



MAINE LOBSTERMEN'S ASSOCIATION UPDATE

Maine Lobstermen's Association

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

President: Kristan Porter

Cutler, 259-3306

1st VP: John Williams

Stonington, 367-2731

2nd VP: Dustin Delano

Friendship, 542-7241

Sec/Treasurer: Donald Young

Cushing, 354-6404

Directors

Bob Baines, Spruce Head, 596-0177

Sonny Beal, Beals Island, 497-3440

Herman Coombs, Orr's Island, 807-8596

Gerry Cushman, Port Clyde, 372-6429

Jim Dow, Bass Harbor, 288-9846

Jamien Hallowell, S. Bristol, 677-0148

Robert Ingalls, Bucks Harbor, 255-3418

Mark Jones, Boothbay, 633-6054

Jason Joyce, Swan's Island, 526-4109

Jack Merrill, Islesford, 244-4187

Tad Miller, Matinicus, 372-6941

Mike Sargent, Steuben, 460-1316

Willis Spear, Yarmouth, 846-9279

Craig Stewart, Long Island, 829-2109

John Tripp, Spruce Head, 691-9744

Chris Welch, Kennebunk, 205-2093

Staff

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Executive Director

Patrice McCarron

patrice@mainelobstermen.org

Membership Director

Andi Pelletier

andi@mainelobstermen.org

Maine Lobstermen's Association

2 Storer St., Suite 203
Kennebunk, ME 04043
207.967.4555

www.mainelobstermen.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING SCHEDULE

All meetings take place in Belfast, unless otherwise indicated.

March 1, MLA Annual Meeting,
9 a.m., Samoset Resort,
Rockport

FIRST YEAR AT THE HELM

By Kristan Porter, MLA President

Hello members.

I am writing to update you on my first year as President of the Maine Lobstermen's Association (MLA). There was definitely no time to "ease" into this job. From the time I was voted in at the Annual Meeting last year there has been no shortage of issues facing the Maine lobster industry, the two obvious ones being whales and bait. Most of my time, besides actually fishing, has been spent on these issues.

I think new whale regulations have the potential to actually change the way our fishery operates. One of the first things I did as President was attend several small industry meetings hosted by the MLA to have open discussions with lobstermen about whale rules. What I learned most from those meetings was just how differently we all fish in each area of the coast. The other big thing I learned was that after getting all the information about how the whale rules work and what we are up against, guys realized that there

may be big changes coming and that we need a strategy in place to influence these changes. We received a lot of thoughtful suggestions at those events and I got a chance to meet some great people.

Since then I have been appointed to the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team (ALWTRT). I serve with other MLA members Mike Sargeant, John Williams, and Dwight Carver, and

our executive director, Patrice McCarron. You can be assured that with our group and Department of Marine Resources whale coordinator Erin Summers the State of Maine is being well represented on the ALWTRT and in other whale management arenas.

Another big decision made by the MLA this year was to become involved in the lawsuit filed by conservation groups against the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) as an "intervenor." It was a tough decision, because anything related to the courts is expensive, but ultimately, we need to be involved. It is not like the MLA to sit on the sidelines. By the way, donations to the Legal Defense Fund are greatly appreciated and needed to keep the MLA involved in this case!

Enough about whales. Bait is going to be the big story for the upcoming season. The NMFS has announced that the 2019 Atlantic herring quota will be cut 70% compared to

last year. To put this in perspective, the 2018 quota was 110 million pounds and the 2019 quota will be 33 million. The MLA was Maine's only lobstering group attending bait meetings and pushing NMFS for more quota this year. Unfortunately, the poor stock assessment outweighed our concerns over how this will impact lobstermen. It will be pretty hard to make up 77 million pounds by putting a few less fish in each bait sack, but that's a place to start. It will take a variety of strategies to weather this storm but I believe in the ability of lobstermen to adapt to difficult situations.

