



Lobster Tales

Atlantic Offshore Lobstermen's Association

June 2017

SNE LOBSTER ADDENDUM page 3



Photo Courtesy of John Peabody

BLACK SEA BASS page 21



Credit: NOAA Fisheries/John Rosendale

CORAL page 8



Credit: NEFMC Deep-Sea Coral Public Hearing Docs.

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REMINDERS

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egg & vnotch status also helpful.

Lobsters are tagged with yellow tbars.
Crabs have orange knuckle or green tbars.

EVENTS

ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

August 1 - 3

The Westin, Alexandria, VA

MID-ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

August 8 - 10

Courtyard Marriott, Philadelphia, PA

Save the Date:

WORKING WATERFRONT FESTIVAL

September 23

Steamship Pier and Fishing Heritage Center, New Bedford

MONUMENT COMMENTS

The Dept. of Interior is accepting public comments **until July 10th** about the North-east Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument. See details on page 9.

THANK YOU

to the companies that have donated to the Association's monument legal fund

INVOICES BY EMAIL

Members or Associate Members interested in receiving invoices by email instead of traditional mail, please let Heidi know.

PFD TESTING EXPANDS

Researchers will be dockside in MA and ME ports the week of July 24th signing up lobstermen to test and help redesign PFDs.

LOBSTER & BAIT MANAGEMENT

LOBSTER BOARD: The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Lobster Board met in May, primarily to consider management actions in Southern New England.

After much discussion and realization that fishery management can't correct climate induced distribution changes, the Board decided on a 5% egg production increase, to be achieved using any combination of trap cuts, season closures, and/or gauge changes. They also decide against a demarcation line in Area 3, meaning that management actions will continue to apply equally across all of Area 3. Further details can be found in ASMFC's press release below.

After the Lobster Board meeting, the LCMTs had until June 15th to select management measures and provide plans to the Commission to achieve the increased egg production goal. These plans will be reviewed during a Technical Committee (TC) conference call later this month and the TC's analysis of plans will be presented to the Lobster Board in August. At that time the Board will finalize management measures and set the implementation schedule.

The Area 3 LCMT met in early June and provided the Commission with the comments printed on the page 5. It is more than likely that the ongoing Area 3 trap cuts alone

will be sufficient to address the 5% increase in egg production target, however we will need to continue to work with NMFS to correct trap cap inconsistencies between the Commission and Federal plans.

HERRING and SKATE BAIT: Related to bait, the Commission's Herring Section also convened in May and approved management measures intended to stabilize the rate of catch in the fishery and better distribute the seasonal quota throughout the June through September period (see press release next page).

The New England Fishery Management Council is also acting to correct issues underlying the de facto skate bait fishery closure last winter. The Skate Committee presented to the Council at their late June meeting a draft framework with three alternatives: 1) Status Quo, 2) A reduced trip possession limit from 25,000 lbs. to 12,000 lbs. for the entire winter season, which should keep the fishery just at or below the catch cap 3) No change to the possession limit, but a higher in-season management trigger with a 9,307 lbs possession limit after a reduction is triggered. The Council selected the second option (press release next page); regulations should be in place ahead of this winter's fishery.



Board Approves 5% Increase in Egg Production for the SNE Lobster Stock

MAY 10, ASMFC

The Commission's American Lobster Management Board approved moving forward with the goal of increasing egg production for the Southern New England (SNE) stock of American lobster by 5%. This increase in egg production can be achieved through a suite of management tools including gauge size changes, trap reductions, and seasonal closures. The recreational fishery is only subject to changes in the gauge size should any be proposed. In making its decision, the Board took into consideration the extensive public comment, which overwhelmingly supported status quo, and the fact that stock declines are largely a result of climatic changes, including increasing water temperatures over the last 15 years.

The next step in the process will be for the Lobster Conser-

vation Management Teams (LCMTs) in Areas 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 to develop area-specific proposals on how to achieve the 5% increase in egg production. As established through Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster, LCMTs are composed of lobster industry members who are charged with recommending area-specific measures for Board consideration and approval. The LCMT proposals will be submitted for Technical Committee review in June and Board consideration in August. Once area-specific measures have been approved, the Board will consider final approval of Addendum XXV.

In its deliberation on the SNE lobster stock, the Board discussed the need to consider changes to the current management goals and reference points, noting changes in the marine environment may limit the ability to rebuild the stock to levels seen in the 1990s. The Board will continue to discuss these issues, particularly as the Commission's Climate Change Work Group develops recommendations regarding the management of stocks impacted by changing climate conditions.



Atlantic Herring Section Approves Addendum I MAY 9, ASMFC



Council Approves Framework 4 to Adjust Skate Bait Fishery

JUNE 21, NEFMC

The Commission's Atlantic Herring Section approved Addendum I to Amendment 3 of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Herring. The Addendum includes management measures intended to stabilize the rate of catch in the Area 1A fishery and distribute the seasonal quota throughout Trimester 2 (June through September), which has 72.8 % of the season's allocation. The following measures were approved by the Section:

Days Out Program - The Section will separately address days out provisions for federal herring Category A vessels and vessels with a federal herring Category C or D permit.

In addition to landing restrictions associated with the days out program, Category A vessels are now prohibited from possessing herring caught from Area 1A during a day out of the fishery.

Small-mesh bottom trawl vessels with a Category C or D permit will notify states of their intent to fish in Area 1A prior to June 1st.

Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts will make days out decisions by consensus. If a consensus cannot be reached, then the default landing day scenario will be zero landing days.

Weekly Landing Limit - The Addendum implements a weekly harvester landing limit for vessels with a Category A permit. The weekly limit will be adjusted throughout the fishing season based on effort. Forty-five days prior to the start of the fishing season, Category A vessels will notify states of their intent to fish in Area 1A, including a specification of gear type. This will provide states with an estimate of effort to calculate the weekly landing limit. For the 2017 fishing season, the notification date is set at May 23rd.

New Fishery Management Plan Tools—The following measures may be considered as potential management tools prior to the start of the fishing year:

Herring caught in Area 1A can only be landed by the respective harvester vessel (i.e. no carrier vessels)

Herring carrier vessels are limited to receiving at-sea transfers from one harvester vessel per week and landing once per 24-hour period

State Landing Report—NOAA Fisheries has granted access to vessel monitoring system-submitted daily catch report data for select staff in Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts. This will provide real-time data for the states to implement a weekly landing limit. Therefore, the implementation of a state landing report is not necessary at this time. The Section will include the option to implement a state landing report as part of the interstate fishery management program if it becomes necessary at a future date.

The New England Fishery Management Council today approved Framework Adjustment 4 to the Northeast Skate Complex Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The framework revises the threshold trigger and possession limits in the skate bait fishery. The measures are expected to help keep the bait fishery open throughout the fishing year while minimizing the risk of fishermen exceeding their annual total allowable landings (TAL) limit. The framework also effectively eliminates the link between the skate wing fishery and the skate bait fishery regarding incidental possession limits. This move was requested by industry since the two fisheries operate very differently.

