings, and five regions covered by underwater gliders. An additional 50 moorings are proposed to be added. Right Whale monitoring data can be viewed in near-real-time through an interactive mapping program at [www.whalemap.org](http://www.whalemap.org) and <https://apps-nefsc.fisheries.noaa.gov/pacm>.

#### Timeline for Whale Rule

NMFS anticipates holding two TRT meetings in 2025: in late summer/early fall to review data and begin discussion on recommendations and in October to discuss risk reduction target and identity risk reduction recommendations. NMFS will hold another TRT meeting in January 2026 to finalize recommendations. NMFS anticipates publishing the proposed rule in October 2026, final rule in fall 2027, and implementation of rule January 1, 2029.

## MLA BUSINESS MEMBER OF THE MONTH: WATERFRONT SOLUTIONS OF NEW ENGLAND

John Ricker likes what he does. As founder of Waterfront Solutions of New England Marine Construction and a former Kittery lobsterman, he knows the value of a well-constructed wharf or dock. “It’s nice to see something that you’ve built last,” he said. “If we do our job right and build it right, you know it is going to last.”

Ricker went lobstering when he was younger but got out of the fishery in the mid-1990s. “I fished inshore from Kittery and offshore from Portsmouth, N.H. and Newport, Rhode Island,” he said. “My dad is still fishing out of Portsmouth and he’s 78. He was supposed to retire at 75 but then he said he thought he’d go for another five years or so. He just keeps going.”

After finishing lobstering, Ricker spent time down in Florida where he got into the marine construction business. “I went to work with a guy down there and eventually ventured out on my own,” he said. After 23 years building piers, docks, wharves, boat houses, and seawalls along the East Coast and the Caribbean, Ricker, a Portsmouth native, decided it was time, as he put it, to “come home.”

He has been on the road a lot since the devastating storms that battered the Maine coast this past January. “We’ve had a bunch of calls since then. We’ve hired more crew and we have a new crane on one of the barges,” Ricker said. “We are able to take on whatever needs to be done.”

Joining the MLA as a business member just seemed to make sense to Ricker. He understands the fishery and the needs of wharf owners and lobstermen. “I just wanted to give a little something back to the industry,” he said. When it comes to marine construction projects, however, Ricker is very clear about his priorities. “Commercial guys have precedence over residential work. That’s how they make a living.”



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# MAINE LOBSTERMEN'S ASSOCIATION UPDATE

## MASSACHUSETTS LOBSTERMEN'S ASSOCIATION WINS LAWSUIT OVER WEDGE CLOSURE

On March 14, the Massachusetts U.S. District Court ruled that NMFS illegally closed a 200-square-mile area to protect right whales. The Judge ruled the agency's permanent seasonal closure of the wedge area to lobster fishing in February 2023 to avoid whale entanglements was contrary to the Consolidated Appropriations Act passed in December 2022 that hit pause on new regulations for the lobster industry until the end of 2028. The judge's ruling explained that because the agency's emergency closure of the wedge area in 2023 was only in effect from February to the end of April and not at the time of the budget law's passage, the carve-out provision for extensions and finalizations of existing closures didn't apply. The government may appeal the ruling.

5 YEAR POLICY TIMELINE		
2024		
Jan	import ban	ASMFC drafted Add 30 to restrict imports below U.S. min size
Jan-Feb	whales	NMFS TRT meetings - orientation and planning for next rulemaking
Mar	import ban	ASMFC approves Add. 30 for public comment
Mar-June	import ban	Public hearings April 9 and May 6; Public comment closes June 3
Apr 17	wind	BOEM comments due on notice to prepare Environmental Assessment for GOM Final Wind Energy Area. www.regulations.gov, Docket No. BOEM-2024-0020
Apr - May	wind	BOEM proposed lease sale notice (60 day comment period)
Apr - May	wind	BOEM publish draft Environmental Assessment
Mar-May	import ban	ASMFC public comment period for Add 30
Spring	wind	BOEM anticipates issuing lease for Maine research Array
Aug	import ban	ASMFC review public comment, consider final approval Add 30 Forward recommendations to NOAA
Jul - Aug	wind	BOEM publish final Environmental Assessment
Jul - Aug	wind	BOEM final lease sale notice for GOM (FSN)
Oct - Dec	wind	BOEM lease auction for GOM
2025		
Jan 1	gauge	ASMFC LMA 1 minimum gauge increase to 3 5/16"
Jan - Feb	whales	NMFS TRT webinars: orientation and planning for next rulemaking
Mar - Apr	whales	NMFS DST model updates - Right Whale data and Fishing Effort Data including federal tracking
Early Fall	whales	NMFS DST New Inputs TRT Meeting 1: Data Review and Preliminary Identification of Elements of Recommendations
Oct	whales	NMFS New Right Whale Population Estimate Released TRT Meeting 2: Preliminary Target; Identify Packages of Recommendations
2026		
Jan	whales	NMFS TRT Meeting 3: Voting on Recommendations
Oct	whales	NMFS Proposed Rule/Comment Period & Team Orientation
2027		
Jan 1	gauge	ASMFC LMA 1 minimum gauge increase to 3 3/8"
Fall	whales	NMFS Final Whale Rule Published
2028		
Jan 1	vent	ASMFC LMA 1 vent increase to 2 x 5 3/4" rectangular; 2 5/8" circular
2029		
Jan 1	whales	Deadline for new Biological Opinion and Whale Rule
Jan 1	gauge	ASMFC LMA 3 and Outer Cape Max gauge decrease to 6 1/2"

## MEET THE MLA BOARD MEMBERS

By Melissa Waterman

Brian Billings, 36, remembers when he accompanied board member John Williams to Billings' first Maine Lobstermen's Association (MLA) meeting. "I had no idea how much went on behind the scenes," he recalled. "Someone was presenting to the board about groundfish hauled in traps. There was talk about having a second trap to return bycatch to the water. They handled that well. We never heard about it again."

Billings graduated from Deer Isle-Stonington High School in 2006 and then went on to Maine Maritime Academy. Billings' grandfather and great-grandfather were fishermen and his father was a teacher before becoming a full-time fisherman, but Billings wanted to explore something different. He graduated from the Academy and found work on a West Coast tugboat. That job took him from Alaska to Hawaii but kept him away for weeks at a time. Eventually he returned to Deer Isle, started a family, and began to lobster inshore and offshore.

Billings, who fishes from Stonington, became an MLA member shortly after he bought his first boat and discovered the MLA's vessel insurance program through Smithwick and Mariners Insurance Company. Some years later he took part in the MLA's Lobster Leadership Institute. "It was eye-opening. It gave me a different perspective on the fishery. There was all this stuff going on behind the scenes at the state and federal levels that I didn't know about," he recalled.

Despite the MLA's court victory last year and action by Congress late in 2022, Billings remains concerned about the lobster fishery's future. The Gulf of Maine lobster stock remains sound – Maine lobstermen are renowned for their stewardship practices, making the fishery one of the most sustainable in the world. "We are highly efficient at being inefficient," Billings said. "We handle everything by hand. We put a lot of lobsters back in the water, alive." His worries stem from what the federal government might do in years to come.

"Are we going to have a viable fishery in the future or will it be diluted as we share the ocean with wind energy projects? I don't have confidence in the government. I'm afraid of being regulated out of business or of it becoming so expensive that individuals can't fish, only companies," he said.

Being part of the MLA is one way to prepare for what the future brings. "There's always lot going on. If I can do my part to keep this fishery going, I want to," he said.

It was the MLA's 2014 Lobster Leadership Institute that hooked Kennebunk lobsterman Chris Welch, 35. The Leadership Institute taught young Maine lobstermen about the management of the fishery, as well as the science and marketing aspects of lobstering. It ended with a trip to Prince Edward Island to stay and fish with lobstermen there. "I wasn't even a member then," Welch recalled. "I remember that meeting at Point Lookout (in Lincolnville). That was the first meeting I ever had with the MLA."

As a result of participating in the leadership program, Welch became an MLA member and, in 2018, joined the board. "I knew we were heading into some serious challenges," Welch recalled. "And I saw they were struggling to find young guys, plus they didn't have anyone from southern Maine on the board."

Welch joined the MLA board as the right whale issue was heating up. In 2017 twelve right whales died in Canadian waters. National environmental groups were gearing up to sue the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) over right whale deaths. NMFS was soon to issue crippling new regulations designed to protect the whales. The Maine lobster fishery was in everyone's crosshairs.

"It was overwhelming!" Welch said. "A lot of the information on right whales was not getting through to my harbor." He found that meeting and talking



Brian Billings.



Chris Welch, his wife Stevie, and sons Calvin and Wesley.

Continued on page 27

# MLA MEMBER DISCOUNT DIRECTORY



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York, ME – \$1 off per bucket (must show current MLA card). 207-752-6775 [noreastbait@gmail.com](mailto:noreastbait@gmail.com)

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### Nautilus Marine Fabrication, Inc.