Some other issues that I have spent time on over the past year are meeting with Maine's Congressional delegation over whales and bait, the China tariffs on U.S. lobster, wind power developments, and testifying on multiple bills at the Maine Legislature. When I agreed to take on this position, I knew it would take up a great deal of my time. One of the biggest challenges for me is just how far I live from everything. It seems sometimes that I am spending more time

behind the wheel of my old truck than the wheel on my bulkhead.

I am very thankful for the unbelievable board of directors who step up when I can't make a trip to Augusta. I know it goes without saying but executive director Patrice McCarron is the glue that holds this thing together. Her depth of knowledge of all the issues keeps me informed and helps me do my

job effectively. I may be at the helm but she definitely does the navigating.

Being away from home many evenings and having endless phone calls with news media, fishery managers, fishermen and others definitely take some getting used to. I am grateful for the patience and support I get from my wife and family. It has been a big transition for all of us.

Lastly, I want to thank my board of directors for supporting me this first year and also our members because without your financial support we wouldn't be able to do all that we do. We have some huge hurdles ahead but you can be assured that the MLA will be there, fulfilling our mission to "advocate for a sustainable lobster resource and the fishermen and communities that depend on it." It is my privilege to serve as your president.



MLA President Porter addresses the Association's board of directors at the 2018 annual meeting. MLA photo.

MLA DIRECTORS MEETING SUMMARY

The MLA Board met February 4 in Belfast. President Kristan Porter welcomed everyone to the meeting and began with introductions. Robbie Begin shared his concerns over DMR's proposed menhaden regulations. With the severe cuts in herring quota, many menhaden harvesters anticipate even more boats turning to pogies this year. There is concern that the quota will be caught up quickly which could impact the price and supply of bait. The board discussed options to ensure that Maine could maximize its share of quota while pacing out landings to provide stability to the bait market so fish are available during the lobster season.

The board unanimously supported submitting comments to DMR in support of its proposal for the state allocation, with landings of 120,000 pounds per day and 160,000 pounds per week, to harvest the state quota quickly. The MLA will recommend that the state slow down landings of the episodic quota to better match demand from the lobster industry and allow small boats equal access to catch the fish. The MLA recommends the episodic quota be limited to 40,000 pounds a day and 80,000 pounds per week. The board reasoned that it is better to start slow because landings can be increased if necessary. But if the fish are caught too quickly, there is no going back.

MLA Directors reviewed a petition organized by the group Save Maquoit Bay seeking an immediate moratorium on all



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pending aquaculture lease applications greater than 10 acres in size. The MLA board is concerned that aquaculture leasing in state waters is expanding rapidly. This is resulting in many new leases and consolidation of existing leases into larger footprints. The MLA Board did not support a moratorium. The MLA needs much more information to fully understand this issue but would participate in discussions on ways to ensure the state's aquaculture permitting process adequately consults existing users and remains effective in regulating the pace of aquaculture expansion.

The MLA Board finalized plans for its Annual Meeting on March 1 at the Samoset. The MLA again is offering a trip to the Boston Seafood Show on March 18, free for members of the fishing industry, which includes transportation and admission to the show and attendance at the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative reception. The MLCA will hold a fundraiser for MLAs Legal Defense Fund on April 6 at Bowen's Tavern in Belfast from 5 to 9 p.m.

The Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team meeting originally scheduled for March has been postponed to April or May. The ASMFC Lobster Board met February 5 to consider changes to the lobster management plan to protect right whales.

The MLA Board voted on lobster bills pending before the Legislature.

