

Island Ad-Vantages

THE VIEW FROM ATLANTIC AVENUE

April 21, 2022: Last week, the Maine Legislature passed a law that makes changes to the rules for the menhaden fishery. The new legislation will close the fishery to new licenses in 2023 and provides the next two years for license holders to catch 25,000 pounds of these fish in order to qualify to keep their license after 2023. Fishermen also must have held a license for at least the years between 2019-2021. The bill that was passed by the legislature was amended from the original version proposed by the Department of Marine Resources. The version of the bill that the department supported would have based eligibility on holding a license in at least one year from 2016 to 2021, and catching 25,000 pounds of fish in one of those years.

Menhaden, also known as pogies, have returned to state waters in large numbers over the past few years and are being used by many lobstermen for bait. The fishery has a regional quota, set by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), which is up for reassessment next month. Maine's quota was set at 2.1 million pounds for 2021-22, or 0.52 percent of the total allowed U.S. catch. Each year, if the DMR determines there are still large numbers of fish in state waters after the quota is met, it allows "episodic event" catches of 1 percent of the total allowable catch. States may also request unused portions of other states' allocations. Once those are exhausted, the state implements a "small-scale" phase of the fishing season during which the catch is limited to 6,000 pounds per day per boat. Maine brought in more than 11 million pounds of pogies in the small-scale phase of the fishing season in 2021-22, which began last July. The ASMFC will be taking up state menhaden quotas at its meeting next month.

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): \$6.55/lb.

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

Fuel (diesel): \$4.75/gal.

Oceanographic Buoy 1-01

44°6'10"N 68°6'44"W - Frenchboro

Sea Surface Temperature: Not Available

Bottom Temperature: 42.6°F (avg. for this date: 39.1°F)

Source: www.neracoos.org