During the 2016 fishing year, the bait fishery was subject to an essential closure when the incidental possession limit was implemented in Season 3 and then was further reduced to 1,135 pounds to match the whole weight equivalent of the 500-pound limit imposed on the skate wing. This made it uneconomical to pursue the bait fishery. Once approved and implemented by the National Marine Fisheries Service,

Framework 4 will:

- Give the bait fishery its own incidental limits;
- Keep the commercial bait per-trip possession limit at 25,000 pounds for Seasons 1 and 2 with a 90% trigger, meaning when 90% of the seasonal TAL is projected to be reached, the bait fishery will be subject to an 8,000-pound incidental limit unless the annual TAC is not expected to be achieved;
- Reduce the possession limit in Season 3 to 12,000 pounds and impose an 80% TAL trigger unless the annual TAL is not expected to be achieved; and
- As a hard backstop, close the fishery when 100% of the annual TAL is projected to be reached.

The Council approved Framework 4 based on a recommendation from its Skate Committee, which considered input from industry members in developing the new measures. Skate bait fishermen proposed the 12,000-pound Season 3 possession limit as a compromise to enhance the likelihood of keeping the fishery open at a lower but still functional level during the final portion of the fishing year. Committee members considered the provision to close the fishery when 100% of the TAL is reached to be an important safeguard against the TAL being exceeded.

LCMT 3 SNE PLAN SUBMITTED TO ASMFC - June 15, 2017

Dear Megan,

The Area 3 Lobster Conservation Management Team met on June 14, 2017 in person at the MADMF office in New Bedford, MA and via conference call.

The following LCMT members were in attendance: Grant Moore – Chair, Peter Brown, Marc Palombo, and Roy Campanale (phone). The following additional Area 3 lobstermen were in attendance: Dick Allen (representing Shafmaster Fishing). The following support staff were in attendance: David Borden – Atlantic Offshore Lobstermen's Assn. (AOLA) and ASMFC, Dan McKiernan – MA Division of Marine Fisheries (MADMF) and ASMFC, Tracy Pugh – MADMF and ASMFC's Lobster Technical Committee (phone), Heidi Henninger – AOLA (phone).

The Area 3 Lobster Conservation Management Team offers the following Addendum XXV management plan by consensus:

Area 3 will complete a 25% trap allocation reduction as approved in Addendum XVIII. Trap reductions of 5% per annum were taken in fishing years 2016 and 2017. As currently scheduled, there will be three more years (2018, 2019, 2020) of 5% annual reductions. The Technical Committee's analysis indicates that these trap reductions will exceed the 5% increased egg production target (Addendum XXV for Public Comment, page 17).

Related to the concern that this trap reduction plan, in combination with transferability, does not effectively remove active effort, we note that there are complexities with multi-area permits, the market for traps, and operational constraints that all serve to draw down the amount of potential fishing effort inherent in shelved permits and traps. The Rhode Island Lobstermen's Association's Addendum XXV comment letter provide a series of insightful examples.

Further, we strongly urge NOAA Fisheries to complete their Addendum XXI rulemaking, to align the federal trap cap with the ASMFC's plan. The federal cap is currently static, whereas the ASMFC's plan reduces the maximum permit

and ownership trap caps annually. For further description, we have attached a letter that the Atlantic Offshore Lobstermen's Association submitted to NOAA NMFS GARFO on this issue.

The LCMT also discussed the provisions approved at the last Board meeting and resolved by consensus the following:

Issue 1 – Target Increase in Egg Production: The LCMT supports the Board's decision to pursue a 5% increase in egg production.

Issue 2 – Management Tools: As noted in our April comments, the LCMT continues to support "Option A, Management Tools Can Be Used Independently". This option allows for much needed management flexibility to craft area specific plans that will meet the goals of this Addendum.

Issue 3 – Recreational Fishery: The LCMT does not have a preference on this issue.

Issue 4 – Season Closures: The LCMT supports Option B with Sub-Option B, No Possession of Lobsters while fishing, most restrictive rule does not apply, with the addition of a bycatch allowance in the trap fisheries of 100 lobsters per day/500 lobsters per trip by count. This will create equitability between the trap and mobile gear fisheries.

Issue 5 – Uniform Regulations: As noted in our April comments, the LCMT continues to support "Option A, Regulations Are Not Uniform Across LCMAs".

Issue 6 – Implementation of Management Measures in LCMA 3: As noted in our April comments, the LCMT continues to support "Option A: Maintain LCMA 3 as a Single Area (Status Quo).

Issue 7 - Management Action in De Minimis States: The LCMT does not have a preference on this issue.

Sincerely,

J. Grant Moore
LCMT Area 3 Chair

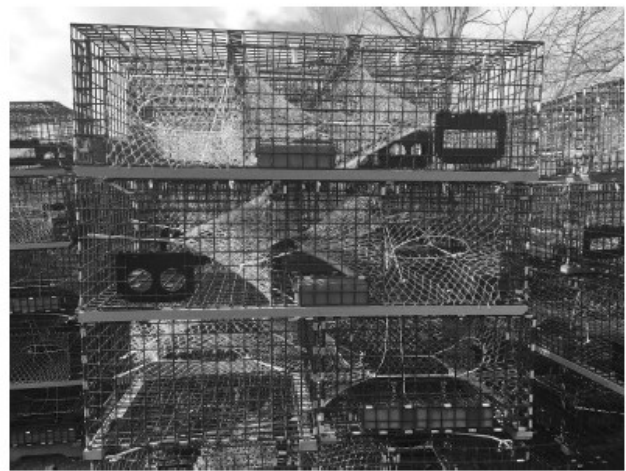
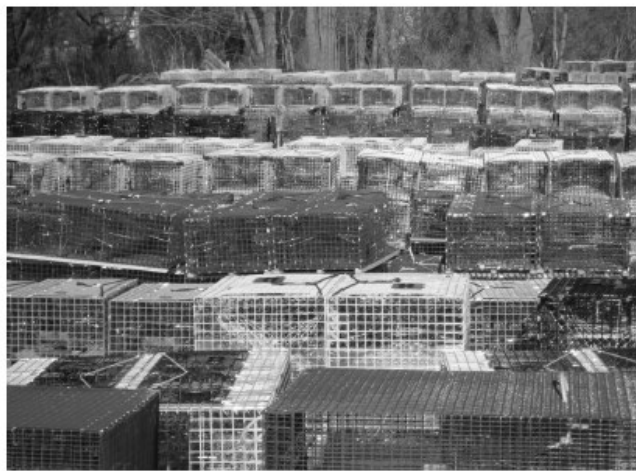


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CORAL AMENDMENT & MONUMENT UPDATE

CORAL AMENDMENT: Since the last issue of *Lobster Tales*, the New England Fishery Management Council held public hearings and accepted public comments about their coral amendment (AOLA's comments are copied on the next page). During that period, the NGO conservation lobby introduced a new alternative for the canyons/shelf break area, which defines a variable, but generally shallower, boundary but exempts both lobster and red crab pot fisheries. Despite concerns about process, the Habitat Committee agreed to have the alternative analyzed by the Plan Development Team (PDT).

At the late June Council meeting, the Committee reviewed the PDT's analysis, which suggested that the NGO alternative could protect more coral, while allowing for the existing footprint of fishing if a few boundary tweaks were made. The Committee passed a motion, which retains their previous preferred alternative for the shelf edge — a 600 meter (330 fathom) zone with all gear, except for red crab, banned from fishing in deeper waters, but added on additional restrictions for mobile tending bottom gear, in line with the modified NGO alternative. This new combined alternative has been remanded to the PDT for analysis. To be clear, this new alternative does not make changes to the proposed lobster fishing closure area, which remains seaward of 600 meters.

