

Island  **THE WEEKLY
Ad-Vantages PACKET**

THE VIEW FROM ATLANTIC AVENUE

By: Danielle Larson, summer intern

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An Alien Amidst Our Oceans

It was another normal afternoon at the Maine Center for Coastal Fisheries. As an intern willing to do pretty much anything to keep myself busy, I was washing off some old rope caked in algae and all sorts of other slimy, stinky, maritime... stuff. Fisherman Warren Judkins pulled into our parking lot, asking if Leroy Weed was around, hoping he could identify a never-before-seen shellfish* he caught off the coast of Shingle Island in 50 feet of water. I took a peek because I was curious about this mystery creature. It had a really strange triangular-shaped shell with a brown stripe running down its side. It had the neck/siphon of a clam, but also had a beard like a mussel. The alien-like creature stumped me, Leroy, and our other staff members on-site. I took up the challenge of trying to identify the strange creature. Thanks to some funny search terms in Google like "triangular clam," "weird Atlantic sea creatures with shells," and "soft mussel triangular brown stripe hairy gooey siphon," I eventually found the buoy barnacle.

The buoy barnacle is incredibly unique, a truly "one-of-a-kind" species. They hang downward from the water's surface, attached to a float which the creature produces itself via modified cement glands. They are the only known barnacle to produce their own gas-filled float. Oftentimes, a group of these barnacles will come together and form one large float to share. The buoy barnacles have a cosmopolitan distribution, meaning they range all across the world, but they do seem to have a preference for warmer temperate waters. The buoy barnacles are far more abundant in the Pacific Ocean, but in the past few years, more and more colonies have been found floating around the Atlantic. Although they often float aimlessly, swept around by ocean currents, these barnacles do have the ability to attach themselves to anything they can find: the backs of sea turtles, lost seabird feathers, sea algae, etc. All in all, these guys were really strange, and I loved the challenge of trying to figure out what they were. For me, it just serves as a reminder of how little we truly know about our oceans.

*While doing research, I found that barnacles are actually crustaceans like lobsters and crabs, rather than mollusks like clams and mussels. For those who may not know, "shellfish" is an umbrella term for both mollusks and crustaceans. Do you have a question about our fisheries? Send it to info@coastalfisheries.org or call 207.367.2708.

Prices to Harvesters

Lobsters (select): \$7/lb.
Lobster (hard): \$6/lb.
Lobster (shedder) \$4.25/lb.
Bait (pogies): \$90/box
Fuel (diesel): \$4.10/gal.

Disclaimer: figures collected on 8/14/23 in Stonington

Oceanographic Buoy I-01

44°6'10"N 68°6'44"W – Frenchboro
Surface Temperature (1 meter): 12.62°C (54.72°F)
Bottom Temperature (50 meters): 10.49°C (50.88°F)

Source: www.neracoos.org

