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Massachusetts Lobstermen press NOAA on gear rules, regulatory process

Earlier this spring, leaders from the Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association met with top officials from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to voice growing concerns over federal regulations affecting the state's commercial lobster industry.

MLA Executive Director Beth Casoni and Executive Committee member Mark Ring joined a discussion with NOAA leadership, including Eugenio Pineiro-Soler and Sam Rauch III. The meeting focused on a range of issues, from emerging fishing technologies to the federal process used to develop whale protection rules.

At the heart of the discussion was the continued push for so-called "on-demand" or ropeless fishing gear, designed to reduce the risk of whale entanglements by eliminating vertical lines in the water. Industry representatives argued the technology is not yet practical for widespread use, citing high costs, operational challenges, and limited adoption among fishermen.

According to the MLA, support for on-demand gear within the industry remains extremely low. Association leaders warned that even limited experimental use could expose the broader fleet to



risk if equipment malfunctions were to result in a whale entanglement.

The issue is closely tied to ongoing efforts to protect the endangered North Atlantic right whale, a species whose declining population has driven stricter federal oversight of East Coast fisheries.

Lobstermen also raised concerns about the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team, the multi-stakeholder body tasked with recommending measures to reduce whale entanglements. MLA representatives criticized the group's process, arguing that it lacks consistency and accountability because participants can

reverse their positions after meetings conclude.

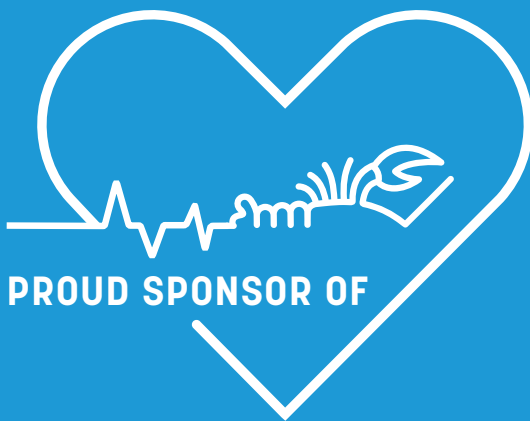
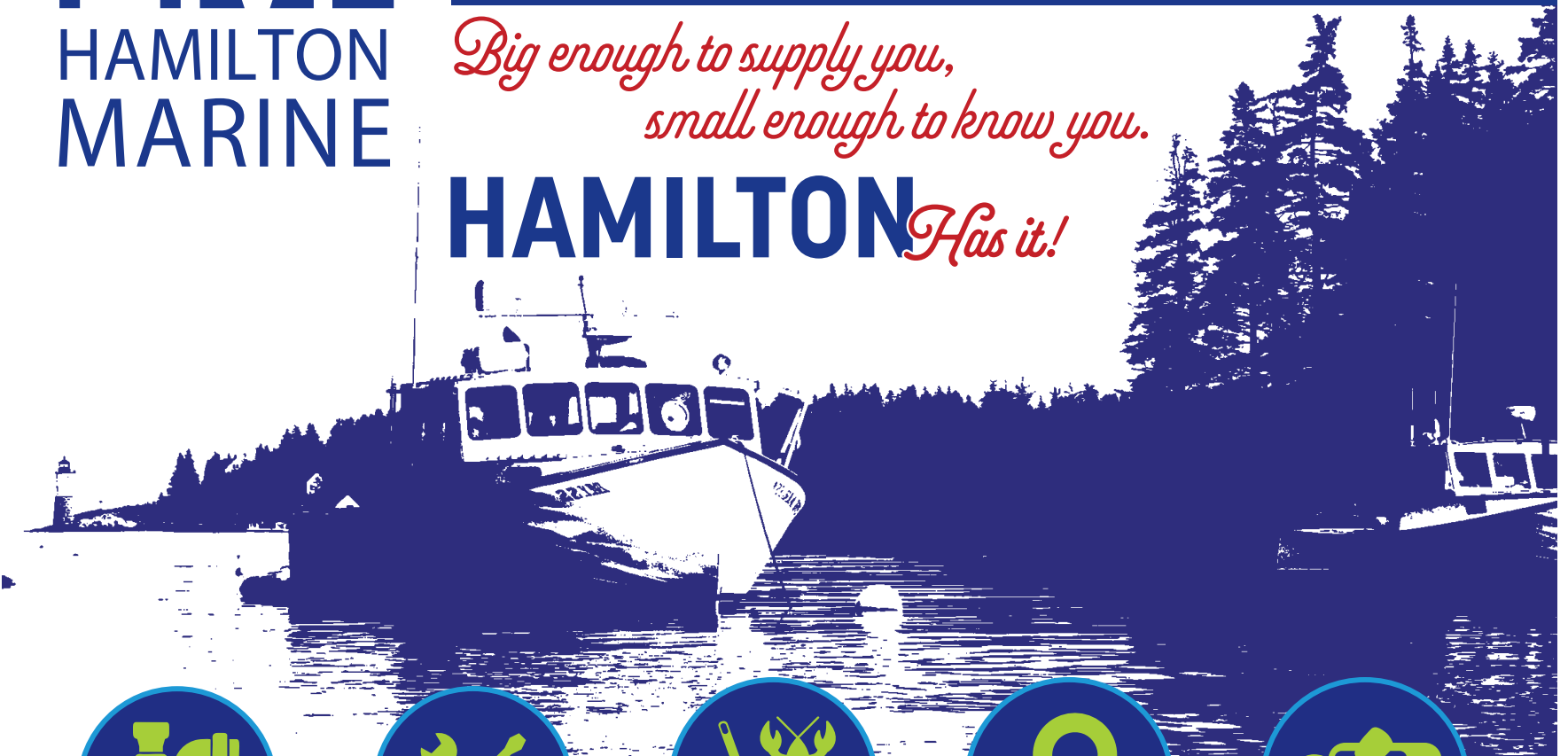
"If agreements reached during multi-day discussions can later be withdrawn, it calls into question the value of the process," industry representatives said, noting the time commitment required to participate.