Additional PDT analysis pushes final action back to at least September, however the Council did go ahead and select final preferred alternatives for Gulf of Maine areas, including no action (no closures) in offshore waters. The only germane change they made was to identify the 114 fathom bump in Jordans Basin as an area of interest for further research, likely to address NMFS's concerns. This area will stay open to fishing for now. See press release on page 32.

MONUMENT: The Trump administration is in the process of reviewing all monuments established since 1996, including the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts National Marine Monument (see page 37 for media coverage). As part of this review, the Department of Interior (DOI) is accepting public comments until July 10th (see next page for submission details). The Association will be submitting comments shortly, which will be distributed to members via email. The Pacific Legal Foundation, which is representing AOLA and four other fishing associations pro bono in a lawsuit against the monument, has already submitted lengthy comments on our behalf (see excerpt on page 12). In addition, Reginal Fishery Councils and Congress are taking the opportunity to ask that management of fisheries in monuments (and sanctuaries) always be under the jurisdiction of Councils and NMFS (see page 13 for an example).

The lawsuit being pursued by PLF on behalf of fishing interests is essentially on pause until results of the DOI's review is complete. The review process could result in repeal of the monument, changes to the boundaries, changes to regulations within the area, or no changes at all. If any action is taken by the Administration it will be the first time a presidency has used Antiquities Act authority to modify or repeal actions taken by prior Presidents. This is sure to trigger legal challenges, which could take years to resolve.

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AOLA to NEFMC Coral Amendment - May 24, 2017

Dear Tom,

I'm writing on behalf of the members of the Atlantic Offshore Lobstermen's Association to submit comments on the "Draft Omnibus Deep-Sea Coral Amendment" alternatives.

Inshore and Offshore Gulf of Maine – We question the need for yet more closure areas in the Gulf of Maine. Drawing discrete boundaries to protect a single species group/habitat feature ignores the complexity and dynamism inherent to marine ecosystems and domestic fishing fleets. However, should the Council opt for an action alternative, the Association supports the Council's preferred inshore and offshore Gulf of Maine alternatives and the closure boundaries approved for analysis on April 18th. The Association feels strongly that fixed lobster gear be exempt from regulations, because of the severe economic impacts of trap closures in these regions. If it becomes necessary to close additional areas in the Gulf of Maine, we urge the Council to select options that minimize the size of the closures to reduce impacts on the mobile and fixed gear fishing fleets.

Continental Slope/Canyons – The Association supports the Council's preferred alternative of a bottom-tending gear closure zone boundary of 600 meters minimum depth with an exemption for vessels currently permitted in the deep-sea red crab fishery. This alternative is consistent with NOAA's guidance to freeze the footprint of current fishing, and it protects most the corals, as documented by NOAA's Deep-Sea Coral Database (70-90% of coral sightings below 640 meters). As repeatedly noted during the marine monument

debate process, areas of the continental slope have been labeled as "pristine" by the conservation community, despite 40 years of bottom fishing. We feel strongly that the Council should reject efforts to limit bottom tending gear in waters shallower than 600 meters or in discrete canyon areas without further evidence of coral presence and impacts on those corals by bottom tending gear.

As we have noted before, area closures have far reaching impacts beyond simply displacing vessels; these include societal and economic impacts on coastal communities, gear conflicts, and encounters with bycatch and protected species. Despite what some in the conservation community espouse, there is little place for a displaced fisherman to go that will maintain productivity, while avoiding gear conflict, bycatch, and protected resources.

Finally, while we realize the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council utilized different General Counsel advice when it opted to exempt lobster gear from its coral amendment, we have concerns that inclusion of lobster gear in a New England coral plan could be found discriminatory under

National Standard 4. NOAA General Counsel has provided legal advice on numerous occasions, on a range of different species, that generally supports the concept that all similarly licensed federal permit holds need to be treated in a similar fashion.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment,

J. Grant Moore

Monument Comments Due by July 10th

I encourage anyone directly or indirectly impacted by the fishing closures in the Monument to comment. The easiest way to comment is to attach a short cover letter to all previous comments you submitted to NOAA and/or the previous Administration and submit the full packet.

Comments may be submitted online at <http://www.regulations.gov> by entering "DOI-2017-0002" in the Search bar and clicking "Search," or by mail to Monument Review, MS-1530, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20240

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The following is an excerpt from the 20 page monument comment letter submitted to the Dept. of the Interior on behalf of the Atlantic Offshore Lobstermen's Assn., Massachusetts Lobstermen's Assn., Long Island Commercial Fishing Assn., Garden State Seafood Assn., and the Rhode Island Fishermen's Alliance. Contact Heidi if you would like a copy of the full comment letter.

Dear Secretary Zinke:

INTRODUCTION:

The Antiquities Act of 1906 has the laudable goal of protecting important landmarks, artifacts, and other objects of historic and scientific interest on federal land. Unfortunately, recent Presidents have abused their power to designate monuments that are clearly beyond the statute's reach—often over the objections of state and local officials, experts, and the communities affected by the designation.

The most glaring, recent example of Antiquities Act abuse is the designation of the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument, an area of the Atlantic Ocean more than 130 miles from the nation's coast roughly the size of Connecticut. The Antiquities Act expressly limits monument designation to "land owned or controlled by the Federal Government"—which excludes designations of distant ocean referred to in 1906 as the "high seas." As with many other abusive designations, this monument was established over the objections of state governments, the fishermen whose jobs depend on a healthy fishery, and regulators who say it will undermine their efforts to ensure the fishery's sustainability.

The Department of Interior should acknowledge that the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument violates the Antiquities Act and recommend that the President revoke it. It clearly conflicts with the policies set out in the President's Executive Order, as President Obama ignored the concerns of stakeholders, the designation is inconsistent with the requirements and original objectives of the Antiquities Act, and it undermines economic growth and the needs of communities dependent on that growth. At a minimum, this huge monument should be substantially shrunk to mitigate the harm it does to sustainable fishery regulation.

SUMMARY OF CONCERNS:

- I. The Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument violates the Antiquities Act.
 - A. The Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument is not located on federal land
 - B. The ocean is not "owned or controlled by the Federal government"
 - C. The monument is not "confined to the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the object to be protected"
- II. The designation was made over the objection of state and local governments and threatens to undermine sustainable fishing
- III. The President can and should revoke the illegal Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument
 - A. There is a strong presumption that the power to make a decision includes the power to reconsider it
 - B. Congress has not indicated that the presumption does not apply to the Antiquities Act
 - C. The argument against the President's power to revoke illegal monument designations leads to absurd results

CONCLUSION:

President Obama violated the Antiquities Act by designating 5,000-square miles of ocean as the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument. This huge designation plainly conflicts with the statute's limitation that monuments may only be declared on "land owned or controlled by the Federal Government." Beyond its apparent illegality, the designation is bad policy, as it undermines sustainable fishing regulation and was made over the objection of state and local governments, regulators, and the fishermen whose livelihoods depend on a sustainable fishery. Considering the policies set out in the President's executive order the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument should be revoked. Failing that, the boundaries should be reduced and the fishing restrictions relaxed to mitigate its adverse impacts on sustainable fishery regulation.

Respectfully submitted,

JONATHAN WOOD,
Pacific Legal Foundation

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. President,

We urge you to change the access rules governing the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts National Monument to guarantee the fishing rights of both recreational and commercial fishermen. We urge you to lift any restrictions on fishing and return fisheries management to the regional fisheries management councils.

