

**Island**   
**Ad-Vantages** **THE WEEKLY**  
**PACKET**

**THE VIEW FROM ATLANTIC AVENUE**

**By: Sal McCloskey, MCCF Board Member**

May 6, 2024

**Picking Spat**

Straddling a fish box, dressed in full oilskins and with a mesh spat bag between my knees, I pull the drawstring on the bag only to be assaulted by a flying rock gunnel. That's the eel-like critter I used to find under the rocks back when I was a kid. Jeepers crow! Here I am almost 80 now, it's pouring rain and howling winds, we're huddled under a tent awning and I'm swishing 5' cylinders of collapsed Netron netting full of scallop baby spat into a cold bucket of salt water. Carla and our other scientists and students from Colby College, Hurricane Island and Vinalhaven are counting the baby scallops, weighing them and recording where each sample came from along our Maine coast.

The spat in the bottom of my bag ranges from the size of the head of a pin to very colorful little scallops twice the size of a lentil. It's a tedious process, and my fingers are frozen. The work is painstakingly laborious, but I'm on it. I'm having a blast. There is also an assortment of other matter to carefully pick out: Sea squirts, jingle shells and a variety of marine worms. Scallops spawn in late August and September and drift in the water column until they begin settlement in October. The spat we collect this spring will get reseeded in the wild or go to aquaculture farms to grow out--where they have a better chance of surviving predators such as the voracious green crab.

For a full week, we worked in Stonington outside the MCCF building looking out on the grizzly weather in the harbor. The second week, we set out for Chipman's Wharf in Milbridge. Thanks to the community of students and volunteers who show up to help, I'm beginning to understand just how collaborative MCCF's work is. As we work in the tank room looking out on the shore and watch the bulldozer begin the long process of rebuilding Chipman's Wharf from January storm damage, fishermen come to visit really interested in what we're doing. Everybody's asking questions, and offering to help. As I return to my spat picking, I'm amused at fielding rock gunnels doing somersaults into the trash can full of cold salt water stationed in front of me, and I think of how grateful I am to be a part of this community.

**FISHERIES LOG**

**Prices to Harvesters** (in Stonington on 4/29/2024)

Lobsters (select): \$7.50/lb.

Lobster (hard): \$6.50/lb.

Bait (herring): \$90/box

Fuel (diesel) : \$3.82/gal

**Oceanographic Buoy I-01**

44°6'10"N 68°6'44"W – Frenchboro

Sea Surface Temperature (1 meter): 6.19°C 44.65°F

Bottom Temperature (50 meters): 4.65°C 41.60°F

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