

Island Ad-Vantages

THE VIEW FROM ATLANTIC AVENUE

March 17, 2022: Maine lobstermen are working diligently to comply with new regulations that will take effect on May 1, 2022 requiring new configurations to the ropes they use for retrieving lobster traps. The new regulations require steps to allow the ropes to break in the event that North Atlantic Right Whales becomes entangled. Weakening of the ropes can be accomplished in several ways including particular knots, splices, or with the insertion of plastic breakaway devices. Although there is no evidence that Maine's lobstermen have recently caused harm to these endangered whales, these regulations are being mandated from the federal government to reduce the risk to whales. Our Gulf of Maine fishery is being included because of historic evidence of these whales migrating through this region in the spring and summer, but more recent studies of whale behavior suggest that fewer whales are coming into the Gulf of Maine than in the past due to changes in oceanography and absence of their preferred food.

There has been clear evidence over the last several years that whales have been killed or harmed through entanglement in the Gulf of St. Lawrence in Canadian waters. Migrations have been reported in that area where the conditions support the microscopic food that whales eat. Last week, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada announced their measures to protect right whales for 2022. Their program is heavily based on observations of whales either through aerial surveys or acoustic listening devices in the water. Unmanned underwater vehicles are deployed that traverse the area with specialized listening devices to detect whale "songs." The government then implements temporary closures for a minimum of 15 days when whales are seen or detected. Canada requires gear marking like in the US, but have not yet implemented a weak link approach. They are planning to implement this and possibly ropeless technology in 2023 as well as implementing safe speed restrictions on all vessels greater than 13 meters when whales are nearby.

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 (run): \$12.80/lb.

Bait (frzn. redfish heads): \$37.50/50lbs.

Fuel (diesel): \$3.85/gal.

Oceanographic Buoy I-01

44°6'10"N 68°6'44"W - Frenchboro

Sea Surface Temperature: Not Available

Bottom Temperature: 39.4°F (avg. for this date: 38.1°F)

Source: www.neracoos.org