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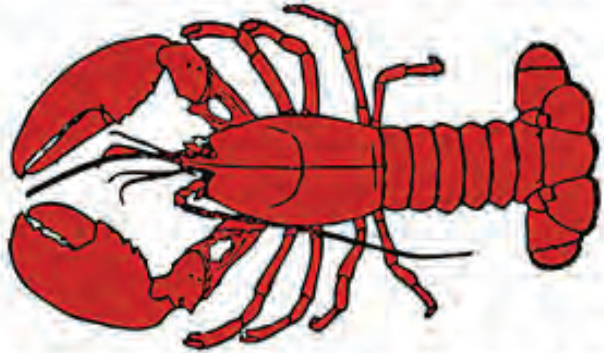


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## MAINE LOBSTERMEN'S ASSOCIATION 70TH ANNUAL MEETING

Maine Lobstermen's Association members gathered to celebrate the organization's 70th annual meeting on March 1 at the Samoset Resort in Rockport. Meeting attendance was up sharply compared to recent years. The meeting commemorated MLA's anniversary and highlighted the association's groundbreaking achievements.

The meeting opened with remarks by Senator Susan Collins, Senator Angus King, and Congresswoman Chellie Pingree via video congratulating the MLA on its 70th anniversary. MLA Board president Kristan Porter welcomed attendees and members of the board. He recognized the board's years of stalwart effort to prevent the destruction of the fishery by standing up to ill-conceived federal regulations designed to protect North Atlantic right whales, efforts that culminated in the MLA's extraordinary court victory in 2023. "I can't express how much time the board put into this. I am grateful to them," he said.

MLA members then elected new Board members: Brian Billings of Deer Isle, Andy Havener of Friendship, Adam Gamage of Walpole, and Richard Howland of Islesford. Porter thanked exiting Board members Jack Merrill, Dustin Delano, Jamien Hallowell, and John Williams for their tremendous service to the industry.

MLA unveiled a new video highlighting the importance of the lobster fishery to the state and the MLA's role in shaping the successful industry we have today through its 70 years of service.

MLA Policy Director Patrice McCarron gave an overview of the past year's accomplishments. The MLA won its lawsuit, earning a unanimous opinion from the Washington D.C. Appellate Court in June 2023. This historic victory means that NMFS can no longer assume only the worst case scenarios when assessing the impact of the lobster fishery on the right whale population. Instead, it must assess scenarios that are "reasonably certain" to occur as required under the Endangered Species Act. The court wrote that the government's "legal reasoning" to give deference to right whales under the Endangered Species Act "was not just wrong; it was egregiously wrong."

There will be no new measures imposed on the lobster fishery to protect right whales until the end of 2028, thanks to the heroic efforts of Maine's Congressional delegation. A new Biological Opinion and Whale Rule, based on realistic assumptions, must be in place by the beginning of 2029.

"We lived to see another day," McCarron said. "This achievement would not have been possible without the MLA." She thanked DMR for its assistance, noting how unusual it is for a state agency to intervene in a legal matter on the side of an industry organization such as the MLA.

McCarron explained that the MLA has been active in the court case brought in 2018 by four national environmental groups against NMFS. The groups argued that the agency had not gone far enough to protect right whales and won a favorable court ruling which would have required lobstermen to endure a 90% risk reduction in 2024. The court dismissed the case in January 2024 and vacated all of the rulings related to the 2021 Biological Opinion citing MLA's legal victory.

The MLA sued the Monterey Aquarium in 2023 over the Aquarium's "red listing" of lobster in 2022. That case has been fully briefed since August 2023 and the parties are waiting to hear next steps.



*It was standing room only at the MLA's 70th annual meeting in March. MLA photo.*

Regarding offshore wind energy in the Gulf of Maine, the MLA worked with its industry partners to successfully rally lobstermen, Governor Mills, and the state's Congressional Delegation to collectively say "No" to any wind leases in LMA1. "This is an unprecedented victory for the lobster fishery. Excluding LMA1 means no industrial wind farms will be built where you fish. This is huge," McCarron said. She also mentioned the MLA's ongoing project with the Responsible Offshore Development Association (RODA) and Lobster Institute called the Maine Lobster Knowledge Trust, established under the Fisheries Knowledge Trust. The

project is collecting and analyzing fishermen's TimeZero and Olex data to inform management issues. Fishermen continue to own the data and decide how that data is used and presented. "It's a groundbreaking project," McCarron said.

DMR Commissioner Patrick Keliher next addressed the audience. He spoke first about the effects of the fierce January storms. "I flew over the coast, talked to people. The thing I heard most often was 'We've never seen anything like this before.'" Keliher said. Estimates put the damage to public and private property along the coast at \$70.3 million. Governor Mills introduced LD 2225 to provide \$50 million for repairs along the coast.

Concerning right whales, Keliher explained that the 2022 Consolidated Appropriations Act provided \$26 million to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) and \$20 million the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) for research activities. \$17 million of the ASMFC funds went to DMR to create its own risk evaluation computer model, gather data to modify NMFS's existing Decision Support Tool, and invest in developing management tools for risk reduction.

DMR is also expanding its passive acoustic monitoring program to better understand where right whales are along the Maine coast. DMR has stationed 26 buoys in a grid across Maine's state and federal waters, crossing into Area

3. These buoys will listen for whales year-round, hauled in and replaced every four months, complementing a large east coast array managed by a variety of states and institutions. DMR will also conduct boat-based visual surveys for whales, both in-shore and offshore, as well as monthly and bimonthly aerial surveys throughout the coast. In addition, DMR received \$5 million from NFWF to put together a gear library to allow lobstermen to try on-demand gear in order to determine what works and what does not work.

Having timely and accurate data on where and when right whales are found is to the lobster fishery's benefit, Keliher said. "Getting better whale data is important. We say

there are no whales in the closed area [annual October through January closed area] and the data show that," Keliher said, referencing the [www.whalemap.org](http://www.whalemap.org) website.

Keliher then announced the preliminary numbers for the 2023 lobster season. Maine lobstermen landed 93,734,116 pounds with an average price per pound of \$4.95. Total value of the catch was \$464,371,720, an increase of \$72 million from 2022.

Keliher shifted the discussion to the increase in the minimum gauge required by ASMFC beginning in January 2025. The increase comes after a 39% decline in juvenile lobster abundance was documented by the ASMFC in October 2023. "There will be a short-term effect to the catch but the goal is to improve the long-term viability of the fishery," Keliher said. "This is scary, I get it. Think of it as an insurance policy."

The ASMFC is considering Addendum 30, which seeks to clarify that foreign imports of lobster smaller than the new LMA 1 minimum gauge size will not be allowed in order to comply with the Mitchell Provision of the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

Keliher went on to detail challenges facing Maine's lobster fishery. He summarized these as wind, whales, sustainability, and federal waters aquaculture. He told the audience that whale advocate Max Strahan filed a 60-day notice to sue DMR for the death of the right whale found on Martha's Vineyard in January. The rope found on the whale had a purple wire tie on it, identifying it as Maine lobster rope.

Finally, Keliher spoke about the connection between lobstermen and DMR and the need for both sides to step up and do better. "Many states don't have the interconnection with industry that we have in Maine. But lately people



*Patrice McCarron chats with former board member Dwight Carver and his grandson. MLA photo.*



*Ready Seafood's Curt Brown, left, and former MLA president Dave Cousens catch up at the annual meeting. MLA photo.*

*Continued on page 20*

# OFFSHORE WIND LEASES OFF THE TABLE FOR LMA 1

## *State and federal push for offshore wind energy continues*

By *Melissa Waterman*

On March 15, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) announced the final Wind Energy Area (WEA) in the Gulf of Maine which establishes the extent of area eligible for lease later this year, an historic first for the region. At the Maine Fishermen's Forum earlier in March, an entire day was spent reviewing the status of offshore wind development in the Gulf and the complex permitting process now underway.

Stephanie Watson from the Governor's Energy Office (GEO) spoke to the large audience about state efforts to create an offshore wind energy research array approximately 40 nautical miles off southern Maine. The Maine Legislature created the Maine Offshore Wind Energy Research Consortium in 2021 to better understand the impact of offshore wind development in the Gulf. To date the Legislature has invested \$3 million in the Consortium for research projects.

In 2023 the Consortium's 26-member advisory board completed its research strategy and funded three priority research projects. The first will look at fisheries coexistence with offshore wind energy development, focusing on socio-economic factors. The second project will be an inventory of socio-economic data, and the third involves seafloor mapping to characterize seafloor habitats, which will be conducted by the Department of Marine Resources (DMR).

GEO completed its application to BOEM for the wind research array in 2022; the application is currently undergoing an Environmental Assessment under National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) review. Research conducted at the array will be made available to "inform" BOEM's future leases. The current plan for the site, located nearly 40 miles from shore, is for ten floating wind energy turbines capable of generating 144 megawatts (MW) of electricity. The Maine Public Utilities Commission is reviewing a Power Purchase Agreement submission.