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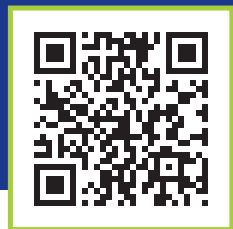
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As the HAULER TURNS

This spring has felt less like a season and more like a steady downpour of meetings—industry, organizational, and everything in between. As the saying goes, you’ve got to make hay while the sun is shining, and by that measure, the past couple of months have been nothing short of bright. It’s been busy, productive, and, at times, overwhelming—but all in service of keeping our fishery informed, represented, and moving forward.

Now, with spring finally giving way to the start of the fishing season, many of you are already back on the water, setting gear and settling into the rhythm of the work. If you’re not, there’s a good chance the whales are still lingering. As we’ve seen year after year, they tend to “flip the switch” around mid-May and begin their migration north. Until then, we wait, watch, and hope for a clear path forward. Ideally, the gear is in—and the whales are gone. One can hope.

Over the past several weeks, MLA leadership has been actively engaged on multiple fronts. Secretary/Treasurer Dave Casoni and Executive Director Beth Casoni attended the Seafood Show, where they met with Eugenio Piñeiro Soler, Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries. The conversation focused on key federal priorities and ongoing challenges facing the industry. The following day, Beth was joined by members of the MLA Executive Committee, including Mark Ring, for meetings with NOAA leadership in Gloucester. Discussions ranged from the future of on-demand gear testing—particularly concerning potential defunding—to broader implications of the Marine Mammal Protection Act. A more detailed summary of these conversations is featured on the cover of this issue.

Closer to home, MLA President Sooky Sawyer, who serves on the Massachusetts Marine Fisheries Commission, participated in

the Commission’s March meeting. One of the major outcomes was the decision to withdraw proposals related to horseshoe crab quota reallocation and lobster permitting changes. The MLA did not support these measures, citing concerns about unintended consequences—particularly the possibility of opening the door to expanded federal-water fleets, especially in Lobster Management Area 1.

Earlier this spring, Beth also took part in meetings of the Commercial Fisheries Commission. These discussions covered a wide range of topics, from strengthening the economic value of locally harvested seafood to expanding in-state processing capacity. A consistent point of emphasis has been the urgent need for more lobster processing within the state. With rising fuel costs and the reality that roughly 80% of processed lobster is currently shipped to Canada, the economic burden ultimately falls on lobstermen. Increasing local processing isn’t just a logistical improvement, it’s a necessary step toward preserving profitability within the fleet.