LD 28 An Act Regarding Access to Lobster Licenses is sponsored by Rep. McCreight of Harpswell. LD 28 proposes to give lobster licenses to those who have completed the Apprentice program and have been on the waiting list for 10 or more years. This would occur annually. The existing limited entry process would remain in place so those waiting less than 10 years would enter through the regular zone wait list. The MLA board discussed this bill at length. All but one board member strongly opposed the bill. The overarching concern was adding new effort as the industry braces for new whale rules and bait shortages. Solving the entry process for the lobster industry would require a more comprehensive solution to address the amount of effort each zone can accommodate and a mechanism for fair entry for both students and apprentices. Many flooded into the fishery in 1997 when Maine's lobster management changed, and the state has not been successful in reducing trap tags back to those levels. Some would like to see new entrants start with more than 300 traps. On the other side, some lobstermen believe the system is not fair and the wait list is too long. Many missed getting a commercial license because they were not ready to commit to the fishery at a young age and are now stuck on the waiting list. The MLA board supported a motion to oppose the bill, with one vote in opposition.

LD 174 An Act to Promote Youth Participation in the Maine Lobster Fishery is sponsored by Rep. McDonald of Stonington. LD 74 proposes to allow a child 12 years old or younger, who does not hold a student license, to assist a Class I, II or III lobster license holder while lobstering. The MLA Board voted unanimously in support of this bill but stressed that it must not be used in lieu of the student license and is solely for educational purposes.

LD 314 An Act to Simplify Apprenticeship Requirements for Student and Apprentice Lobster and Crab Fishing License Holders is sponsored by Rep. Faulkingham of Winter Harbor. LD 314 proposes to allow a person with an Apprentice or Student lobster license an alternate method to demonstrate Apprentice Program completion through verified lobster landings of at least 4,000 pounds over a period of not less than two years. The MLA board unanimously opposed this bill. The board believes it undermines the educational component of the Apprentice Program. It would be very easy to cheat by falsifying landing slips from a parent or another lobsterman's catch. It also creates an inequity between students and apprentices because apprentices can't land lobster.

LD 340 An Act to Establish a Temporary Terminal Condition Medical Allowance for Lobster and Crab Fishing License Holders. This bill is sponsored by Rep. McCreight of Harpswell. A similar bill was debated last session and resulted in extending the current Temporary Medical Allowance from a maximum of one year to two. LD 340 proposes to create a new section of law and establish a temporary terminal condition medical allowance to allow a person who meets several criteria to haul gear of the terminally ill lobsterman if he harvested at least 1,000 pounds in the previous year. There is no proposed limit on the number of renewals for the temporary terminal condition medical allowance. The MLA unanimously opposed this bill and instead supports keeping the existing temporary medical allowance in place to treat all lobstermen who face prolonged illness equally.

LD 430 An Act To Establish and Promote a System of Safe Disposal of Expired Marine Flares. This bill is sponsored by Rep. McCreight of Harpswell. LD 430 proposes the Department of Public Safety establish programs for the collection and disposal of expired marine flares and for education of the public and state agency personnel regarding expired marine flares. It has been referred to the Criminal Justice Committee. MLA board members thought that some local transfer stations, fire departments and safety trainers will take expired flares, however there are not programs in place everywhere. The MLA voted to support this bill.

LD 618 An Act To Remove Nighttime Restrictions on Lobster Fishing in a Certain Area in the Bay of Fundy. This bill is sponsored by Rep. Tuell of East Machias. LD 618 proposes to allow Zone A lobstermen who fish in the U.S. portion of

the Gray Zone to raise and haul lobster traps during any time of day between Labor Day and Memorial Day. Day time hauling restrictions would remain in place during June, July and August. The Gray Zone encompasses approximately 70 square miles around Machias Seal Island. Gray zone lobstermen are fishing beside Canadian fishermen who do not have any night time restrictions on gear hauling. Further, Maine Marine Patrol has no enforcement authority over Canadian fishermen. Due to the unique circumstances faced by Maine's Gray Zone lobstermen, the MLA does not believe that this proposal would set a precedent to expand night-time hauling in the rest of the state. The MLA voted unanimously to support this bill.

