

Maine Coastal News

Volume 39 Issue 6

June 2026

FREE

ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION SPRING MEETING NEWS



Farrin's Boat Shop of Walpole doing sea trials on the new JANA B. of Kingstown, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in South Bristol on 22 April. She is a Young Brothers 40 finished out as a sportfish boat powered with a 725-hp Volvo Diesel.

TAUTOG MANAGEMENT BOARD Meeting Summary

The Tautog Management Board met to review a Technical Committee (TC) report on the tasks assigned by the Board in response to the 2025 stock assessment update and provide guidance to the Plan Development Team (PDT) on Draft Addendum I.

In response to the 2025 stock assessment update, which found overfishing is occurring in the New Jersey-New York Bight (NJ-NYB) and Delaware, Maryland and Virginia (DMV) regions, the Board tasked the TC with (1) developing harvest projections to determine the reductions necessary to reach a 50% probability of achieving the fishing mortality (F) target by 2028 and 2030, (2) use the Risk and Uncertainty Tool in developing additional projections, and (3) provide a qualitative review of new fishery-independent surveys in the DMV region.

According to the projections, the NJ-NYB region would need a 44% reduction to have a 50% probability of achieving the F target in 2028, and a 40% reduction would be needed to have a 50% probability of achieving the F target in 2030. In the DMV region, maintaining status quo removals (i.e., removals equal to the 2022-2024 average) would result in a greater than 50% probability of being at or below the F target in both 2028 and 2030, meaning no

reduction would be needed. This was likely due to the very strong year-classes in 2020-2023 that will be moving into the exploitable size classes over the next few years and the three-year average of removals was lower than the 2021-2023 removals, which were recent highs. Utilizing the Risk and Uncertainty Tool to determine the probability percentage to achieve the F target resulted in a recommended probability of 64% for the NJ-NYB region and 66% for the DMV region, and the projections were re-run to calculate the reduction needed under these new probabilities. However, the Board ultimately opted to develop the options in Draft Addendum I using a 50% probability of achieving the F target. Additionally, the TC reviewed Maryland DNR's Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Habitat Survey and the Delaware Ventless Trap Survey and considered both surveys promising for providing additional data for consideration in the next benchmark assessment.

After reviewing the projections, the Board provided guidance to the PDT on how to draft options to achieve the necessary reductions in Draft Addendum I. First, the Board opted not to wait for re-calibrated Marine Recreational Information Program values that are expected in August 2026. As a result, the Draft Addendum will be considered for approval for public comment at the 2026 Summer Meeting with potential

final action at the 2026 Annual Meeting. Furthermore, the Board requested the PDT develop options with a 50% probability of achieving the F target by 2030, including options to change the fishing seasons and bag limits. Finally, the Board added a section to the document for options to allow for states to implement a second tag in the commercial tagging program to provide more flexibility for harvesters in the live market to use a more preferred tag, if one can be found to be suitable.

For more information, please contact James Boyle, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator at jboyle@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move to continue forward with the addendum process and not delay for the re-calculated MRIP data.

Motion made by Dr. McNamee and seconded by Mr. Hasbrouck. Motion carries (7 in favor, 2 opposed).

AMERICAN LOBSTER MANAGEMENT BOARD

Meeting Summary

The American Lobster Board met to review a report from the Technical Committee (TC) on two Board tasks; approve nominations to a Steering Committee to develop a process to define management objectives for the Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank (GOM/GBK) fishery; receive updates from

Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts on recent industry meetings with the Gulf of Maine lobster industry; and receive a report from NOAA Fisheries on the Request for Information (RFI) on alternative gear marking; and review a list of outstanding management changes for future consideration. The Board also approved a nomination to the American Lobster Advisory Panel (AP).

After reviewing the 2025 Stock Assessment the Board tasked the TC with estimating the benefits to the GOM/GBK fishery that would have resulted from implementing the minimum gauge size increases under the repealed Addendum XXVII. The TC addressed this task by simulating the impacts of the Addendum XXVII gauge and escape vent size changes as if they had been triggered in 2018 and implemented from 2019-2023. This approach allowed the management actions to play out through a period of time when recruitment and fishing mortality estimates were reliably informed by estimates from the recent stock assessment. Relative to simulations where no changes to the gauge or vent sizes were implemented, the results of the TC analysis show decreases to the number of lobsters landed in the years where the two gauge sizes and the vent size changed, before stabilizing at slightly lower catch numbers.

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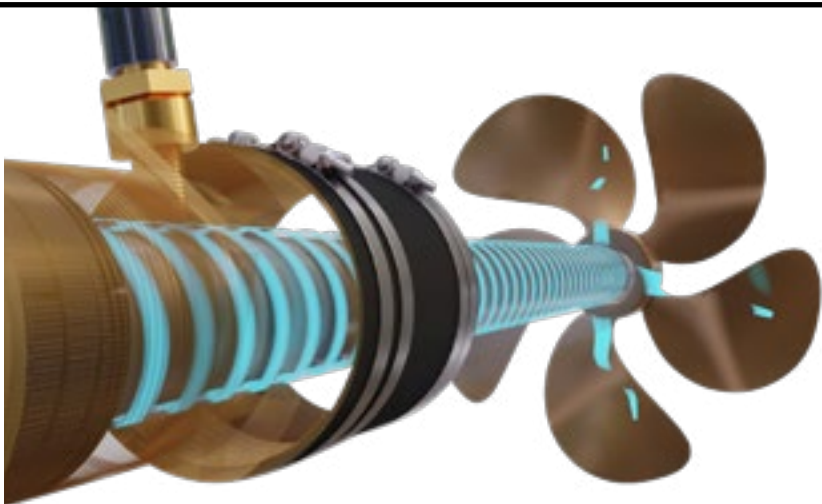
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Maine Coastal News is published 12 times a year and is dedicated to covering the news along the entire coast of Maine, Kittery to Eastport. We cover general marine news, commercial fishing, yachting (power and sail), boat yard and waterfront news and maritime history.

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Editor-in-Chief	Rachel Elward
Advertising Sales	Randy Nichols

Advertising Deadlines: The deadline for the July issue is June 5.
The deadline for the August issue is July 3.

Publisher's Note

Every spring I would make a run to Southern New England to visit the family. My aunt and uncle would come up from Florida for the summer, and my mother would be quilting away. They all have passed on now, but I still try to make a trek down there for books, maritime antiques and just to see what is going on along their coast.

The first week in May I headed south with the first stop at the Book Barn in Niantic, CT. I brought three boxes with me, but I was good and limited myself to just one, some for my collection and some to re-sell. The plan was to spend the night in Mystic, but my usual place, the Holiday Inn right off the exit, was not open until August. I thought I had a room at the Hilton next door, but it was actually at the Hampton Inn on the other side of the highway. These inns are usually good, but this one was under construction and the room that I had booked was not available because someone decided to extend their stay. It was okay, and maybe it will be better when they are back together. The next day I headed for New Bedford where there are two good groups of antique stores and then stayed the next two nights at the Hampton Inn in Fairhaven. The following day I headed for Cape Cod to do run on the topside on Route 6A from Sandwich to Yarmouth, then down to South Dennis on Route 28 and finally over to Centerville, but I forgot that they are doing work on the Bourne bridge. It was real slow going as there was just one lane heading over the bridge knocked down from three. Well, while I slowly crawled towards the bridge an emission warning light came on saying that in 175 miles my top speed would be just 65 mph. Not being pleased with the turn of events, and when finally, over the bridge, I headed for Sandwich Harbor. What got me mad was that I

had been at the local GMC dealer and asked if there was any maintenance that needed to be done as I had heard that there was some sort of flushing that needed to be done due to the DEF they make us run in diesels. I called the dealership, asked why this had happened and they were nice, I was not quite as nice, thinking they should have known this could happen. My next call was to Alden GMC in Fairhaven, real close to the motel I was in, who gave me a better explanation saying that you do not know when this is going to happen and if I could get back to them just after lunch they would bring it right in and if they had to order parts they would be in the next morning and I would have my pickup back early afternoon. Wow, I was thinking that they would be booked for at least a week and would not have the time to even look at it. A few years ago, in Portsmouth I had an issue and the GMC dealer who would not even look at my pick-up until the following week. So far it was all good news. My plans for a run around Cape Cod were now out the window, but there was an antique shop right down the road, which I quickly visited, found nothing, and then it was back to Fairhaven. By mid-afternoon they had her diagnosed and needed to order a sensor. Now, I worried it might not come when it should and being Friday, this could be bad as I needed to be back in Winterport to write this paper. The following morning, after contemplating being stuck there for another couple of days, or at the very least, not getting my vehicle back until early to mid-afternoon I received a call saying she was ready to go at 0900. Now that is service and to someone that was not a regular customer, I was very relieved.



MCN's Calendar of Waterfront Events

On-going Exhibits

Penobscot Marine Museum
SARDINELAND
Evolution of the Maine Lobster Boat
Jim Steele Peapod Shop
Art of the Sea
At Home, At Sea, Stories
Working the Bay
Gone Fishing
Searsport
Info: penobscotmarinemuseum.org/

Maine Maritime Museum
Upon That Isle in Maine
Re-Sounding
Percy & Small
Historic Watercraft Collection
Watercraft Restoration
Lobster & the Maine Coast
Bath
Info: mainemaritimemuseum.org

Cape Ann Museum
Among Friends
Avery, Gottlieb & Rothko by the Sea
Contemporary Art Wetu
Native Waters, Native Lands
Gloucester, MA
Info: capeannmuseum.org

New Bedford Whaling Museum
"Look pleasant, please" Early portrait Photography in New Bedford
New Bedford in the 1800s
Bristol County: Incarcerated
Coquilla Nut Carving
Seals and Society
New Bedford, MA
Info: (508) 997-0046

Mystic Seaport Museum
Brickwrecks, Sunken ships in Legos
Monstrous Whaling and its Colossal Impact
Mystic, CT
Info: mysticseaport.org

2026

JUNE

6 Centreboard Regetta
Centreboard Yacht Club
South Portland

20 Boothbay Lobster Boat Races
Boothbay Harbor
Info: Ashlee Lowery (207) 808-9230

20 Solstice Race
Rockland Yacht Club
Rockland

20 Harraseeket Regatta
Harraseeket Yacht Club
South Freeport

21 Rockland Lobster Boat Races
Rockland Harbor @ Breakwater
Rockland
Info: Nick O'Hara (207) 542-4348
Mike Mayo (207) 542-1879

26-28 WoodenBoat Show
Mystic Seaport
Mystic, CT

28 Bass Harbor Lobster Boat Races
Bass Harbor
Info: Colyn Rich (207) 479-7288
Elean Mitchell (207) 266-6968

JULY

4 Moosabec Reach Lobster Boat Races
Jonesport
Info: Roy Fagonde (207) 610-4607

11-12 Pilot Regatta
Portland Yacht Club
Falmouth

12 Stonington Lobster Boat Races
Town Dock
Stonington
Info: Jeff Eaton, (207) 598-0488

18-19 Boothbay Regetta & Shipyard Cup
Boothbay Harbor Yacht Club
Boothbay Harbor

18 Race to the Graves
Rockland Yacht Club
Rockland

19 Friendship Lobster Boat Races
Town Dock
Friendship
Info: Heidi Thibodeau (207) 701-9194

24-25 Camden Classic Cup
Camden Yacht Club
Camden

26 Harpswell Lobster Boat Races
Harpswell
Info: Amanda Peacock (207) 756-3104
Kristina York (207) 449-7571

26 Paper Cup Challenge
Rockland Yacht Club
Rockland

31 Monhegan Race
Portland Yacht Club
Falmouth

AUGUST

1 Seguin Sprint Race
Portland Yacht Club
Portland

3-5 ASMFC Annual Meeting
Westin Crystal City
1800 Richmond Highway
Arlington, VA

8 Winter Harbor Lobster Boat Races
Town Dock
Winter Harbor
Info: Chris Byers, (207) 963-7139

8 SailMaine Regatta
SailMaine
Portland

8 Boothbay Harbor Commodore's Cup
Boothbay Harbor Yacht Club
Boothbay Harbor

9 Merritt Brackett Lobster Boat Races
State Park Restaurant
Pemaquid
Info: Brent Fogg (207) 694-4988
Sheila McLain (207) 677-2100

David Bradley Opens Impressive Marine

SEARSPORT – For those that can remember back 15 years or so, you might remember Bradley Boats, a boatbuilding company that operated out of Ellsworth by David Bradley. Unfortunately, when the 2008 financial crash came it took down this company. Afterwards I briefly saw David at Atlantic Boat and then at Al Pettegrew’s before he disappeared. Maybe once a year I would get asked if I had seen him. About a month ago he resurfaced. His company, Impressive Partners, was building houses out on Islesboro for several years, but now he is focusing on a comeback in the marine world with Impressive Marine, which does electrical and electronics work on the mid-coast.

“When I started the construction company,” said David, “it was after Covid. I was at Duck Trap Fish Farms in Belfast as a maintenance supervisor, which was pretty good, but I needed to do something else. I survived Covid working for them. I was thinking of starting a web-based electric motor sales company. Electric motors are everywhere. At Duck Trap I learned that because we’d go through electric motors like they were candy, but that didn’t happen. I then bought a trailer and threw an ad on Craigslist, because I just wanted something different to do. All of a sudden, I am getting carpentry work and getting paid really well. I do everything by the book; everybody has a W-2, all covered by insurance, all safe by OSHA standards. I try to maintain that level. It costs a lot, but I’ve got happy guys. It is amazing you could make a living with a chop-saw and a trailer. It was really good.”

Out on Islesboro he began by assisting another contractor with studding up a very expensive summer home and then he did the finish work. Now, he just finished up a boat house for the same owner. They have also been doing other jobs on the mid-coast and was getting ready to start a kitchen the next

day. David added, “For me, it has been educational, because I am not a carpenter. I am a woodworker. At Bradley Boat I was able to take my ideas and put them in auto-CAD. Then we were able to transcribe that into wood and then moulds. We built parts that fit in the hulls. I had the greatest pride in that because we were able to take the first Bar Harbor 39, which took us about 12,000 man-hours, the second one took about 8,000 and the third one was around 4,000. My idea was to turn it into a production level boat.”

Unfortunately, like everyone, you realize that there is a point when the body says, ‘you cannot keep doing this.’ He was working with another contractor, and he will keep his guys busy for as long as they want to be busy. Now he is focusing on his marine business.

David grew up in Norridgewock and built his first boat when he was 8. He said, “I sure ticked my old man off. He had a piece of 3/4-inch plywood, and I nailed some 2 x 6s to it and brought it out to the puddle in the front yard in the springtime and it promptly sank. I grew up on a lake in Northern Maine in the summers. My father had a flying service so there were always boats. I had an older brother who was a lobster fisherman of sorts and he built a wooden boat. He lent me Gougeon Brothers book. Every time I see one I buy it, and I give it to somebody who wants to know about fiberglassing. It is the Bible. In the back of National Fishermen there was always these ads for boat kits. I actually bought some plans, but of course I did not have the funding to build one.”

David then went to work for Robert Peire, who at the time was building the Indian Island 28 in Lincolnville, which was based on the BHM 28. He worked there for a short time but continued to read books on

Continued on Page 6



David Bradley opens Impressive Marine to service electrical and electronic systems.

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David Bradley Opens Impressive Marine

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boatbuilding. David then got certified as a SCUBA diver and went urchin diving for the next 11 winters. During the summers he went lobster fishing as a sternman for Jeff Eaton of Deer Isle/Stonington for a couple of summers. David stated, "We had a great time. It was meet at the restaurant at 5 o'clock, get on the boat by 6, and go to work. I am not a lobsterman. It is a lot of going around and around and a lot of changing water in the traps. It was a break between urchin diving, and it was on the ocean. Nice clean air and I was making decent money. Then a couple of winters I worked with Jeff in the shop. One winter we rebuilt a Stanley 36. I can't remember the gentleman's name we worked for, but we tore it right down to the bare hull and built a new top. The next winter we built his HELEN ARLENE, the 38 H & H."

When asked how they learned more about boatbuilding, David explained, "If we had questions we'd go drive off and see somebody who was doing something that we wanted to know. Jeff was really comfortable with the guys down at H & H. Eric at H & H helped us both out incredibly. We also went to the finish shops locally."

David then went to work for John Hutchins over at Downeast Boats & Composites in Penobscot. He also got to know Spencer Lincoln and David added, "He would drag me off now and then and we'd go to different places and lay under a boat. He'd show me the lines, and he'd talk to me about them. I'd stop at his house, and he'd throw open the prints on his desk and he'd say, 'You see what this is here?' I had no idea, but I learned a lot from that man. He got me the job over at John Hutchins. I lasted there a year, which is a long-time doing finish work

in a layup shop."

At that point he decided to go out on his own and thus started Bradley Boats. "It was the right time. There were no finishers for all the hulls that were being built on the coast, and I immediately had three boats to build. The hardest part was finding crew and getting people to stay. Honestly, over the course of the tenure of Bradley Boat I had over 100 employees in 9 years. It's a tough industry. You kind of have to nurture everybody that you get through the door because for one, they really don't know what they're doing and two, they really want to build a boat. It is not about grinding fiberglass or doing layup or spraying gelcoat."

David did some things that others stayed far away from like fly-by-wire steering. Or taking the keel off of a Wesmac 38. He said, "That was a no, no. The first one I did I had an incredibly hard time with. We built it with such a high center of gravity that it would trip on its keel and fall over. Basically, when you turned to the left it would lean over to the right. It would scare you. You could see the S-turn in your wake. That was my fault because I did it without doing the proper weight and balance calculations and by removing the keel it changed everything."

