January 5, 2023

**A Vibrant Fishing Heritage – and Future**

As winter sets in and the darkness of the solstice brings us together to celebrate family, traditions and give thanks, we also look ahead to the future with hopes and dreams of keeping our fishing heritage vibrant and our coastal community thriving. I reflect on the importance of fish and seafood in our community celebrations and traditions. Dating to the early first century biblical references depict the fish as a symbol of resurrection and infinity. The Greek characters alpha and omega resemble a fish and symbolize the beginning and the end, respectively. The words for fish and abundance are pronounced the same in Chinese, where the fish symbolizes wealth and in pairs, marital happiness. Humans are culturally entwined with fish and fisheries and protecting our local access to small scale owner operator fisheries in Maine means protecting the fabric of our community.

Last week’s passage of the Omnibus Bill marks a chance for Maine fishermen and fisheries community to once again demonstrate the ethos of the lobster & crab fishery through continued responsible co-management. The bill overrides recent legal challenges and provides the industry not with money, but with time. Maine’s fishing industry received a 6-year moratorium on current gear regulations, offering an invaluable chance to plan and adapt in a way that allows Downeast communities to survive economically in the face of the many changes ahead. Long-term solutions to whale population sustainability is also a critical element of the needed balance; the majestic animal deserves our continued collective attention to ensure survival of this species, just as we have always done in Maine.

We have seen countless innovations in fisheries over centuries, driven by necessity, or curiosity – and with last week’s big news from Washington there is a lot of hope for our next generation of fishermen as we innovate for a very bright future in Maine’s fisheries. Wishing everyone a very merry winter solstice filled with family and friends. MCCF is proud to continue to work to ensure sustainable fisheries and sustainable fishing communities in the Gulf of Maine, forever. Do you have a question about our fisheries? Send it to info@coastalfisheries.org or call 207.367.2708.

**Prices to Harvesters (in Stonington)**
- Bait (pogies): $78/bu.
- Fuel (diesel): $5.49/gal.

**Oceanographic Buoy I-01**
- Bottom Temperature (50 meters): 46.1°F
- Source: www.neracoos.org

*Figures collected on Dec. 27, 2022*