Maine is a lot like Alaska, and thankfully not Alaska
Stonington, which effectively sits 11 miles offshore once you’ve crossed all the bridges, is often compared to Alaska and this rings true with me. We live on a rugged coast, far off the beaten path, we like our challenges, we care for our communities, and we have deep cultural values shaped by the fact that we earn our keep from the sea. But today, I am thankful that we are not Alaska; I am grateful for what we have here, and willing to work hard to sustain it.

The recent legal contest over sustainable fishing practices in the lobster fleet dominates our minds, and the fear of uncertainty looms large over us as we enter the winter months. The economic impact of the proposed changes to our practices, coupled with the speed of those changes, would be unbearable for most fishermen. And so, as we work hard to bring science and logical argument to the courts to alter the outcome of this contest, let’s face it: we still have our lobster fishery.

Our friends in Alaska are not so fortunate. Overnight, the snow crab fishery is gone.

We have navigated the changing seas in the lobster fishery. Sure, things have moved around due to water temperature, and costs and markets are fickle. Changing things too much, too fast, and in response to legal mandate have never been the Maine way. Let’s consider how we compare to Alaska. We have prioritized and sustained one of the last owner-operator fleets in the United States, making us nimble in comparison to the investments and specialization in Alaskan crab fisheries.

Remember when our landings were dominated by cod, and then lobster took center stage. The big question is “What’s next and how do we get there?” At MCCF we are working to help understand what our future fisheries look like? With a big-picture understanding, paired with good science around climate change and the fish that fill our oceans, we can plot a path forward securing opportunities for Mainers, including some really great fishing and seafood.

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 at www.coastalfisheries.org.

FISHERIES LOG

Prices to Harvesters in Stonington
Lobsters (shedder): $3.75/lb.
Bait (pogies): $135/box
Fuel (diesel): $5.30/gal.

Oceanographic Buoy I-01 44°6’10”N 68°6’44”W – Frenchboro
Bottom Temperature (50 meters): 54.34°F (avg. for this date: 50.9°F)
Source: www.neracoos.org