

Island Ad-Vantages

THE VIEW FROM ATLANTIC AVENUE

April 9, 2020 – In a normal spring, the Elver fishery would start around March 22, and the 10- week season would end in early June. But like everything else, the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting yet another fishery. After considering a much-delayed season, DMR was able to open the fishery on March 27. Elvers (*Anguilla rostrata*) are catadromous eels, which means they spawn at sea and the baby eels make their way up brooks and streams this time of year to settle into freshwater ponds where they grow to adult age and return to the ocean three years later. There are only 425 commercial elver licenses in Maine and most of the fishermen deploy fyke nets along the shores of rivers and streams to capture these tiny “glass” eels. In a good year, they can fetch nearly \$2500/lb in typically Asian markets that buy them live and then grow them in ponds for the sushi markets where smoked eel is considered a delicacy. But like other fishery markets right now, the price is way down to \$512/lb. There are approximately 2500 elvers in a pound. As DMR opened the fishery, they’ve changed some of the rules to encourage social distancing. Fishermen must stay at least 6 feet apart, so the nets need to be spaced accordingly along the river banks, and this year fishermen are being allowed to collect and transport one another’s harvest. This allows fishing but minimize contact between fishermen and with the buyers. The low price is very disappointing for those fortunate enough to win a license through the lottery process and effort is probably down from past years.

If you are interested in learning more about these programs, give us a call.

Do you have a question about our fisheries? Send it to info@coastalfisheries.org or call 367-2708. Learn more about MCCF by visiting us online at www.coastalfisheries.org.

FISHERIES LOG

Prices to Harvesters in Stonington

Lobsters: \$4.25/lb.

Bait (frozen Pogies): \$28/box

Fuel (diesel): \$2.75/gal.

Oceanographic Buoy I-01*

Surface Water Temperature: 41°F