August 18, 2022: Lobstering can be quite monotonous. Haul a pair of traps, clear them out, bait, rinse, and repeat 150 times. Once in a while, something will happen to shake things up a bit. We were shifting a load of gear one morning right around Halloween. I was back aft, baiting bags ahead so I wouldn’t get swamped when we started to take traps on. The sun was just starting to peek up through the islands. Our favorite dockhand, Edgar Ray, lowered us down some fresh salted herring that morning so it was sliding into the bags pretty quick. I plunged my hand into the bait to grab a fist full and felt something rather firm. Probably a dogfish. I started to pull it out. I squinted through the twilight at my bare thumb when I realized I was wearing blue rubber gloves and that wasn’t my thumb. The thumb was attached to the whole hand and a tan sleeve began to emerge from the bait. My stomach dropped. I let go and began to back up toward the stern. I opened my mouth to yell at my brother who was at the helm, but nothing came out. I finally screamed, “MATT!!” He slacked off the throttle and spun around quick. I pointed a shaky finger. We both stared at the greasy hand sticking straight up out of the bait, stiff as a board with rigor mortis. I turned eight shades of white as horrible theories flooded my brain about how some poor soul lost his arm in a herring seining accident. “Don’t move,” Matt finally said, “I’m gonna throw it overboard.” He began to pull it out, but the sleeve looked like it was stapled shut on the bottom, with cotton spilling out. A fake Halloween hand. We returned to the dock that afternoon to a grinning Edgar, “Hey boy,” he jabbed at me, “heard you needed a hand today!”

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 (shedd): $3.30/lb.
Bait (fresh pogies): $125/crt.
Fuel (diesel): $4.70/gal.

Oceanographic Buoy 1-01
44°6’10”N 68°6’44”W - Frenchboro
Sea Surface Temperature: N/A
Bottom Temperature (50 meters): 52.6°F (avg. for this date: 49.5°F)
Source: www.neracoos.org