The consulting firm Karp Strategies and Alison Bates from Colby College will conduct the project to inventory socio-economic data. "We will do a comprehensive inventory of existing socio-economic data and identify gaps in the data," Bates explained. "That will lead us to make recommendations on where and how Maine should prioritize future studies." Bates and Karp Strategies staff will speak with fishermen, researchers, and environmental organization representatives on what specific data they think is important. Alice Sandzen from the Gulf of Maine Research Institute will focus on fisheries coexistence with offshore wind energy development. "The first question we will address is what does coexistence look like?" Sandzen said. The goal is to develop research questions that reflect diverse gear types operating offshore and that lead to best practices for wind energy developers.

Jesse Minor at DMR is coordinating the Maine Coastal Mapping Initiative in partnership with GEO. Three sonar-equipped fishing vessels with hydrographic and wildlife observers on board will conduct 24-hour, multi-day surveys. The purpose is to rapidly fill in data gaps in the areas relevant to wind project development. New mapping will be done in a 12-mile area surrounding the lease area. Inshore the vessels will concentrate on Muscongus Bay, the Midcoast, and outer Casco Bay. Offshore priority areas lie northwest and south of the research array area. In addition, the project will survey BOEM's identified Wind Energy Area, focusing particularly east of Cashes Ledge. The data will be used to create seafloor characteristics maps as well as habitat maps. "For some of these areas, existing data is from the 1880s," Minor noted.

The audience questioned whether a route had been chosen for the cables that will bring electricity from the planned research array to shore. "Not selected yet but likely to be either to Maine Yankee or to Wyman Station in Yarmouth," Watson replied. "But either route will need a full federal review."

Turning to the review process for leases, Zach Jylkka from BOEM spoke about the Gulf of Maine Wind Energy Area and Maine's research array lease application. He started off by stating the obvious: "There is no area in the Gulf of Maine free of conflict. We want leases to be in the areas with the lowest amount of conflicts."

In October 2023 BOEM announced draft Wind Energy Areas in the Gulf. Fishermen breathed a sigh of relief when it was made clear that nearly all of Lobster Management Area 1 (LMA 1) was excluded. However, two secondary areas of interest within LMA 1 remained under consideration. BOEM received more than 300 comments during the public comment period, which ended in November, the majority of which asked that those two secondary areas be removed. Other commentators asked that leases be excluded from LMA 3 and from any areas where the Northeast groundfish fleet operated. The final Wind Energy Area, announced on March 15, excluded all of LMA 1 included those two secondary areas.

"We are now at the comment review stage, looking at size, location of the lease areas, etc." Jylkka said. "The lease auction date is still sometime between October and December 2024." He emphasized that a lease does not authorize construction of wind turbines, rather it allows for site characterization and environmental assessment activities by the developer to determine if the area is suitable for construction of an offshore wind array.

Once a lease is issued, BOEM steps back slightly from center stage. "The devel-

oper does most of the engagement with the public," Jylkka said. BOEM comes in after the Construction and Operations Plan (COP) is done, which, Jylkka estimated, would be six to eight years after the lease sale.

Concerning Maine's planned research array, "BOEM sees it as a key opportunity to work with the state on research related to offshore wind." He anticipated approval for the lease sometime this spring.

Josh Gange from BOEM spoke about the review procedures for electricity transmission from wind turbines. A lot of federal agencies and other entities are involved, including BOEM, the Army Corps of Engineers, state agencies, and the electrical grid operator.

"Transmission is part of the lease," Gange said. "The developer must work with the state on where cables are located, and the grid connection with the independent system operator (ISO)." The wind energy developer must incorporate easements for the cable as part of its Construction and Operations Plan. Multiple route options might be in the plan, which itself must go through NEPA review. "From identifying the transmission route to construction takes several years," Gange said.

Another agency, the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE), also plays a role in offshore wind lease permits. "BSEE performs environmental compliance checks on Outer Continental Shelf activities," explained Hannah Weaver from BSEE. "That includes environmental compliance related to protected species, habitat, commercial and recreational fishing, visual and cultural resources." BSEE is most active during the construction and operation phase of development and can take appropriate enforcement actions.

Later in the day presentations turned to the engineering aspects of floating offshore wind turbines. Suzanne MacDonald from the National Renewal Energy Laboratory, a research institution, spoke about recent improvements in floating offshore wind technology.

Floating wind turbines currently are operating at two locations in Scotland. "Floating wind turbines are expected to be deployed at utility scale by 2025," she said. "Costs for things such as steel have given the industry pause recently but it is ready to explode exponentially when those costs go down."

*Continued on page 20*

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MLA annual meeting continued from page 18

have said to me that we aren't listening. I believe that when we have tough conversations we have better results. But less than 100 people commented on the gauge change. No one is coming to the lobster zone council meetings and to hearings," he said. "If we are not doing good by you, you tell us. It's as easy as that. Screaming that the science sucks gets us nowhere."

People in the audience then asked Commissioner Keliher questions. One had to do with the number of juveniles being found by lobstermen in their traps and the need for observers to record what lobstermen are finding. "Yes, and we are talking about that. We've got some money now and we can do that. That way when you are hauling we are seeing what you are seeing," Keliher replied.

Another person asked about the consequences to lobstermen from the dead right whale found on Martha's Vineyard. "The uncertainty around the whale is a real concern. The whale had already been seen entangled. NOAA considered it dead. How the death will be used against us, I don't know," Keliher said.

McCarron pointed out that this is the first time a death has been associated with Maine gear. "Right now NMFS assumes we are responsible for about five right whale deaths each year [under the MMMA/ESA] so a single death is still well below that. And right whale births are now outpacing deaths. It's really positive for the species," she said.

President Porter then asked MLA Board member Chris Welch to come forward. Welch presented the MLA's Golden V-notch award to Kennebunk fisherman and MLA board member Laurin Brooks, who he called his mentor and friend. Brooks has been a long-time advocate for southern Maine lobstermen attending countless meetings and ensuring their concerns have been heard.

Porter thanked everyone in attendance. "Thank you for coming. There is strength in numbers. This Association is a solid voice and has been here for 70 years. To keep that voice strong, become a member!"

Offshore wind continued from page 19

Companies have moved to ever larger wind blades, in part to economize the cost of constructing floating turbines, MacDonald noted. As the blades grow longer and the turbines taller, the space between each becomes larger. So too does the seafloor area each turbine must have for anchoring. "The spacing is measured by rotor diameter. For a 220-meter (720-foot) rotor you need eight rotor diameters [between turbines], about one mile," she said. These larger rotors and structures also require larger staging areas on land. Most of the construction of a floating turbine will take place on shore because it is less expensive on land than at sea.

Richard Akers with Maine Marine Composites focused on the mooring systems needed to anchor the turbines in place. Different types of mooring and anchoring systems are associated with different types of floating turbines. Anchors can be drag embedded, driven piles, suction piles, or gravity anchors. "Suction embedded plate anchors seem best for the Gulf of Maine," Akers said. "They cause the least disturbance to the seafloor but are hard to get out in decommissioning"

He pointed out that every floating turbine, despite being tethered to the bottom, will move about in the ocean, encompassing an area called a watch circle.

The footprint for the anchoring system also varies depending on what is used to connect the floating turbine to the anchor.

The cable extending from a turbine may be run to a floating substation and from there to the seafloor. "You can't bend a cable because it will break," Akers said. Once the cable reaches the bottom it will be buried six feet into the seafloor.

When asked during a panel discussion about the size of any no-fishing zone around a floating wind turbine, Akers said that the aim is to have a watch area no more than 50 meters in size around the turbine in any direction. "A huge exclusion zone is not needed," he said. "It's a small space to stay out of except you don't know where they [the anchor lines] are. You could have fixed gear there but how do you mark it?"

Another person asked how BOEM evaluates which mooring system would be best to use. Jylkka said that such a decision was a long way away. "You have the NEPA review, and state and federal review of the Construction and Operation Plan, which shows how the thing will be built. [The systems] will be fine-tuned but some of it is just availability."



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## TO YOUR HEALTH: *Keeping your balance one key to safety on deck*

By *Melissa Waterman*

One of the most important safety measures while on a boat is to keep your balance. After all, the boat's deck is moving up, down, and sideways. Crossing the deck, you are in motion on a surface that is moving as well. The last thing you want to feel is dizzy.

But that is just what a large number of people do feel, whether they are on a boat or standing stock still on land. A person's inner ear may be out of whack, and when that happens, the world feels out of whack too.

There are a number of things that can cause feelings from mild dizziness or incapacitating vertigo (vertigo is the sensation of motion or spinning). Let's look at the two most common.

A cold or the flu can cause inner ear inflammation. Inflammation may be in the labyrinth of your inner ear, a delicate structure that looks like its name. The labyrinth is made up of fluid-filled channels which control balance and hearing.

When you move your head, the fluid in the channels moves. This tells the brain which direction and how fast you are which then allows the body to balance in space.

With labyrinthitis, the labyrinth gets inflamed, swells, and sends misinformation to your brain which causes dizziness. Symptoms of acute labyrinthitis include vertigo; your eyes moving on their own, making it hard to focus; hearing loss in one ear; loss of balance; tinnitus (ringing in your ears); nausea and vomiting. Labyrinthitis usually goes away within a few weeks.