David liked the 38, which he called the Bar Harbor 39. He added, "That is a nice boat. I bought the hulls from Wesmac, but I had them block out the keel. We glued a piece on the bottom of the hull to run the shaft tube through. It is just basically for rudder and prop protection. I was on one of my boats sleeping down below. It had been a really rough night, and the owner was at the helm as we were coming in Barnegat Inlet in New Jersey. He got on the top of a wave and got into the chop and hit a sand bar. It sounded like it ripped everything out and inside the

boat was a mess. We hauled it out a couple of days later and I couldn't see anything. I put stainless steel skeg shoe on the bottom of it, and it had a little scratch. That was a great test."

"I really didn't know what I was doing when I started Bradley Boat," confessed David. "I had an idea; I guess you could call it a dream. I just wanted to do it better than somebody else. I wanted to make nice things. I think we built nine in the 38-foot range and 30 of the little 22-footers. The 22 was a Calvin 20, which came from Northern Bay. Somebody took a 20 and stretched it three feet and he started making them and calling them the St. Croix 22. Eventually, I bought the mould from him, and I then sold the moulds to Al Pettegrew. He calls it the Black Ledge 22, but I don't know if he's ever done anything with it. I built new deck and cabin moulds for it. It really is a sweet little boat."

When it all came crashing down, David had a boat in the shop, which he moved up to Brewer, where he finished it off. When that was done, he went to work for Atlantic Boat for about a year. He did a lot of work on the Flye Point 31. He said, "They were trying to build a production run for the 31-footer. I did a lot of work on that and the advertising and this and that. I am not sure where it all went. I put a lot of effort into that."

"At that point," continued David "I went around the yards. I worked with Al Pettegrew for a year or so. Then I went over to Wesmac, wiring and stuff. Really nice boats. Then from there I went to Anguilla in the British West Indies for three winters. I worked pretty much as a maintenance guy for a ferry operator who had 11 of these classy looking outboard boats he was using as water taxis to get you across the bay to Anguilla the first year. They were running all the time and so I worked on his boats. Before I left one of the owner's friends said he wanted to build a boat. He was in politics, but he ended up with this boat shop. They started from scratch and he built stitch and glue, plywood, glass over plywood and mahogany West System boats. They worked in open bays with the wind blowing through. So, we had the hull, a 54-footer, and I turned it into a 50-passenger ferry. The first air-conditioned cabin ferry for the island. She had a pair of C-15 Cats in it, and it went really well. I was really proud of that. We worked with Donald Blunt and a guy named Chris, both from Rhode Island. They designed a proper drive train and then we went from there. The second time around they were really necessary because we put the props in tunnels. It was a really unique experience going from hull to Coast Guard sea trials in six months. I got a call three or four months later that one of the captains had got upset and burned her right to the waterline. They had it in the yard when I went to visit

and it was gone. So, we had another hull built and I went down and did it all over again. It wasn't as much fun this time around."

David was doing this during the winters and in the summers, he would return to Maine and work with Commercial Divers' Inc. out of Bangor. They were working on dams and power plants. He then went to work for a New Hampshire company, which was working on high pressure steam valves. They would disassemble all the valves and put them back together and David would certify them.

He then went to work for a company based in St. Thomas, which worked on MTUs. The majority of the work was on land-based generators. When a hurricane came through, they had plenty of work getting everything back functional. He was also working on mega-yachts. "I liked working on the big boats," said David, "and all the people were great, but it was a long way from home, and six months is a long time to spend from home."

He enjoyed it all, but he wanted to come back to Maine. Before Covid and the tariffs, David was buying obsolete electronics online and repairing them and reselling them. But when the prices went up it became hard to make a profit. David added, "I am 62 and when Bradley Boat went down, I lost everything. I lost my own personal respect, and I lost the respect of a lot of people when I went out of business. I spent four or five years just trying to gather myself back. It took me a long time to get back into the marine thing mentally. I know where I belong, it's with boats. Everything about my life has been really revolving around boats. I think the electrical, electronics thing is fun. It challenges me and I can make people happy doing it. I went down to Rhode Island two years ago and took all the MEAs on networking and electronic installation. I study ABYC steadily and keep on top of that. If there is a question, it is in the book I carry. I don't hold any ABYC certifications, but I will. I am an authorized dealer of all of those electronics, and I have done training sessions with some of them. I wanted to get back into something that I love and enjoy. Just with the sales end of it I should be able to survive and doing installs at my leisure as I get older. I have taken all of my retirement money and put it into this new venture so hopefully it will return on my investment."

There is a huge demand for marine electricians and electronic technicians anywhere on the coast of Maine. David will not have a problem finding work, his problem will be can he handle all that comes his way. He certainly will try his best.



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New England Fishermen's Stewardship Association News

Trump Administration Moves to Buy Back Wind Lease Areas, A Win for Fishermen

By Dustin W. Delano

For years, commercial fishermen along the East Coast have raised serious concerns about the rapid, large-scale industrialization of our ocean through offshore wind development. Those concerns were often dismissed, minimized, or ignored altogether. Today, however, we are seeing what may be the first meaningful shift in federal policy, one that reflects what fishermen have been saying all along.

The Trump administration, working through the Department of the Interior, has begun taking steps to halt, reevaluate, and in some cases buy back offshore wind lease areas along the Eastern Seaboard. Recent reporting indicates that the administration has proposed approximately \$1 billion to cancel offshore wind leases, including at least two major lease areas currently held for development. These leases are part of a much larger buildout effort tied to an estimated \$25 billion in planned offshore wind investment, much of it concentrated in highly productive fishing grounds.

While the full list of lease blocks and final compensation agreements has not yet been publicly detailed, the direction is clear. Areas that were once slated for large-scale industrial wind development are now being reconsidered, and in some cases, targeted for removal altogether.

Many of these lease areas overlap directly with some of the most productive fishing grounds in the United States, spanning from the Gulf of Maine to the Mid-Atlantic. Fishermen have long warned that converting these areas into industrial energy zones would have serious consequences, limiting access to historic fishing grounds, displacing vessels into smaller and more dangerous areas, and creating navigational risks in heavily developed zones. There are also ongoing concerns about impacts to marine ecosystems and fish behavior that have yet to be fully understood.

This shift by the administration represents a critical course correction. It acknowledges that the ocean is not an empty space available for unchecked industrial expansion, but rather a working environment that sustains thousands of fishing families, coastal communities, and one of the last truly domestic food production systems in

the country.

The decision to begin buying back and canceling leases signals a willingness to step back and reconsider whether current policies are sacrificing a sustainable, domestic food source in favor of development that has not fully accounted for its long-term impacts. It reflects a growing recognition that the balance between energy development and existing ocean uses has been out of alignment.

This shift is not just about policy. It is about people. Commercial fishing supports generations of family businesses, underpins local economies from Maine to North Carolina, and contributes to a domestic food supply that is already under pressure from imports and overregulation. Protecting access to fishing grounds means protecting jobs, preserving coastal culture, and strengthening food security. At a time when the United States imports the majority of its seafood, maintaining the ability to harvest from our own waters is not just an economic issue, but a matter of national security.

We commend Secretary Doug Burgum and President Trump for recognizing the need to reassess offshore wind leasing and for taking meaningful steps in this direction. Their willingness to engage with the realities facing commercial fishermen is a positive and necessary development.

At the same time, this effort must not stop here. We strongly encourage the administration to expand this review to additional offshore wind lease areas across the Eastern Seaboard, particularly those that overlap with high-value fishing grounds and critical habitat. Billions of dollars' worth of leases have already been issued, and without a comprehensive reevaluation, the long-term impacts to the fishing industry could be severe.

Fishermen are not opposed to progress, but we are opposed to being excluded from decisions that directly impact our future. We bring generations of firsthand knowledge about the ocean, its patterns, its risks, and its value. Any lasting ocean policy must be built with that knowledge, not around it.

The decision to begin reversing offshore wind lease development marks a turning point. It offers an opportunity to restore balance, protect access, and ensure that America's fishermen are no longer treated as an afterthought. NEFSA looks forward to continuing to work with the administration

to build on this momentum and to keep fishermen at the center of decisions that shape the future of our ocean.

The Great American Fish Fry: Celebrating U.S. Seafood for America's 250th

In recognition of America's 250th anniversary, NOAA is giving new life to a familiar tradition, with the rebranding of its annual Fish Fry as the Great American Fish Fry—an expanded celebration of the nation's seafood heritage and the hardworking fishermen who sustain it. This year's event is set to be bigger and more inclusive than ever. NOAA is actively seeking seafood vendors from across the country, creating an opportunity to showcase the incredible diversity and quality of American-harvested seafood. With plans to increase ticket availability, the event will welcome a broader audience and shine a brighter spotlight on domestic fisheries.

The Great American Fish Fry offers a unique platform to connect consumers directly with U.S. seafood, highlighting the importance of supporting local fishermen and coastal communities. As interest in sustainable, domestically sourced food continues to grow, events like this play a key role in strengthening appreciation for the industry. With the nation's 250th year as the backdrop, the Great American Fish Fry has the potential to be a powerful celebration of both tradition and the future of U.S. fisheries. FMI: <https://greatamericanfishfry.my.canva.site/>

NEFSA hires Tim Smith as Operations Manager

The New England Fishermen's Stew-

ardship Association is pleased to announce that Tim Smith has been hired as operations manager.

Tim was born in New Jersey and grew up in Maine where he graduated from Gorham High School. He was educated at Mars Hill University for Business Administration and Psychology, and New Hampshire Institute of Art for UX/UI Design.

Tim spent 5 years in the tech industry working for Apple before moving on to a career in training and workforce development at the nonprofit Woodfords Family Services.

"At Apple, I learned how to design and implement systems that are intuitive, efficient, and built around the needs of real people. At Woodfords Family Services, I worked in training and workforce development, helping staff grow and supporting an organization through the day-to-day complexity of mission-driven work. Together, those experiences gave me a deep respect for operational infrastructure," he said.

As the Operations Manager, Tim will be focused on day-to-day operations, memberships, budgets, logistics, events, fundraising and more. "I'm not coming in to reinvent the wheel; I'm here to listen, learn, and make everyone's job a little easier wherever I can. I look forward to engagement with the fishing community; that's exactly what drew me to this role. Commercial fishing is one of the hardest, most under-appreciated jobs in America, and the people who do it deserve an organization running at its best on their behalf. I want to help make that happen," he said.

You can reach Tim at: tim.smith@nefishermen.org, (207) 615-1962, or swing by the NEFSA office.

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USS John P. Murtha to support NASA's Artemis II mission

From Petty Officer 1st Class Jomark Almazan

06 April 2026

SAN DIEGO, CA - Amphibious transport dock ship USS John P. Murtha (LPD 26) is slated to serve as the recovery ship for the Orion spacecraft and its crew upon their return from the historic Artemis II mission.

The ship is named in honor of the late and long-serving Pennsylvania Congressman John P. Murtha.

"It is a fitting tribute to Congressman Murtha, who dedicated his life to serving our nation, that the ship bearing his name will be integral to this historic moment in space exploration," said Capt. Erik Kenny, commanding officer of John P. Murtha. "He was a champion for our military and a visionary. We are honored to carry on his legacy by supporting NASA and the Artemis II mission."

The Artemis II mission is the first crewed flight of NASA's Space Launch System (SLS) rocket and Orion spacecraft, sending four astronauts on an approximately 10-day journey that will take them beyond the Moon. This mission will mark humanity's first crewed voyage to the vicinity of the Moon in over 50 years.

Upon completion of their mission, the Orion capsule will splash down in the Pacific Ocean, where John P. Murtha and its crew will be prepared to recover the astronauts and the spacecraft.

The U.S. Navy's amphibious transport dock has unique advantages, including a well deck, helicopter pad, onboard medical facilities, and communication capabilities needed to support the mission. The platform gives NASA the ability to recover the Orion space capsule and collect critical data to help ensure it's ready to recover the astronauts and capsule during future Artemis missions.

MH-60S Sea Hawk helicopters from Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 23 will provide imagery support for NASA by tracking the Orion space capsule as it travels through Earth's atmosphere. After splashdown, HSC-23 helicopters will recover the astronauts once they exit the capsule and bring them to the ship for assessment and then transport them to shore.

Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group 1 will provide Navy divers to recover and transport the Orion space capsule from the ocean to the ship's well deck. Navy divers are experts in mobile diving, salvage, towing, and open water, small boat operations. In addition to the Navy divers, EODGRU-1 will support the recovery mission with a dive medical team to assess and assist the astronauts following their exit from the capsule.

Artemis II is NASA's first crewed mission in a series of missions around and to the lunar surface where crew can build and test systems needed to prepare for the challenge of future missions to Mars. The mission launched from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida, April 1, with four astronauts onboard.

U.S. Navy recovers NASA astronauts, Orion space capsule after historic Artemis II moon mission

From Lt. Cmdr. Kristina Johnson

21 April 2026


SAN DIEGO, CA - The U.S. Navy, in partnership with NASA and U.S. Space Command, recovered the Orion space capsule and its four-person crew from the Pacific Ocean, April 10, marking the conclusion of the historic Artemis II mission.

Amphibious transport dock USS John P. Murtha (LPD 26), assigned to Expeditionary Strike Group 3, served as the primary recovery ship for the astronauts and spacecraft, executing a complex maritime operation that spanned from atmospheric reentry to securing the capsule in the ship's well deck.

"I could not be more proud of the skill and professionalism the crew demonstrated," said Capt. Erik Kenny, commanding officer of John P. Murtha. "Our team executed this complex recovery with pride, showcasing the unique capabilities of our naval forces. Being able to play a vital role in this operation is a testament to the strength of our team."

NASA launched Artemis II from Kennedy Space Center, Florida, April 1. The mission served as a critical flight test for future crewed missions to the lunar surface and is part of NASA's broader effort to prepare for eventual human missions to Mars.

For the Navy, the mission also represented a homecoming for its own. The crew included mission commander retired U.S. Navy Capt. Reid Wiseman and pilot U.S. Navy Capt. Victor Glover, both former Navy test pilots and Naval Postgraduate School alumni, alongside NASA astronaut Christina Koch and Canadian Space Agency astronaut Jeremy Hansen.



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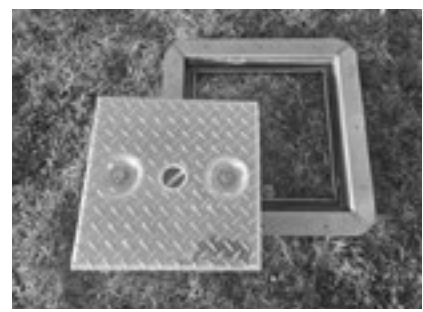
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U. S. NAVY NEWS

The night before splashdown, NASA Chief of Astronauts and retired U.S. Navy Capt. Scott Tingle addressed the recovery team to discuss the gravity of the operation.

“They say we stand on the shoulders of giants,” Tingle said. “Tomorrow, the crew of John P. Murtha becomes giants. You will set the standard for how we are going to operate our human space flight program for the next fifty years.”

Tingle also highlighted the scale and significance of the recovery effort.

“We will recover Orion, the biggest capsule we have ever put in space, launched on the most powerful rocket we have ever flown astronauts on,” Tingle said. “It traveled nearly half a million miles, reached speeds approaching 40,000 miles per hour, and will end its journey right here aboard USS John P. Murtha. It is an absolutely incredible, historic event.”

The operational phase of the recovery began in the evening of April 10, as Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 23 provided critical imagery support, tracking the Orion capsule through the atmosphere until it splashed down at 5:07 p.m.

Immediately following splashdown, dive medical personnel from Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group (EODGRU) 1 made initial contact with the “Integrity” capsule and crew to conduct medical assessments.

Once the astronauts were cleared for transport, they were hoisted into MH-60S Sea Hawk helicopters with HSC-23 and flown to John P. Murtha for further evaluation. Simultaneously, Navy divers, experts in mobile diving, salvage, towing, and open-water small boat operations, rigged the Orion space capsule for recovery from the ocean to the ship’s well deck.

Rear Adm. Brent DeVore, commander, Expeditionary Strike Group 3, said the recovery reflected the team’s extensive preparation and operational readiness.

“This recovery was a direct result of


hours of training and the exceptional dedication of this team of teams,” DeVore said. “Our Sailors are trained to be ready for any mission, and they executed this historic task with the precision and professionalism that defines our naval service.”

As the Department of War’s human space flight support manager, U.S. Space Command is responsible for the terrestrial rescue and recovery of NASA-sponsored astronauts and spacecraft for the Artemis program.

Working in support of U.S. Space Command, additional Navy units included Fleet Surgical Team 1; Fleet Surgical Team 9; En-Route Care System teams from Naval Medicine Readiness and Training Command (NMRTC) San Diego, Twentynine Palms, and Guam; and an Expeditionary Resuscitative Surgical System team from NMRTC Camp Pendleton, which provided critical expeditionary medicine expertise and advanced capabilities to respond, treat, and save lives. Naval Health Research Center also provided 24-hour access to specialized facilities and highly trained personnel for the analysis of biological material and technical support.

Supporting joint partners included U.S. Air Force First Air Force, Detachment 3; and U.S. Space Force’s 45th Weather Squadron.

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The Future of Our Fishery

By Sheila Dassatt

Some of us have been introduced to a new legislation that introduces Legislation to “Strengthen American Fisheries.” The reason I’m saying “some” is because a lot have seen it on social media posts and have asked for more information about what it is all about. I don’t totally have all of the answers either, but I will do my best.

