November 24, 2022

The Rise and Fall of Oysters; and What That Means to Your Turkey
If you travel in enough fisheries circles, you will often hear people talk about “cycles.” Sometimes they are annual and have to do with fish moving around for food or sex, and other times they have more to do with human behavior and our effects on fish populations. Oysters are no exception.
From the time when Eastern oysters (Crassostrea virginica) paved the bottom of the sea, and were of significant importance to Indigenous peoples in North America, to post colonization where commercial oyster fisheries once employed roughly 53,000 people in the 1880’s, they were a cornerstone of our economies, ecosystems and lives.

By the early 1900s due to pollution, sediment disturbance, and overfishing, we had managed to find a way to nearly eliminate this resource or at least make them inedible, and a common fare at the table became a rare delicacy. Fast forward to today, we are cleaning our waters and aquaculture and fisheries management practices are far improved. And we have seen a resurgence of the oyster everywhere from, in front of you at your favorite hipster bar, to inside your turkey stuffing.

For Maine, and for MCCF, we are at a time where we need to think hard about the right development strategy for this booming “new” fishery, that could help diversify vulnerable fishing communities and create opportunity, or could simply be another number in a corporate bottom line….That is a topic for another day.
For this week, however, the decision is whether to put them in your stuffing. And I would argue that “yes!” you should. Oysters add wonderful, subtle flavors and moisture to a potentially dry and bland side dish. If you haven’t tried it yet and are cringing, get over that feeling and do it! Find about a cup of shucked oyster meats. Chop them (or not), add them to whatever butter and vegetable concoction you add to you bread. And make oyster stuffing this year. Thank me after... and then get informed and engaged in shaping the oyster’s future in Maine. And Happy Thanksgiving!

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.

Prices to Harvesters
Lobsters (shedder): $3.75/lb.
Bait (fresh pogies): $81.50/bushel
Fuel (diesel): $5.60/gal.

Oceanographic Buoy I-01
44°6’10”N 68°6’44”W - Frenchboro
Sea Surface Temperature: N/A
Bottom Temperature (50 meters): 51.82°F (avg. for this date: 49.26°F)
Source: www.neracoos.org