Misusing the authority of the Antiquities Act, President Obama unilaterally, without any consent from Congress or local stakeholders, designated the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts National Monument about 130 miles off the coast of Cape Cod. This designation has prohibited commercial fishing in more than 4,900 square miles of ocean, or about an area the size of Connecticut. The rules governing the Monument prohibit all commercial fishing in the area except for lobster and red crab fishing which are exempt from the regulation for seven years. While recreational fishing is currently minimally impacted by the Monument designation there is concern that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) stated, last year, that future restrictions and permit requirements may be necessary for the recreational sector. The recreational sector is also prohibited from anchoring anywhere within the boundaries of the Monument which has the potential to severally impact traditional recreational fishing activities.

For what sensible purpose does the federal government wall off a massive section of ocean and prohibit its use by American citizens?

The United States has one of the most highly regulated, most sustainable, and environmentally friendly fisheries systems in the world. By closing off this robust fishery we are ensuring

that Americans will be eating more seafood from countries that aren't as responsible as us. We will be enriching the fishing fleets of Asian and European nations, including those hostile to American interests.

The Magnuson-Stevens Act, which governs our fisheries, is designed to ensure sustainable fisheries resources while also producing a maximum sustainable yield for our fishermen. NOAA fisheries and the regional management councils have taken strong measures to reduce the catch of overfished stocks, many times to the detriment of local fishermen. The regional councils are more than capable of preserving our natural resources while at the same time allowing our fisherman to make a living. We should not have to choose between the livelihoods of our fishermen and the health of our fisheries. There is a balance that we are required by law to meet, and when that balance starts to shift too far to the side of the fisheries we start to see drastic consequences in our coastal communities.

The closing of over 4,900 square miles of ocean to commercial fishing doesn't just have the potential to put commercial fishermen out of business but also damages entire communities. The local retail and restaurant industry in many communities is entirely dependent on a robust fishing economy. Many of these small businesses will inevitably be damaged by this monument designation. It is time that we put American fishermen first and restore their access to the fisheries that they have been responsibly fishing for generation.

We thank you for your leadership and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Tom MacArthur, Andy Harris, Frank LoBiondo, Aumua Amata Coleman Radewagen, David Rouzer, Lee Zeldin and Walter B. Jones - Members of Congress.

x

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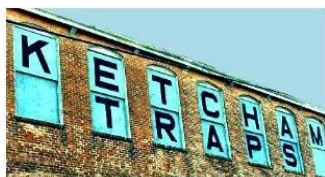
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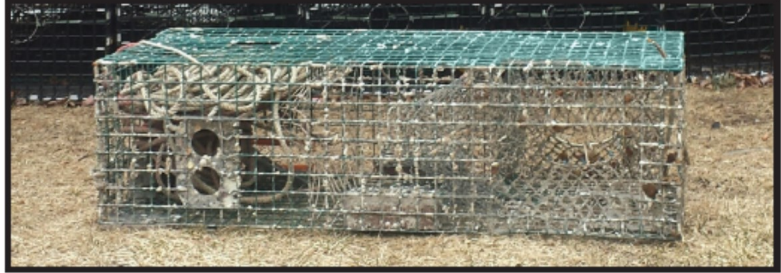
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RESEARCH UPDATES

VENT STUDY: AOLA just wrapped up a collaboration with URI and Fisheries Specialists to investigate different rectangle vents sizes to optimize selectivity during mixed crustacean fishing. The impetus for this project was RI lobstermen who prefer using rectangle vents for all fishing, rather than switching from rectangle to circular.

The URI team studied, first in the laboratory and then in fishery dependent field trials, the current regulated vent (5 3/4" wide) as well as two experimental vents (3 1/2" and 3 9/16" wide, respectively). Inshore, the team found that shorter vents increased retention of legal sized crabs and sublegal lobsters, but didn't significantly change sublegal crab or legal lobster catch. A final report will be available soon and shared via email.

CRAB TAGGING: Work continues to tag 40,000 Jonah crabs across the region. We are in need of vessels willing to take out a technician to tag crabs and collect data, especially in offshore GOM. Crews will be compensated for food costs and paid market value for all legal crabs that are tagged.

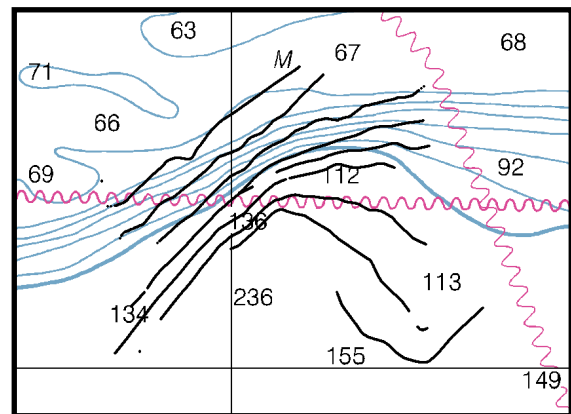
Tags are being deployed in SNE, GB, and GOM, so everyone should be on the lookout for tagged crabs, as well as lobsters that were tagged previously in the Georges Bank area. Call or text Heidi with recapture reports, including tag number, date, and location. Carapace size (or a photo next to a gauge), egg & vnotch status also helpful. Crabs have orange knuckle or green tbars. Lobsters are tagged with yellow tbars.

LOBSTER TAGGING: We were recently awarded grant funds through NOAA's Saltonstall-Kennedy program to expand lobster tagging in the Georges Bank/Gulf of Maine stock. We will be working with ME and NH state biologists to deploy up to 15,000 additional tags to investigate migration and growth. This project will start later this year or early 2018, pending the award administration process, and run for two years. Unfortunately, a similar project for SNE was not funded by NOAA's Climate Impacts on Fisheries Program, but we are investigating other funding sources.

JUVENILE LOBSTER HABITAT: Big thanks to those who worked with Burton Shank to make habitat surveying successful in Alvin Canyon. What follows is a summary from

Burton. You can also read more online at https://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/press_release/pr2017/features/lobster-surveys-2017/ and see some images on page 22.

Prior to the survey, I had productive conversations with captains and / or owners that were extremely helpful for getting a sense of where and how much fixed gear was in the area and how conditions were out there ahead of time. Once on site, we were contacted by a captain, who conveyed the coordinates of their high-fliers within our study area. With these coordinates, we figured a general layout of their trawls and had no problem picking up our vehicle and flying over the groundlines whenever we got close. With some high winds and rough seas, we were only able to sample for ~11 hours but completed our planned survey of Alvin between 125m and 275m (~70-150 Fa), including ~60 nm of survey track, collecting ~250,000 images (see survey tracks below).



Almost everything we saw was soft-bottom with only a few protruding rocks or patches of cobble. No juvenile lobsters were apparent while surveying. We'll have to take a closer look in the processed images. We only saw a handful of adult lobsters, mostly on the eastern side of the canyon in the deeper waters. There were lots of Jonah crabs, monkfish, flatfish, skates and dogfish. Burrows in the sediment were abundant and one of our tasks will be to see how well we can characterize different burrows and see who lives in them. Sea pens were abundant in the shallower area and we saw a couple patches of what look like hard coral (unconfirmed) in the deeper area. With no hard-bottom habitat, soft corals were absent. Once we finish the scallop survey and can focus on processing the backlog of images, I'll try to get an image set up where fishermen can browse around as they like.



