



THE VIEW FROM ATLANTIC AVENUE

By: Mike Thalhauser

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Fish Scales

If you are a regular reader of our column, you have probably heard us talk a lot about “scale”. Not the evil one in your bathroom, but as a way to describe some level that a fishery might be harvested or managed. For example, alewife are managed at different scales. There’s a federal scale, where the Atlantic Ocean is the scale, but they are also managed at a state scale by state entities like DMR that can use local socio-economic factors to inform how they do their job. Maine alewife are also managed and monitored on the local scale, and let me tell you why that makes all the difference.

It makes the difference because that is the scale that they exist at. Yes, during a lot of their lives, they are swimming around an ocean together. A big, messy, wavy ocean where fish are almost impossible to find or see or count, and so it’s not the best scale to get information from, or make decisions on. But for a short window of time (Mostly May in Maine) alewife take a break from the vast ocean and they come back to where they were born to spawn. Most of those fish swim up a clear little brook before they spawn, and when they do, they are easier to see and count than they are at any other time in their life. And because we live here in Maine, and because our communities have watched these fish return for as long as we all have been here, it means we possess the “local knowledge” of these fisheries. That matters.

It's why we all matter, and it's why MCCF and so many other groups advocate and spend a lot of time and resources, creating spaces and policies and conversations to find out how best to get the best of all of these scales. To take advantage of all the best things that each scale has to offer.

It's not just fish either. I hope that everyone right now, thinking about policies and conversations (fish or otherwise) would think a little more about scale. So next time you are taking a position on an issue you might hear about...use your local knowledge. Think about your neighbors and the people in your communities. Think about what it really matters to you and what you know and let that guide your positions. Forget the internet and forget political parties. Think local and think about your families and neighbors. After all, it's the scale that WE exist at.

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.

FISHERIES LOG

Prices to Harvesters in Stonington as of 3/17/2025

Lobster (hard): \$10.50/lb.

Lobster (shedder) \$9.50/lb.

Bait (pogies): \$90/box

Fuel (diesel): \$3.10/gal

Oceanographic Buoy I-01

44°6'10"N 68°6'44"W – Frenchboro

Top Temperature (1 meter): 38.05°F 3.36°C

Bottom Temperature (50 meters): 38.25°F 3.47°C

Source: www.neracoos.org