Viral labyrinthitis is quite common in adults. Children most often suffer from bacterial labyrinthitis.

Certain factors raise your risk for labyrinthitis:

- Drinking large amounts of alcohol
- Fatigue
- History of allergies
- Smoking
- Stress

Then there's Meniere's Disease.

Meniere's disease affects the vestibular system, which lies behind your ear. While the exact cause is not fully known, the disease involves a buildup of fluid in the inner ear. This extra fluid increases the pressure in the inner ear, which then disrupts the vestibular system. Meniere's disease does not clear up; it is a lifelong disorder.

Symptoms of Meniere's disease include regular dizzy spells that start and stop suddenly. Vertigo also occurs, which may last for minutes or up to 12 hours. There might also be hearing loss that comes and goes. Tinnitus is also common, as well as a feeling of fullness in the ear.

Researchers aren't clear about what leads to Meniere's disease. The Mayo Clinic cites factors such as poor fluid drainage due to a blockage or irregular ear shape, autoimmune disorders, a viral infection, or genetics.

Meniere's disease can happen at any age but it usually starts between the ages of 40 to 60.

Medicine can help reduce the buildup of fluids. People suffering from Meniere's disease also use certain self-care techniques to tamp down a vertigo attack.

Among them are sitting or lying down, avoiding sudden movement and bright lights, and not reading or watching television, which can make symptoms worse.

Whatever the cause, make sure that when you step on board your vessel you can keep your balance!



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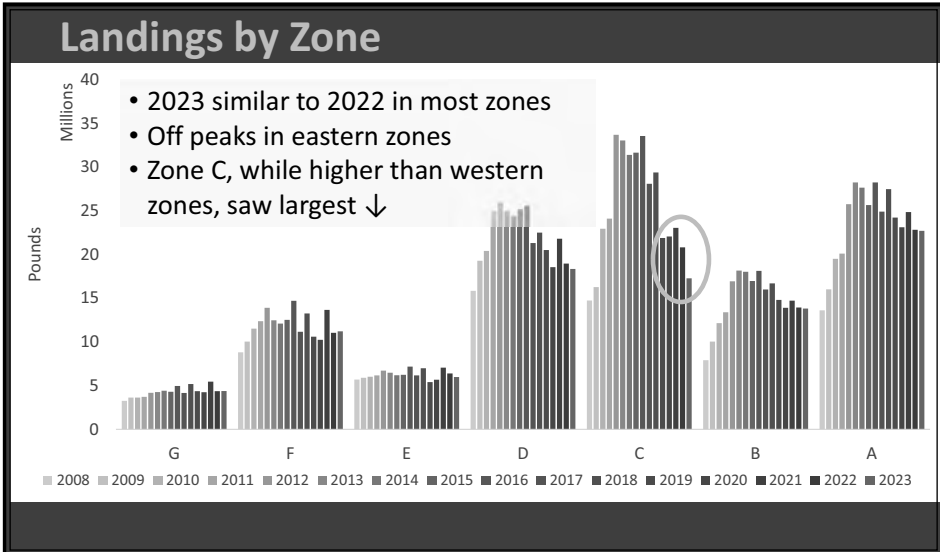
**For lobster, crab, clam/worm, elver fisheries and menhaden seining contact:**

Dustin W. Delano, Chief Operating Officer  
[coo@fishermenstewardship.org](mailto:coo@fishermenstewardship.org)  
 207-615-6352

DMR lobster data continued from page 1

However, data from DMR's 2023 lobster surveys show many of the surveys stabilizing, and a few increasing.

Reardon moved on to an overview of 2023 lobster landings by zone. Highest landings were found in Lobster Zones A and D. The eastern lobster zone landings dropped from peak years. Zone C, while still higher than western zones, had the sharpest drop in landings. "Lobster abundance was patchy last year. There were some low catch areas, higher catches in others," Reardon said. "Some boats chose not to fish, or to fish more traps or have longer soak times. It was similar to 2022."



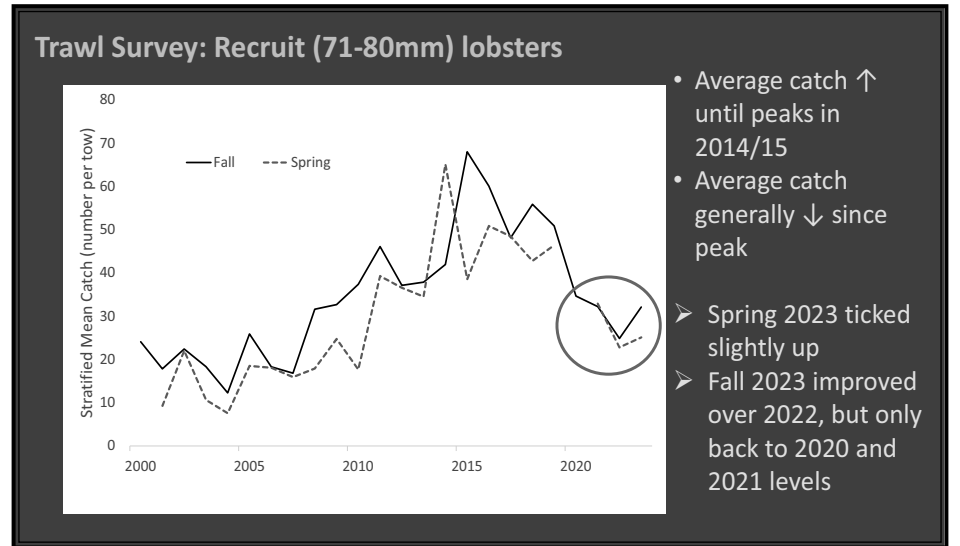
Drawing on trip level data, the catch per trap was high in 2023 despite declining abundance. "Average catch rate remains high, around 400 to 450 pounds per trip," Reardon said. All lobstermen now report daily effort by 10 minute square. These data show that most trips are made inside three miles, and fewest trips are made outside of 12 miles, contradicting the anecdotal belief that most Maine lobstermen are fishing outside. The data, however, indicate that all survey grids inside Lobster Management Area 1 show fishing effort.

DMR's weekly and biweekly surveys of lobster larvae from June to September, 2023, showed a big increase in stage 4 larvae, reported DMR's Heather Glon. Stage 4 larvae are the final stage before the lobsters move to settle on the seafloor.

The lobster settlement survey also showed an uptick from previous years. The lobster settlement surveys identify the young-of-the-year lobsters that have settled on the seafloor. "This is the first year the results are above the times

series average coastwide since 2011," Reardon said. "But remember this is just one year of data."

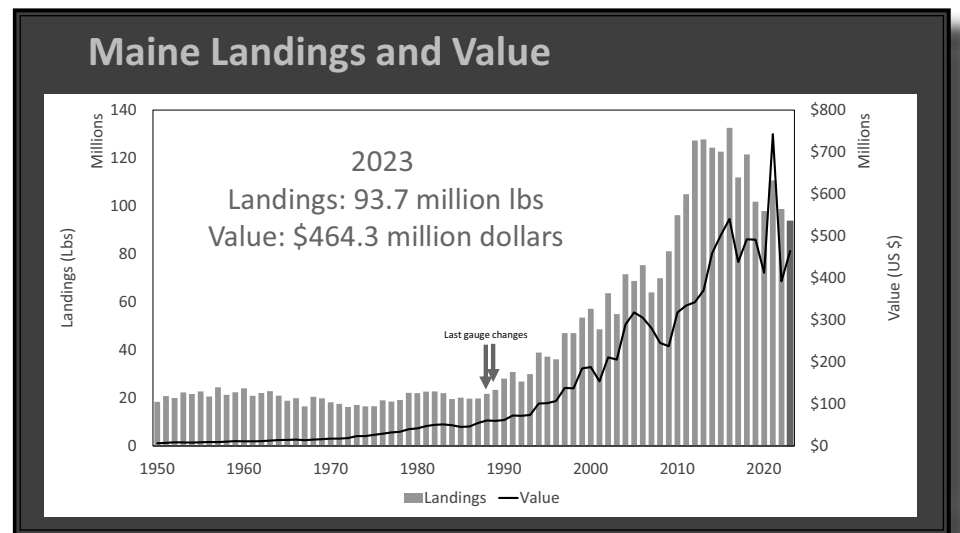
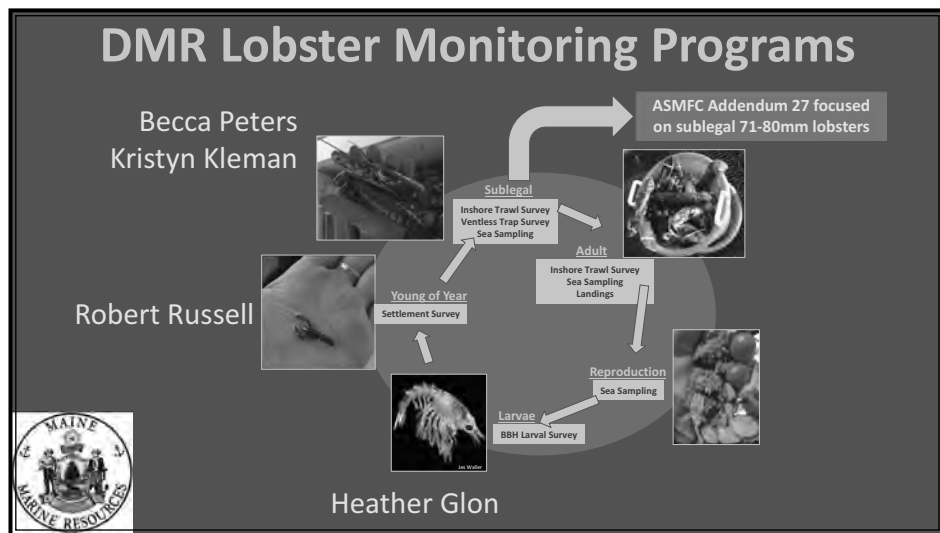
The department's ventless trap survey, which takes place from June to August at 276 sites in state waters, found that sublegal lobster numbers remained stable in the west, but continued to decline in the eastern region. Data from the spring and summer trawl surveys, which conduct 120 tows per season and extend to 12 nautical miles, indicated that sub-legal lobster numbers were up in 2023, particularly during the fall survey, after a steady decline in previous years. However, both remain well below historic highs. Reardon noted that bottom temperatures, both in the spring and the fall, have been the highest ever recorded during the past three years.



