

Island  **THE WEEKLY
Ad-Vantages PACKET**

THE VIEW FROM ATLANTIC AVENUE

By: Mike Thalhauser

June 20, 2024

Alewife Reflections of 2024

Summer feels like it's finally here, along with the pleasure-craft outside our office window maneuvering around the harbor in a way that I can only describe as "not quite as natural or skillful" as the less-fancy boats run by the seasoned captains of Stonington's fishing fleet. And I just finished my last school visit to do an alewife fish printing activity with some elementary school kids. FYI, fish printing is just what it sounds like. We paint actual fish and use that to leave an impression on a t-shirt, and hopefully an impression on the child or adult that wears it.

2024 was a great year of alewife returns around the peninsula with nearly a million fish in just the five ponds we have in the Bagaduce River Watershed! And every June, I am left tired and reflecting on these shiny little fish I spend so much time working with. Why are they important? What really resonates? There are obvious answers around their "keystone" status in the ecosystem but after working with so many teachers and students and community volunteers, I have been thinking more about our human communities and what we share with these fish... and why our mutual connection is so natural and strong.

As I drove in to work today after a meeting in Penobscot, with partners like Bailey Bowden (Chair of the Alewife Committee) and Ciona Ulbrich (Funding and Project Management Magician at Maine Coast Heritage Trust) where we were planning the next restoration steps for our fish and our communities, I found myself tying us all together with a simple but important attribute. "Commitment to a Place."

For the fish, alewife return each spring, from the open ocean, to the same place they were born and where their parents traveled to bring them into the world. Each run of thousands or millions of fish all share a commitment to one place. And that strategy of commitment to a place and to a community is a proven successful one that has kept them around for a lot longer than people.

For people, we definitely don't have the track record of commitment that alewife do, but after all of the people and kids that I have had the pleasure to work with this year, I think it's safe to say that we have learned that our only path to success in maintaining our incredible communities, is through that same commitment to our place here. And like the fish, it can't be just one or two of us. It has to be a strategy that we all commit to. And the best thing is that for alewife or people... it's the same place.

So do it. Be an alewife. Commit to this place and to its future. It works. To learn more about MCCF's work or how to visit our Discovery Wharf Marine Museum visit: www.coastalfisheries.org.

FISHERIES LOG

Prices to Harvesters

(in Stonington on 6/17/2024)

Lobsters (select): \$5.50/lb.

Lobster (hard): \$4.50/lb.

Bait (herring): \$90/box

Fuel (diesel) : \$3.15/gal

Oceanographic Buoy I-01

44°6'10"N 68°6'44"W – Frenchboro

Sea Surface Temperature (1 meter): 8.82°C 47.88°F

Bottom Temperature (50 meters): 6.74°C 44.13°F

Source: www.neracoos.org (June 17, 2024)