The MLA’s Annual Membership Meeting brought together participants from across the Commonwealth and sparked meaningful dialogue about the future of lobster management. Much of the conversation centered on the intersection of whale protection measures and the sustainability of the lobster resource. Beth introduced several forward-looking—at times challenging—ideas to help initiate discussion, emphasizing that none were entirely new but all deserved renewed consideration. Members responded with thoughtful, constructive input, which will continue to be evaluated as these issues develop.

It was also reiterated that MLA Delegates play a critical role in shaping the organization’s positions on lobster management. These decisions are not made lightly, and member



involvement is essential. Anyone interested in having a direct voice in this process is strongly encouraged to become a Delegate.

In closing, after careful consideration and discussion with the Executive Committee, we want to share an important update: this will be the final printed issue of the publication. Moving forward, we will transition to a fully digital format. This shift will allow us to provide more timely updates, interactive content, and direct access to resources such as advertisers, regulatory agencies, and video materials. We are also exploring the development of an audio version, making it easier to stay informed while steaming to and from your gear.

We understand that change can be difficult—but it is also inevitable. As an industry, adaptability has always been one of our greatest strengths. We’ll adjust our sails, as we always have, and continue ahead—together.

Wishing you calm seas and a strong season,

Beth Casoni

Executive Director
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Secretary Rollins announces the creation of the USDA Office of Seafood

WASHINGTON, D.C., APRIL 15, 2026 – Today, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke L. Rollins alongside U.S. Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum, White House National Economic Council Director Kevin Hassett, Alaska Senator Dan Sullivan, and Maine Senator Susan Collins announced the creation of the new U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Office of Seafood. This first of its kind office will prioritize customer service and ease of navigation for American seafood cultivators, producers, and processors to access USDA programs.

“President Trump is the first President to recognize fisherman for the essential work they do to sustain our food supply,” **said Secretary Rollins**. “With the launch of the USDA Office of Seafood, we are honoring decades of hard work on the water and opening the door to new opportunities, stronger support, and a brighter future for the seafood industry. Today’s announcement, in addition to the historic tax cuts and investments in rural America made possible through the priorities and provisions in the Working Families Tax Cuts, is truly a new chapter for America’s fishermen.”

“The Department of the Interior is thrilled to support the establishment of the first-ever Seafood Office at the Department of Agriculture - an initiative that puts the people who help feed America first,” **said Secretary Burgum**. “American fishermen are the backbone of coastal economies and a vital part of our nation’s food security. By improving coordination across agencies, the Seafood Office will ensure these fishermen can fully access the tools and programs they need to thrive.”



“The Trump Administration is committed to supporting American fishermen, strengthening our coastal communities, and ensuring families have access to affordable high-quality American seafood,” **said Secretary Lutnick**. “When our fishermen win, America wins.”

“Fishing is the very foundation of Maine’s heritage. Today, the seafood industry in our region generates more than \$5 billion in income and supports hundreds of thousands of jobs, in addition to providing a nutritious food supply, delicious restaurant meals, and sustaining entire coastal communities,” **said Senator Collins**. “I appreciate that USDA is recognizing our fishermen as farmers of the sea and establishing the Office of Seafood. The creation of this office is a long overdue, essential step to expanding seats at the table for our hardworking fishing families, who are a key piece of our nation’s history and our future as well.”

“Alaska’s fishermen deserve the same federal attention, resources, and risk management tools afforded to America’s incredible farmers,” **said Senator Sullivan**. “The new USDA Office of Seafood—an action I’ve been strongly advocating for over the past decade—opens the door to that opportunity. This office is going to benefit everybody: all of

Alaska’s fishermen, our small businesses, and our many coastal and Interior communities from across the state. I thank Secretary Rollins and Secretary Lutnick for working closely with me and my team over the past year to fully understand the challenges facing our fishermen and coastal communities and for taking meaningful action on their behalf. With this new office, we’re going to build a stronger partnership between USDA, Department of Commerce, the entire Executive Branch, and our fishermen, so they can continue to do what they do best: sustainably harvesting the freshest and healthiest wild seafood in the world.”