The Sea Sampling Program, conducted aboard commercial lobster boats, showed that sub-legal lobsters found in traps hauled were less than at the peak in 2017 but the decline has leveled off since 2020 and still remain above the historic levels prior to 2010. The number of legal and V-notched lobsters recorded remained stable generally, with a slight decline in eastern lobster zones since earlier peaks.

Both the Sea Sampling and ventless trap surveys found an abundance of small lobsters, less than 60 mm in length, in the Downeast survey areas.

In summary, Reardon said that lobster surveys indicate that 2023 was similar to 2022. While there is positive news with data showing settlement and larvae numbers are up, she emphasized, "one year, however, is not a trend."



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# SECOND "CHOWDER'S ON" RAISES FUNDS FOR LOBSTERING COMMUNITIES

By Kevin Kelley, Director of Advancement

The delicious aroma of hot lobster stew, clam chowder, and homemade pies filled the auditorium at STAR Theatre in Kittery on Sunday, February 25, where about 200 people turned out for the second annual "Chowder's On" event. Organized by volunteers Betsy Wish, Charlene Hoyt, Holly Dupuis, Tammy Melcher, Laura Baxter, and Kittery lobsterman Dave Kaselauskas, the event raised more than \$24,000 for the Maine Lobster Community Alliance.

"Lobstering is an important part of our community's identity," said Wish. "Last year, the future of this critical industry was threatened, and, as a community, we asked what we could do to help. That's how Chowder's On was born, and we were thrilled to replicate its success this year — with all proceeds going directly to supporting the future of this heritage industry."



Lobsterman Dave Kaselauskas preparing lobster for the mouth-watering stew. MLA photo.

"We are incredibly grateful for the support of so many individuals and businesses in the Kittery community," said Hoyt. "Between unfair federal regulations and historic storms that battered our working waterfronts, the lobstering industry has faced many challenges over the past few years, but this event is meant to celebrate just how special lobstering is to our identity as Mainers."

Organizers spent months reaching out to local businesses and collecting prizes for what turned out to be an incredibly successful live auction



The crowds turned out for the second annual "Chowder's On" dinner in Kittery. MLA photo.

and raffle, which was emceed by NewsCenter Maine morning news anchor, Sharon Rose.

Much of the lobster for the tasty stew was donated by local lobstermen as well as event sponsors Chrissy D. Lobster, Island Seafood, Seaview Lobster Co., Taylor Lobster Co., and The Lobster Co. in Arundel.

"It was so heartening to stand in the auditorium and see a community come together to support their local lobstering families," said Kevin Kelley, director of advancement for the Maine Lobstermen's Association. "From personal touches like photos of local lobstermen to the video display, all of the volunteers worked so hard to make this such a true community event."



The engine that made it all happen: Betsy Wish, Charlene Hoyt, Holly Dupuis, Tammy Melcher, Laura Baxter.



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## DMR AQUACULTURE LEASE APPLICATION STATUS AS OF 3/22/24

### *Experimental Lease Applications: Terms Up to 3 Years, Size to 4 Acres, Non-Renewable*

Blue Hill	Quinby, Kipp	E side N of Carlton Isl narrows, Blue Hill Salt Pond	3.9 acres	Shellfish/Algae	3 yrs	App rec'd 9/1/23; comments due 10/7/23
Bremen	Davidson, Colby	E of Hog Island, Muscongus Bay	3.89 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App2 rec'd 9/27/22; site report published
Bremen	Genthner, Gary Jr.	E of Cow Island, Muscongus Bay	3.99 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App rec'd 9/14/23; comments due 10/14/23
Bremen	Harvey, Shannon	Southeast of Cow Isl, Muscongus Bay	4 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App rec'd 9/1/23; comments due 10/7/23
Bristol	Unicorn Oyster	E of Perkins Point, Damariscotta Rvr	3.9 acres	Shellfish	3 yrs	App rec'd 11/17/22; site report published
Brunswick	Green, Christopher	The Reach	2.71 acres	Shellfish	3 yrs	App rec'd 11/18/22; site report published
Chebeague Isl	Chebeague Island Oyster Co.	SW corner Chandlers Cove, Casco Bay	2.4 acres	Shellfish	3 yrs	App rec'd 3/21/23; comments due 4/22/23
Chebeague Isl	Jordan, John	W side of Gr Chebeague Isl, SW of Division Pt	4 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App rec'd 9/21/23; comments due 10/21/23
Chebeague Isl	Jordan, John Jr.	W of Great Chebeague Isl, SW of Seal Ledge	3.98 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App rec'd 9/21/23; comments due 10/21/23
Chebeague Isl	Robinson, Gordon	E of Great Chebeague Isl, Casco Bay	4 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	Apps 1&2 rec'd 10/3/23; comments due 11/4/23
Cumberland	Nappi, Brent	East of Sturdivant Isl, Casco Bay	4 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	Lease Granted 2/8/24 (CAS S13x)
Damariscotta	Black Stone Point Oysters LLC	E of Blackstone Pt, Great Salt Bay	3.45 acres	Shellfish	3 yrs	App rec'd 5/9/23; comments due 6/10/23
Deer Isle	Salt of the Earth Seafarm LLC	E of Barred Isle, Penobscot Bay	3.95 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App rec'd 6/15/23; comments due 7/15/23
Edgecomb	Glidden Point Oyster Co.	SW of Dodge Pt, Damariscotta River	3.97 acres	Shellfish	3 yrs	App rec'd 12/1/22; site visit completed
Falmouth	Nappi, Brent	S of Clapboard Isl, Casco Bay	4 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	Lease Granted with Modifications 2/8/24 (CAS C13x)
Freeport	DiMauro, Levi	W of Little French Isl, Casco Bay	3.92 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App rec'd 1/10/23; site report published
Freeport	Love Point Oysters LLC	East of Pettingill Island, Maquoit Bay	3.99 acres	Shellfish	3 yrs	App rec'd 6/1/23; site visit completed
Freeport	Ryan, Stuart	SW side of Williams Isl, Casco Bay	2.4 acres	Shellfish/Algae	3 yrs	Public Hearing 1/10/24 1pm Freeport Town Office
Frenchboro	Starburst Enterprises, Inc.	Blue Hill Bay, Eastern Cove, Rich's Head	3.9 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App rec'd 12/7/23; comments due 1/6/24
Friendship	Cutts, Joe	E end of Friendship Long Isl, Meduncook Rvr	2.2 acres	Shellfish	3 yrs	App rec'd 12/13/22; site report published
Harpwell	Dutton, Terry	N-NE of Flash Island, Ridley Cove	3.99 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App rec'd 6/22/23; comments due 7/23/23
Harpwell	Tumble Tide	NW of Little Whaleboat Isl, Casco Bay	3.94 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App rec'd 2/27/24; comments due 3/31/24
Harpwell	Weeks, Benjamin	E/Dingley Isl, SE/Long Isl, New Meadows Rvr	4 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	Apps 1&2 rec'd 5/23/23; comments due 6/25/23
Harpwell	Wilson, David	Wilson Cove, Middle Bay	4 acres	Shellfish	3 yrs	App rec'd 5/2/22; site report published
Harpwell	Wilson, David	SE of Doughty Pt, Long Reach	4 acres	Shellfish	3 yrs	App rec'd 4/12/22; site visit completed
Isleboro	Grindle, Kimberly	Turtle Head Dove, Penobscot Bay	4 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App rec'd 1/31/23; site visit completed
Isleboro	Lindelof, Jett	E of Job Isl, Penobscot Bay	4 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App rec'd 3/21/23; site visit completed
Isleboro	Lindelof, Lake	W of Middle Isl, Penobscot Bay	4 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App rec'd 3/21/23; site visit completed
Lincolnville	Heal, Nicholas	East Ducktrap Harbor	3.99 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App 1 rec'd 6/29/23; comments due 7/29/23
Long Island	Great Ledge Cove Seafood LLC	W of Lil Chebeague Isl, Casco Bay	4 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App rec'd 6/20/23; comments due 7/22/23
Long Island	Shearwater Ventures LLC	NW of Lil Chebeague Isl, Casco Bay	3.86 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App rec'd 3/21/23; site visit completed
Northport	Heal, Nicholas	East Ducktrap Harbor	3.99 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App 2 rec'd 6/29/23; comments due 7/29/23
Portland	Restorative Aquaculture LLC	WSW of Mackworth Isl, Casco Bay	3.38 acres	Shellfish/Algae	3 yrs	Application withdrawn January 2024
Searsport	FV 11th Hour, Inc.	SW of Sears Isl, Penobscot Bay	3.94 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App rec'd 3/21/23; site visit completed
Searsport	Nichols Fisheries	S of Sears Isl, Penobscot Bay	3.94 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App rec'd 1/17/23; site report published
South Bristol	Glidden Point Oyster Co.	W of Prentiss Isl, Damariscotta River	3.99 acres	Shellfish	3 yrs	App re-rec'd 2/28/23; site visit completed
South Bristol	Nor'Easter Oyster Co.	Mid. Branch, NE of Peabow/W of Foster, Johns Rvr	3.32 acres	Shellfish	3 yrs	App rec'd 7/18/23; comments due 8/19/23
South Bristol	Norumbega Oyster Inc.	Eastern Shore S of Merry Isl, Damariscotta Rvr	2.78 acres	Shellfish	3 yrs	App rec'd 2/28/23; site visit completed
St. George	Albatross Fisheries	W of Caldwell Island, end of St. George River	4 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App rec'd 7/13/23; site visit completed
St. George	Miller, Hyvarinen, Philbrook	NW of Seavey Ledges, Penobscot Bay	3.99 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App rec'd 6/1/23; comments due 7/1/23
St. George	Miss Madisyn	W of Caldwell Isl, end of St. George Rvr	4 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App rec'd 10/10/23; comments due 11/11/23
St. George	Schroeder, Jeffrey	Turkey Cove, St. George River	.9 acres	Shellfish	3 yrs	App rec'd 2/23/23; site visit completed
St. George	Schroeder, Jeffrey	Turkey Cove, St. George River	2 acres	Shellfish	3 yrs	App rec'd 6/1/23; site visit completed
St. George	Tarbox, Brian	NW of Norton Isl, Wheeler Bay	3.99 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App rec'd 6/22/23; comments due 7/22/23
Steuben	Pinkham, Randy	E of Chair Pond Head, Pegeon Hill Bay	3.99 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	Apps 1&2 rec'd 3/28/23; comments due 4/29/22
Steuben	Sokoloski, Victor	E of Chair Pond Head, Pegeon Hill Bay	3.99 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	Apps 1&2 rec'd 3/28/23; comments due 4/29/22
Stonington	Greenhead Lobster LLC	Penobscot Bay	3.5 acres	Shellfish	3 yrs	App rec'd 10/12/23; comments due 11/11/23
Stonington	Greenhead Lobster LLC	Between East Penobscot Bay and Jericho Bay	4 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App rec'd 10/12/23; comments due 11/11/23
Waldoboro	Bennett, T & Simmons, A	N of Haystack Island, Medomak River	2.52 acres	Shellfish	3 yrs	Lease denied 2/14/24
Walpole	Dodge Cove Marine Farm	N of Glidden Ldg, W of Fitch Cv, Damariscotta Rvr	1.9 acres	Shellfish	3 yrs	App rec'd 3/21/23; site visit completed
Yarmouth	Gerber, Caitlin	SE of Moshier Island, Casco Bay	4 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App rec'd 8/25/22; site report published
Yarmouth	Parker, Joe	NE of Basket Island, Casco Bay	4 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	App rec'd 3/19/24; comments due 4/20/24
Yarmouth and Freeport	Dirigo Marine Resources	NE of Moshier Island, Casco Bay, Yarmouth &	3.9 acres	Marine Algae	3 yrs	Lease granted 2/1/24
York	So ME Sustainable Shellfish LLC	W of Sewall's Bridge, York River	0.97 acres	Shellfish	3 yrs	Public Hearing 4/22/24 1pm York Public Library