LD 676 An Act to Simplify Maine's Lobster Licensing System. This bill is sponsored by Rep. Faulkingham of Winter Harbor. LD 676 proposes to eliminate the Class I, II, and III licenses and replace them with a "single" license for an individual and a "crew" license to fish with unlimited crew. The cost of the license and associated fees for the single license would be the same as the current Class I license and fee for the crew license would be the same as the current Class III license. The MLA board was concerned that there are many lobstermen who fish alone but purchase the Class II license to be able to bring crew occasionally. They would have to pay more under this bill to do that. Others supported the current licensing structure because it works and does not need to be replaced plus allowing unlimited crew could lead to increased fishing effort. The MLA voted unanimously to oppose this bill.

LD 675 An Act to Provide Equity in the Lobster Promotion License Surcharge. This bill is sponsored by Rep. Faulkingham of Winter Harbor. LD 675 proposes to amend the provisions regarding surcharges to fund the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative by replacing the current 3-tiered structure (Class I \$165, Class II \$330.50, Class III \$480.75) with a single surcharge of \$310 for all three classes of licenses. The intent of the current MLMC funding structure is to charge more to lobstering operations that land more catch and less to smaller operations. Because is not possible to place a surcharge on lobster landings, the fee uses license class as a proxy. The MLA Board voted unanimously to oppose this bill.



DMR Commissioner Patrick Keliher spoke to the Marine Resources Committee in January, prior to his re-confirmation as Commissioner by the Legislature. MLA photo.

The MLA did not have enough information to take a position on *LD 434 An Act to Price Carbon Pollution in Maine* which proposes to tax carbon fuels sold in Maine.

Several bill titles have been submitted, but the bill text is not yet available. The MLA Board was not able to vote on them due to lack of information.

LR 1312 An Act to Improve the Student Lobster Licensing Program, sponsored by Rep. Devin of Newcastle.

LR 1313 An Act to Further Define the Monhegan Lobster Conservation Area, sponsored by Rep. Devin of Newcastle.

LR 148 Resolve, Establishing a Commission to Study the Existing Potential and Future Impacts of Aquatic and Marine Debris on Maine's Aquatic and Coastal Habitats and Species, sponsored by Rep. Devin of Newcastle.

LR 2191 Resolve, To Require Maine to Become an Affiliate of the International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification, sponsored by Rep. Devin of Newcastle.

LR 2075 An Act to Incorporate Advancements in Watershed Nutrient Management with Research on the Influence of Nutrient Management on Ocean and Coastal Acidification and Hypoxia, sponsored by Rep. Devin of Newcastle.

LR 2089 An Act to Protect Maine's Marine Waters, sponsored by Rep. Devin of Newcastle.

LR 1161 An Act to Strengthen the Marine Economy, sponsored by Pres. Jackson of Aroostook.

There are several bonds seeking funds related to marine issues. MLA is concerned over several of these and will consider whether to support any of the

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bonds once all of the information is available.

LD 16 An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Invest in Infrastructure to Address Sea Level Rise, sponsored by Rep. Brennan of Portland. This bill seeks to move a referendum question forward: "Do you favor a \$50,000,000 bond issue to improve waterfront and 18 coastal infrastructure in municipalities to address sea level rise?"

LD 400 An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue for Food Processing Infrastructure in Targeted Areas of the State, sponsored by Rep. Hickman of Winthrop. This bill seeks to move a referendum question forward: "Do you favor a \$20,000,000 bond issue for food processing infrastructure in targeted areas of the State?"

LD 547 An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue To Support Maine Aquaculture, sponsored by Sen. Chipman of Cumberland. The funds provided by this bill seeks to move the referendum question forward: "Do you favor a \$25,000,000 bond issue to provide funds to the Gulf of Maine Research Institute to study and promote Maine aquaculture?"