“Proud to be part of the launch of the inaugural, first-ever USDA Office of Seafood! Food security is national security which means prioritizing domestic production and strengthening our food supply here at home. From our Florida coasts to communities across the country, we’re cutting red tape, backing our fishermen, and ensuring American seafood competes—and wins—on the world stage. This office will not only elevate and support commercial production, but also advance commonsense conservation so future generations can thrive in this industry. As Chair of the Aquaculture Caucus, I’m grateful for the

tenacious leadership driving this effort forward—Secretary Rollins, Secretary Lutnick, Secretary Hassett, Secretary Burgum—and President Trump,” **said Representative Cammack**.

Fifty years ago this week, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act—the primary law governing marine fisheries in U.S. federal waters—was signed into law, providing the fishing industry with long-term economic stability. However, for years, fishermen across the country have been struggling to navigate programs at USDA that can help support their businesses.

With the creation of the USDA Office of Seafood, the Federal government now enters a new era of seafood policy where American fishermen will be recognized by USDA as a key part of the U.S. food supply.

One of the primary roles of the new USDA Office of Seafood will be coordinating across USDA agencies to ensure fishermen are integrated into USDA programs and working alongside the U.S. Department of Commerce and other Federal partners to revitalize the American seafood industry.

Today’s action supports USDA’s implementation of President Trump’s Executive Order 14276, *Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness*. The USDA Office of Seafood will play an important role in coordinating with the U.S. Department of Commerce in the development of the America First Seafood Strategy to promote production, marketing, sale, and export of U.S. fishery and aquaculture products and strengthen domestic processing capacity.

For additional information, email seafood@usda.gov or visit www.usda.gov/seafood

Major changes to Boston Harbor shellfish classification in the works

In 1925, a national typhoid epidemic caused by the consumption of contaminated oysters led to the closure of almost all of Boston Harbor to shellfishing. Since then, only specially licensed harvesters have been permitted into certain areas to access moderately contaminated softshell clams destined for a shellfish purification facility. This is about to change.

Thanks largely to the multi-billion-dollar clean-up of Boston Harbor, water quality has improved enough to reclassify certain areas of the harbor to Conditionally Approved, allowing shellfishing for direct human consumption. These areas include some of the most productive shellfish habitats in the Commonwealth in parts of Winthrop, Hingham, and Hull. This will allow both commercial and recreational shellfishers to harvest shellfish for their personal use or direct sale into commerce for the first time in a century. Not only will this be a tremendous boon to residents of the three towns, but also to other Massachusetts residents interested in recreational shellfishing.

Although some of these areas have been harvested over the years on a limited basis, the product (soft-shelled clams) was required to be sent to DMF's shellfish depuration plant in Newburyport, where the clams were purified before they could go to market. While the depuration process makes shellfish safe to eat, it is expensive, labor intensive, and is limited to a few

specially trained and certified commercial harvesters. As such, most residents of the Commonwealth could not benefit from this fishery. Reclassification in Boston Harbor will eliminate the need for this highly regulated and controlled process and allow this bountiful public resource to benefit the general public.

While DMF has completed its analysis demonstrating that large areas of the Outer Harbor are clean enough to be reclassified for direct harvest, the actual timing of the re-opening requires additional collaboration with the municipalities. As a home-rule state, Massachusetts is one of only two in the country that cedes management of shellfishing in clean waters to the local cities and towns. Because Winthrop, Hingham, and Hull have no history of managing shellfisheries, some additional steps are required before they can allow shellfishing in their communities.

First, a local management plan must be developed to specify how the fishery will be managed sustainably. Second, enforceable rules and regulations, as well as a local permitting system, need to be established. Third, a local Shellfish Constable must be hired and trained to oversee all aspects of the fishery, including enforcement. Additionally, in this case where the areas will be subject to routine closures following rainfall, sewage spills, and other unforeseen events that can negatively affect water quality, the towns will need to collaboratively



Portions of the areas within the red circles of the productive shellfish habitat in greater Boston Harbor (shown in yellow) now meet water quality standards to allow direct harvest of shellfish for the first time in 100 years.

develop a Conditional Area Management Plan (CAMP) with DMF. CAMPs specify when potentially harmful conditions exist, how temporary closures will be implemented, and who will be responsible for enforcement.