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## Standard Lease Applications: Terms Up to 20 Years, Size to 100 Acres, Renewable

Bay Harbor	Acadia Aqua Farms LLC	SW of Googins Ledge, Frenchman Bay	48 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	Hearing completed 3/28/22
Beals	Downeast Institute	Near Mud Hole Pt/Eastern Bay, Mud Hold Cove	3.95 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	App rec'd 3/7/24; site review TBD
Beals	The Flying Place LLC	W of Beals-Great Wass Cswy, Flying Place Pound	5.57 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	App rec'd 3/21/23; site review TBD
Boothbay	Pleasant Cove Oyster Farm	Damariscotta River	2.78 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	Scoping sess. 2/26/24 Boothbay Town Office
Boothbay Hrbr	Yentsch, Carlton	W of Samoset Rd, Bottle Cove	1.12 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	App rec'd 10/27/22; site visit completed
Brunswick	Ferda Farms LLC	E of Lower Coombs Isl, New Meadows Rvr	2.33 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	Pub.Hear. 4/8/24 1pm Brunswick Town Hall
Chebeague Isl	Great Ledge Cove Seafood LLC	NE Lil Chebeague Isl, Wstrn Chandlers Cv	6.85 acres	Marine Algae	20 yrs	Lease Granted 1/31/24
Chebeague Isl	Linda Kate Kelp LLC	SW of Basket Isl, Casco Bay	16 acres	Marine Algae	20 yrs	Scoping sess. 11/17/23 Chebeague Island Hall
Damariscotta	Mook Sea Farms Inc.	Days Cove, Damariscotta Rvr	4 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	App rec'd 11/8/22; site visit completed
Deer Isle	Barrows, Abigail	South of Big Hay Isl, Pickering Cove	4.24 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	App rec'd 7/26/22; site visit completed
Deer Isle	Brewer, Marsden & Brewer, Robert	East Penobscot Bay	4 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	Scoping session 2/5/24 Deer Isle Town Office
Deer Isle	Deep Blue Aquaculture LLC	W of Hog Island, Eastern Penobscot Bay	41.2 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	App rec'd 4/4/23; site review TBD
Deer Isle	Melvin, Allison & Klein, Jesse	Between Oak Pt & Campbell Isl, Fish Creek	4.74 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	App rec'd 11/21/23; site review TBD
Edgecomb	Glidden Point Oyster Co.	Damariscotta River	.2 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	Scoping session 7/27/23 Edgecomb Town Hall
Freeport	Coffin, Bailey	W of Sow & Pigs Isl, Casco Bay	6.84 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	Public Hearing 5/23/23 Freeport Town Hall
Freeport	Sparta, Kenneth Curtis	W of Crab Isl, Casco Bay	8.25 acres	Shellfish/Algae	20 yrs	App rec'd 3/25/22; site report published
Georgetown	Gaffney, Michael & Mark	N of Lil Phoebe Isl, Robinhood Cove	7 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	Public Hearing 11/15/23 Georgetown Community Center
Hancock	Taunton Bay Oyster Co, Inc.	South of Burying Island, Taunton Bay	7.46 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	App rec'd 10/26/23; site review TBD
Harpwell	Butterfield, Keith	SW of Lower Goose Isl, Casco Bay	25 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	Scoping session 1/14/22 Harpswell Town Hall
Harpwell	Ferda Farms LLC	E of Bombazine Isl, New Meadows Rvr	5 acres	Shellfish	10 yrs	Scoping sess 2/23/24 Cundy's Hrbr Comm Hall
Harpwell	Goose Island Oysters LLC	W of Upper Goose Isl, Middle Bay	10.4 acres	Shellfish/Algae	20 yrs	App rec'd 1/31/23; site visit completed
Harpwell	Love Point Oysters LLC	Middle Bay, SW of Upper Goose Isl	3.20 acres	Shellfish/Algae	20 yrs	Public Hearing 2/14/24 Harpswell Town Office
Harpwell	Quahog Bay Conservancy	E of Snow Island, Quahog Bay	1.36 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	App rec'd 5/18/23; site review TBD
Harpwell	Wilson Cove Oysters LLC	Wilson Cove, Middle Bay	3.21 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	App rec'd 8/22/22; site visit completed
Long Island	Great Ledge Cove Seafood LLC	S Lil Chebeague Isl, NW Chann. Rocks, Casco Bay	9.03 acres	Marine Algae	20 yrs	App rec'd 4/9/23, site review TBD
Long Island	Ocean's Balance	West of Cow Isl Ledge, Casco Bay	4 acres	Marine Algae	20 yrs	App rec'd 12/1/22; site visit completed
Long Island	Summit Point LLC	N of Cow Isl, Casco Bay	6.4 acres	Marine Algae	20 yrs	App rec'd 3/29/23; site review TBD
Newcastle	FareWell LLC	Upper Dodge Cove, Damariscotta River	3.6 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	App rec'd 3/7/24; site review TBD
Newcastle	George Faux, Inc.	S of Great Salt Bay, Upper Damariscotta Rvr	1.8 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	Pub.Hearing 3/26/24 Damariscotta Town Office
Newcastle	Norumbega Oyster Inc.	E of Upper Dodge Pt, Damariscotta Rvr	6 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	App rec'd 9/9/22; site visit completed
North Haven	Maine Island Aquaculture LLC	SW of Hog Isl, Marsh Cove	15 acres	Shellfish/Algae	20 yrs	Lease Granted 1/9/24
Phippsburg	Clam Hunter Seafood (T Watson)	North end of Morse Rvr, Spirit Pond	2.52 acres	Shellfish	10 yrs	Scoping session 9/14/22 Phippsburg Library
Phippsburg	Clam Hunter Seafood (T Watson)	W of Parker Head, Kennebec Rvr, Mill Pond	.96 acres	Shellfish	10 yrs	Scoping session 9/14/22 Phippsburg Library
Scarborough	Saltwind Seafarm LLC, Matthew Hassler	W of Nonesuch Point Scarborough River	2.31 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	App rec'd 7/11/23; site review TBD
South Bristol	Dewey's Shellfish LLC	NW of Peters Island, Damariscotta River	0.58 acre	Shellfish	20 yrs	App rec'd 8/16/21; site report published 1/2/24
South Bristol	Heron Island Oyster Co.	Fitch Cv @ Glidden Ldg, E side Damr Rvr	1 acre	Shellfish	20 yrs	Pub.Hear. 3/14/24 DMR W Boothbay Harbor
Southport	Brewer, Jodi & Morning Star Fisheries	N of Dot's Isl, Sheepsct Rvr, Ebenecook Hbr	1.37 acres	Marine Algae	20 yrs	App rec'd 6/6/23; site visit completed
St. George	Albatross Fisheries	Deep Cove, W of Port Clyde, St. George River	4.41 acres	Marine Algae	20 yrs	App rec'd 3/21/23; site visit completed
St. George	Balano, JW & McCoy, MR	Harrington Cove, Wheeler's Bay	1.98 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	App rec'd 7/26/22; site review TBD
St. George	Cotton, J; Thomas, S; Devil's Apron Sea Farm	End of St. George Rvr, Deep Cove, W of Pt Clyde	5.74 acres	Marine Algae	20 yrs	Scoping session 6/5/23 St George Town Office
St. George	Miller, Keith	SE of Elwell Isl, Rackliff Bay, Penobscot Bay	11 acres	Marine Algae	20 yrs	App rec'd 8/2/23; site review TBD
St. George	Miller, Keith & Ryan	SE of Elwell Isl, Wheeler Bay	12.8 acres	Marine Algae	20 yrs	Scoping session 9/19/23 St. George Town Office
St. George	Miller, Keith & Ryan	West of Norton Isl, Rackliff Bay	11.1 acres	Marine Algae	20 yrs	Scoping session 9/19/23 St. George Town Office
St. George	Miss Madisyn LLC	Deep Cove, W of Pt Clyde, End of St. George Rvr	4.44 acres	Marine Algae	20 yrs	App rec'd 5/30/23; site visit completed
Steuben	Francis, Arnold	Smelt Brook, Dyer Bay	3.56 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	App rec'd 8/18/22; site visit completed
Steuben	Francis, Arnold	E of Birch Point, Dyer Bay	2.91 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	App rec'd 8/18/22; site visit completed
Swan's Island	Joyce, Jason & Joshua	Mill Pond, Burnt Coat Harbor	9.95 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	Scoping session 1/23/23 Swan's Island Town Office
Unorg. Terr.	Baines, Robert & Cole	W Penob. Bay, W of Hewitt Isl, S of Clam Ledges	7.33 acres	Marine Algae	20 yrs	Lease Granted 1/8/24
Yarmouth	Butterfield Shellfish	SE of Little Moshier Isl, Casco Bay	20 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	Scoping session 3/29/24 1pm Yarmouth Town Hall
Yarmouth	Henninger, Thomas	Little John Isl, Casco Bay	6.37 acres	Shellfish	20 yrs	App rec'd 4/4/23; site review TBD