American Lobster Settlement Index | Update 2016

Compiled by: R. Wahle and J. Carloni

Participants: ME DMR (K. Reardon), MA DMF (T. Pugh, K. Whitmore), RI DFW (S. Olszewski), NH F&G (J. Carloni), DFO Canada (M. Comeau, P. Lawton, S. Armsworthy, A. Cook), UNB, St. John (R. Rochette), GCIFA (E. O'Leary), PEIFA (M. Giffen), Fishermen & Scientists Research Society (S. Scott-Tibbets)

<http://umaine.edu/wahlelab/current-projects/american-lobster-settlement-index/>

Just as US and Canadian lobster landings seem to be breaking all the records, settlement has been dipping to all-time lows. The disconnect is causing a lot of people to scratch their heads. Harvests on both sides of the border have sustained an almost uninterrupted surge in abundance for more than a decade. By 2015, US harvests had nearly doubled since 2003, and since 2000 for Canada, making for a combined volume of 157 thousand metric tons (346 million lbs) with a value of \$US1.48 billion. Fishery independent state and federal surveys leave no doubt that there have been real and dramatic increases in abundance. While the 2016 landings are still being tallied, if Maine's impressive performance is any indication, 2016 is likely to go down as another banner year both in volume and value. By all indications, the reproductive output of the American lobster population should be greater than ever, but for some reason it does not seem to be translating into record breaking settlement.

This ALSI Update adds 2016's settlement numbers to our continuing time series of diver-based and bio-collector-based sampling in New England and Atlantic Canada. In this update we also feature an analysis led by Joshua Carloni, of NH Dept. of Fish & Game, to take a closer look at what might be behind the puzzling disconnect between what should be record-breaking larval production and the paltry settlement reports across the region.

Settlement 2016: Young-of-year lobster densities in 2016 continued a downward spiral. Many areas reported some of the lowest settlement on record since monitoring began, and the list of areas reporting downturns seems to be growing. Working from south to north, the low numbers in southern New England have been the status quo for nearly a decade, but at least they remain steady in the face of persistent shell disease. In the Gulf of Maine,

most monitoring sites from Beaver Harbour, NB, to Cape Cod Bay report some of the lowest settlement since the late 1990s or early 2000s. Collector-based time series in Canada are relatively short, so the long-term perspective isn't possible. Lobster Bay and St. Mary's Bay of southwest

Nova Scotia had a recent spike in 2014, but have since fallen off. Settlement along the eastern shore of Nova Scotia has been nil for the past 3-4 years. It may be too early to tell, but in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence, Prince Edward Island seems to be sliding off its impressive surge that peaked in 2014.

The Great Disconnect: The nagging mystery is why settlement would be so low when the brood stock is at record-breaking highs. To dig deeper into this problem we examined a unique long-term time series of lobster larval abundance that bridges the gap between egg production and settlement. Larval samples have been collected annually by the environmental consultant, Normandeau Associates, Inc. since 1988 as part of coastal impact studies for New Hampshire's Seabrook Nuclear Power Station. They use a specialized plankton sampler called a neuston net designed to skim the sea surface where lobster larvae concentrate.

The larval time series reveals the upward trend in early stage larvae that we would expect from the growing numbers of adult lobsters evident both in commercial landings and NOAA trawl surveys. The disconnect comes soon thereafter. By the time larvae mature to the still-planktonic postlarval stage a couple weeks later, the trend has turned decidedly downward since 2007. We would naturally expect the numbers of stage I larvae to determine the abundance postlarvae, but we found no correlation. We did find, though, that annual fluctuations in postlarvae at Seabrook strongly determine the abun-

dance of young-of-year settlers in our western Gulf of Maine ALSI study areas. With the exception of 1990, a year of exceptionally high postlarval numbers but low settlement, this was true even for mid-coast Maine, our longest standing ALSI time series, some 100 nautical miles away from Seabrook. Our analysis indicates the correlation with Seabrook weakens for ALSI monitoring sites further east in the Gulf of Maine and south of Cape Cod.

One interpretation of the disconnect between stage I larvae and postlarvae is that survival rates in the intermediate larval stages have been declining over the years despite burgeoning egg production. Could it be that rising numbers of predators, or a shrinking food supply, or unfavorable currents are heightening losses of lobster larvae? One line of evidence hints that recent declines in zooplankton prey that lobster larvae eat may be a contributing factor. An independent set of plankton tows conducted by Normandeau, also at Seabrook have recorded a decline in several species of zooplankton in recent years. Over the 27 year time series we find a robust alignment between changes in postlarvae, young-of-year settlement, and the abundance of the copepod, *Calanus finmarchicus*, a key node of the Gulf of Maine's planktonic food web. Is this a cause-effect relationship, or is something larger causing a decline in both lobster larvae and copepods?

If we can generalize from this admittedly limited larval data set, the take-away is that larval production seems to be doing just fine, rising with the historic surge in brood stock. But times seem to have been getting harder for larvae as they run the month-long gauntlet from hatch to settlement. Clearly, we need to better understand these linkages to know whether larval food supply could be a limiting factor in recruitment of Gulf of Maine lobster and the implications of these trends for the future of the fishery. Most importantly, this is a prime example of why spawner abundance and egg production has been a notoriously poor predictor of recruitment to so many fisheries, and why ALSI may be a useful bellwether for the future.

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NEWS *briefs*

OBSERVER SEA DAYS

NMFS has announced observer sea day assignments for fishing year 2017. Days are assigned based on the need for bycatch data only. In other words, gears known to have limited bycatch, based on prior years' data, are assigned the fewest sea days, even if the directed species (e.g. lobster and Jonah crabs) are data poor.

In response to a lawsuit, NMFS has been assigning sea days via a mathematical formula for the past few years (before that they used a combination of math and subjective decision making). During the first years using the formulaic approach, lobster was assigned a large number of days because of unknown groundfish bycatch rates and larger NOAA observer budgets. Observed trips on lobster vessels in those years documented little bycatch and now that those data are incorporated into the formulaic calculation, the fleet is receiving far fewer days.

Lobster fleet observer cover will be so low this year that there may be NO multiday offshore trips observed.

REMINDERS

FY 2017 Scallop Access Areas: The northern portion of the Closed Area II Access Area will be open during the winter, but otherwise closed. The Southern portion of Closed Area II and all of Closed Area I are closed to scallop fishing. Nantucket Lightship Access Area and Elephant Trunk Flex areas are open to the Limited Access fleet only. Remaining Mid-Atlantic Access Areas are open to both scallop fleets.

Port Sampling Offices: NMFS has moved their port sampling field office in New Bedford to U.S. Custom House, 37 North Second St. and in Southern New Jersey from Cape May to 1750 Zion Rd, Suite 101 Northfield, NJ

Capital Construction Fund (CCF): NMFS recently amended CCF regulations to eliminate minimum project costs and annual deposits requirements, and the requirement that any vessel acquired with CCF funds be reconstructed. If you are interested in learning more about CCF visit:

http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/mb/financial_services/ccf.htm

FY 2017 Sea Days

Lobster pots Mid-Atlantic: 15
Lobster pots New England: 17
Crab pots Mid-Atlantic: 28
Crab pots New England: 83

A note about lobster vs. crab days: Sea days are assigned by gear type, based on VTRs. Most of the lobster fleet reports gear as 'lobster pots' whether targeting lobster, Jonah crab, or both; however a handful of vessels report gear as 'crab pots' when targeting Jonahs. The red crab fleet records their gear as 'crab pots'. This means that the large majority of crab pot sea days will be onboard red crab vessels, with a lesser amount on Jonah crab trips.

