

Island Ad-Vantages

THE VIEW FROM ATLANTIC AVENUE

October 28, 2021 – Indeed! There is much ado about the North Atlantic right whale. On Saturday, October 16 Maine U.S. District Court Judge Lance Walker ruled to postpone the nearly four-month federal closure to lobster fishing with endlines slated to begin October 18 in a 967 sq. mile portion of Lobster Area 1 overlapping with Maine Lobster Zones C, D, and E. In the days following the decision Maine’s lobster fishery, congressional delegation, governor, and press applauded this reprieve and the long-awaited application of logic, rather than politics, to the right whale conundrum. This past weekend, whale scientists struck back in the Sunday Portland Press Herald (**Whale scientists fire back – with science – at critics of new lobstering rules**).

Judge Walker found the scientific evidence used to support the closure to be thin, preferring direct observations of whales in the area to the predictive modeling NOAA used. He continues stating that the “certain economic harms ... outweigh the uncertain and unknown benefits of closing [this area]”. In Sunday’s PPH article, however, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute acoustic scientist Mark Baumgartner contends there is sufficient direct evidence that right whales frequent the area to justify its closure as his whale listening devices recorded a minimum of ten right whales in the proposed closure area throughout the winter of 2019-2020.

Here’s the rub: if **not** having this closure is found to jeopardize north Atlantic right whales, NOAA might have to revoke its authorization of the federal lobster fishery- and that, certainly would be a horrifying outcome for the lobster fishery.

Both sides perceive that politics having too large a role, thus impeding solutions that might have a chance to reverse current trends for this troubled whale species. If you want to know more about what **we know** about the North Atlantic right whale from scientists who study them, register and tune into our Lunch and Learn tomorrow, Friday October 29th 12:30-1:30pm.

Do you have a question about our fisheries? Send it to info@coastalfisheries.org or call 207.367.2708. Learn more about MCCF by visiting us online at www.coastalfisheries.org.

FISHERIES LOG

Prices to Harvesters in Stonington

Lobsters (select): \$6.55/lb.

Lobsters (shedder): \$5.55/lb.

Bait (pogies): \$65/bu.

Fuel (diesel): \$3.05/gal.

Oceanographic Buoy I-01

44°6’10”N 68°6’44”W – Frenchboro

Sea Surface Temperature: 55.8°F (avg. for this date: 52.2°F)

Bottom Temperature: 54.9°F (avg. for this date: 51.5°F)

Source: www.neracoos.org