*For an interactive source of pending lease applications, please see DMR's table of Pending Aquaculture Lease Applications, where you can find maps and documentation.*

*Go to: [www.maine.gov/dmr/](http://www.maine.gov/dmr/) and from the Aquaculture dropdown menu, select Maine Aquaculture Leases and LPAs, then Pending Lease Applications.*

*Scoping Session and Hearing information can also be found on the calendar at [www.maineobstermen.org/events](http://www.maineobstermen.org/events)*

## In the NEWS

### DISASTER DECLARATION FOR MAINE RELEASES FEDERAL FUNDS

In late March, the Biden administration issued a “Major Disaster Declaration” for the January storms that devastated the Maine coast. Maine’s eight coastal counties — Washington, Hancock, Waldo, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, Cumberland, and York — will be able to apply for funding to help cover the cost of public infrastructure estimated at more than \$70 million. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will offer assistance to eligible individuals and families that experienced “severe property damage.” FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance Teams will be deployed to Maine to help people apply for federal money to help pay for temporary housing, home repairs, and other eligible needs. In addition, the U.S. Small Business Administration is expected to make low-interest loans available to help businesses recover financially.



PenBayPilot.com photo.

### P.E.I. LOBSTER EXPORTS DOWN FOR 2ND YEAR

P.E.I. lobster exports were down again in 2023, but the Lobster Council of Canada is expecting a rebound. The total value of P.E.I.’s lobster exports in 2023 was \$265 million, down from \$310 million in 2022, according to Industry Canada statistics. P.E.I.’s lobster exports did not see the same kind of decline in 2020 that the Canadian fishery experienced as a whole. The Island’s fishery benefited enormously from the 2021 rebound, when sales jumped by 78%. Despite double-digit decreases in the last two years, P.E.I. lobster exports in 2023 were still 11% higher than they were in 2019.

### WEDGE CLOSURE IN MASSACHUSETTS REMOVED

A federal judge overturned National Marine Fisheries Service’s (NMFS) emergency extension of a Massachusetts closed area to lobster and Jonah crab fishing, ruling that the fisheries were in compliance with federal laws. NMFS’s emergency rule sought to extend the closure in the Massachusetts Restricted Area Wedge, making late winter and spring gear restrictions permanent. The Massachusetts Lobstermen’s Association filed a lawsuit in February, contending that congressional limits on whale-protection measures applied to the new Massachusetts wedge rule. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 included a five-year mandate that NMFS’s existing Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan amendments “shall be deemed sufficient to ensure that the continued federal and state authorizations of the American lobster and Jonah crab fisheries are in full compliance” with federal endangered species and marine mammal laws. U.S. District Court Judge William G. Young agreed.

### FEDERAL FUNDS FOR COASTAL REPAIRS INCLUDED IN APPROPRIATIONS BILL

U.S. Senator Susan Collins, vice chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, secured \$15 million dollars to help coastal communities in Maine rebuild, following infrastructure damage caused by recent storms. The bill was included in the March 8 funding package that was recently signed into law. The Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations bill includes \$10 million through the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), which will go toward repairing and renovating infrastructure affected by the December and January storms that hit the Maine coast. The legislation also includes \$5 million to create a new program at the Economic Development Administration (EDA) for working waterfronts.

### HERRING FISHERMEN ADMIT TO FRAUD

Five fishermen — Glenn Robbins of Eliot, Maine; Neil Herrick of Rockland; Stephen Little of Warren; Ethan Chase of Portsmouth, New Hampshire; Jason Parent of Owls Head — were charged with participating in a multi-year scheme of falsifying herring catch and selling unreported herring pleaded guilty soon after a federal trial began.

According to local news sources, from 2016 to 2019 the *Western Sea* and its crew underreported the number of herring caught and sold fish to buyers who also underreported how much fish they had received. The fishermen were then paid cash for the extra fish that they caught. The five fishermen have all pleaded guilty to lesser offenses in a plea deal with federal prosecutors. With the deal, 59 counts against the fishermen were dismissed for lesser charges.

According to the *Portland Press Herald*, the plea agreements carry a maximum sentence of a year in prison, a fine of up to \$100,000 and up to one year of supervised release, with the possibility that none of the defendants see jail time.

### RARE GRAY WHALE SPOTTED IN SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND

The New England Aquarium aerial survey team sighted a gray whale off the New England coast in early March. The species has been extinct in the Atlantic for more than 200 years. Gray whales are found in the North Pacific Ocean. However, in the last 15 years, there have been five observations of gray whales in the Atlantic and Mediterranean waters, including off the Florida coast in 2023. Scientists believe that the Northwest Passage, which connects the Atlantic and Pacific through the Arctic Ocean in Canada, has been ice-free in the summertime in recent years, partly due to rising global temperatures. It is believed that this has allowed gray whales to potentially travel the Passage in the summer, something that wouldn’t have been possible in the previous century.

