

THE VIEW FROM ATLANTIC AVENUE

By Tom Duym, Fisheries Education Specialist

November 20, 2023

10 Years and It Still Inspires

Last week we completed the Eastern Maine Skippers Program tenth Fall Cohort gathering. The Cohort events are designed to bring the participating students and schools together to meet and discuss common, or specific, issues around each community's seafood producing culture and methods. We had very good attendance at the Schoodic Institute with 5 schools: North Haven, Vinalhaven, Deer Isle-Stonington, Ellsworth and Jonesport. To facilitate the island communities of North Haven and Vinalhaven, we started with an overnight on Wednesday with some relaxed activities, and a give and take discussion about gear proposals for the future with a close up view of Edge-Tech's Buoy Release System.

Thursday, we started off with some fishermen's views on change, challenges and opportunities. We were treated to an informative and inspiring panel discussion with Dwight Carver of Beals, Mike Murphy of Machiasport, Kristan Porter (MLA President) of Cutler, Mike Sargent of Steuben, and Marsden Brewer of Stonington. Despite missing a fishing day, these men gave of their time to come and give advice and messages of resilience. They spoke not only of surviving current changes, but also of thriving in an industry where seafood will still be in high demand and innovation will create a cherished living from working the coastal waters of Maine. In these times of looming change, it is so refreshing to listen to these fishermen convey their passion for their chosen occupation and offer such pointed and heartfelt advice to the next generation that one cannot help but come away feeling encouraged and positive. It made me wish we could have broadcast that session because it was so honest, hopeful, supportive and in measured contrast to the hand-wringing and nay-saying that most media and social sites portray about the future of owner-operator fishing along our coast.

DMR Commissioner, Pat Keliher addressed the group and stressed that as distasteful as some change may be, innovation and becoming engaged in the discussion, process and testing of gear or policy should be part of this next generation's plan. To question and test approaches, needs to be thoughtful and timely. Commissioner Keliher has supported the Eastern Maine Skippers Program since its beginning and his enthusiasm and continued support are greatly appreciated along with his optimism and commitment toward fishermen and fishing communities in our state. As always, another uplifting and successful kickoff for EMSP and the next group of fishing community leaders.

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 in Stonington, as of 11/20/2023

Lobsters (select): \$6.75/lb.

Lobster (hard): \$5.75/lb.

Lobster (shedder) \$4.50/lb.

Bait (pogies): \$90/box

Fuel (diesel): \$3.70/gal

Oceanographic Buoy I-01

44°6'10"N 68°6'44"W - Frenchboro

Bottom Temperature (50 meters): 49.3°F 9.61°C

Source: www.neracoos.org