This bill was introduced by U.S. Senators, Angus King I-ME and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) to strengthen the American seafood industry. The legislation is called The American Seafood Competitiveness Act. This would expand access to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Loan and grant programs for commercial fishermen. This would also expand Farm Credit eligibility to businesses providing services to fishermen and fish processors. The American Seafood Competitiveness Act would: (taken from a monthly newsletter), 1) Amend the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act to include commercial fishing and fish processing as eligible agricultural activities under USDA programs. 2) Include wild caught fish and shellfish as eligible agricultural products under USDA’s Local Agricultural Market Program and allow USDA to waive or reduce matching fund requirements lowering barriers for small rural operators. 3) Update USDA regulations to ensure seafood processors can access financing to acquire or upgrade processing facilities and address significant operating costs. 4) Expand eligibility for USDA farm ownership and operating loans to allow fishermen to

purchase permits, acquire vessels, make capital improvements, and cover operating and maintenance costs. 5) Broaden Farm Credit eligibility to businesses that support fishermen and fish processors providing access to lending from Farm Credit institutions similar to that available to farm related businesses. 6) Create additional financing options for coastal communities that rely on the seafood economy, in the same manner as those supported by traditional agriculture. This Act would recognize the seafood industry’s role as “farmers of the sea” by ensuring that they have the same opportunities as traditional farmers. Last year, Sen. King led the Fishing Industry Credit Enhancement Act (FICA) which would allow businesses that provide direct assistance to fishing operations.

In a nutshell, these are the basic facts that go with this legislation. Now I’m not trying to be negative, but I so carry an “air of caution” with this piece of work. How many of us knew ahead of time that this was a plan in the making? I wasn’t aware of it until it was just about a done deal.

Recently, I watched a documentary about Margaret Holcomb, who was a young woman whose father passed away unexpectedly and left her with a farm in Kansas. She worked the farm all of her life, as her father raised her after her mother died when she was young. Margaret went to the tractor dealership there and they basically laughed her out of there. She was determined to work the farm herself and ended up buying two Farmall tractors at an auction with what

money that she had. It was hard work for her, but she worked the farm with those old tractors.

I will try to put this story in a nutshell. She saved what money she made and all of the equipment was owned by her. She knew how to repair the tractors if they needed work and was able to keep them going. A lot of the neighboring farmers had top of the line equipment as well as the best of everything for their farms. Of course, most of their equipment was from Farm loans and low interest funds sponsored by the USDA.

When the wheat business took a big fall in the 70s and 80s, the farmers could not pay their loan bills and eventually lost their farms and had to let them go to auction. Margaret was able to attend the auctions and purchase their lost land to add to her farm. With that being said, they could not pay their equipment loans as well. This put the tractor dealership out of business because they ended up re-possessing their tractors and equipment. This all came from these loans and lower interest funds. Margaret stayed with the farming, because financially, she was able to add these repossessed lots to her farm-stead. The owner of the tractor dealership actually came to her and apologized for the way that he laughed and treated

her. There is a moral to this story and I hope that you can read between the lines. Check it out with the farmers, nothing is done for free. There will be fees and control that will come along with this. What is going to happen to our marketing collaborative? They offer marketing assistance or emergency loans that offer insurance related to fishing, such as gear manufacturers or bait suppliers and gain access to the Farm Credit System.

The USDA will have control of our product much like the farmers. If they reject any of the product, they can call it dead loss. They did this with Mike when he was driving cattle to a processor. They deemed one of the cows weak, shot it and who knows what they did with the cow? The farmer was out \$3,000 and never did receive it. It was just one example of what can happen when you give up some of the control of your product.

Now this may be a good thing for the fishermen, but ask questions, this is what I plan to do. I’m not a spring chicken any more, so I have a tendency to be cautious when things sound too good to be true. Also, our best interest is with our own industry, we want to be sure that we don’t get caught in financial situations that leave it over our heads. “Nothing is for free!”

Maine Dept. of Marine Resources

Body of Steuben Man Recovered from Dyer Bay

April 22, 2026

STEUBEN - The body of Thomas West, 63 of Steuben has been recovered from the waters of Dyer Bay near his 35-foot lobster boat, Aces and Eights, which was moored close to the wharf at the end of Merritt Road in Steuben. Mr. West’s body was discovered in the water this morning at 6am by family members. Marine Patrol was notified at 9pm last night by the Maine Department of Public Safety’s Regional Communications Center that Mr. West was missing after local fishermen reported that his boat was running with no one aboard. Marine Patrol launched a search last night using a remotely operated vehicle in the water near Mr. West’s boat. Marine Patrol suspended the search at 2:30am due to low visibility and planned to resume efforts this morning but was notified that his body had been discovered and transferred to a relative’s fishing vessel. His body will be transported to the Office of Chief Medical Examiner in Augusta for an examination.

Guidance from the Maine Department of Labor: Youth Working Lobster Boats as Independent Contractors in Maine

May 1, 2026

The following guidance is provided on behalf of the Maine Department of Labor.

What Youth and Families Need to Know

The Maine Department of Labor provides this guidance in relation to state enforcement of child labor laws. Contact the US Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division for questions about federal enforcement of child labor laws.

State labor standards, including child labor laws and restrictions, apply to employees. They do not apply to independent contractors. Child labor laws are based on the State’s interest in protecting children and youth from employment situations that may place them in harm’s way for the financial benefit of others. This means it is important to know how a minor is working in the lobster industry first, so you know what labor standards and protections, if any, apply.

These examples are provided to help you think about whether a young person is working as an employee or an independent

contractor.

Example 1: Simon is 9 years old and has a student license from the Department of Marine Resources (DMR). Simon fishes his own traps from a skiff. Simon’s dad goes out with him to make sure he’s safe, but Simon does all the work. He keeps all the money he makes when he sells his catch. Simon is an independent contractor who works for himself.

Example 2: Louise is 15 years old and fishes with her uncle as the Sternman. She has fished with him for several years. Louise bands lobsters and baits pockets but doesn’t run the hauler or drive the boat. She is paid a percentage of the boat’s daily catch value. Louise is an independent contractor, whether or not she has a student license from DMR.

Example 3: Henry is 17 years old. He does not have a student license. He works as a third man on a neighbor’s boat. He has worked for other captains and has a reputation for being a solid hand. Henry is paid a flat day rate, not an hourly rate. Henry is an independent contractor.

If the location and type of work look like one of these examples, then the minor working in the lobster fishery will most likely be considered an independent contractor. HOWEVER, each situation is different.

The Maine Department of Labor looks at the facts of each case when there is a complaint or report of a child labor violation. Below is more information about the criteria for an independent contractor.

Who is an INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR under Maine law? Under Maine law (26 MRS §1043(11)), an independent contractor must exhibit ALL these characteristics: Have the right to control the means and progress of the work, except as to the final results; A crewman is responsible for banding lobsters but can decide whether to do it after each string or every few strings. Be customarily engaged in an independently established trade, occupation, profession or business; A crewman has a student or apprentice license from DMR, has a history of working on lobster boats, or has other experience in the fishery. Have the opportunity for profit and loss as a result of the services performed; A crewman is paid based on a

Continued on Page 27

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Commercial Fishing News

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF D.E.L.A.

From the Director –

To start this report, I was looking over my report from last month and noticed that we are now in May and the weather hasn't changed much. It is still fairly cold with lots of rainy, cloudy days. I'm not trying to give you a weather forecast, but this makes a big difference with getting our gear and boats ready for this new season, especially if you need to paint a wooden boat. We need to paint the bottom and topside of our boat too and this makes it very difficult.

A lot has been going on since last month if you've been following the fishing industry. We have had our series of Zone meetings with suggestions for the next ASMFC meeting that is coming up. Marianne Lacroix of the Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative was there to announce that they have been approved for two more years and are also have openings for new Board members. We had a couple of guys offer to serve from Zone C.

The Zone meetings also gave an update on the lobster stock assessment over the past few years. Our stock is healthy and up in poundage but there were fewer landings mostly due to wind and weather. There was discussion about protecting the females, notching and shell disease. The science topic of the meetings was very good and informative. There were good suggestions for protecting our lobster stock for future reference.

We saw the notes from the last advisory meeting that was held in January. The Council voted to have a meeting to proactively discuss conservation options. This meeting was held in February. The discussion was to make suggestions in leu of a gauge increase. Some of the suggestions had to do with the impact of the sizes and placement of the vents. Another suggestion was to do with the cost of investing in hatcheries and potential

benefit to the resource.

Buy back of females, v-notch and release, biological impact of culls and overall handling practices. The LAC Members are not advocating for a gauge change. With all of these suggestions being said and publicized, if you have suggestions, please send them into your Zone, DMR or your association if you belong to one. These suggestions are all very important.

DELA is happy to announce a new member! Welcome to Paul Boncek of Wells, Maine! I am so pleased that Paul has been in touch with me and proudly supports our fishing industry. We always welcome new members to our association, especially with the support that we have been receiving to maintain our way of life and heritage concerning what Billy Bob Faulkingham went through with the Maine Labor Department. There has been an outpouring in support of teaching our young ones how to learn first-hand how to fish on the boat with family teaching them. Safety is also a big factor on the boat. Everyone that goes fishing should really have safety knowledge and safety gear.

DELA would also like to report that Virginia Phillips of Wolfeboro NH sent in funds in memory of Doug Phillips.

When it comes to safety, we offer our condolences to the family of Thomas West of Steuben. His body was recovered near his boat, Aces and Eights which was still running at the time. With the beginning of the summer residents arriving, Jeffrey B. Eaton of New Mexico was recovered from the waters new Little Deer Isle, deceased from an overturned kayak. Now they are looking for a missing person on a paddle board. I can't stress enough how dangerous it is in these cold waters of the Maine Coast. I saw that they were having an informative class for kayakers that are coming here

as summer visitors. This class is to teach safety and help them to get along with the commercial vessels in Stonington. In all honesty, I understand that it is beautiful in the area and the islands are a great place to explore, but when the commercial fishing boats come in from haul, they are in a hurry to get to the dock to sell their catch of the day. It seems to be when these kayakers are out in the middle of the thoroughfare. I am not trying to complain, maybe I am, but it is highly dangerous to be out there and get in the way. The coast of Maine is truly beautiful, but even the locals were taught to have great respect for the ocean. A squall can come up without any notice, the winds change and can swamp a vessel like a kayak in a heartbeat. There really should be more lessons on how to manage the sea, especially when you are not a native here. Please take heed and stay safe!

We have had a lot of changes going on since the Legislature was in session, during and after. There has been changes

with the President extending the time line for the whale rules, as well as the USDA (Department of Agriculture) changing their rules to allow the fishermen to be "farmers of the sea." This entails a lot of Federal involvement, which you can draw your own conclusions of how you feel about that. I will explain a little more about this in my article if I can, (factually). There are a lot of variables that we want to consider with these changes. Always remember, we are all working for what is best for our fishing industry and families. We won't always agree with one another, but regardless, there is a lot of "food for thought here."

Trust me, we will our best for our industry.

See you at the dock, Sheila



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Commercial Fishing News

MISCELLANEOUS COMMERCIAL FISHING NEWS

Scientists and the Fishing Industry Join Forces for Better Data and Management (Part 1)

NOAA Fisheries' Cooperative Research programs build partnerships between scientists and fishermen to collect data that improves fisheries management.

April 06, 2026

While the Northeast Fisheries Science Center spent more than 300 days-at-sea monitoring and sampling from ships last year, no one spends more time out on the water than fishermen. Fishermen are in tune with the seasons and fish stocks, and contribute significantly to the economy and food supply. That's why we have a dedicated research team focused on working closely with the fishing community. Together, we collect and analyze data that helps answer big questions about fisheries and ocean ecosystems.

We bring the fishing community and scientists together to answer shared questions and improve management of Northeast fisheries. Cooperative research can take many forms, from outfitting fishing gear with oceanographic sensors to partnering with fishing vessels to design and execute fisheries surveys.

"We rely on the expertise of captains and crew in our region to get a more complete picture of fisheries and marine ecosystems," explained Cooperative Research Branch Chief Anna Mercer. "Many cooperative research projects start with fishermen sharing their observations and concerns. We work with industry members to develop research projects that address scientific uncertainties and harness the knowledge and expertise of the fleet."

Cooperative research provides opportunities for fishermen to document what they are seeing on the water with data that is useful to them and the scientific community. Working together allows us to better understand the ocean and the fish stocks that fishermen rely upon for their daily catch. It also builds lasting relationships and trust between the scientific and fishing communities. In many cases, the data fishermen collect are used to make stock assessments more accurate, improving fisheries management practices. NOAA Fisheries promotes science-based fisheries management, ensuring both the industry's economic viability and the long-term health of marine ecosystems.

You may have heard about our Coopera-

tive Gulf of Maine Bottom Longline Survey. It has been collecting data on species that prefer rocky habitats in partnership with two commercial fishing vessels since 2014. Our Study Fleet has been going strong since 2006. It includes nearly 50 commercial fishing vessels whose captain and crew collect detailed data on fishing effort and catch. Fisheries stock assessments rely on data from both the Bottom Longline Survey and the Study Fleet.

Our science center has many other cooperative projects actively engaging with the fishing community, supporting stock assessments, oceanographic models and forecasts, and enhanced understanding of fisheries species.

Fishermen Are Powering Better Ocean Forecasts

While satellites and oceanographic buoys collect data on sea surface temperatures, getting real-time bottom temperatures is more challenging. Many of our region's fisheries species use the ocean floor as habitat, including lobster, sea scallops, and Atlantic cod. Our Environmental Monitors on Lobster Traps and Large Trawlers program, or eMOLT, outfits fishing vessels from Maine to North Carolina with sensors and computers. They collect and transmit bottom-water temperatures when they deploy fishing gear including traps and trawls. Last year, about 145 fishing boats collected data through eMOLT.

Bottom temperature data collected by fishermen is used in 72-hour ocean forecast models. These can help fishermen make decisions about where to fish or how often to check their lobster or crab traps. It also supports forecasts the U.S. Coast Guard uses to plan Search and Rescue Operations and flood inundation predictions through the Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic Regional Associations of Coastal Ocean Observing Systems.

The eMOLT program also deploys dissolved oxygen sensors on lobster boats to monitor low oxygen conditions that can develop in the summer. Low oxygen conditions can affect fisheries. For example, lobsters will either move to avoid them or die if they are stuck in traps. Last year, the program deployed 70 sensors in New Jersey, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Maine. We used this data to create a data product showing how many days of low oxygen were detected around the region last year.

This shows where additional monitoring may be warranted. The data product will be presented to the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils as part of the annual State of the Ecosystem Report.

"When I heard about eMOLT, I chimed right in and wanted to be involved. We put in 180 days a year at sea and I figured our input would help," explained Chris King of the F/V Donna Marie, based in Provincetown, Massachusetts. "We can find out where species will be, or where they won't be."

eMOLT began as a collaboration between the Gulf of Maine Lobster Foundation, several lobster fishing associations, and the Northeast Fisheries Science Center. In recent years, the program has engaged with other fishing associations, non-profits, and academic institutions around the region. We have expanded coverage across different fisheries and geographic areas.

Making the data fishermen collect available to both the science and fishing communities in near real-time is a top priority. In collaboration with the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation, we recently developed FishBOT. It combines environmental information collected by eMOLT participants with information collected by NOAA surveys and research programs at institutions including Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and Rutgers University. FishBOT provides a more cohesive look at subsurface environmental conditions in our region. Our team is always working to update the data visualizations available to eMOLT captains in the wheelhouses of their vessels.

"We are always interested in feedback from the fishing industry. We make changes to the software to make it more user-friendly and useful to fishermen. For example, we added a summary from the haul when the data downloads so the captain can add it to their logbook," explained eMOLT Coordinator George Maynard. "That way the fisherman is the first to see the data."

Uncovering the Secrets of Shortfin Squid with the Squid Squad

Northern shortfin squid support an important but highly variable commercial fishery in the Mid-Atlantic region. Between 2012 and 2022, its annual value ranged from \$1.1 million to \$27.3 million. Despite the importance of the fishery, much of these squid's lives remain a mystery, including population size. Individual squid live less than 1 year, making the population highly dynamic. Squid migrate on and off the continental shelf based on changing oceanographic conditions, but their migration patterns do not overlap with our fisheries surveys.

To answer key questions about the life history and oceanographic drivers of squid, we formed the "Squid Squad." It's a collaborative team of industry partners and federal and academic researchers, including oceanographers, fisheries biologists and statisticians. In 2022, members of the Squid Squad embarked on a multi-year field sampling research effort. They wanted to simultaneously collect oceanographic and biological data in partnership with a commercial shortfin squid fishing vessel.

This project collects data to: Understand how squid movement and biology are related to oceanographic conditions; Document the size, reproductive maturity, and age of squid that migrate onto the U.S. continental shelf at the start of the fishing season; and Develop protocols for deploying oceanographic instruments from commercial fishing vessels to collect high-quality oceanographic data.

We are building upon ongoing squid research to expand and test novel data col-

lection methods. This project will advance our current understanding of oceanographic drivers of northern shortfin squid populations.

Scientists and the Fishing Industry Join Forces for Better Data and Management (Part 2)

NOAA Fisheries' Cooperative Research programs build partnerships between scientists and fishermen to collect data that improves fisheries management.

April 15, 2026

Our cooperative research team works with industry partners across New England and the Mid-Atlantic to collect fish and invertebrate samples to better understand age, growth, reproduction, and bioenergetics. These samples fill data gaps during times of year and areas without surveys or other ways of collecting fish samples.

For example, we have collected herring samples to evaluate skipped spawning events. We have also collected haddock samples to study reproductive dynamics in the Gulf of Maine, where extreme fluctuations occur. We recently collected critical data from weekly samples of longfin squid to advance the understanding of longfin squid life history. This will provide data to support the 2026 longfin research track stock assessment. Since the program began in 2009, we have collected samples from more than 35 species from over 70 fishing vessels.