LD 537 An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue To Support the Gulf of Maine Research Institute's Establishment of a Near-shore Coastal Sensor Network, sponsored by Rep. Blume of York. This bill seeks to move a referendum question forward: "Do you favor a \$2,000,000 bond issue to support the Gulf of Maine Research Institute's establishment of a near-shore coastal sensor network to gather oceanographic data, track changes in state waters, predict changes and support persons who engage in commercial fishing and aquaculture as they adapt to a changing ocean?"

LD 861 An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue To Complete the Renovation of a Wharf and Bulkhead in Portland for Marine Research, sponsored by Rep. Sylvester of Portland. This bill seeks to move a bond referendum question forward: "Do you favor a \$3,000,000 bond issue to complete the renovation of a wharf and bulkhead at the Gulf of Maine Research Institute in Portland to bring the wharf back into operation for a fishing vessel berthing resource to support marine research at sea and for continued long-term marine job development?"

The MLA board held a closed session to review budget information and vote on a slate of nominees to present to MLA members at the Annual Meeting on March 1.

ASMFC CONSIDERS CHANGES TO LOBSTER MANAGEMENT TO PROTECT RIGHT WHALES

The ASMFC American Lobster Management Board initiated a draft addendum to the lobster management plan to consider reducing the number of vertical lines in the water in response to concerns about the North Atlantic right whale population and the potential impacts of whale conservation measures on the lobster fishery.

"With this proposed action, the Board is entering uncertain waters," stated Maine Commissioner Pat Keliher. "However, as the lead management authority for American lobster, we have a responsibility to ensure the viability of the lobster fishery. Through the active engagement of the states and the lobster industry in our management process, we believe the Board is best suited to navigate the growing challenges facing the lobster fishery."

The ASMFC considered how lobster management intersects with the conservation of protected resources. While ASMFC is primarily a forum for the Atlantic coast states to cooperatively manage fish and shellfish species, the Board noted several factors associated with North Atlantic right whale conservation which could substantially impact the economic and cultural future of the lobster fishing industry. These include future recommendations of the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team and the anticipated Biological Opinion being developed by NMFS under the Endangered Species Act. Given the high economic value of the lobster fishery and its social significance to coastal communities, the Board agreed it is important to ensure the implementation of measures to conserve right whales takes place in a way that maintains the sustainability of the lobster fishery.

The draft addendum will consider options to reduce vertical lines by zero to 40%, to be achieved by trap limits, gear configuration changes, seasonal closures, and/or the acceleration of currently planned trap reductions. Any reductions will consider ongoing state and federal management actions, including trap reductions and trap caps, which have already reduced vertical lines. By initiating this action, states can continue to cooperatively participate in the management of this species during ongoing discussions on the conservation of right whales. In addition, those who are most familiar with the intricacies of the lobster fishery can provide input on future regulations.

ASMFC CONSIDERS MEASURES TO PROTECT SPAWNING HERRING IN AREA 1A

The ASMFC's Atlantic Herring Management Board approved a draft addendum

to the herring management plan to consider options to strengthen spawning protections in Area 1A (inshore Gulf of Maine). This action responds to the results of the 2018 Benchmark Stock Assessment which showed reduced levels of recruitment and spawning stock biomass over the past five years, with 2016 recruitment levels the lowest on record.

The ASMFC currently uses a series of closures to protect spawning aggregations in the Gulf of Maine. These closures use biological samples to project the annual start of spawning. The closures are implemented for four weeks but can be extended by two additional weeks if samples indicate the continued presence of spawning herring. Recent analysis found that while the spawning closure system was significantly improved under the most recent management plan, the protocol could be further strengthened by considering when, and for how long, a closure is initiated. Specifically, the analysis showed that currently spawning closures are initiated when there are approximately 25% spawners in the fishery. Greater protection could be provided by initiating a closure when a lower percentage of the population is spawning and extending the closure for a longer time. The draft addendum considers extending the length of the spawning closures as well as altering the point at which closures are triggered in order to provide greater protection to the stock.