Related, NMFS continues to work to account for portions of the federal lobster fleet that don't report VTRs (much of Area 1) in the SBRM process and better coordinate state and federal sea sampling. NMFS has determined that they can't act without official rulemaking, so they have presented a SBRM framework adjustment to the New England and Mid-Atlantic Councils. If the timeline is maintained, rulemaking will happen this winter for changes effective fishing year 2018. The changes won't alter the number of days assigned to the lobster fleet, but will expand the number of boats eligible to be selected for observation.

MA PROCESSING BILL

Important to many AOLA Associate Members, the Massachusetts Legislature has once again taken up legislation to amend lobster processing regulations in the state. In years' past, such legislation has not made it out of Committee.

Currently, the state Senate has included language in a budget amendment that would allow licensed wholesalers to process unfroze raw lobsters, as well as allowing the sale of previously frozen raw in-shell tails and the importation of unfrozen shell-one lobster parts and tails. However, the House's version of the budget only includes funds to study processor changes.

Further complicating the issue coastwide, regulations vary by state.

NEWS *briefs*

ENERGY EXTRACTION

In April, President Trump signed Executive Orders that aim to expand offshore drilling in the Atlantic Ocean, allow energy exploration in marine sanctuaries, and require the review process for new marine sanctuaries to include an assessment of potential energy resources (see page 37 for press coverage). This is in contrast to recent actions by the former Administration and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) to ban drilling and suspend leasing in the Atlantic.

Acting on these Executive Orders, proposals that were rejected by the Obama Administration are being reconsidered. Energy leases could be available no sooner than 2019, but other activities could start sooner. For example, NMFS is seeking public comments through July 7th related to approving seismic air guns use to locate gas and oil formations. While, the New Jersey Congressional delegation has sponsored a bill to ban seismic testing in the Atlantic. Further details available in the articles of interest on page 37.

VESSEL INCIDENTAL DISCHARGE

Readers might remember that back in 2014 Congress approved a three year extension of the commercial fishing industry's exemption to certain EPA discharge permitting requirements. That exemption is set to expire this December.

However, a Vessel Incidental Discharge Act has been introduced in both Congressional chambers. This act would require commercial vessels to apply the best available technology to meet discharge standards set by the Coast Guard, and would carve out an exemption for commercial fishing vessels from the EPA's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) vessel discharge permits. It is expected that this act will proceed through Congress along with the U.S. Coast Guard Reauthorization Act of 2017.

AOLA staff have contacted the Congressional delegations of ME, NH, MA, RI, NY, and NJ to request their support of a permanent commercial fishing vessel exemption (see letter next page).

BLACK SEA BASS

As first reported in the February issue of *Lobster Tales*, Black Sea Bass management was in need of a correction to adjust to new favorable stock assessment information. In recent years restrictive catch limits have harmed the fishery and created bycatch issues. As many of you have noted, sea bass are everywhere.

Since our last reporting, NMFS has acted on the recommendations of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, announcing in May:

"NOAA Fisheries announces revised 2017 and projected 2018 catch limits for black sea bass following the recent benchmark stock assessment in December 2016.

Based on the new stock assessment information, we are implementing revisions to the 2017 black sea bass specifications that represent a 53-percent increase in the 2017 commercial quota, and a 52-percent increase in the 2017 recreational harvest limit.

We are also removing an accountability measure that was applied to the 2017 commercial fishery at the beginning of the fishing year to account for a previous overage in 2015. If the new stock assessment had been available to set 2015 specifications, the catch limits would have been set higher and overage would not have occurred. As a result, we have determined the accountability measure is no longer necessary and are removing it from these revised 2017 specifications.

The projected 2018 specifications are provided for planning purposes. The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council will review the projected 2018 catch limits and, should any changes be recommended, you will be notified in another bulletin in late 2017. "

WHALES: The Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team met over two days in April. They reviewed new information about whale stock status, recent research, and entanglement rates. At this point, no new management is planned, but members are working on proposals for future TRT priorities. The team will convene via conference call in September.

AOLA to Congress - Vessel Incidental Discharge - June 5, 2017

Variants of the following letter were sent to Senators and Representatives in ME, NH, MA, RI, NY and NJ.

Dear Senator,

I'm writing as representative of the Atlantic Offshore Lobstermen's Association, a trade association of commercial lobstermen who hail from ports in Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, and New Jersey, to ask that you support "S. 168 – 115th Congress: Commercial Vessel Incidental Discharge Act." This Act serves to set best management practices and make permanent a commercial fishing vessel exemption that has been in place since the original legislation was enacted in 2008. If no action is taken, commercial fishing vessels will need to abide by the provisions of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act as of December 18, 2017. Yet, in what appears to be an arbitrary distinction, 13,000,000 recreational vessels will not be subject to the provisions having been granted a permanent exemption by Congress in 2007

If Congress does not act, Environmental Protection Agency National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits will need to be obtained by approximately 80,000 additional vessels (commercial fishing vessels of all sizes and other commercial vessels less than 79 feet) to legally

discharge effluent, such as deck wash and fish hold water, generated during normal vessel operations. Vessel owners who don't obtain permits will be subjected to daily fines.

While a single permit may not seem overtly onerous, it represents yet another administrative hoop the domestic fishing fleet will need to jump through simply to do their job, further discouraging economic growth in an already struggling small business sector. Further, the NPDES regulations define a long list of discharges that are prohibited or must be minimized on vessels permitted under the program. While admittedly, some of these prohibitions make good sense, many others are not practicably and excessively burdensome.

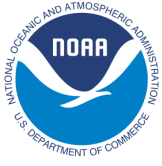
AOLA staunchly supports sustainability in fisheries, but regulations must be balanced and practical. The proposed Vessel Incident Discharge Act presents such a pragmatic approach by requiring best practices for limiting discharges in lieu of permits and giving the Coast Guard authority to define these practices for both recreational and commercial fishing vessels, ensuring equity. As a representative of small businesses in your state, I urge you to support S. 168 to help fishermen continue to provide sustainable, domestic seafood for our nation.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

J. Grant Moore

IMAGES FROM THE HABCAM SURVEY OF ALVIN CANYON





Chris Oliver Appointed to Lead NOAA Fisheries

JUNE 21, 2017

Today, Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross, with concurrence from the White House, named Chris Oliver Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries. The Texas native assumed his new position on June 19, taking the helm from Acting Assistant Administrator Samuel Rauch who will return to his position as the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs.

As the agency's new Assistant Administrator, Oliver will oversee the management and conservation of recreational and commercial fisheries including some aspects of marine aquaculture, the preservation and maintenance of safe sources of seafood, and the protection of marine mammals, marine protected species, and coastal fisheries habitat within the U.S. exclusive economic zone. He will also manage an agency with a strong presence nationally with 4,800 people in five regional offices, six science centers, and 24 labs and fish stations in 15 states and U.S. territories.

Oliver most recently served as Executive Director of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, a position he held for the past 16 years. He has been with the Council since 1990, also serving as a fisheries biologist and then deputy director. During his tenure as executive director he led the way on several cutting edge management initiatives, including development of limited access privilege programs and fishery cooperatives and catch share programs, the North Pacific's comprehensive onboard observer program, numerous bycatch reduction programs, extensive habitat protection measures, commercial and recreational allocation programs, and coastal community development programs. He was also responsible for all administrative and operation

al aspects of the Council process, and lead staffer for legislative and international issues.