To assist the towns in developing these new procedures, DMF Shellfish Program staff have already met with officials from Winthrop, Hingham, and Hull, each of whom have initiated these time-consuming processes. We can expect these areas to begin opening in 2026 as these requirements are put in place.

As filter feeders, shellfish have the unique ability to accumulate any contaminants found in

the surrounding water. Because of this biology, shellfishing for direct human consumption can only be allowed in areas with the highest water quality designation due to the risk to public health. As such, re-opening these areas to shellfishing is one of the strongest indicators yet that the decades-long Boston Harbor clean-up was a success. We hope this trend continues and we can re-open additional areas of Greater Boston Harbor in the future.

*By Wayne Castonguay,
Gloucester Regional
Shellfish Supervisor*

www.mass.gov/news/major-changes-to-boston-harbor-shellfish-classification-in-the-works

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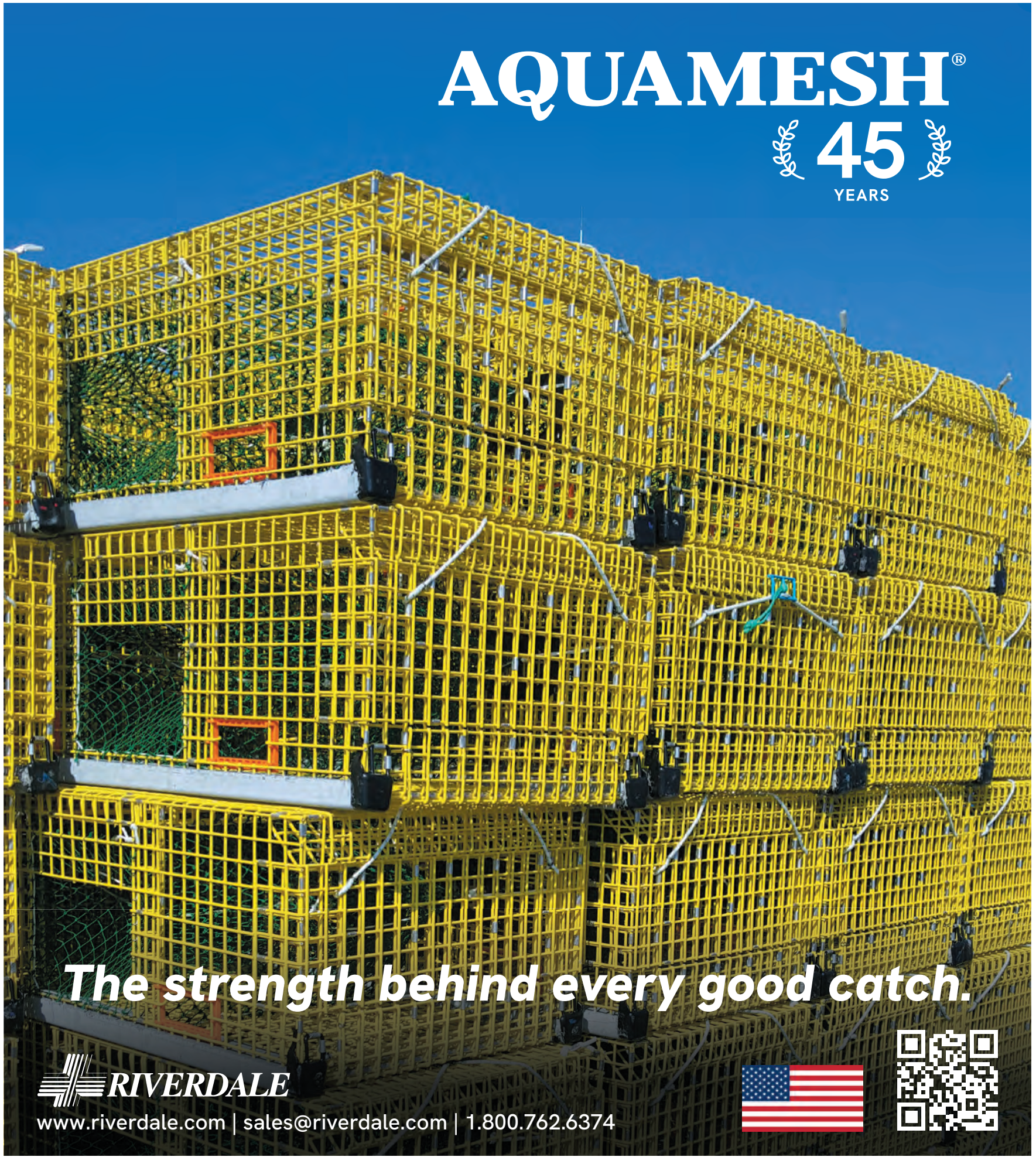
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VW 1 Gear Innovation Fund Project Outline

The Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association (MLA), in partnership with Real Time Data—the developers of the electronic logbook platform Deckhand—worked together to create a streamlined, workflow-based application for commercial lobstermen. This tool allows fishermen to record their catch and effort while simultaneously and seamlessly capturing their location within offshore wind lease areas in the background.

Deckhand has proven to be a highly adaptable platform, capable of collecting multiple types of data at once and distributing relevant subsets to various data endpoints. Its flexibility makes it an ideal solution for the evolving needs of today's lobster fishing industry.

Initial funding supported the development of this application with direct input from lobstermen, ensuring it aligns with real-world practices and truly *"works the way they do."*

At its core, this project is designed to support and protect fishermen. Currently, six lobstermen are equipped with Deckhand devices integrated with the VW 1 Gear Innovation workflow.

As participants utilize the system, they will contribute to the collection of fine-scale temporal and spatial data across Southern New England. This data will help generate accurate insights to support mitigation and compensation program applications, while also demonstrating the value of electronic data collection to individual businesses and the broader fishing industry. Ultimately, the goal is to expand adoption and maximize participation in electronic data reporting across the industry.

In the long term, this project provides fishermen with onboard technology that significantly improves the efficiency and ease of data col-



lection across multiple aspects of their operations. A single Deckhand unit enables the recording of catch and effort not only to meet reporting requirements, but also to support the verification of mitigation and compensation claims. By capturing more precise and reliable data, the platform enhances the quality of information shared with key stakeholders.

Getting involved in this project is an opportunity for lobstermen to take control of their own data and ensure their work is accurately represented in an increasingly complex ocean landscape. As offshore wind development continues to expand, having precise, self-collected data on where and how you fish is one of the strongest tools you

have to protect your livelihood and support fair access to mitigation and compensation programs. This technology is designed to work the way you do—simple, practical, and built with input from fishermen—while also reducing reporting burdens and improving efficiency onboard. By participating, you're not only strengthening your own operation, but also helping to build a unified, data-driven voice for the lobster industry that can better advocate for its future.

If you are interested in getting set up with your very own Deckhand device for the 2026 fishing season, call MLA's Administrative Director Julia Logan at 781-545-6984 ext. #3 or email at jlogan@lobstermen.com