States will hold public hearings and written comments are due on April 3, 2019 and should be forwarded to Megan Ware, FMP Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, Virginia 22201; 703.842.0741 (fax) or at comments@asmfc.org (Subject line: Atlantic Herring Draft Addendum II).

NMFS SLASHES 2019 HERRING QUOTA

NMFS announced a herring quota of 15,065 metric tons for the 2019 fishing season, a 70% reduction in herring compared to the 2018 quota. This action is expected to prevent overfishing of the herring resource and lower the risk of the stock becoming overfished.

In June 2018, a new stock assessment for herring concluded that although herring was not overfished and overfishing was not occurring in 2017, poor recruitment would likely result in a substantial decline in herring biomass. The stock assessment estimated that recruitment had been at historic lows during the most recent five years (2013-2017). The assessment projected that biomass could increase, after reaching a low in 2019, if recruitment returns to average levels but that herring catch would need to be reduced, starting in 2018, to prevent overfishing and lower the risk of the stock becoming overfished.

2019 Herring Quota (Compared to 2018)				
	2019 Quota	2018 Quota	Reduction metric tons	% Loss
Total	15,065	49,900	34,835	70%
1A	4,354	27,743	23,389	84%
1B	647	2,639	1,992	75%
2	4,188	8,200	4,012	49%
3	5,876	11,318	5,442	48%

The Science and Statistical Committee (SSC) reviewed the herring stock assessment and recommended that herring ABCs should not exceed 21,266 mt in 2019, 16,131 mt in 2020 and 2021. When adjusted for management uncertainty associated with the Canadian weir fishery, this equates to a quota of 15,066 mt in 2019, 9,931 mt in 2020 and 2022. The SSC was concerned that the new assessment's recruitment projections used a long-term average, rather than weighting recent low recruitment, resulting in a substantial projected biomass increase for 2021. To mitigate its concerns, the SSC recommended maintaining the 2020 ABC (16,131 mt) for 2021, updating the herring assessment in 2020, and investigating herring's recent low recruitment. The assessment update would enable the SSC to reconsider its 2021 ABC recommendation based on updated estimates of recruitment and biomass.

The MLA urged NMFS to set a higher quota for 2019 in order to allow the lobster industry time to identify alternative sources of bait, coordinate bait distribution, and expand infrastructure and storage capacity to minimize the economic impacts of reduced herring catch limits.

NMFS provided the following rationale for not choosing a higher quota. "We understand the comments made by these stakeholders and why they advocate for a higher herring ABC in 2019. While the impacts of less catch and less revenue associated with either ABC alternative will negatively impact the fishing industry, we agree with the commenters that economic impacts on the fishing industry will likely be more severe with implementation of the lower ABC. Because actual catch in 2018 was higher than anticipated, the proposed ABC of 30,688 mt likely has less than a 50% probability of preventing overfishing in 2019. This means that the higher ABC is no longer a viable alternative for 2019. The partial government

shutdown that began on December 22, 2018, prevented us from analyzing additional ABC alternatives. Therefore, to better account for scientific uncertainty and prevent overfishing and lower the risk of the stock becoming overfished, we are implementing the lower ABC recommended by the Council for 2019.”

The MLA also advocated for a higher proportion of herring to be allocated to Area 1A because recent allocations do not reflect the availability of herring or the effort of the herring fishery. In addition, it would help to lessen the impact of the quota reduction on the lobster fishery. NMFS provided the following rationale for choosing to not allocate more fish to Area 1A. “We understand the concerns expressed in these comments. Because sub-ACL allocations have the potential for biological impacts on the herring stock and economic impacts on the fishing industry, we are deferring to the Council’s recommendations for sub-ACL allocations. The Council will soon begin developing herring specifications for 2020-2021 and will likely reconsider sub-ACL allocations at that time. Because herring revenue makes up a larger percentage of total revenue for purse seine vessels than trawl vessels, we agree that purse seine vessels may be more negatively affected by low catch limits than trawl vessels. We disagree that sub-ACL allocations will prevent the ACL from being harvested in 2019 because recent catch (2016-2018) in each of the management areas has been higher than the 2019 sub-ACLs, with the exception of Area 2 in 2017. But if there is unharvested herring catch available in any of the management areas near the end of the fishing year, the Council could request we use an additional in-season adjustment to reallocate unharvested catch.”

