



FROM THE WHEELHOUSE

There's a lot of reasons to be worried about how our fishermen and their families are doing in these challenging times. But there's also a lot of reason for hope. Fishermen are problem solvers. There's uncertainty every day as they steam off on their quest for lobster or other seafood, and they are constantly adapting. Arguably, the communities that are made up of fishermen and their families are also fairly resilient. But the current suite of challenges is enough to wonder what the future entails. Will the market for lobster return? Will new regulations related to the Right Whale issue be so onerous that fishermen can't make their margins to support their businesses and families? How will the continued changes in our ecosystem affect the catch and the supply of bait?

On the hopeful side, we recently learned that the judge overseeing the law suit against NOAA has determined that, rather than implement regulations this fall, NOAA will be given until May 31, 2021 to finalize it's "biological opinion" and propose regulatory changes based on more recent data to inform the assessment of risk that lobster gear may have to the endangered North Atlantic Right Whale. There is also some hope that some international markets may begin to re-open for the lobster fishery with the EU relaxing tariffs.

We're tracking these types of issues at MCCF and engaging with fishermen and community members while marshaling resources and partnerships to help find collaborative solutions to problems and looking around the corner in hopes we can see a problem before it becomes a crisis. I hope you take a few minutes to read about some of our work in this newsletter. Thank you for your interest and support.

Best wishes,

Paul Anderson
Executive Director

COMMUNITIES COME TOGETHER FOR “FISH FOREVERYONE”

Earlier this summer we were awarded a \$10,000 grant from the Maine Community Foundation to address food insecurity caused by COVID-19 in Deer Isle, Stonington, and the Blue Hill Peninsula. MCCF used the funds to support a number of local organizations including Healthy Island Project, Healthy Peninsula’s Magic Food Bus, Island Food Pantry, Island Nursing Home and Care Center, and Tree of Life Food Pantry.



Concurrent with this event, we organized a week-long seafood celebration, “*Fish Foreveryone Community Seafood Celebration*,” which plays off of our well-known tagline “*Fish Forever*.” The celebration included area restaurants that used locally-sourced seafood for their dishes as well as seafood retailers. Fishermen, dockworkers, aquaculturists, and other industry members were recognized for their dedication to harvesting seafood for their neighbors and beyond. The event also included an online campaign, which provided economic data, nutritional and interesting facts about Maine seafood, as well as a collection of recipes submitted by community members.

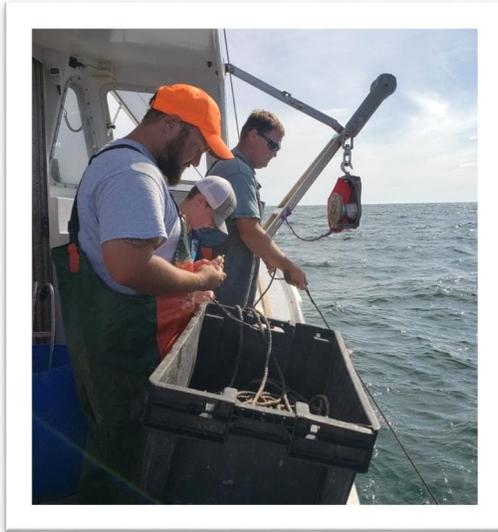
WHY FISHERMEN NEED A SEAT AT THE TABLE



One of our long time supporters recently asked how we connect with the fishing industry and what our role is in connecting them with marine resource related policy. MCCF has always felt that fishermen’s voices, knowledge and sensibilities are critical to creating policy that works to sustain fisheries in the context of conservation, but also in a way that allows for prosperity and success. We involve fishermen in all of our programs whether it’s helping to count the adult and juvenile alewives that come and go seasonally, or participating in the Sentinel

Survey providing their knowledge, skill and vessels to take our staff and partners out to sea. The Eastern Maine Skippers Program brings fishermen into the classrooms and takes students to the wharfs where they can learn from other adults in addition to their teachers. Our Eastern Maine Coastal Current Collaborative is steadily building a network of fishermen to inform how this partnership with NOAA and DMR can create a research framework that answers the right questions for long term sustainability of fishing and fishing communities in our region. We believe these levels of engagement are sincere and action oriented and that they result in trusting and durable relationships, so that we can be of service and make sure policy evolves in partnership with fishermen.

SENTINEL SURVEY: WHAT AND WHY



Our Sentinel Survey Project has entered its 10th year and is going strong with 11 participating fishermen. The survey has three purposes: 1) to engage local fishermen in the scientific processes of observation, hypothesis testing, and data collection toward a collectively improved understanding of groundfish in eastern Maine; 2) to establish a long term groundfish abundance index in an under-surveyed part of the Gulf of Maine; and 3) to collect otoliths, genetic, muscle, and stomach samples from cod, in order to study their diets, stock structure, age, and other life history information that will tell us about stock dynamics and potential population recovery. We

hypothesize that the rebounding alewife prey will support gradual recovery of groundfish populations in eastern Maine. A new element of this work is being proposed right now to the regulatory agency so that we can sample larger, spawning cod during the winter and spring months for genetic and diet studies. It's a great example of listening to fishermen about their seeing mature fish in the area, but haven't yet been encountered in the Survey.

STAFF MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: TATE YODER

Having grown up on the Blue Hill Peninsula and being passionate about visual storytelling, my experience working with MCCF has allowed my fondness for this place and my interests to come full circle. Much of Maine is tightly knit, so it only made sense that my connections from my time in the New Media program at the University of Maine, Orono, and previous freelance film work with local organizations such as Blue Hill Heritage Trust and Schoodic Institute, ultimately helped me find MCCF.



While immersed in the New Media program, there was a key take-away that I embraced as the COVID-19 pandemic began in the middle of my senior capstone: disruptions can become opportunities. Though much of the in-person programming and interaction with our audience at MCCF had to be canceled or postponed this summer, we've been able to continue connection through a variety of initiatives, such as our "Ask Leroy!" series, monthly Lunch & Learn webinars, and short video narratives to help tell the story of MCCF and the work we're doing. I'm so thankful to have joined a wonderful group of people doing such important work for our communities and the fisheries we rely on, and I very much look forward to continuing to tell the stories of our organization, and people and communities we aim to support.



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LUNCH & LEARN SERIES GOES ONLINE

When the COVID-19 pandemic led to a nation-wide lockdown, we spent the spring strategizing how to salvage our in-person summer programming. We decided to take our annual *Lunch & Learn Summer Talk Series* online. This allowed us to continue to connect with our supporters, friends, and colleagues, while also connecting with a new audience of folks curious to learn more about Maine's fisheries. Not just locally, but from across the state and country.

Participants can easily register online as well as submit questions related to that month's topic before and during the talk. Some talks even feature a polling tool to get the audience involved and interacting with guest speakers and panelists.

All talks from earlier this summer can be viewed on our website at coastalfisheries.org/media/videos, as well as our YouTube channel at Maine Center for Coastal Fisheries.

UPCOMING ONLINE TALKS

Fishermen at the Helm of Research: Applying Local Knowledge to Better Understand Fish Populations

Friday, September 25 | 12:30 pm EST
Speakers: Pat Shepard, MCCF Collaborative
Research Specialist and guests

Ecosystem-Based Fishery Management: A New Approach in Eastern Maine through the Eastern Maine Coastal Current Collaborative

Friday, October 30 | 12:30 pm EST
Speakers: Dr. Carla Guenther, MCCF
Chief Scientist and guests

To learn more and register for upcoming talks, visit coastalfisheries.org/events.