### MAINE LOBSTER FESTIVAL SEEKS DELEGATE

The Maine Lobster Festival is seeking young people to apply for its Delegate competition. The Coronation Committee is accepting 16 applicants on a first-come, first-serve basis, until June 16. Applicants must have a passion to represent and advocate for Maine’s lobster industry. The competition includes a focus on education regarding the Maine lobster fishery, instruction and guidance on essential skills for the position such as public speaking, and a charitable donation to an organization of the delegate’s choice. Winners will be announced at the coronation on July 31 during the 77th Maine Lobster Festival. The top three winners will receive a crown and cash prize, and represent the Festival for the next year. First place prize is \$2,000, second place \$1,500, and third \$500. For more information, go to <https://mainelobsterfestival.com/main-events/maine-lobster-festival-delegate>.

**“WHEN CFN SHOWS UP  
IN MY MAILBOX EVERY  
MONTH, IT’S LIKE GETTING  
A LETTER FROM HOME.”**

**Commercial Fisheries News**  
**fish-news.com/cfn**

# Events Calendar

More details on all of these events can be found online at [www.mainelobstermen.org](http://www.mainelobstermen.org)

**April 3**  
MLA Board meeting, 5 p.m., Darby restaurant, Belfast.

**April 9**  
ASMFC Webinar Hearing on Addendum 30, 6-8 p.m., <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/rt/1158490969027262805>.

**April 8**  
Aquaculture Public Hearing - Ferda Farms, 1 p.m., Brunswick town hall.

**April 9**  
Aquaculture Advisory Council, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., via Teams and at DMR Office, Augusta.  
Public Hearing on American Lobster Board Draft Addendum 30 (Webinar), 6-8 p.m. Register at <https://register.gotowebinar.com/rt/1158490969027262805>.

**April 16-18**  
New England Fishery Management Council meeting, Mystic, CT.

**April 17**  
Final Wind Energy Area, Comments due on Environmental Assessment. FMI: [www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/state-activities/maine/gulf-maine](http://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/state-activities/maine/gulf-maine). Submit comments through [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), Docket No. BOEM-2024-0020.

**April 22**  
Aquaculture Public Hearing - Southern Maine Sustainable Shellfish, 1 p.m., York Public Library.

**April 29-May 2**  
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission meeting, Arlington, VA.

**May 1**  
Aquaculture Public Hearing - Kenneth Sparta, 1 p.m., Freeport town hall.

**May 6**  
ASMFC Hearing on Addendum 30, In-person/Hybrid, 6-8 p.m., Urban Forestry Center, Portsmouth, NH or via webinar at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/rt/1158490969027262805>.

First Aid/CPR - Coast Guard Sector Northern New England, South Portland, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. FMI: <https://fishingpartnership.org/event/first-aid-cpr-south-portland-me>.

**May 8**  
First Aid/CPR - Coast Guard Station, Boothbay Harbor, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. FMI: <https://fishingpartnership.org/event/first-aid-cpr-boothbay-harbor-me>.

**May 11**  
Auburn Lobster Festival, Main St, Auburn, 1-6 p.m. FMI: [www.auburnlobsterfestival.com](http://www.auburnlobsterfestival.com).

**May 15**  
Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative board meeting, TBD.

## Attention Lobstermen

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## MARINE PATROL OFFICER OF THE YEAR



From left, MLA president Kristan Porter, DMR Commissioner Patrick Keliher, Officer Michaud, Sgt. Matthew Wyman, Col. Rob Beal. MLA photo.

Maine Marine Patrol Officer Alex Michaud received the 2024 Maine Lobstermen's Association Officer of the Year Award during the Maine Fishermen's Forum in Rockport. The award is presented annually to a Marine Patrol Officer who has demonstrated outstanding service in support of the Maine lobster industry.

Officer Michaud, who joined the Marine Patrol in 2017, serves in the St. George-Warren Patrol. In addition to strong patrol work, search and rescue support, and community

relations, Michaud was recognized for investigating many lobster fishery violations including cases related to V-notching, untagged traps, fishing under suspension, and trap limits.

Officer Michaud was praised for demonstrating good judgement in his investigations. "Alex has found an important enforcement balance and utilizes good officer discretion," wrote Marine Patrol Sergeant Matthew Wyman in a letter nominating Michaud for the award. "He applies appropriate logic, reasoning, and compassion while effectively enforcing Marine Resource Laws."

"Alex performs his duties well and has become an excellent representative for the Department," stated Sergeant Wyman. "He is confident in his role as a Marine Patrol Officer and is willing to go the extra mile to successfully detect and apprehend violators of Maine's Marine Resource Laws and Regulations."

MLA board members continued from page 9

with other board members from throughout the coast helped broaden his perspective on all sorts of issues, including actions taken by NMFS on right whales. "I got a lot of information from different parts of the state and information I could take to my area," he said.

But a lot of the actions coming from NMFS were deeply discouraging. "I remember I sat with my wife at one point and said, what am I going to do if I'm not a lobsterman? I absolutely love being a lobsterman. I was very discouraged when that first 60% reduction came out," Welch recalled.

Welch believes in the power of the MLA. "We have a voice. When you can't be at a meeting, we are there for you. A lot of people in my area say, 'What has the MLA done for me?' I say, what has it not done for you?" Welch has also been involved in the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative's (MLMC) efforts to educate chefs and others about the quality of Maine soft-shell lobsters. Encouraged by his fellow Lobster Leadership Institute participant Cyrus Sleeper, who served on the MLMC's board, Welch took part in lobster events in Chicago, Atlanta, and New York City, talking about the fishery and lobstermen's sustainability practices.

Welch remains concerned about the fishery's future, despite the breathing room lobstermen are enjoying now. "We're just catching our breath now. 2028 is coming up. The MLA is going to continue to fight for the lobster fishery. MLA fights for us and for our kids, for the future generations."

# THE MLA: WORKING FOR MAINE LOBSTERMEN FOR 70 YEARS

*Letter to the editor, Sunday Portland Press Herald, November 28, 1954*

Driven by low prices of lobsters and disastrous effects of hurricanes Carol and Edna, lobster fishermen of the Maine coast met in Rockland recently and formed what is known as the Maine Lobstermen's Association. The group elected Leslie Dyer of Vinalhaven as president. Other officers are Farrell Lenfestey, vice president; Clarence Lunt, treasurer; Bert Nevils, secretary; and Alan Grossman, legal counsel.

**Tentative Program**  
Maine Lobstermen's Association  
FIRST ANNUAL CONVENTION

FRIDAY, JUNE 24

12:00 Noon - 2 P. M. Registration, Lobby Thorndike Hotel  
2:00 P. M. Meeting of Executive Committee (Mural Room)  
Official Opening of Convention  
Invocation  
Pledge of Allegiance to Flag  
Reports of Officers  
Reports of Delegates

6:00 P. M. Buffet Dinner (All Members and Ladies), Main Dining Room  
Welcome To Rockland, Osgood A. Gilbert, Chairman, Rockland City Council  
Speaker - Gov. Edmund S. Muskie  
Refreshments  
Floor Show

SATURDAY, JUNE 25

9:00 A. M. Registration, Lobby Thorndike Hotel  
Association Meeting (All Members)  
Speakers

12:30 Noon Luncheon Meeting Main Dining Room (All Members and Ladies)  
Speakers

*Program for the MLA's first annual meeting in 1955. MLA image.*

Delegates were elected from all coastal areas so that every lobster fishing settlement might be represented. Since that time delegates and officers have been diligently at work forming local chapters from Kittery to Eastport. The association now numbers about 1,500 men.

Since we have been organized many misconceptions have been formed by false rumors which have been circulated regarding the association and its purposes. Like any new organization the association has its enemies which are trying to destroy it before it can become a dominant force to give sorely need aid to the individual lobsterman. The group has been formed as an independent organization of Maine lobster fishermen for their mutual benefit as well as to promote a more friendly spirit of cooperation.

Other purposes are: To encourage by proper and lawful means, sound and economical trade practices within the industry. And to strive for the elimination of such practices and methods that are unfair, uneconomic and contrary to sound business principles. Also to encourage the enactment of sound and uniform State and Federal legislation which will benefit the industry which today is beset upon by foreign imports and disasterously low prices at home which are virtually smothering the industry and driving lobster fishermen into other fields of endeavor.

For a long time it has been the fervent hope of many lobstermen that one day they would have an organization that could speak for them so that their voices might be heard in regards to matters which vitally concern their existence.

The group of far-sighted lobster fishermen who have formed this association are working for the interests of the lobsterman and for that purpose only. With the high prices of lobster fishing equipment and gear combined with the low prices which he receives for his catch the very livelihood of the Maine coast

lobster fisherman has been increasingly threatened. The only hope left to them was to form an organization to better themselves. The association which they have formed is proving to be a vital force within the industry and work already has begun on matters to be presented to the coming session of the Legislature.

Rodney Cushing  
Cliff Island



*MLA president Les Dyer addresses members at the 1955 annual meeting. Penobscot Marine Museum photo.*



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