"I've been a fisherman for a long time, but doing cooperative research has been great for learning even more about the biology of squid," shared commercial fisherman and industry partner Mark Philips. "It's a breath of fresh air to work with the staff. Their excitement for science motivates me to continue to collaborate and it's clear they have our back."

Fishermen in the groundfish industry harvest species including Atlantic cod, haddock, pollock and flounder. Commercial fishery quotas and recorded catch are typically based on total fish weight. However, scientists need to know the number of individual fish caught for accurate stock assessments. To bridge this gap, they translate catch weights into fish numbers using length-weight relationships and whole to gutted weight conversion factors.

The length-weight relationship—a mathematical model to predict a fish's weight based on its length—is an important tool in fisheries science. Converting length to weight can be tricky for species like Atlantic cod because they are typically gutted at sea. We need to convert the fish's gutted weight back to whole, or live, weight. We do this conversion by applying a "conversion factor," which represents the ratio of the gutted weight to the whole weight.

Our cooperative research team launched the project to update conversion factors for cod, haddock and pollock, and the length/weight calculations for those species as well as five species of flounder. We are working with the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries and the commercial groundfish industry, including fish dealers and fishermen from: Gloucester, Massachusetts; Boston, Massachusetts; New Bedford, Massachusetts; and Point Judith, Rhode Island.

The project has already made great strides. We have sampled more than 2,462 fish at sea for conversion factor data from nine vessels and more than 6,044 fish sampled portside for length-weight data from 10 fish dealers. Our scientists sail on commercial fishing trips and sample at fish houses. They measure individual fish lengths and weights, and collect otoliths—fish ear bones—which they use to determine a fish's age. We share quarterly progress reports



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Commercial Fishing News

MISCELLANEOUS COMMERCIAL FISHING NEWS

with our fishing industry partners, providing preliminary results and integrating their feedback into the project.

Partnering to Size Up Golden Tilefish for Stock Assessment

Adult Golden tilefish live in burrows and are not often caught during our fisheries surveys. We also infrequently encounter them during portside sampling. Because of this, the tilefish stock in the Mid-Atlantic is a data-poor fishery. For accurate stock assessments, we need to measure the lengths of more tilefish. That's why our cooperative research team is partnering with a fishing vessel that catches golden tilefish for a pilot project to estimate tilefish lengths using video recording.

We are working with the F/V Seacapture and TeemFish to collect video data of tilefish on measuring boards. A member of our cooperative research team reviews the footage and estimates tilefish lengths. We have generated more than 7,000 length estimates so far. We will continue this pilot project for another year to build a robust dataset to compare with port sampling and data collected by fisheries observers. Our scientists will present the results to the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

Laurie Nolan, owner of the Seacapture, shared, "It has been a pleasure working with the Cooperative Research team. We hope to produce needed length data that can be used in the stock assessment process for golden

tilefish."

Recreational Catch Data Powers Cod and Winter Flounder Stock Assessments

We recently teamed up with New England's recreational fishermen and other partners to collect missing data on Atlantic cod and winter flounder. More complete data will help these important fish populations recover and keep fishermen fishing.

In light of recent advancements in our understanding of Atlantic cod populations, stock assessment scientists needed more biological data from the recreational fishing fleet. We teamed up with members of New England's recreational for-hire fleet, the New England Aquarium, Pelagic Strategies, and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission to fill those data gaps.

During the first year, 12 participating charter boat captains measured the lengths and cited the precise location and date/time caught for more than 3,000 fish. They also collected fin clips for genetic sampling and otoliths to determine the age of more than 300 cod. This data will fill critical gaps, informing more effective management for both cod and winter flounder.

Building Lasting Relationships Between Fishermen and Scientists

We are committed to building new partnerships between the wider science and fishing communities and we developed the Northeast Cooperative Research Summit to do just that. This annual event, which

rotates between New England and the Mid-Atlantic, provides an opportunity to learn about ongoing cooperative research, define research priorities, and connect with fishermen and scientists.

"The summit does a really great job of creating a forum where everyone feels on equal ground. As an early career scientist it is awesome to be able to just strike up a conversation with a fisherman. I learn so much just from talking with them, and it means a lot to learn their names and see their faces and hear about their experiences." — Northeast Cooperative Research Summit Participant.

Our cooperative research team is available to help make connections and turn fishermen's ideas into research. If you are a fisherman interested in conducting

collaborative research to improve the science and management of New England and Mid-Atlantic fisheries, contact Cooperative Research Branch Chief Anna Mercer. If you are a scientist looking for a research partner in the fishing community, we can connect you to vessels participating in the fisheries or areas that your research focuses on. The relationships built through cooperative research are critical to expanding knowledge of fisheries and marine ecosystems, and improving fisheries management.

Western Atlantic Provides Refuge for Bluefin Tuna

A 30-year study shows that conservation

Continued on Page 26

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Boat And Ship Yard News



A Fay & Bowen launch from 1906 being rebuilt at Hylan & Brown in Brooklin. They have replaced frames and part of her keel and added an electric pod.



This is an Elco cruiser which has been under a rebuilding program for a number of years at Hylan & Brown in Brooklin. She is in the final stages, but probably needs another winter.

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Hylan & Brown Brooklin, ME

One never knows what they will find in any of the boat shops up and down the Maine Coast. When I walked into the main shop, there to the left was a 1906 Fay & Bowen torpedo stern launch. This company was started by Walter Fay and Earnest Bowen in Geneva, New York as the Fay & Bowen Engine Co. in 1904. Over the next 25 years they built approximately 900 boats before the stock market crash of 1929 forced them to close their doors. This one was found in upstate New York and was mostly original. The big problem was that someone was recutting all the seams with a skill saw but had set the saw depth too deep and cut halfway into every frame. So, every frame needed to be replaced and riveted. While working on the frames they also discovered that they needed to replace a portion of her keel before they could add an electric pod drive. With this drive system they needed to stiffen the area around it. This boat will be used as a harbor launch in Buck's Harbor and that means they will also be adding additional seating.

I am coming away with more questions about the development of the torpedo stern as to where did it originate? When they were working on the stern framing, they thought

that they would find a chine log. Instead, they found a bunch of steam bent frames with a very hard turn and all were broken. Ellery Brown added "These guys basically did the same model with two different sterns. They had sort of a fantail and then they had the torpedo. I don't know how many of each they did and I also don't know how many of these there are around, but there are a few."

Then behind the Fay & Bowen launch is the wooden 50-foot Elco cabin cruiser PATIENCE, which is in for a total restoration. This restoration began at Paul Rollin's shop in York years ago and then came here to be finished. This has been a multi-year process. The last time she was in the shop she received new fore and main decks, which was several years ago. She was brought in again this year, and they worked on her interior. They put in the ceiling, bulkheads, forward cabin and fo'c's'le. They also got work done on the trunk cabin and main pilothouse. With time running out they feel like one more winter might be enough to complete the project. Ellery said, "The last one will be mostly just engine and interior work. She is starting to look like the whole package. The pilothouse was traditional raised panel mahogany, but we did it nontraditional, plywood cored with Sepo 1/4 to 3/8-inch veneer. It will look 100 percent traditional, but it was all vacuum bagged, so it is going to be much more stable and maintainable than floating raised panel

construction."

One concern is that before she comes in for the last phase they think they want to put her in the water and get her to swell up since she has been out of water for a long time.

Another interesting aspect of this boat is that there were several different versions of this 50-foot model. However, the owners have done a lot of research and know this one was from 1926 because the wind screen was vertical and the pilothouse was almost out to the gunnels. Ellery thought that there were at least five or six of this size Elcos still in existence and all well-maintained.

In the shop off to the side is the William Hand designed WOMBAT, which is cold-moulded and was built in South Freeport in the 1990s. This boat was originally fitted with an inboard gasoline engine, but several years ago it was switched over to electric power. This motor was not performing as the owner wanted, and they are switching her over to a new E-Propulsion 40 kW motor. The previous motor was under the cockpit sole, and the new motor will be further forward, meaning new motor beds and shaft. The two lithium batteries are rather large, each weighing 400 pounds, and these will be fitted under the side seats. Ellery added, "This owner is very knowledgeable. He actually started the conversation with us about converting it to an outboard and wanted to put a motor well in the back. We started



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Boat And Ship Yard News



This is the new facility being erected by Lyman-Morse in Rockland. This is right next to the fabrication shop.



The PORTLAND PILOT boat in for annual maintenance and to the right is the Lowell built lobster boat TAM O'SHANTER from South Freeport, also in for annual maintenance at Royal River Boat Yard in Yarmouth.

talking about what don't you like about her electric system? We told him, 'I think if you stuck with electric, we could do a lot better than what you have.' He ended up going for that. His wasn't that old and E-tech is a viable motor, but it has been kind of messed with. He also had some sketchy lithium-ion batteries in it. All this is from E-Propulsion is absolutely the latest."

Next to WOMBAT is a Glen-L designed runabout. The owner was interested in a new electric runabout but did not like the quote they gave him. The owner then asked if there was anything they could adapt to what he was looking for, and they found this boat with a big gasoline engine. Due to the amount of weight previously they needed to distribute the weight since she is getting an electric outboard mounted on a bracket with one battery under the foredeck and the other in the stern. Once completed she will be heading to her owner in Minnesota.

Ellery also said that he had just come back from an electric boat demonstration at the Fishermen's Co-op in Spruce Head.

The Island Institute had set them up with an electric workboat. Fogg Boatworks of North Yarmouth had built a flat-bottom aluminum workboat, powered with an E-Propulsion outboard, for carrying crates around the harbor. For the demonstration they towed a string of crates, and due to an electric motor's torque, they had no problem. Since the boat is not in constant use it could be plugged in when tied to the dock. They did feel that they could work the boat three to four hours before she needed to be charged.

Lyman-Morse Thomaston, ME

Lyman-Morse has begun construction of a new 15,000-square-foot facility to support large-scale composite fabrication and assembly, marking a significant expansion of the company's manufacturing facilities in Thomaston, Maine. The new building will be the third facility on the campus and will hold the company's Advanced Composites

Continued on Page 18

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Boat And Ship Yard News



This is a Portland Pudgy, which is 7 feet 6-inches in length and can be rowed, sailed or powered with an outboard. They are built in Biddeford.



This is a 21-foot Striper, under construction at Riverside Boat in Newcastle. She is halfway planked, but she is on hold while yard workers get the storage boats ready for the water.

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Center. It joins the Lyman-Morse Workboats division, and Lyman-Morse Technologies building, which houses the company's CNC and metal additive department.

Together, these three facilities position Lyman-Morse as a fully integrated advanced manufacturing partner capable of delivering across multiple materials and disciplines. This combination allows Lyman-Morse to support a wide range of applications, from marine systems and vessels to industrial components and specialized engineered solutions.

With the addition of the Advanced Composites Center, Lyman-Morse continues to broaden its capabilities across: Rapid Prototyping; Composite fabrication and structural components; Metal additive manufacturing - 3D printing SS316L; and Custom-engineered systems and assemblies.

Purpose-built to support the company's advanced composites capabilities, the new

clear-span building includes a radiant-floor heat system to provide consistent climate control for construction projects and teams. Integrated compressed air lines, vacuum pumps, and IT infrastructure support the modern tools and equipment used in composite manufacturing, and two 5-ton overhead cranes will enable efficient movement of large structures throughout the building. A planned renewable energy system will enhance Lyman-Morse's commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility. The interior layout is engineered for flexibility, allowing teams to manage complex manufacturing projects while maintaining precision and efficiency across all stages of production. The new building represents a major step forward in Lyman-Morse's scale, efficiency, and technical capacity as demand increases across the marine, industrial, defense, and specialized fabrication sectors.

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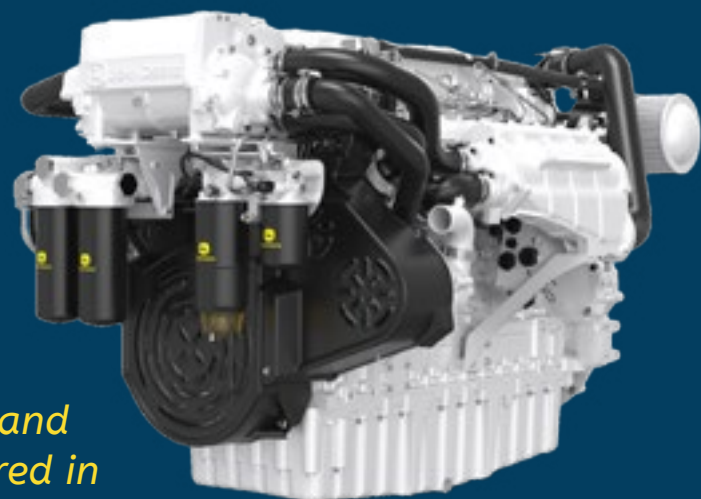
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Boat And Ship Yard News



This is Southern Maine Marine in Biddeford, which was sold last summer to Kennebunkport Marina. Note the new shop and out frame they are doing site work for a 30,000 square foot storage building.

team the space and infrastructure they need to execute at the highest level,” said Samir Gupta, manager of Lyman-Morse’s Advanced Manufacturing division. “This new building allows us to take on larger, more complex projects with greater efficiency.”

The project is supported by an award from the Maine Technology Institute’s Maine Technology Asset Fund (MTAF3.0), a state program that aims to boost economic activity and grow the state’s innovation economy. When completed in summer 2026, the ITAR-compliant Lyman-Morse Advanced Composites Center will join Lyman-Morse’s two other specialized manufacturing facilities on Elltee Circle and create a fully integrated, world-class hub for innovation in advanced manufacturing, metal and composite fabrication, and technology development.

The two other Lyman-Morse facilities on Elltee Circle that comprise the Advanced Manufacturing Campus include:

Lyman-Morse Technologies

Precision CNC machining operations, utilizing 3- and 5-axis machines; EOS M290 metal additive manufacturing system; Workforce training and development; ITAR compliant and ISO9001:2015 certified.

Lyman-Morse Workboats

Construction of aluminum workboats, landing crafts, and emergency response vessels; Specialized production of commercial and government vessels; Aluminum, Stainless and Carbon Steel fabrication with full finish coatings; Standards: ABYC, ASME IX, AWS, ABS, AISC, NAVSEA, DEP; In-house AWS certified welding inspectors (CWI) and certified welding educator (CWE); AWS D1.2 certified team of welders in marine specific alloys – 5086/83, 6061, 5052; and ISO9001:2015 certified.

By bringing together composites, metals, and additive manufacturing within a single campus, the Lyman-Morse Advanced Manufacturing Center is positioned to support increasingly complex projects while maintaining the craftsmanship and problem-solving approach that has defined the company for nearly half a century. The expansion reflects Lyman-Morse’s ongoing

investment in advanced manufacturing infrastructure, workforce development, and domestic production capabilities.

“This project is about building capability for the long-term,” said Drew Lyman, president of Lyman-Morse. “We’re creating a facility that not only supports our current work but positions us for the next generation of manufacturing challenges.”

Padebco Custom Boats Round Pond

They have been busy this winter with their usual storage boats being moved in and out of the work bays in the main workshop. One of the big projects is on a Padebco 27, which is in for a second year. She was powered with twin 150-hp outboards. These have been removed and they enclosed the transom so they could add a full-width seat. They also added some stern facing seats. They have removed the soft top and will be replacing that with a hardtop, which is almost completed. The outboards will be replaced with twin 200 outboards on a bracket, and these will be controlled with an Optimus 360 joystick with electric power-steering. Leon McCorkle added that he was heading to Florida to get a refresher course in their installation. This project will likely be done early summer.

They also have been building a new Padebco 23 centre console, which should be completed in June for a customer from Biddeford Pool. She will be powered with a 150-hp Yamaha outboard.

Their boat brokerage sold a couple of boats this winter. One was a 20-foot Grady

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ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION SPRING MEETING NEWS

Continued from Page 1

By weight, landings initially decreased in the years when the gauge size increased and then stabilized at a greater landings weight. Upon full implementation of the simulated management measures, landings stabilized at a ~4% decrease in the total number of lobsters landed, but an increase of 6% in landed weight because lobsters were landed at a larger size. The gauge changes resulted in a shift in the size composition of landings, with the primary shift being the replacement of many “chicks” (<1¼ lbs.) by “quarters” (1¼ - 1½ lbs.), and “halves” (1½ - 1¾ lbs.). The protection of smaller individuals through the increased gauge and vent size regulations also resulted in an increase in reference abundance and spawning stock biomass, and reduced exploitation rates. The Board acknowledged that as management measures are considered moving forward, there will also need to be an analysis of the economic and market impacts of those measures.

The TC also reported on a task from the Board to provide input on a proposal to modify the lobster fishery season closure in Lobster Conservation Management Area (LCMA) 5, which spans the southern part of New Jersey through Virginia. The proposal is to change the rules to allow traps to be set 15 days earlier (March 9 instead of 24) and to be re-hauled for harvesting black sea bass, require gear to be removed by January 15, and prohibit the retention of lobster from January 16 to March 15. The intent of the proposed change is to allow LCMA 5 lobster permit holders to target black sea bass earlier in the season by effectively shifting the closure earlier by two weeks. The TC noted that because the closure was implemented over a decade ago, recent landings data during the period of the proposed dates are not available to project changes in exploitation, but the TC believes the proposed change has the potential to marginally increase lobster exploitation because catchability in March is expected to be greater than in January. As an alternative approach to increase access to black sea bass, the TC suggested modifying the rules governing the setting and hauling of trap gear during the closure (e.g., allowing pots to be set and fished for black sea bass March 9 instead of March 24, as proposed) while maintaining the dates during which lobster harvest and possession is prohibited. This change would not be expected to increase lobster mortality. The states indicated they will convene a Lobster Conservation Management Team (LCMT) meeting for Area 5 to develop a conservational equivalency proposal for Board consideration. It was also noted that a federal rulemaking process would be required to change the closure rules in federal waters.