"I understand how important stakeholder involvement, transparency, and best available science are to making the right policy decisions and I plan to ensure those tenets of the Magnuson-Stevens Act are applied across the board while I am leading the agency," he said. "I intend to rely heavily upon the regional expertise of the eight fishery management Councils and the associated NOAA Fisheries Regions and Science Centers, and to ensure they have the resources necessary to effectively tackle region-specific issues."

Through his long-time participation in the Council Coordination Committee and various international regional fishery management organizations, Oliver gained extensive knowledge of the national and international fisheries issues facing the agency.

Originally from Rockport, Texas, Oliver was also a Research Associate at Texas A&M University from 1987-1990, working with federal and state agencies on management issues associated with Gulf of Mexico shrimp fisheries, giving him both personal and professional experience with fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico. He holds a BBA in Business Management and a Master's degree in Fisheries Science, both from Texas A&M. Oliver enjoys many outdoor activities and is an avid hunter and fisherman. He and his wife Maggie of 34 years have two sons, Christopher and Nicholas.

"I look forward to leading NOAA Fisheries and working with our partners to rebuild U.S. fisheries and conserve and recover protected resources where necessary, promote domestic marine aquaculture production where appropriate, maintain our reputation for world-renowned science and analysis, and do so while maximizing fishing opportunities for the benefit of recreational and commercial fishermen, processors, and the coastal communities which depend on them for generations to come," said Oliver.



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PFD TESTING CONTINUES

Researchers from the Northeast Center for Occupational Health and Safety, in conjunction with Fishing Partnership Support Services, will be dockside in MA and ME ports the week of July 24th signing up additional lobstermen to test and help redesign PFDs.

The aim of the research is to address barriers to PFD use and develop solution that make safety cost-effective and easy for Northeast lobstermen. For questions about the project, contact Julie Sorensen at Julie.Sorensen@bassett.org or at 607-547-6023 ext.2210. Unfortunately, they can't accept volunteers via phone or email, because of the random design of the study.

SAFETY



Man Overboard Rescue Device Developed by Milford Lab Staff

APRIL 13, NOAA NEFSC

[Excerpted] Recovering an unresponsive person in the water and bringing them aboard a vessel has been a longstanding problem in marine safety and training. Until now. A new invention from the Northeast Fisheries Science Center's Milford Laboratory looks like a practical and effective tool for saving lives at sea.

Robert Alix, captain of the Lab's 49-foot research vessel Victor Loosanoff, and Werner Schreiner, a former deck hand on the boat, developed the Man Overboard Recovery device, (MOB) and a U.S. patent is pending. The rights belong to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the parent organization of NOAA Fisheries.

"We thought it would be useful and could save lives, especially on small boats that usually have a small crew," said Alix, who came up with the idea with Werner about five years ago during safety training in local waters. "It is hard enough to get a person who is conscious and cooperative into a boat with high freeboard, but much harder if the person is unconscious and cannot help in their own rescue."

The device allows a single rescuer to attach a lifting sling to a person in the water without the need for a second rescuer to enter the water and without help from the victim, who may be unresponsive. A lifting sling, constructed of nylon webbing similar to automotive seat belt material, and a section of rope are attached to a wishbone-shaped 'Y' at the end of a long handle.

During a rescue, the sling is attached to the victim and detached from the 'Y' and handle. The rope is then attached to a lifting device on the rescue vessel, such as a block and tackle, to hoist the victim onto the vessel. The wishbone shape of the 'Y' allows the rescuer to attach the lifting sling to a victim who is floating horizontally or vertically.

The original prototype, a fiberglass pole and a bent stainless tubing 'Y', led to a second version constructed entirely of fiberglass tubing. It more closely resembles the drawings

in the patent application, which allows for some modification of the device, including the ability of the handle to be telescoping and the 'Y' to fold. The device could be stored in a bag or case, with lifting sling and rope fully rigged, ready for use. The rescuer would simply remove the device from the case, unfold and telescope the unit, and proceed to perform a rescue.

"Bob Alix approached me when I was conducting training at the Millford Lab. He showed me the MOB device and how useful it could be in a limited crew situation," said Derek Parks, technology transfer program manager for NOAA. "I thought the idea sounded very interesting, so I did some research and found there could be an opportunity for a U.S. patent on the device. Regardless of the outcome of the patent application, we would love to see this device manufactured and used as broadly as possible in the future. It would be a great legacy for Bob and another contribution from NOAA towards saving lives."

Alix believes the market for this device would be vessels from about 25 feet to 75 feet long with relatively high freeboard (the distance from the waterline to the upper edge of the side of the boat) and no dedicated rescue craft such as a rigid hull inflatable boat. These vessels typically have freeboard that is too high to grab and pull a victim up and out of the water by hand. The device might also appeal to search and rescue teams, to vessels that carry passengers for hire, commercial fishing vessels, and to some larger recreational vessels.

"We feel that this device works in situations where currently available devices do not," Alix said. "A vessel equipped with one of our MOB devices, along with an existing rescue device such as a buoyant horse collar, would be able to safely recover both an active victim and a completely unresponsive or deceased victim without the need for a rescuer to enter the water."

"If it saves even one life, all the time and effort to get it out there will be well worth it," Alix said. Lt. Erick Estela Gomez of the NOAA Corps will be taking over for Alix as captain of the Loosanoff in June.



Council Postpones Coral Action for Continental Slope/Canyons Pending Analysis of New Alternative; Takes Steps for GOM | JUNE 22, NEFMC

The New England Fishery Management Council today adopted coral protection zones for the Gulf of Maine as part of its Omnibus Deep-Sea Coral Amendment. However, it postponed action for the Continental Slope south of Georges Bank in order to further develop an additional alternative. The Council's Plan Development Team (PDT) will work with the Habitat Advisory Panel to further refine this new alternative. The Council's Habitat Committee then will review the results and develop a recommendation for the full Council to consider. The timing of final action is uncertain.

Gulf of Maine

For the Gulf of Maine, the Council approved the following measures:

Outer Schoodic Ridge – The Council adopted a discrete coral protection zone for this area where bottom-tending mobile gear (trawls and dredges) will be prohibited. Other types of fishing gear will be allowed, including lobster traps/pots.

Mt. Desert Rock – The Council adopted a discrete coral protection zone for this area as well where bottom-tending mobile gear will be prohibited but other gears, including lobster traps/pots, will be allowed.

Jordan Basin DHRA – The Council designated a Dedicated Habitat Research Area in Jordan Basin on/around the 114 fathom bump site, which encompasses roughly 40 square miles. This designation is meant to focus attention on the coral habitats at this site. The Council believes additional research on corals and fishing gear impacts should be directed here. No fishing restrictions are proposed at this time.

Jordan Basin and Lindenkohl Knoll – The Council did not adopt any coral protection zones for either of these offshore Gulf of Maine areas or support any new fishing restrictions there.

Framework Items, Research Activities

The Council included a list of items that could be modified in the Omnibus Deep-Sea Coral Amendment through framework adjustments rather than through additional amendments. These include: (1) adding, revising, or removing coral protection zones; (2) changing fishing restrictions; and (3) adopting or changing special fishery programs.