2019 Atlantic Herring Landings For Data through February 14, 2019			
Area	2019 Quota	Cumulative Catch	% of Quota to Date
1A*	4,354	--	0%
1B	647	--	0%
2	4,062	1,215	30%
3	5,700	1,135	20%
Total	15,065	2,350	24%

RIGHT WHALE WORKING GROUP CONSIDERS ROPE

The New England Aquarium convened a two-day meeting with fishing industry members and researchers from the U.S. and Canada to discuss methods to make fishing rope safer for whales. Options discussed included methods to avoid whales encountering rope, such as red ropes, or removing ropes through trawling up or other gear reductions. The group also looked at options that may reduce the risk that an entanglement results in a serious injury or death, such as weak ropes, knots, splices, tag lines or other methods. The New England Aquarium will draft a report summarizing the discussions. There were three points of potential agreement from the meeting: 1) reduced breaking strength rope is worth exploring; 2) there may be validity in phasing in gear modifications to allow fishermen time to adapt to the changes and explore options for financial assistance; and 3) there is an urgent need for field testing in the offshore fishery where reduced strength rope may be difficult to fish.

PATRICK KELIHER RE-APPOINTED AS DMR COMMISSIONER

The Maine Senate and House both confirmed the reappointment of Patrick Keliher as Commissioner of Marine Resources. Keliher was sworn in by Governor Mills in February.

MAINE LOBSTER RESEARCH COLLABORATIVE

The Lobster Research Collaborative met in February. Researchers funded through this effort provided updates on lobster research underway. The group discussed ways for researchers to set priorities for lobster research and collaborate on projects to further our understanding of the lobster stocks in a changing climate.

TOP ENTRY CRAB TRAPS REQUIRE TRAP TAG

It has been Maine’s policy to allow top entry crab traps to be fished within state waters without a lobster trap tag. This is no longer the case. Effective immediately, all lobster and/or crab traps, no matter what the configuration, must have a valid lobster trap tag attached to them in both state and federal waters. If you currently have crab traps submerged in coastal waters without a valid lobster trap tag, please contact your local Marine Patrol Officer to work through this policy change.

FOUND A TAGGED LOBSTER?

If you find a lobster with a yellow 1-bar tag marked with “AOLA” please contact:
Heidi Heninger at (774) 251-9454 or heidi@offshorelobster.org



Take photos like this to report length.

The Atlantic Offshore Lobstermen’s Association (AOLA) is working with New Hampshire Fish and Game and Maine Department of Marine Resources to tag lobsters in the Gulf of Maine and on Georges Bank in 2017 and 2018, in order to track migration and investigate growth.

WHAT TO REPORT: date, location, tag #, whether the lobster had eggs or v-notch, and whether it was kept or released.

Carapace Length: We are testing a software system that can accurately measure size from photographs. Please take a photo of the lobster next to a gauge (top right above) and text this to 774-251-9454 along with the measured carapace length.

REWARDS: Every tag report qualifies as one raffle entry. Rewards will be drawn in July and December, 2018 & 2019. Reports with accurate length reports and/or photos will be entered into higher value raffles. \$8,000 in rewards will be distributed.

If you haul a tagged lobster, please release it and contact:

774-251-9454 or heidi@offshorelobster.org



Many thanks to these fine businesses, the MLA’s Keeper members!

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| Bar Harbor Bank & Trust | Guy Cotten, Inc. | Novatec Braids LTD |
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