Maine and New Hampshire reported on recent meetings with stakeholders to identify potential management approaches for the Gulf of Maine. Maine is continuing to hold meetings with its Lobster Advisory Committee to discuss management measures and conservation efforts. New Hampshire recently presented the results of an industry survey on lobster management and fishermen’s perceptions.

The Board received an update from NOAA Fisheries on the status of the RFI to gather additional information on ropeless gear and visualization technology. NOAA Fisheries indicated that the RFI is currently under review. The RFI aims to better inform stakeholder input and Council decision-making regarding the development of the Joint New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils’ Alternative Gear Marking Framework Adjustment, which

will consider changes to surface-marking requirements that would allow the use of fixed gear without a persistent buoy line as a possible approach for reducing entanglement risk for large whales.

The Board also reviewed a list of potential management changes that had been recommended in previous discussions of the Board and with the Lobster Conservation Management Teams (LCMTs). The list of possible management changes included allowing harvesters in LCMA 2 (Southern New England) to maintain a maximum of 2 permits with 800 traps each for a total of 1600 traps, allow the transfer of traps between permits owned by a single entity without the conservation tax, maintain active trap limits and ownership caps for LCMA 3 (federal waters), and shifting the seasonal closure in LCMA 5. The Board will maintain this list as a living document so these changes can be considered when future actions are taken.

The Board also appointed Chris Townsend, a Massachusetts lobster trap fisherman, to the American Lobster AP. For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at cstarks@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move to approve the nominations to the Steering Committee on Lobster MSE.

Motion made by Mr. Wilson and seconded by Dr. McNamee. Motion carries by unanimous consent.

Move to approve the nomination of Chris Townsend from Massachusetts to the Lobster Advisory Panel to replace Eric Lorentzen.

Motion made by Mr. Glenn and seconded by Mr. Cimino. Motion carries by unanimous consent.

ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD

Meeting Summary

The Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board met to discuss guidance on biological reference points (BRPs) and spatial management for the 2027 benchmark stock assessment, as well as the composition, task details and timeline of the Board Work Group on future striped bass management; and receive updates on Maryland’s Addendum II implementation, and a timeline and process for feedback to NOAA on its Striped Bass Aquaculture Plan.

The Board provided guidance to the Atlantic Striped Bass Stock Assessment Committee (SAS) on the development of the upcoming assessment’s BRPs (i.e., targets and thresholds for spawning stock biomass and fishing mortality) that would address the Board’s current and future management objectives. The Board requested the SAS continue to explore both model-based reference points, such as MSY, SPR40% and SPR50%, as well as other options for empirical reference points including treating the 1995 spawning stock biomass (SSB) value as a target and using 75% of that value as a threshold. The Board requested the SAS investigate the relationship between SSB, recruitment, and environmental factors to further inform the thresholds and consider other metrics for stock health such as a wide age structure, total abundance, catch rates, and the spatial extent of the stock. The Board expressed continued interest in spatial reference points and recommended Delaware Bay be included in the Chesapeake Bay producer area region instead of being included in the ocean region.

The Board provided additional guidance for the Work Group (WG) on future striped bass management, established by the Board in October 2025. The WG is

intended to discuss management beyond 2029 considering the impact of recent low recruitment as those weak year-classes become the majority of the spawning stock biomass in the coming years. Staff presented several options for WG formation and possible timelines to address the WG tasks. The Board agreed with the staff recommendation to wait until after the assessment completion to address assessment-related tasks (BRPs, recruitment drivers, spawning areas, size-based management). After discussion of several approaches for the WG, the Board will establish a steering committee which will provide guidance on work group tasks and timelines. The steering committee will be comprised of 6 Board members (Board Chair plus 1 from each spawning area/region: Chesapeake Bay, Delaware Bay, New York Hudson River, Southern New England, Northern New England). The Board also expressed its desire to hold a management objectives workshop in 2027.

In February 2026, the Board approved state implementation plans for Addendum III to Amendment 7 on the measurement of total length and the Maryland Chesapeake Bay recreational season. Maryland’s implementation plan notified the Board of the state’s decision to move forward with implementing the new recreational season baseline and was working through its state process for implementation at the time. On March 31, Maryland announced the state 2026 recreational striped bass regulations, which are consistent with its implementation plan.

NOAA Fisheries developed a report on the science and environmental issues as well as legal and policy issues regarding striped bass aquaculture. This report was presented to the Board at its February 2026 meeting. NOAA is seeking feedback on its report from the Commission. Based on Board feedback that will be provided to staff over the summer, a draft letter will be presented to the Board for its review at the Commission’s August meeting.

Lastly, Nichola Meserve from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts was elected Vice-Chair. For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, Fisheries Policy Director, at tkerns@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move to use a steering committee process.

Motion made by Ms. Madsen and seconded by Mr. Sikorski. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

Move to elect Nichola Meserve as the Vice-Chair of the Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board.

Motion made by Ms. Ware and seconded by Mr. Clark. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

ATLANTIC COASTAL COOPERATIVE STATISTICS PROGRAM COORDINATING COUNCIL

Meeting Summary

The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) Coordinating Council met to take action on the FY2027 RFP (Request for Proposals), discuss NOAA recreational fishing initiatives, and receive ACCSP program updates.

The Council reviewed the recommended updates to the Funding Decision Process, general proposal guidelines, and review schedule as presented by the Operations Committee and Advisory Panel. The Council approved the FY2027 RFP with modified language on the proposal guidelines to note that “Proposals that request funding to purchase 3rd party data or develop/purchase 3rd party software that is similar (e.g., performing existing functions) to software offered by

ACCSP will be considered on a case-by-case basis.”

ACCSP staff presented a summary of the process to request changes to the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey to include more detailed area fished and depredation information. NOAA staff presented updates on the Recreational Angler Partnership Improvement Directive (RAPID), Marine Recreational Information Program estimate publication dates, and the next National Saltwater Recreational Fishing Summit planned for March 2027.

The Council received an update of ACCSP program activities, including recreational initiatives, 2025 commercial landings publication, software development projects, major cross-team projects, and regional partner coordination.

For more information, please contact Geoff White, ACCSP Director, at Geoff.White@accsp.org.

Motions

Move to approve the ACCSP FY2027 RFP as presented, including updated language in the funding decision document as amended today.

Motion made by Ms. Zobel and seconded by Dr. McNamee. Motion approved by consent.

ATLANTIC MENHADEN MANAGEMENT BOARD

Meeting Summary

The Atlantic Menhaden Management Board met to (1) consider approval of Draft Addendum II on the Chesapeake Bay reduction fishery for public comment; (2) review a Technical Committee (TC) report on the Board task regarding changing environmental conditions; (3) review a report from the Committee on Economics and Social Sciences (CESS) regarding the economic impacts of changing the total allowable catch (TAC); (4) receive an update on a Request for Proposals being developed for Chesapeake Bay research; (5) elect a Vice Chair; and (6) approve a nomination to the Advisory Panel.

In October 2025, the Board initiated Draft Addendum II to Amendment 3 to develop options to more evenly distribute harvest of the Chesapeake Bay Reduction Fishery Cap (Bay Cap) into quota periods as well as consider reductions in the Bay Cap up to 50%. The Plan Development Team (PDT) incorporated the Board’s feedback from February into the Draft Addendum and drafted a memo of additional information requested by the Board as well as options that the PDT considered and rejected. Specifically, the Board’s tasking included: comparing reduction effort with harvest data within quota periods; investigating pound net and reduction catch rates to determine if pound net landings are correlated with the timing of the reduction fishery; and summarizing pound net participation over time.

The Board discussed the complexity of the Draft Addendum II options, particularly regarding the interaction between accounting for overage penalties between years and allowing underharvested quota to rollover between periods within the same year. In addition to providing edits to the problem statement and requesting text to clarify certain provisions, the Board opted to establish a Work Group of Board members to work with the PDT in further developing the document. The Work Group and PDT will consider tasking the TC with investigating pound net and reduction fishery catch rates, since the PDT recommended that the TC would be a more appropriate body to provide further analysis, if possible. The Board will review and consider approving the revised

ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION SPRING MEETING NEWS

Draft Addendum for public comment at the 2026 Summer Meeting.

At the 2025 Annual Meeting, the Board tasked the TC with reviewing information from NOAA's Ecosystem Dynamics and Assessment Branch and Chesapeake Bay Office, and the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution to evaluate the possible effect of cold water on the Continental Shelf on Atlantic menhaden migration and migratory patterns, particularly in relation to the timing of osprey arrival, nesting, and breeding. The Board also tasked the TC with considering what role water temperature, dissolved oxygen levels, shoreline hardening, and other environmental

factors play in the local abundance of menhaden and other forage species in the Chesapeake Bay. The TC conducted a literature review on the key topics identified by the Board that could serve as a basis for a more quantitative approach if tasked by the Board. The TC noted that many factors within a species' physical environment will influence abundance, distribution, and timing of population events such as spawning and migration. Additionally, the TC stressed that the existing datasets may not be sufficient to fully address the Board's questions, given the limited spatial and temporal coverage of both fishery- dependent and -independent data. The Board did not provide any further tasking on this issue.

In October 2025, the Board also tasked the CESS with looking into how changes in Atlantic menhaden management could impact jobs within the fishery. There were two studies identified that address employment impacts associated with landings changes in the Atlantic menhaden fishery: Kirkley et al. 2011 and Whitehead and Harrison 2017. Kirkley et al. assessed the economic importance of the reduction sector under alternative harvest scenarios in Chesapeake Bay, including an approach that allowed for increasing costs associated with shifting harvest to coastal waters in response to

reductions in the Chesapeake Bay quota. The study estimated the reduction sector supported approximately 519 full- and part-time jobs in Maryland and Virginia, including 347 in Northumberland County, Virginia, associated with total landings of about 141,000 metric tons (mt), of which roughly 85,000 mt were harvested from Chesapeake Bay. Under an extreme scenario in which no harvest was allowed in the Bay and effort could not be shifted to coastal waters, employment losses in Northumberland County were estimated at up to 176 jobs, including 98 direct losses in the reduction sector. The analysis also indicated that a reduction of 1,000 mt in the Chesapeake Bay quota corresponded to an estimated loss of approximately 3.7 total jobs, including 2.1 direct jobs in the reduction sector.

Whitehead and Harrison applied a similar modeling framework and produced employment impact estimates consistent with Kirkley et al. In addition, this study estimated that employment changes in Northumberland County scale with output at approximately one job per \$45,000 in landings (roughly \$60,000 in 2026). CESS noted that estimates should be interpreted cautiously in a management context. Because the type of model used (i.e., the Leontief input-output model) does not account for market adjustments or adaptive behavior, they likely overstate long-term employment effects. However, both studies note the reduction industry is a critical sector in the local economy, and that it may be challenging for employees to transition to other sectors if there are job losses. CESS recommends additional socioeconomic research to support menhaden management decisions.

The Board received an update on funding included in federal appropriations for Chesapeake Bay menhaden research. The Commission is developing a Request for Proposals to evaluate research projects for funding based on the priority studies identified in the October 2023 report from the

Virginia Institute of Marine Science.

Finally, the Board elected Nicole Lengyel Costa of Rhode Island as the Vice Chair and approved the nomination of Eric Lorentzen, a Massachusetts seine net fisherman, to the Atlantic Menhaden Advisory Panel.

For more information, please contact James Boyle, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator at jboyle@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move to add a no rollover provision to section 3.2.2.3.

Motion made by Mr. Luisi and seconded by Mr. LaFrance. Motion passes (10 in favor, 5 opposed, 1 null, 2 abstentions).

Move to reconsider the previous motion.

Motion made by Mr. Grout and seconded by Mr. Woodward. Motion passes (13 in favor, 3 opposed, 2 abstentions)

Move to add a no rollover provision to section 3.2.2.3.

Motion fails (3 in favor, 13 opposed, 2 abstentions).

Move to form a Work Group of the Atlantic Menhaden Board to work with the Plan Development Team on revisions to Draft Addendum II.

Motion made by Ms. Lengyel-Costa and seconded by Mr. Clark. Motion passes (16 in favor, 2 abstentions).

Move to elect Nicole Lengyel-Costa as Vice-Chair of the Atlantic Menhaden Board.

Motion made by Mr. Haymans and seconded by Mr. Reid. Motion passes by unanimous consent

Move to approve the nomination of Eric Lorentzen from MA to the Atlantic Menhaden Advisory Panel.

Motion made by Ms. Meserve and seconded by Mr. Gates. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

JOINT SESSION OF THE ATLANTIC AND GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSIONS' LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEES

Meeting Summary

The Law Enforcement Committee (LEC) conducted a joint meeting with the Gulf State Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) LEC to review species issues; Joint Enforcement Agreements; Guidelines for Resource Managers on the Enforcement of Fishery Management Measures; the NOAA Field Forensic Program; Court Authorized Surveillance; enforcement case studies; and Illegal Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing enforcement. A closed session was convened to discuss new and emerging issues in law enforcement.

Tautog Management Discussion – The Committee reviewed a proposal from the State of New York, which requests that Draft Addendum I include an option to allow states to use an alternate tag type for commercially taken tautog due to concerns regarding damage to fish retained in New York's live market fishery. The LEC will work with staff to monitor this issue closely and stay informed about the research and testing conducted by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation as it works to identify a suitable alternate tag option. The LEC supports the commercial tagging program outlined in the FMP and is open to endorsing an alternative tag, provided it meets the established requirements of the program.

Joint Enforcement Agreements (JEA) – ASAC Bryan Landry from NOAA Office of Law Enforcement (NOAA OLE) engaged the Committee in a discussion concerning the status of the JEA program.

Funding for the JEA has been included in the FY2026 budget. The LEC as it supports the continuation and effectiveness of

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Also Shipwreck Index and Chronological listing up online!

ON-GOING PROJECTS INCLUDE:

Creating an encyclopedia and a chronological history of events.

Also, transcribing maritime articles from: Maine Industrial Journal (1880 to 1918); Bangor Whig & Courier (1836-1899); Republican Journal (1829 to present); and various others including Eastern Argus (Portland), Bath Daily Times, Eastport Sentinel, Ellsworth American, New Bedford Mercury, Salem Gazette and Boston Evening Transcript.

Transcribing: WPA Ship Documents, especially ones not published.

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ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION SPRING MEETING NEWS

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the JEA program.

The LEC reviewed its shared expectations and priorities regarding the JEA program. The Committee reaffirmed the commitment of participating states to the program's objectives and collaborative enforcement efforts. Members expressed hope that NOAA OLE will further enhance funding for the JEAs in the FY2027 budget, strengthening the partnership and advancing fisheries enforcement initiatives.

Guidelines for Resource Managers – At the request of the GSMFC LEC, ASMFC staff delivered a comprehensive presentation of the Guidelines for Resource Managers on the Enforcement of Fishery Management Measures. Key points included the document's evolution, its practical use in fisheries enforcement, and how it addresses challenges faced by managers working to ensure compliance with regulatory frameworks.

Field Forensic Program – NOAA has initiated pilot testing of a newly developed rapid polymerase chain reaction (PCR) device as a part of its Field Forensic Program. This technology allows officers to perform genetic analysis directly in the field, delivering immediate results and eliminating the need to send samples to external laboratories. US law prohibits the false labeling of imported seafood products. Despite this, visually identifying fish species during port inspections is often difficult, as physical characteristics alone may not be sufficient. In the past, NOAA officers collected genetic samples and sent them to forensic laboratories for confirmation, a process that could take weeks and potentially delay the movement of seafood through US ports.

The introduction of rapid PCR technology provides enforcement personnel with the capability to swiftly identify fish species on-site. This advancement helps officers collect evidence and investigate seafood fraud more efficiently. By expediting the identification process, the device helps prevent illegal seafood products from entering the US marketplace and strengthens the effectiveness of port inspection operations.

Court Authorized Surveillance Techniques – Sgt. Jeffrey Turcotte of the Maine Department of Marine Resources conducted a presentation on best practices in the use of court authorized surveillance techniques. Sgt. Turcotte highlighted successful case prosecutions from the state of Maine and the processes used in supporting these cases. This presentation focused on the illegal deployment of traps in the lobster fishery.

Case Study – Operation Scaled Deception – Lt. Patrick Carron from the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MSDMR) offered a presentation on this enforcement action as it relates to the fraudulent use of trip tickets in their commercial fisheries. The presentation detailed a multi-year investigation into illegal finfish harvesting and trafficking between Mississippi and Alabama, focusing on spotted seatrout and red drum. The investigation began in 2018 when Alabama Marine Resources Division (ALMRD) noticed large quantities of spotted seatrout being sold in Alabama without proper reporting on Mississippi trip tickets. Mississippi has strict regulations, including a total allowable catch for spotted seatrout, which was exploited by commercial fishermen who sold unreported catches to a seafood dealer in Alabama.

In 2020, complaints arose about suspiciously high quantities of red drum being harvested and sold, leading to further investigations. Authorities discovered fraudulent reporting, hidden compartments in boats,

and connections between Mississippi and Alabama fishermen. Cellular data and social media posts revealed that fishermen were laundering illegally harvested fish from Alabama on Mississippi trip tickets.

The investigation, dubbed "Operation Scaled Deception," involved collaboration between MSDMR, ALMRD, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. It identified 44 participants in the scheme, resulting in 8 convictions, \$21,446 in fines, and the lifetime forfeiture of gill net licenses for one dealer. The total amount of illegally harvested finfish was 101,673 pounds, with a retail value of \$1.53 million. Key lessons learned include the need for better communication between agencies, the exploitation of regulatory differences between states, and the inadequacy of current fines to deter criminal activity.