The Council also agreed that anyone conducting research

activities in coral zones would be required to obtain a letter of acknowledgement of these activities from the National Marine Fisheries Service's Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office.

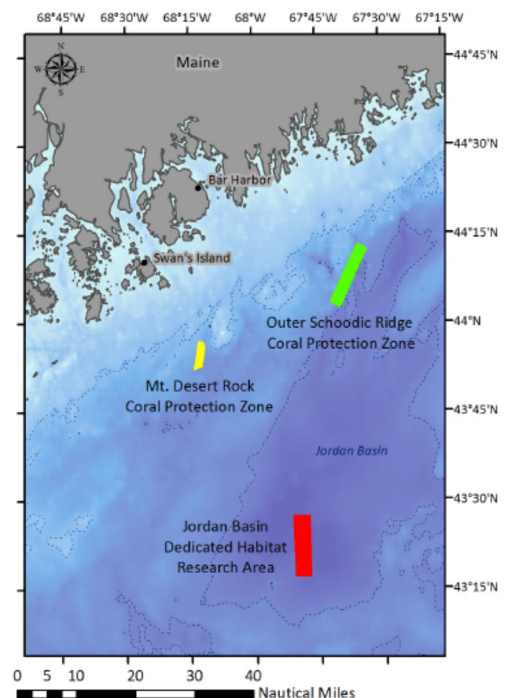
Continental Slope and Canyons Region

During its April meeting, the Council considered six options for the Continental Slope/canyons region, which is south of Georges Bank, and selected Alternative 6 as its preferred option. This alternative calls for a broad coral protection zone boundary of 600 meters minimum depth, equivalent to roughly 325 fathoms. The use of all bottom-tending gear would be prohibited within the zone, but a pot gear exemption for the deep-sea red crab fishery was included. This is the only fishery using bottom-tending gear known to take place deeper than 600 meters.

During the May public hearings on the coral amendment, a coalition of environmental groups put forward a new broad zone alternative, which the Council's Habitat Committee agreed to have analyzed.

At today's meeting in Portland, ME, the Council reviewed this analysis for what was being called Alternative 7. The alternative reflects both fishing effort and coral data at depths ranging from 300 to 550 meters and was developed to freeze the footprint of bottom tending mobile gears.

The Council voted to consider combining Alternatives 6 and 7 and will review the analyses at a future meeting. Consideration of the additional alternative means final action on this portion of the Coral Amendment is delayed to later this year.



Coral protection areas for Mt. Desert Rock and Outer Schoodic Ridge. – NEFMC graphic

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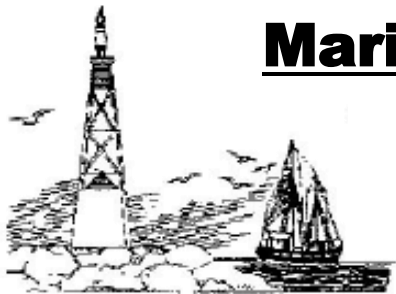


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- * [Concerns aired about marine monument](#), *Cape Cod Times*, June 17

Legislative/Administrative (monuments, drilling, and budget)

- * [Seafood groups praise Trump's "Buy American" executive order](#), *Seafood Source*, Apr. 24
- * [Trump orders review of national monuments...](#), *The Washington Post*, Apr. 26
- * [Trump signs executive order to expand drilling off America's coasts...](#), *The Washington Post*, Apr. 28
- * [Booker, Menendez introduce bill to ban seismic testing in Atlantic](#), *Cape May Herald*, May 27
- * [Trump admin proposes seismic surveys for Atlantic drilling](#), *The Washington Post*, June 5
- * [Senate Commerce Committee advances fishing, maritime commerce bills](#), *Saving Seafood*, May 19
- * [Trump budget slashes billions in federal fishery funds](#), *National Fisherman*, May 30

Lobster & Bait Fisheries

- * [NOAA Warns of continuing species shifts due to warming oceans](#), *The Fishing Wire*, May 19
- * [What did your lobster eat before you ate your lobster? And why should you care?](#), *Centralmaine.com*, May 21
- * [Scandinavian biologists see threat in crossbreeding by American, European lobsters](#), *Portland Press Herald*, June 6
- * [A mystery is born: Where are all the baby lobsters?](#), *Portland Press Herald*, June 11
- * [New England's lobsters could face 'smashing' new predators](#), *WCAI*, June 12

Lobster Market

- * [Canada-European Union pact worries US lobster industry](#), *SouthCoast Today*, May 18
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- * [National Fisheries Institute urges cut in U.S. tariffs to boost exports](#), *SeafoodSource*, May 22

Whales

- * [Scientists eye new tools for whale safety](#), *Cape Cod Times*, Apr. 9
- * [Mass die-off of whales in Atlantic is being investigated](#), *The NY Times*, Apr. 27
- * [Boats may be hitting whales in Gulf of Maine more often, study suggests](#), *Portland Press Herald*, Apr. 23
- * [The mystery of off-the-grid whale moms](#), *The Atlantic*, May 12

Other

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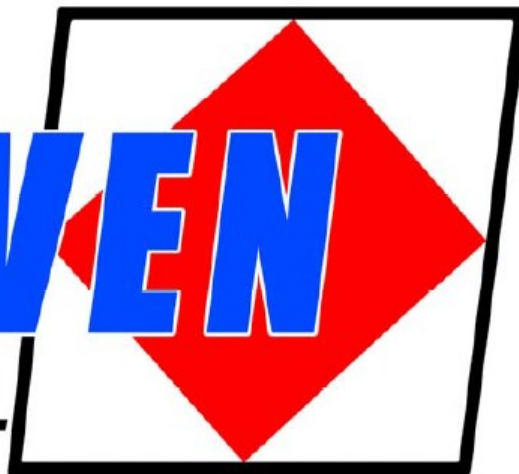
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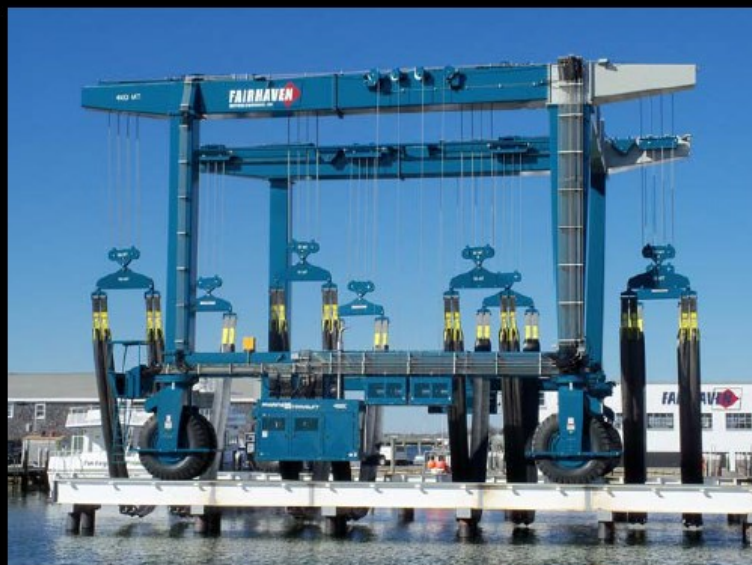
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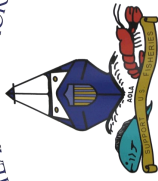


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