March 12, 2023

You never know if you don’t ask

When was the last time you sat down to a pile of fresh fried Maine shrimp? Yeah, I don’t remember either. And don’t get your hopes up, it won’t be happening anytime soon. But we are catching a few for a small study we’re running. One of the coolest parts of the Eastern Maine Skippers Program is helping students answer their own questions about our coastal ecosystem. Questions like, “Could we capture and transport egg-bearing shrimp and hatch and raise the juveniles in captivity?” We bounced it off the two people in Maine who might know: Megan Ware at DMR, and Dr. Brian Beal at DEI on Beals Island. Neither had any idea if anyone had tried it before - so we decided to give it a shot.

We paired it with curriculum units to give the students some background on biology and life history, capture methods, and fishery management. Shrimp are hermaphroditic, which means they spend the first 3 years of their life as males and transition to females for the rest of their lives. They live up to age 5. We also have 3 different species: Pandalus montagui (tiger shrimp), Dichelopandalus leptoceros, and the historically harvested and deep fryer favored, Pandalus borealis. We also partnered with fishermen to help us out. John Williams generously donated a few traps for us to use, along with some harvesting tips. Josh Miller, Matt Trundy, Dan Rodgers, and Jason Alley volunteered to set them out. The students are working closely with the fishermen in their harbors to transport the shrimp they catch to Beals Island and put them in a flow-through tank designed to hold the adults in one part and collect any eggs they drop in another part.

The first trip was mildly successful, yielding about 30 shrimp. At first glance, we didn’t see any eggs. We assumed they already dropped but decided to transport them anyway and let the kids examine them. To all of our surprise, larvae showed up in the collection tank the next morning. We had a boy! And a few dozen followed. The project is helping us understand how shrimp behave and survive in captivity, and may shed light on the possibility of culturing them in the future. If you are interested in more information or would like to get involved, please contact Pat Shepard or Tom Duym at our office. If you would like to place an order for shrimp, get in line. In the meantime, check out this 8-day old baby shrimp!

Do you have a question about our fisheries? Send it to info@coastalfisheries.org or call 207.367.2708.

**Prices to Harvesters**

- Lobsters: $7.15-$8.15/lb
- Scallops: $13.00/lb
- Diesel: $4.85/gal

(Prices in Stonington on 3/12/23)

**Oceanographic Buoy I-01**

- 44°6’10”N 68°6’44”W - Frenchboro
- Water Temperature (50 meters): 41.5°F (Ave:38.71°F)

Source: [www.neracoos.org](http://www.neracoos.org)