Case Study: Operation Atlantis – Captain Scott Pearce from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) offered a presentation on the false tagging of seafood products. This presentation discussed illegal lobster importation, mislabeling practices, enforcement actions, violations, and legal proceedings related to Florida fisheries. The FWC and NOAA investigated Florida-based seafood companies for allegedly importing massive quantities of Caribbean lobster, mislabeling them as US origin, and re-exporting to China. Inspections revealed violations such as improper reporting, lack of notification, and breaches of spiny lobster regulations. Federal charges including wire fraud and conspiracy were brought against two seafood dealers, highlighting concerns about reputational harm to American fishermen and insufficient government oversight.

IUU - Assistant Commander Game Warden Les Casterline of Texas Parks and Wildlife Division (TPWD) offered a presentation on his agency's effort in enforcement of IUU fishing. He discussed illegal fishing activities along the Texas/Mexico border, enforcement efforts, new initiatives to combat seafood fraud, and regulations for seafood import monitoring. The Seafood Import Monitoring Program (SIMP) is designed to regulate the entry of seafood into the US. This program tracks the journey of seafood products from the point of harvest all the way through to their arrival at US borders. By monitoring this entire process, SIMP helps ensure that imported seafood meets legal requirements and maintains transparency throughout the supply chain. SIMP specifically targets thirteen priority species, all selected due to their vulnerability to illegal fishing practices and the need for greater oversight in their trade.

To support lawful harvesting and production, the program requires comprehensive recordkeeping and data collection for each imported shipment. Importers must provide detailed documentation that demonstrates the seafood was harvested and produced in accordance with established laws and regulations. This information is then used to verify compliance and prevent illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing from impacting US markets. These enforcement efforts have been in collaboration with partnered agencies, including TPWD, NOAA, Customs OFO, USFW, and the FDA.

For more information, please contact Kurt Blanchard, LEC Coordinator, at kurt.blanchard@verizon.net.

HORSESHOE CRAB MANAGEMENT BOARD

Meeting Summary

The Horseshoe Crab Management Board met to consider the final report on the recent stakeholder engagement process

to inform possible changes to the Adaptive Resource Management (ARM) Framework and review a summary of state legislation on horseshoe crab fisheries in Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey.

The Board received a report on the process initiated in 2026 to review and revise the Utility, Reward, and Harvest Policy (U/R/H) functions of the ARM Framework with input from stakeholders representing bait fisheries, biomedical groups, dealers, ecosystem, shorebird, and horseshoe crab conservation groups. Compass Resource Management was contracted as a third-party facilitator to design and conduct the stakeholder engagement process. The purpose was to elicit stakeholder values and perspectives to develop clear, actionable recommendations for revising the U/R/H functions, which are mathematical functions within the ARM model that reflect stakeholder priorities and values related to horseshoe crab harvest, shorebird populations, and the ecosystem. Through a series of educational meetings, an in-person workshop in January 2026, and input from the Delaware Bay Ecosystem Technical Committee (DBETC), stakeholders developed recommendations to update the economic value ratio of male to female horseshoe crabs in the bait fishery, better represent stakeholder perspectives on red knot population goals, and add a precautionary threshold for zero female harvest if the female horseshoe crab population in Delaware Bay falls below 7 million crabs. As a next step, the Board tasked the ARM Subcommittee with making the recommended changes to the ARM Model and testing the updated functions against the existing model. The DBETC will also review the updates and report back to the Board at the next meeting.

Staff provided a summary of state legislation related to horseshoe crab bait and biomedical fisheries in Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey. New Jersey implemented a moratorium on horseshoe crab bait harvest in 2008 but allows horseshoe crabs to be used for biomedical purposes. As of October 1, 2023, hand harvest of horseshoe crabs is prohibited in Connecticut, and New York passed legislation to phase out the commercial and biomedical harvest of horseshoe crabs by 2029. Some states expressed concern that restricting horseshoe crab harvest in these states could increase the demand for harvest from other regions.

For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at cstarks@asmfc.org.

Motions

No motions made.

COASTAL SHARKS MANAGEMENT BOARD Meeting Summary

The Coastal Sharks Management Board met to consider updates on actions for the Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) relevant to coastal sharks; a presentation on changes to the Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES) and impacts on smoothhound sharks; and the FMP Review of the 2024 Fishing Year and state compliance.

The Board received updates from NOAA Fisheries on federal rulemaking for the HMS FMP. A proposed rule was published January 6, 2026, that considers revising commercial Atlantic blacknose shark and recreational Atlantic shark fisheries management measures. This rulemaking responds to the framework for implementing management measures established in Amendment 14 and aims to increase management flexibility and optimize quota utilization of Atlantic shark commercial and

recreational fisheries. The proposed rule seeks public input on alternatives related to blacknose shark management boundaries and commercial retention limits, Atlantic shark recreational size limits and retention limits, and management group quota linkages. The comment period on this action was extended to May 29, 2026, and a final rule is expected in late 2026.

The Board received a presentation from the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) on the recent inclusion of tope sharks and all smoothhound sharks of the genus *Mustelus* to CITES Appendix II. This listing will impact permit requirements for smooth dogfish exports. Beginning June 5, 2027, exports and re-exports from the US of smoothhound sharks, whether alive or dead, and any parts or derivatives must be accompanied by a CITES export permit or re-export certificate issued by the FWS Division of Management Authority. Imports of smoothhounds into the US must be accompanied by a CITES document issued by the country of export or re-export. Stakeholders are advised to apply for the necessary permits three to six months in advance to avoid export delays.

The Board approved the Coastal Sharks FMP Review for the 2024 fishing year, state compliance reports, and de minimis status for Massachusetts. Ben Dyar of South Carolina was elected Vice-Chair of the Coastal Sharks Board.

Lastly, the Board discussed a possible agenda item for a future meeting that would include a presentation on a study of land-based recreational shark fisheries in North Carolina, as well as state regulations related to shore-based shark fisheries. For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at cstarks@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move to approve the Fishery Management Plan Review and state compliance for coastal sharks for the 2024 fishing year, and approve de minimis status for Massachusetts.

Motion made by McKiernan and seconded by Mr. Haymans. Motion approved by consent.

Move to elect Ben Dyar as Vice-Chair of the Coastal Sharks Board.

Motion made by Mr. Batsavage and seconded by Dr. Rhodes. Motion approved by consent.

ANNUAL AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE ASMFC Honors 2026 Annual Award of Excellence Recipients

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) is proud to announce the recipients of its 2026 Annual Awards of Excellence, recognizing outstanding contributions to the management, policy development, enforcement, and public understanding of Atlantic coastal fisheries. This year's honorees represent excellence across four key areas: fisheries management and policy, legislative leadership, outreach, and law enforcement.

"These award recipients exemplify the dedication, expertise, and collaborative spirit necessary to sustain our nation's marine resources," said ASMFC Chair Daniel McKiernan of Massachusetts. "Their work strengthens not only their respective fields, but also the entire interstate fisheries management process."

Management & Policy Award John Clark — Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife (Retired)

John Clark is honored for a distinguished career in fisheries management and policy, marked by more than a decade of service as Delaware's Administrative Commissioner to ASMFC. Since 2011,

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he has played a central role in guiding the Commission's work on complex and often contentious fisheries issues.

Mr. Clark has chaired several key management boards, including those overseeing horseshoe crab, Atlantic menhaden, and American eel fisheries. He is widely respected for his fairness, efficiency, and ability to navigate technical and policy challenges while fostering productive dialogue among diverse stakeholders.

His contributions to the development and application of innovative management tools, such as the horseshoe crab Adaptive Resource Management Framework model, have supported the recovery of important species and provided benefits across ecological, commercial, and biomedical sectors.

Prior to his administrative role, Mr. Clark built a strong foundation as a field researcher and scientist, contributing significantly to the understanding of fisheries and invertebrate ecology in Delaware waters.

His career reflects a rare combination of scientific expertise, policy leadership, and dedication to public service.

Congressional & Legislative Contributions Award

Alex Swanson — Legislative Assistant, Office of U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen

Alex Swanson is honored for her exceptional contributions to advancing fisheries policy and securing critical federal support for ASMFC priorities. As a Legislative Assistant, she has demonstrated a deep understanding of coastal and marine issues, as well as the complex intersection of science, policy, and funding.

In fiscal year 2026, under a highly constrained budget environment, Ms. Swanson played a leading role in securing funding for key initiatives, including the Chesapeake Bay menhaden study and an industry-based trawl survey pilot program. These efforts will help address longstanding scientific questions, improve data collection, and support more effective fisheries management decisions.

Ms. Swanson's experience working in both New England and Mid-Atlantic congressional offices has provided her with a broad perspective on interstate fisheries challenges. Her ability to translate technical needs into actionable legislative outcomes has made her an invaluable partner to ASMFC and its stakeholders.

Her leadership ensures that the needs of coastal communities, fisheries managers, and the scientific community are effectively represented at the federal level.

Outreach & Advisory Award

Francis "Fran" McParland — New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Francis "Fran" McParland is recognized for his innovative and impactful approach to fisheries outreach and public engagement. His work has significantly enhanced public understanding of marine resource management across New York's diverse marine environments, from Long Island Sound to the Atlantic Ocean and the Hudson River.

Through the development of creative, science-based communication strategies—including social media outreach and in-person engagement—Mr. McParland has successfully translated complex regulatory and scientific concepts into accessible and engaging messaging. His efforts have strengthened public trust in fisheries management and increased awareness of conservation priorities.

Mr. McParland regularly engages a wide range of stakeholders, including recreational and commercial fishing communities, educators, and youth groups. He has

also organized and participated in hands-on events such as beach cleanups and environmental awareness initiatives, fostering a culture of stewardship and community involvement.

In addition to his outreach work, he has demonstrated leadership within the professional community, including serving as President of the New York Chapter of the American Fisheries Society. His contributions have had a lasting impact on both public engagement and professional collaboration in fisheries management.

Law Enforcement Award Corporal Vincent "Vinny" Artrip — Maryland Natural Resources Police

Corporal Vincent "Vinny" Artrip is recognized for his exceptional leadership and effectiveness in fisheries law enforcement along Maryland's Atlantic coast. Assigned to one of the region's most active coastal districts, Corporal Artrip has demonstrated extensive expertise in both recreational and commercial fisheries enforcement, handling complex cases involving species managed under overlapping state and federal regulations.

Over the past year, his enforcement efforts have addressed violations involving key Atlantic species such as striped bass, black sea bass, flounder, tautog, as well as federally managed pelagic species including bluefin tuna and billfish. His work requires a high level of technical knowledge and the ability to navigate evolving regulatory frameworks.

A deputized officer under the Joint Enforcement Agreement program, Corporal Artrip works closely with NOAA Fisheries and federal enforcement partners to ensure alignment with national fisheries management objectives. He also maintains strong working relationships with neighboring state agencies, supporting coordinated enforcement efforts across jurisdictional boundaries.

In addition to his operational work, Corporal Artrip has contributed to regulatory development discussions, assisted with the transition to federal reporting systems for highly migratory species, and delivered training to fellow officers and partner agencies. His efforts have enhanced both compliance and interagency coordination, making a lasting impact on fisheries enforcement in the region.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE Meeting Summary

The Executive Committee met to discuss several issues including a review of the Commission's FY27 Budget and the President's FY27 budget request, and receive updates on legislation, CARES cooperative agreement, and future annual meeting locations.

Staff presented the draft Commission's FY27 Budget, which was unanimously approved by the Executive Committee.

The Committee reviewed the President's FY27 budget request. Funding has been reduced for a number of ASMFC budget priorities. Staff and the states will work to restore federal funding for these important Atlantic coastal fisheries science and management priorities.

Staff provided an update on recent legislative activity, including a summary of the State Boating Act and reauthorization of the Sport Fish Restoration Act.

Staff provided an update on the CARES cooperative agreement. The Commission continues to try to collect funds from those who received funds deemed ineligible. The current deadline for the Commission to pay remaining funds is December 4, 2026.

Lastly, staff provided an update on

future Annual Meeting locations. In 2026, Rhode Island will host the annual meeting, November 8-12 at the Viking Hotel in Newport. In the following years the host states are: 2027 South Carolina; 2028 Massachusetts; 2029 Pennsylvania, 2030 Georgia and 2031 Connecticut.

For more information, please contact Laura Leach, Director of Finance & Administration, at lleach@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

Move to approve the FY2027 Budget.

Motion made by Mr Cimino and seconded by Mr. Grist. Motion carries without objection.

SCIAENIDS MANAGEMENT BOARD Meeting Summary

The Sciaenids Management Board met to consider Georgia's and South Carolina's red drum management measures proposals to implement Addendum II; consider North Carolina's conservation equivalency proposal for its spot commercial fishery; consider a report from the Sciaenids Board Plan Review Teams (PRTs) regarding a Board task to review Board species' de minimis provisions; as well as receive updates on the 2026 Atlantic Croaker Benchmark Stock Assessment and the Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (SEAMAP).

In October 2025, the Board approved Addendum II to Amendment 2 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Red Drum, which updated red drum management in response to the 2024 stock assessment results. The Addendum modified the fishing mortality (30% spawning potential ratio or F30%) the southern stock will aim to meet with implemented management measures. Florida implemented more restrictive red drum regulations in September 2022 immediately following the assessment model time series; these measures are estimated to have achieved the minimum 14.4% reduction in catch associated with F30%. South Carolina and Georgia each submitted a proposal with a range of regulatory options which achieve reductions greater than the 14.4% reduction. Based on the least and most restrictive regulatory options in both proposals, the southern stock is estimated to achieve a reduction ranging between 19.6% and 24.2%. The Board approved all management options in both proposals. The implementation date for all new measures is September 1, 2026, which Georgia and South Carolina have both confirmed they are on track to achieve.

The Board approved a conservation equivalency proposal submitted by North Carolina for its spot commercial fishery. North Carolina requested an adjustment of its spot commercial fishing season closure period from December 10th through April 4th to January 1st through April 28th. A later closure period would address comments North Carolina has received from commercial fishermen in the southern portion of the state, who have observed peak harvest of large, adult spot later in the year, coinciding when the current closure period is starting. North Carolina's current spot commercial fishery closure was first implemented in 2021 following the 2020 triggering of the spot traffic light analysis, which required states to implement measures which are estimated to achieve a 1% reduction in the previous 10-year average of spot commercial harvest. The proposal estimates a closure from January 1st through April 28th would achieve a reduction in harvest (6,940 lbs.) that would exceed both the plan required 1% reduction (5,126 lbs.) and the estimated reduction achieved by the current closure period (5,281 lbs.). Following the process

established in the Commission's Conservation Equivalency Guiding Document, the Spot PRT, Technical Committee, Law Enforcement Committee, and South Atlantic Advisory Panel all reviewed the proposal and did not have any concerns.

The Board considered a report from the Atlantic Croaker, Black Drum, Red Drum, Spot, and Spotted Seatrout PRTs regarding a Board task to provide recommendations on: (1) whether the current 1% threshold for a state to be considered de minimis is appropriate and (2) whether there may be alternate ways to evaluate whether a state is de minimis. De minimis provisions in interstate FMPs are meant to reduce the regulatory burden for states whose measures would have a negligible effect on the conservation of a species. In the past 5-10 years, several states have had reoccurring issues with how de minimis is currently defined for species such as spot and Atlantic croaker. The PRTs' report offers several possible solutions, which either modify the current definition of de minimis or modify the de minimis process. The Board did not move forward with any specific action at this time but indicated an interest in exploring possible management action following the release of the results of the Atlantic Croaker Benchmark Stock Assessment and Peer Review Report at the ASMFC Annual Meeting 2026 in November. This way, if the assessment leads the Board to consider possible management action, any changes to de minimis provisions could also be addressed in the same management document.

The Board received an update on the 2026 Atlantic Croaker Benchmark Stock Assessment. The Stock Assessment Subcommittee held an in-person assessment workshop from March 2-6, 2026. A peer review workshop is tentatively scheduled for July 2026. The assessment and peer review report is scheduled to be presented to the Board at Annual Meeting. The spot benchmark assessment will begin once the Atlantic croaker assessment completes peer review in July 2026, with the goal to be peer-reviewed in June 2027 and presented to the Board at Annual Meeting 2027. Given this timeline, the Board agreed an updated traffic light analysis for spot would not need to be completed in 2026.

The Board received an update on SEAMAP, which is a cooperative program for the collection, management, and dissemination of fishery-independent data and information in the southeastern US used to inform fishery management decisions for fisheries in coastal areas. There are three components to the program: the Gulf, the South Atlantic, and the Caribbean. Currently, assessments for several Commission species use SEAMAP data including red drum (2024), Atlantic menhaden (2025), and bluefish (2025). To support the long-term planning for this program and to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the surveys, the SEAMAP committees have put together a strategic plan for their next funding cycle. The aim of this document is to summarize the importance of each survey and outline proposed enhancements for improvements.

Under other business, several states, including Virginia, North Carolina, and Florida, provided an update on cold stun events which occurred in their waters earlier this year. Their impact on the population of species such as spotted seatrout and red drum is currently unknown but will continue to be monitored by the states.

For more information, please contact Tracey Bauer, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at tbauer@asmfc.org.

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Motions

Move to approve South Carolina and Georgia's range of options in their respective red drum management proposals to implement Addendum II.

Motion made by Mr. Woodward and seconded by Dr. Rhodes. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

Move to approve North Carolina's conservation equivalency proposal for its spot commercial season.

