September 29, 2022: After a recent interview I had with Captain Leroy Weed, lifelong fisherman and our very own Marine Education Associate at Maine Center for Coastal Fisheries, there were three quotes that stood out to me that I’d like to share in this week’s column. They highlight the change he’s seen in fishing and coastal communities over time, the importance and relevance of diversification for fishermen, and the mindset he used to overcome adversity.

“When I was ten years old starting to lobster in a row boat, we didn’t have the luxury of an outboard, or a pot hauler, or buying traps. There wasn’t a lot of money around either. If Dad went clamming you went clamming too. You might end up with ten cents to buy a candy bar or a soda pop, but the rest of it went to the family.”

“Most of the fishermen would change over after fishing for lobster. Come November they’d gear up and go scalloping, or they’d go cut firewood. Some of them set trawls for halibut and codfish, they fished for haddock and hake. Come spring they’d go clamming. There were two quarries and a sardine factory. During the war the shipyard employed a lot of people, they built boats for the Army. There was a lot more diversity in what they could do on the water. Now there’s more diversity working on the land.”

“Fishing is always stressful because you never know what the year’s gonna bring, and that challenges you mentally. I think it does to everybody. If you’ve got children and a family and a mortgage on your house and a mortgage on your boat, you’re under a lot of stress to make it work. There’s gonna be good days and bad days. Some days it will blow like crazy, others it will be dead calm. I’ve seen it be foggy for three weeks straight. If you don’t have the equipment to deal with that fog, you’ve got to sit it out. But it’s no different than anything else. You can’t let it overwhelm you. You’ve got to keep focused on what you’re doing.”

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
Bait (pogies): $78/bu.
Fuel (diesel): $4.72/gal.

Oceanographic Buoy 1-01
44°6’10”N 68°6’44”W - Frenchboro
Bottom Temperature (50 meters): 54.1°F (avg. for this date: 51.3°F)
Source: www.neracoos.org

DISCLAIMER: figures collected Monday, September 26, 2022