Motion made by Mr. Batsavage and seconded by Mr. Simpson. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

AMERICAN EEL MANAGEMENT BOARD

Meeting Summary

The American Eel Management Board met to consider a report from the Technical Committee (TC) and Stock Assessment Subcommittee (SAS) on their evaluation of Florida's proposal to discontinue the annual young-of-year (YOY) survey, review preliminary yellow eel landings for 2025, and elect a Vice-Chair.

The Board received a report from the TC and SAS regarding the evaluation of Florida's YOY survey. Florida submitted the proposal in October 2025 and the Board tasked the TC with evaluating the utility of continuing the Florida YOY survey and its contribution to the Commission's management and assessment of the American eel stock. The TC and SAS reviewed the YOY survey data and an alternative electrofishing survey in Florida. They reported that the FL YOY survey has an unusual methodology, has had irregular management of the lake where it occurs, gives limited signals for population trends, and is not used for management. While they concluded that on its own the Florida survey does not contribute significantly to the assessment of

the stock, collectively, state eel recruitment surveys could serve as a warning signal of stock-wide recruitment failure. The Board approved an alternative state management program to exempt Florida from conducting the YOY survey with the requirement to continue of the electrofishing survey. The SAS recommended evaluating the Florida electrofishing survey and discussing the use of YOY surveys during the next benchmark stock assessment process.

The Board reviewed preliminary yellow eel landings for the 2025 fishing year to evaluate them against the coastwide landings cap. Preliminary coastwide landings in 2025 were 260,348 pounds, excluding confidential data. This is a 19% decrease from 2024 and well below the coastwide cap. Maine provided updates on the 2026 glass eel fishery and the state's aquaculture allocation. The 2026 glass eel fishery is ongoing, but prices and landings are significantly lower than they have been in recent years. It is suspected reduced fishing effort in Maine is due to lower market prices resulting from decreased demand in the international market and greater supply from other sources, such as, an increase in Canada's glass eel quota. Additionally, Maine reported the eel aquaculture company American Unagi is no longer in business; therefore, Maine will not use its 200-pound aquaculture allowance this year and will not apply for the allowance for 2027.

Heather Corbett of New Jersey was elected Vice-Chair of the Eel Board. For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at cstarks@asmfc.org.

Motions

Main Motion

Move to approve an alternative management program to exempt Florida from the American Eel FMP requirement in section 3.1.1 to conduct an annual young-of-year abundance survey. Motion made by Ms.

Burgess and seconded by Dr. Rhodes.

Motion to Amend: Move to amend to add "and require the continuance of the electrofishing survey."

Motion made by Mr. Clark and seconded by Ms. Kennedy. Motion passes (11 in favor, 5 opposed, 1 abstention).

Main Motion as Amended

Move to approve an alternative management program to exempt Florida from the American Eel FMP requirement in section 3.1.1 to conduct an annual young-of-year abundance survey and require the continuance of the electrofishing survey.

Motion passes by unanimous consent.

Move to elect Heather Corbett as Vice-Chair of the American Eel Management Board.

Motion made by Ms. Zobel and seconded by Mr. Edwards. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

INTERSTATE FISHERY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM (ISFMP) POLICY BOARD

Meeting Summary

The ISFMP Policy Board met to receive reports from the Executive Committee (see earlier Executive Committee summary), Habitat Committee, Law Enforcement Committee (see earlier LEC meeting summary), and Assessment Science Committee; review a report from the Declared Interest and Voting Privileges Work Group (WG); receive an update on the Recreational Angler Partnership Improvement Directive (RAP-ID) initiative; and discuss proposed changes to the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch's standards for fisheries.

Since last spring, the Commission's Executive Committee has discussed issues related to states declared interests and voting privileges on species management boards prompted by several circumstances. Most notable is the changing distribution of many species managed by the Commission, which

in turn has resulted in (and is anticipated to result in additional) interest by states to alter their participation on species management boards. The Executive Committee formed a Work Group (WG) to develop possible solutions to concerns that the criteria listed in the Commission's Rules and Regulations for states to declare into a fishery are not specific enough to help guide the Policy Board in evaluating a declared interest request. The WG recommended changes to the criteria, which are meant to add specificity to the eligibility criteria, clarify valid data sources, correct for redundant and outdated language, and better reflect the species and fisheries under Commission management. The Board will consider taking action on modifications to the Rules and Regulations at the Commission's Business Session in August.

As part of this discussion, the Board also considered a set of Voluntary Voting Guidelines that provided a set of circumstances with an indication of when a state should consider voting versus abstaining. Voting privileges can be complex issue. The ISFMP Charter establishes that all states with a declared interest in a fishery are voting members of the board, eligible to participate in all board votes. The impetus, in part, for considering guidelines to voting practices is a range of philosophies regarding the role of Commissioners. While all recognize that Commissioners are selected by their states to represent their interests and consider the sustainability of the stocks managed under the Commission, there are differing views of the role of Commissioners on their responsibilities that extend beyond their state's jurisdiction. During the discussion considering the guidelines, some Commissioners expressed that their role is to participate in the management across the entire Atlantic coast serving as a trustee for all populations

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Boat And Ship Yard News

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White. Leon was thinking of putting one of his boats, a 23-foot Parker, which is getting repowered and new canvas, on the market. He thought, and figured other yards were feeling the same, that customers were not spending like they have in the past few years.

One other thing was that with the change in the administration, the loan that was awarded them due to the storms two years ago, had dried up and disappeared. They did receive funds from the state that was used for engineering and permits to lift a building on the waterfront, build a substantial foundation under it and make repairs to the ramp. They do not have the funds to complete the project, but they have the groundwork done. They were thinking of maybe doing some of the project in-house but were not sure if they could do it in phases.

On a side note, Leon has been involved with Lincoln Academy, assisting with boat-building and maintenance courses. He said, "We have got an ABYC, which is actually up and running. I taught the first trimester last year and then this year one of their instructors taught it. They are not taking the test at the end of the year and getting certified yet, but they are getting there. There is a lot of interest in the class. So, it is going well.

"Those kids are getting a broad overview of what we do," explained Leon. "They are getting some work on inboard diesel, outboards, I/Os, drivetrain, a little

bit of transmission, how lights are wired, seacocks, plumbing systems, and things like that. If you took the system certification, the electrical certification and then added engine, and maybe even the ABYC gas and inboards, that is what they are teaching at the high school level. I want to see it expanded to an all-year program. Definitely we have to beef up that curriculum a bit to make that happen, but it is doable. I'm probably going to go back next year and teach."

Portland Pudgy Biddeford

For those that head down Route 1 south of Biddeford proper, you will see on the left side a building with a couple of small dinghies out on the lawn. This is Portland Pudgy, a great 7-foot 6-inch recreational dinghy produced in several colours.

They build this boat with a roto-mould using polyethylene, which makes them almost indestructible. They can be used in a wide variety of situations. It can be rowed, sailed, or motored. A number of long-distance cruisers love them as they are seaworthy and do not take up much deck space. The designer was a pretty avid sailor and saw the need for a lifeboat dinghy combination that had this kind of durability to it.

They are looking at options for different sizes, maybe even a different hull design.

If they work well on the Maine coast, which is covered with numerous jagged rocks, they will work well pretty much any-

where. They like to say it's like the compact car market. A lot of people like big trucks and a lot of people like compact cars and that's our market.

Riverside Boat Newcastle, ME

There are several yards on the coast of Maine that will take you back in time. This yard still uses a railway, and nearly all their 70 boats are wooden with the exception of just five.

The winters are always busy. This winter they brought in a Valentine, design by Creston Bryant, which is a 15-foot sailboat. She has a carvel planked bottom and lapstrake topsides. She received a new stem, new forefoot, and chine ends. The bottom strake on the topsides was replaced halfway back and all new bottom planking. Then she was given a paint job.

There is a 22-foot launch in another shed that has received a new stem, new stem knee, new forward end of the keel and now is getting planked back up.

The Concordia yawl outside has some issues and before going over they will replace a couple of planks and then recaulked.

There is a 22-foot launch in need of a couple of new garboards and a Rhodes 36 needs one plank before she can be launched.

The 21-foot Striper got its moulds, ribbons and frames put together this winter and is about halfway plank up. She has an owner, but he will not see her launched this

year.

Other work included a flagpole for one of their dock customers and a runway for another.

Southern Maine Marine Service Arundel

If you have been travelling Route 1 south of Biddeford, you should have noticed a major construction project underway here.

In August last year, the owner of Kennebunkport Marina purchased this company. They explained, "We outgrew our spot in Biddeford, and we were looking at another piece of land in Kennebunk for boat storage. Before we pulled the trigger on that, I talked to the owner here and just said, "We are getting ready to do another project. We talked about this the last time we did a project, and you weren't ready to sell. Before I pull the trigger on this other property, do you have any interest?" At first, it was a no, and then a week later a maybe and then it was yes. We talked about numbers and timelines and came up with something that worked for both of us. This gave us the room to grow, and it will let us bring our service business here and a lot of our storage business. Right now, we are just finishing up a new shop and then we will have a storage unit going up."

The new shop was started last November and is 6,000 square feet with a mezzanine break room for the employees. This will likely be finished mid-May.

The front of the main building will remain a showroom. In the rear was a work bay and this will be used for parts and offices.

This property had been sub-divided and now it is back to one lot. They will be building a 30,000-square foot heated storage building. They have been blasting rock and as soon as the groundwork is completed, they will pour the concrete for the building. This will be a big addition to the two 12,000 square-foot cold storage buildings. One of these has already been turned into heated storage with plans to convert the other soon.

They are a Mercury dealer and are full-service dealers for Yamaha and Suzuki. They do not have a boat line, but this may change in the near future. Their Wells store is a Suzuki dealership down at Webhannet River Boat Yard.

They are looking to service the area boaters between the Saco River and Wells better and making these changes certainly shows their commitment.

Yankee Marina Yarmouth

There has been a lot going on here this winter. One of the major projects was on a Crowley Beal 36, formerly a lobster boat, which they put an interior in. They had to do a lot of ripping apart to make sure everything was still bonded to the hull. The first year they replaced the balsa core decks, which were totally gone. Last year they cut the hard top back and painted her.

For other projects: an Ericsson 35 was in to have her electrical system upgraded; a Defever 49 was in for extensive shaft work, which included pulling the stuffing boxes, milling them down, installing Tide Marine seals and then aligning the shaft; a 53-foot Stevens sailboat had her air conditioning and Victron battery monitoring system replaced; a Maine Cat was in to remove her electric drive system and installed Yamaha outboards; and a full restoration on a Aquasport 26.

The paint bay has been busy all winter. They have painted a Grady White, Aquasport, Mako, High Seas, Hinterhoeller, J-boat and a Hunt cold moulded powerboat.

ASMFC SPRING MEETING NEWS

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of fish managed by the Commission, while other Commissioners expressed their role is to advocate and support their state fisheries, in concert with other states, but not as a coastwide manager. The Board did not approve the guidelines at this time.

The Habitat Committee Chair presented information on the Committee's on past and ongoing activities. The Habitat Committee is seeking Board feedback to better understand priority habitat issues, information needs, and communication preferences to best serve the needs of the member states. Board members will be sent a survey in the next weeks to gather Board input.

The Legislative and Governor Appointee Commissioners met earlier in the week and elected new leadership. The group also briefly discussed their role in potentially reducing the politicization of fishery management decisions. The new leadership requested the Commission Chair work with staff to revise the Commission Rules and Regulations to establish the group as a committee. The Board agreed to work towards this end.

Preparations for the cobia and Atlantic sturgeon benchmark stock assessments have begun. Atlantic sturgeon has two upcoming workshops this year and the deadline for anyone to submit data is July 1. The assessment is scheduled for peer review in 2028. Cobia recently had a successful data workshop and is scheduled for peer review in 2027. Lastly, it was noted the Tautog Management Board requested the next benchmark be moved from 2029 to 2028. The Assessment Science Committee will review the assessment schedule and provide options for the Policy Board to consider in August.

In April 2026, NOAA Fisheries introduced RAPID as a core component of its updated National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy. RAPID is designed to modernize the way saltwater recreational fishing data are collected and managed by transforming the existing Marine Recreational

Information Program. It aims to increase data precision, credibility, and accessibility. For example, NOAA Fisheries has provided a significant increase in funding for state-level data collection and sampling. NOAA will be utilizing regional workshops and collaborations with the states, Commissions and Councils to actively engage stakeholders and the fishing community in the process.

The Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch's Standard for fisheries provides a system to review wild-caught fishing against the Monterey Bay Aquarium's definition of sustainable fishing. Each fishery is reviewed using four main areas—from the health of targeted and accidentally caught species to management and ecosystem effects. Staff reviewed what is likely the most consequential proposed changes, such as stricter green threshold for stock status, tightened rebuilding stock thresholds, the ability of discard rates to flip a color rating, and harsher treatment of data-poor fisheries, and how these changes could meaningfully shift the ratings of dozens of fisheries currently sitting at or near the green/yellow or yellow/red boundaries. Staff also reviewed the structural and clarification changes which are largely housekeeping. Several states indicated their state intends to send comment. The Board agreed to also send comments. Board members will send staff issues they would like addressed in the comment letter and staff will work with Commission leadership to finalize the letter.

Motions

Move to start the process to change the declared interest section of the rules and regulations.

Motion made by Mr. Clark and seconded by Mr. Borden. Motion passes with no objections.

Move to accept the voluntary guidance for voting that's in the document for sections 1-5.

Motion made by Mr. Hyatt and seconded by Mr. Gary. Motion fails (5, 11, 1 abstention, 1 null).

Move to task the Commission Chair,

under Article IV Section 4 of the Rules and Regulations to formally establish the Legislative and Governor Appointee (and proxies) Sections as a Committee. Motion made by Mr. Reid and seconded by Mr. Grist. Motion passes by unanimous consent.

COMMISSION BUSINESS SESSION Meeting Summary

The Commission Business Session met to review changes to Goal 1 of the 2026 Action Plan. Specifically, tasks related to summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish were modified to reflect actions that have been taken with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) over the past few months. First, the Recreational Sector Amendment for all four species will not be completed in 2026 in order to allow for a stakeholder workshop to occur this fall. For scup, an addendum may need to be initiated depending on the outcome of a Council framework that considers options to increase management flexibility during the commercial scup Winter I quota period. Lastly, the Commission and Council will conduct a comprehensive technical review of confidence interval methods used in the Percent Change Approach for setting recreational measures for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass. The Percent Change Approach is used to establish recreational management measures—including bag, size, and season limits—by comparing expected harvest to the average recreational harvest limit. A critical component of this process is the application of a confidence interval around harvest estimates, which determines the required level of change in management measures. The Commission approved the revisions to the 2026 Action Plan. The revised Plan can be found here.

For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, Fisheries Policy Director, at tkerns@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move to approve the revised 2026 Action Plan.

Motion made by Mr. Clark and seconded by Mr. Grist. Motion passes by consent.

MISCELLANEOUS COMMERCIAL FISHING NEWS

Continued from Page 13

measures in the western Atlantic have created a vital haven, contributing to the recovery of bluefin tuna.

April 21, 2026

An international team of scientists deployed electronic tags on bluefin tunas across three decades to investigate stock movement between the eastern and western Atlantic. They also examined catch data dating back to 1950 to better understand the proportion of removals among regions.

The study was published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

Atlantic bluefin tuna is a highly coveted species, managed as two stocks by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas. The western stock is harvested by the United States, Mexico, Japan, and Canada. The eastern stock is targeted by many countries across the Mediterranean basin and eastern Atlantic. ICCAT divides management of these two stocks at the 45°W meridian, setting separate catch limits and management measures for each stock.

Tagging Data: Following the Food

The scientists deployed tags on 1,720 bluefin tuna from 1996 to 2025. Tag data provides information on where and when fish migrate, where they feed, ideal environmental conditions, and when fish enter and leave known spawning areas. They also inform fisheries stock estimates by providing measures of natural and fisheries mortality.

Data collected from the tags confirm trans-Atlantic migration and stock mixing—most frequently in the east to west direction. The results show that many bluefin tuna move from eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean waters to the western Atlantic to forage and grow. These fish often remain in the west for several years before returning to the Mediterranean Sea or spawning in the Slope Sea. Tagging also demonstrated that adult fish tagged in U.S. and Canadian waters move back to the Mediterranean Sea to spawn and often return the following year to the western Atlantic to forage along the U.S. eastern seaboard. Importantly, bluefin tuna that originated in the western Atlantic, however, tend to stay west of the 45°W management line.

Why the great migration? Tuna are likely heading west to find and feed on vital prey such as Atlantic mackerel, Atlantic herring, and menhaden, which are abundant in U.S. and Canadian waters.

A Deep Dive into the Catch Data

The team also analyzed regional catch data dating back to 1950 to better understand the proportion of removals among regions. The data show a dramatic difference in fishing pressure: 55 percent of the total catch was caught in the Mediterranean Sea (BF59 in the figure); 17 percent in the eastern central Atlantic (BF57 and BF58); 17 percent in the northeastern Atlantic (BF53 and BF54); and 11 percent in the entire West Atlantic (all regions west of 45°W).

In the past 30 years, the disparity has become even more extreme; the Mediterranean now makes up 72 percent of the catch across the entire Atlantic.

The scientists determined that bluefin tuna from the eastern Atlantic experienced much higher fishing mortality when in the east compared to the west or north. This indicates that migrating to the West and North Atlantic offered eastern Atlantic bluefin tuna safety from high harvest levels.

The majority of Atlantic bluefin tuna are captured by purse seines in the Mediterranean where the fish are more vulnerable to fishing. Historically, these catches targeted age one and two fish, harvesting them before they can reach the size and age when they exit the Mediterranean on feeding migrations. This restricted the ability of the population to access productive Atlantic waters.

In the last 30 years, Mediterranean fisheries have increased pressure on the population—particularly with the rise of capture-based aquaculture that targets more mature bluefin tuna. Catches during the 1990s and 2000s ramped up substantially, peaking at 60,000 tons in 2007—nearly double the scientific recommendations at the time. In 2010, after global concerns for the state of the stock, ICCAT implemented substantial cuts in quotas, as well as binding conservation and management measures.

In contrast, for more than 45 years, western catches have followed binding total allowable catch limits—typically a tenth of the eastern limits. They have had strong conservation measures including prohibitions on targeted fishing in the Gulf of America.

Bottom Line: Bluefin Tuna Conservation Measures Work

The major conservation and management measures taken by ICCAT, combined with shifting catches to larger fish, resulted in a dramatic turnaround of the stock. Reducing fishing mortality to sustainable levels allowed several year classes of fish to survive, grow, and leave the Mediterranean to seek the productive feeding grounds of

the North Atlantic. This escapement from the Mediterranean spawning areas to wider Atlantic waters with stricter harvest measures allows bluefin to live longer, grow larger, and contribute more offspring to the population. This emphasizes the importance of managing fishing mortality in areas of high vulnerability such as spawning aggregations.

John Walter, deputy director of science and council services at the NOAA Southeast Fisheries Science Center, and co-author on the study summarized, “It really is an international success story—we have thriving fisheries throughout the Atlantic and a return of the fish to many areas where they had not been observed in many years. The key to this rebound may be surprisingly simple—allow a fish restricted to spawn in a narrow environmental niche but evolved to seek productivity anywhere in the ocean, to do just that.”

Whether the current Atlantic bluefin fishery total allowable catch remains sustainable in the face of a rapidly changing ocean and increasing human demand remains uncertain. What is certain is the return on investment for state-of-the-art science.

U.S. anglers have been frustrated in recent years by strict harvest measures for bluefin, but the science confirms these limits are effective. Our conservation efforts are having huge impacts—not just for the United States, but across the Atlantic. Anecdotal evidence supports this, with anglers along the U.S. East Coast catching more and larger bluefin than in the past 30 years. The stock recovery is such that ICCAT adopted a higher total allowable catch for the western stock. NOAA Fisheries is working on rulemaking to implement the corresponding U.S. quota increase in 2026.

By the Numbers: 2026 North Atlantic Right Whale Calving Season

The 2026 North Atlantic right whale calving season has come to a close in the southeast United States.

April 30, 2026

Southeast

Each fall, some North Atlantic right whales travel more than 1,000 miles from their Northeast feeding grounds to the shallow, coastal waters of their Southeast calving grounds. During this time, mid-November to mid-April, right whales can be seen off of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida where residents eagerly await their southern migration.

Members of the public can play a vital role in conservation by reporting sightings to NOAA Fisheries and partner agencies. These public reports add to data researchers collect during aerial and vessel surveys which contribute to updated right whale population and calving season numbers.

2026 Right Whale Calving Season Numbers

The North Atlantic right whale is an endangered large whale species, making every female right whale and calf important to the species’ recovery. Twenty-three calves were born during the 2026 right whale calving season—the highest number since 2009. Of the 23 mom-calf pairs identified this season, 20 of these were returning moms. Thirteen of these returning moms last had calves in the 2021 or 2022 seasons, marking a shorter interval between births than the recent average of 7 to 10 years. This is closer to the normal or healthy interval of 3 to 4 years.

There were approximately 500 sightings of 129 right whales in the Southeast during the 2026 calving season. These sightings came from aerial and vessel surveys, members of the public, the volunteer sighting network, military vessels, and dredging operations. They included: 23 moms; 23 new calves; 20 adult females (without calves); 39 adult males; and 24 juveniles and yearlings.

The individual whales that researchers preliminarily identified in the Southeast included more than a quarter of the right whale population (excluding new calves). This is a 29 percent increase compared to last year’s calving season. Seeing such a large portion of the population in the calving grounds suggests reproductive health is improving, potentially moving the species toward more positive recovery trends.

One mom-calf pair was sighted in the Gulf of America, away from their standard South Atlantic calving grounds. The mom, named “Millipede,” and her calf were seen in the Gulf during January and February 2026. The last confirmed sighting was just south of the Key West National Wildlife Refuge on February 4, 2026. This is only the sixth time right whales have been detected in the Gulf since 2000.

2026 Right Whale Calving Season Field Effort Stats

The NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office monitors the calving season each year with the help of our partners, both at sea and in the sky. Aerial and vessel surveys are critical for species recovery because they provide the primary scientific data needed to estimate population abundance, distribution, and health.

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News from the Department of Marine Resources

Continued from Page 10

percentage of the value of the daily catch, not an hourly wage. Hire, pay, and supervise their own assistants, if there are any; AND Be able to work for other clients/customers, even if they choose not to.

A crewman can work for other captains or vessels if and when they want.

The independent contractor must also have at least THREE of these characteristics: Substantive investment in the facilities, tools, instruments, materials and knowledge needed to do the work; A crewman has their own oilskins, boots, and/or other gear needed to do the work. No limitation to work exclusively for the other individual or entity; A crewman can work for other captains or vessels if and when they want. Responsibility for satisfactory completion of the work and failure to complete the work; A crewman given the task of banding the lobsters works with minimal supervision to get the job done in the time required. Contract that defines the relationship and provides rights in the event the contract is terminated before the work is done; This would be very unusual with youth working for a captain/vessel. Payment based on factors directly related to the work performed and not solely the time worked; A crewman is paid based on the value of the daily catch, not an hourly

wage. Work performed is outside the usual course of business for which the service is performed; This would be very unusual with youth working for a captain/vessel.

OR Determination that the person is an independent contractor by the federal Internal Revenue Service. This would be very unusual with youth working for a captain/vessel.

Any questions contact the MDOL Bureau of Labor Standards at bls.mdol@maine.gov for more information.

Body of Sea Kayaker Recovered by Marine Patrol

May 5, 2026

LITTLE DEER ISLE – The Maine Marine Patrol has recovered the body of Jeffery B. Eaton, 55 of Albuquerque, New Mexico from the waters near the Deer Isle Bridge. Mr. Eaton was reported missing this morning at approximately 10:30 a.m. by family members who witnessed him overturn his kayak shortly after he launched from the shore near the end of Wiegand Place on Little Deer Isle. Marine Patrol along with members of the Maine State Police/Maine Marine Patrol Underwater Recovery Team, the Maine Marine Patrol aircraft, and the US Coast Guard responded. His body was located by the Marine Patrol pilot at 1:45 p.m. and recovered by Marine Patrol Officers approximately 1/2 mile west of Wiegand

Place. According to Marine Patrol, he was not wearing a life jacket or a wet suit. His family has been notified, and his body has been transferred to a local funeral home.

Maine Elver Harvest Reported Through 2 AM on 5/9/2026

DMR

- Pounds Reported - 4,637.50
- Overall Quota - 7,566
- Remaining Quota - 2,928.50

MALISEET

- Pounds Reported - 21.85
- Overall Quota - 107
- Remaining Quota - 85.15

MICMAC

- Pounds Reported - 26.52
- Overall Quota - 39
- Remaining Quota - 12.48

PASSAMAQUODDY

- Pounds Reported - 1,233.19
- Overall Quota - 1,300.78
- Remaining Quota - 67.59

PENOBSCOT

- Pounds Reported - 217.67
- Overall Quota - 620
- Remaining Quota - 402.34

Dealers reported buying a total of 6,136.727 pounds out of 9,632.78 available

pounds with a reported value of \$1,914,888 for average price per pound of \$312.

Jurisdictions with no landings listed either have no reported landings or their landings are currently confidential.


All 2026 data are extremely preliminary and subject to change without notice.

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17' 2018 Sportsman Island Reef 17 w/ Yamaha F90 Outboard - 404 Hours, 2018 Single Axle Trailer, Bimini Top & GPS. Very Clean, Asking \$22,000 - Call or stop by for more details - Casco Bay Yacht Sales, Freeport Maine, 207-865-4103; cascobayyacht.com



18' 2026 Scout 188 Sportfish w/ Yamaha F115LB, New Venture Single Axle Trailer, Alpine Gray Hull, Console Cover, Trim Tabs, Dual Integrated Swim Platforms, Bimini Top & Much More - Call or stop by for more details - Casco Bay Yacht Sales, Freeport Maine, 207-865-4103; cascobayyacht.com

POWER



19' 2026 Scout 195 Sportfish w/ Yamaha F115XB, New Venture Single Axle Trailer, Fusion Bluetooth Stereo, Console Cover, Powder Coated T-Top & Much More - Call or stop by for more details - Casco Bay Yacht Sales, Freeport Maine, 207-865-4103; cascobayyacht.com



20' 2005 Boston Whaler 205 Eastport w/ Mercury Optimax 150hp Outboard - 275 Hours, 2006 Tandem Axle Trailer, GPS & Livewell. Asking \$25,000 - Call or stop by for more details - Casco Bay Yacht Sales, Freeport Maine, 207-865-4103; cascobayyacht.com



21' 2026 Scout 15 XSF w/ Yamaha F150XC, New Venture Tandem Axle Trailer, Midnight Blue Hull, Powder Coated T-Top, Removable Teak Bow Table & Much More! Call or stop by for more details - Casco Bay Yacht Sales, Freeport Maine, 207-865-4103; cascobayyacht.com

POWER



23' 2021 Scout 235 Dorado w/ Yamaha F300UCA Outboard, Black Hull, Garmin GPS, Garmin VHF Radio, Fiberglass Hardtop, Bow Cover, Electric Head & Much More - Very Clean - Asking \$97,500 - Call or stop by for more details - Casco Bay Yacht Sales, Freeport Maine, 207-865-4103; cascobayyacht.com



23' 2020 Steiger Craft 23 Miami w/ Yamaha F200XCA Outboard - 64 Hours, 2020 Venture Tandem Axle Trailer, VHF Radio & Garmin GPS. Asking \$92,000 - Call or stop by for more details - Casco Bay Yacht Sales, Freeport Maine, 207-865-4103.

24' GRADY WHITE OFFSHORE, 1987. 200 hp Yamaha 2-stroke, 90 gal fuel tank, renewed 2017. 2 battery system, loads of equipment, dodger. Asking \$6,000. May be seen at Ring's Marine Service. South Freeport (207) 865-6143.

24' LUND GENMAR 2450, 1991. Complete with galvanized trailer and Evinrude 8 hp kicker. Mercruiser 5.7L outdrive. Fresh water use only. Fuel tank 96 gal. Cuddy cabin with full cushions for two, sink, hand pump, space for porti potty, fresh water tank. 2 down riggers and misc. tackle. Upgrade: Complete replacement of the main deck plywood 2024. Asking \$12,000. May be seen at Ring's Marine Service. South Freeport (207) 865-6143.

24' STINGRAY, 1998. With Mercruiser outdrive, galvanized trailer. Lots of equipment. Set up for 2 berths, space for porti potty. Asking \$5,000. May be seen at Ring's Marine Service. South Freeport (207) 865-6143.

POWER



24' SCOUT 240 XSF, 2025. With Yamaha F300XSB - DES Outboard. Shark Gray Full Hull Color Upgrade, Garmin 8610XSV, Garmin VHF 315 Radio, Rocket Launchers, Hardtop T-Bag, Battery Charger, Fresh Water Washdown, Diaphragm Overboard Discharge Pump, Self-Contained Porcelain Head, Seadeck Helm Footrest and Helm Pad, Upgraded Leaning Post w/ Tackle Station, Folding Helm Chairs & Igloo Cooler - New Venture Tandem Axle Aluminum Trailer Available. Sale Price \$140,000. Call or stop by for more details - Casco Bay Yacht Sales - Freeport, Maine - 207-865-4103; cascobayyacht.com



24' SCOUT 240 Dorado, 2025. With Yamaha F300XSB & New Venture Trailer. Garmin 1243 XSV & GT12M Transducer, Fiberglass Hardtop, Wireless Active Mount Phone Charger, Diaphragm Overboard Discharge & much more! Sale Price \$169,000. Call or stop in for more details Casco Bay Yacht Sales, 207-865-4103; cascobayyacht.com



26' SCOUT 260 LXF, 2025. With Dual Yamaha F200XSA - DES - White Outboards. Shark Gray Full Hull Color Upgrade w/ Painted White Accent Stripe, (2) Garmin 1243XSV, GMR 18XHD Marine Radar, Garmin VHF 315 Radio, Bianca Cushion Package Upgrade, Battery Charger, Rocket Launchers, Lumitec Light Bar, Windshield Wiper, Diaphragm Overboard Discharge & Electric Head Upgrade. - Call or stop by for more details - Casco Bay Yacht Sales - Freeport, Maine - 207-865-4103; cascobayyacht.com

POWER



27' SCOUT 277 DORADO, 2022. With Dual Yamaha F200XCA White Outboards - Only 182 Hours! Black Full Hull Color, Garmin 8612XSV, Garmin VHF 315 Radio, Optimus EPS Steering, Cayenne Cushion Package, Hardtop Full Enclosure & Drop Curtain, Rocket Launchers - Clean & Loaded. \$199,000 - Call or stop by for more details - Casco Bay Yacht Sales - Freeport, Maine - 207-865-4103; cascobayyacht.com



32' 2004 Boston Whaler 320 Outrage w/ Dual Mercury XXL Saltwater Series 225hp Outboards, 2004 Tri-Axle Trailer, (2) Garmin GPS, Garmin XHD Radar, VHF Radio & Much More - Asking \$79,000 - Call or stop by for more details - Casco Bay Yacht Sales, Freeport Maine, 207-865-4103; cascobayyacht.com

SAIL

22' HUNTER SLOOP, 1985. Red hull with wood trim, 9.9 Johnson outboard, main, working jib, some equipment. Asking \$995. May be seen at Ring's Marine Service. South Freeport (207) 865-6143.

CAPE DORY 25 D MARK II, 1982. Yanmar diesel, fully found on a galvanized trailer. Main, working jib, furling genoa. Sleeps 4. Make appointment to see. Ring's Marine Service. S. Freeport (207) 865-6143.

27' CATALINA, 1972. Priced to sell. Call for details. May be seen at Ring's Marine Service. South Freeport (207) 865-6143.

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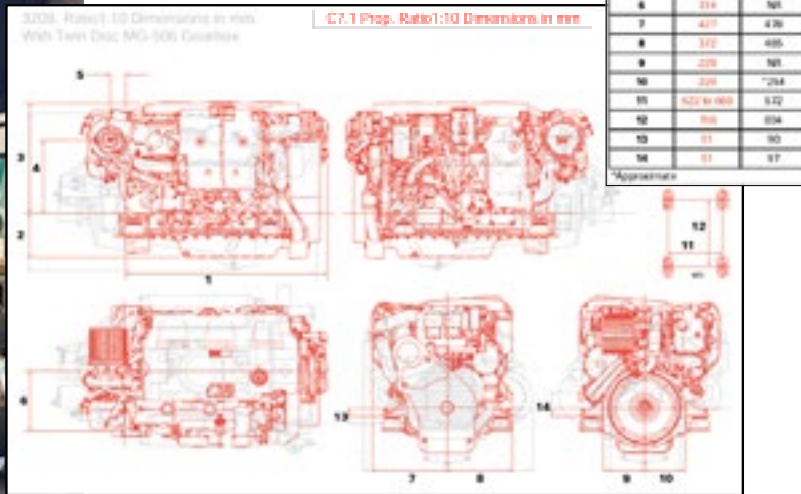
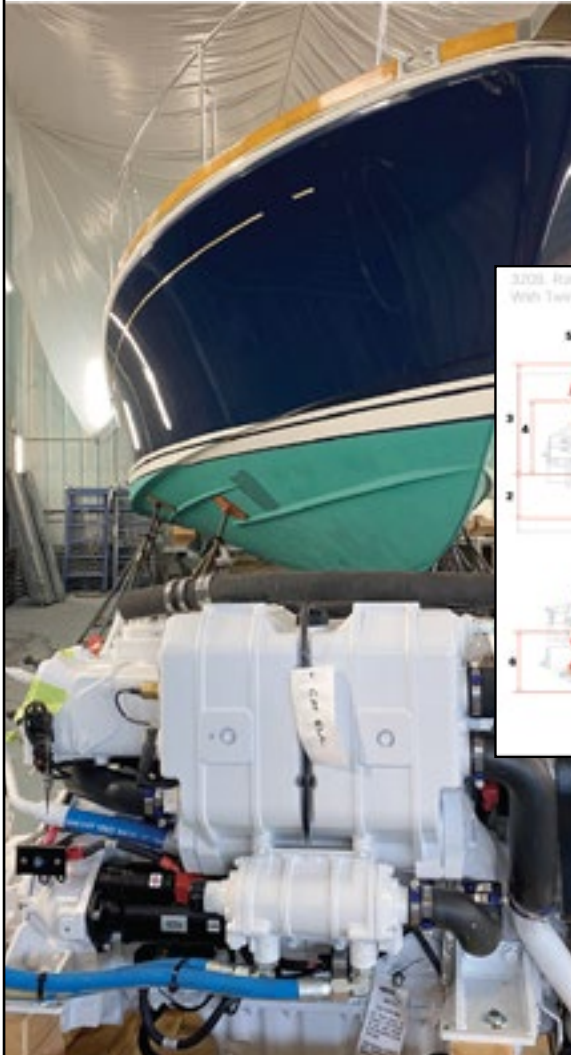
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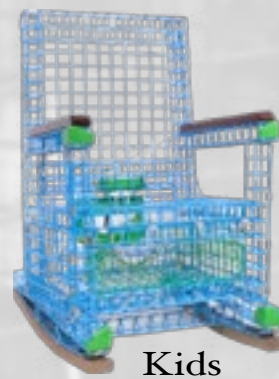
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