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Port: Warren, RI

JOHN MORAN

Biz: Athearn Marine
Port: Fairhaven

SKIP BENNETT

F/V: Uptown Girl
Port: Duxbury

MIKE MORAN

F/V: Cindy Lee
Port: Hampton Harbor, NH

RYAN BROWN

F/V: Miss Fortune
Port: Seabrook, NH

BEN MORGAN

F/V: Ben Fishing
Port: Chatham

ERIC DOUCETTE

F/V: Zeus
Port: Manchester-by-the-sea

JAMES NASH

F/V: Ann Marie
Port: S. Chatham

DENISE GILBRIDE

F/V: Cassidy Lynne
Port: Hampton Harbor, NH

FRANK ONESCHUK

F/V: Martha Porter
Port: Pt. Judith, RI

JOSHUA T. HEATH

F/V: Sheila Ann
Port: Hampton Harbor, NH

DAVID PETERSON

F/V: Bjorn
Port: Chatham

WILLIAM HERRICK

F/V: Sarah Jean
Port: Newbury

STEPHEN PIETRUSKA

F/V: Kayley J
Port: Fairhaven

ALEX IACONO

F/V: Storm Elizabeth
Port: Provincetown

CHARLES RONEY

F/V: Cynthia Anne
Port: East Hampton, NY

VINNY IACONO

F/V: Miss Mia
Port: Menemsha

MATTEUS SCHEFFER

F/V: Mary Knight
Port: Menemsha

NICK MARTIN

F/V: Time and Tide
Port: Sandwich

KEVIN WARK

F/V: Dana Christine 2
Port: Barnegat Light

JACOB MARSHALL

F/V: Helen Irene
Port: Fairhaven



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Our passion for the industry drives ongoing innovation, including the upcoming Gloucester BASE Fish Auction. This auction will create an open, orderly marketplace that ensures fair prices for fishermen and reliable access to fresh seafood for buyers.

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Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries Eugenio Pineiro-Soler (left) with MLA Executive Director Beth Casoni (right).

Meeting

FROM PAGE 1

Despite the criticisms, both sides described the meeting as constructive. NOAA officials, according to the MLA, expressed appreciation for the industry's candid feedback.

Massachusetts lobstermen point to significant progress already made in reducing risk to whales, estimating the state has achieved roughly 93 percent of required risk reduction targets through measures such as gear modifications and fishing restrictions.

Attention now turns to NOAA's forthcoming Biological Opinion, a key regulatory document that will determine whether additional changes are required for the lobster fishery to comply with federal endangered species protections.

For an industry that has operated along the coast of Massachusetts for generations, the stakes remain high. The outcome of ongoing federal reviews could shape not only future conservation measures, but also the economic viability of one of the region's most iconic fisheries.

Henry Lind receives 2025 David L. Belding Award

Since 1989, the David L. Belding Award has been presented annually by the Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission and the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) to recognize an individual's dedication to promoting the conservation and sustainable use of the Commonwealth's resources. Dr. Belding was a pioneer in marine science and aquaculture in the early 1900's, building the first marine laboratory on Cape Cod to research how shellfish can be grown from seed to alleviate fishing pressure on wild populations. His prolific scientific career produced substantial research, spanning from river herring to aquaculture, that is still referenced today.

Earlier this month, Henry Lind was recognized with this award for his contributions and leadership in shellfish management. For more than 50 years, Henry Lind has been a tireless steward of the marine environment and a passionate advocate for managers and researchers who help ensure the sustainable use of these valuable resources. His career began in 1971, studying salt marshes in Eastham for an undergraduate course. He served the Town of Eastham for over 34 years as a Conservation Agent, Shellfish Constable, Harbor Master, and Natural Resources Director. His work included managing and maintaining the passage of local herring runs and supporting environmentally friendly solutions to coastal erosion. The impact of Henry's contributions to shellfish management and research, however, is particularly remarkable. He helped establish



Henry Lind (leftmost) stands with (left to right) Raymond Kane, Chairman of the Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission (MFAC), Bill Amaru, member of the MFAC, and Dan McKiernan, Director of Division of Marine Fisheries.

municipal quahog propagation efforts, supported harmful algal bloom research when Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP) became a recurring threat to shellfish on Cape Cod, and contributed to early experimentation and modification of upweller technology for intermediate grow-out of shellfish seed.

The impact of Henry's passion and expertise in this field reaches beyond himself with his role as a founding member of the Massachusetts Shellfish Officers Association (MSOA). Through Henry's dedication, he spearheaded formal training for shellfish constables that explored shellfish biology, commercial and recreational fisheries management, and law enforcement, which has

been crucial to the MSOA and DMF's work for decades.

Even in retirement, Henry continues to contribute to these same efforts as a volunteer, exhibiting exemplary dedication to shellfish management and those who rely on these natural resources. As a capstone to his career, Henry is currently leading the effort to modernize and expand shellfish constable training through an upgraded hybrid and accessible course. He embodies the same curiosity, care, and passion that led Dr. Belding through his remarkable career, and he is an exceptional recipient of the 2025 Belding Award.

<https://www.mass.gov/news/henry-lind-receives-2025-david-l-belding-award>

What's been going on: Lobster Foundation of Massachusetts Updates



On April 14th, the Lobster Foundation of Massachusetts (LFoM) hosted the "Scrap It!" South Shore Gear Cleanup Initiative in partnership with the Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association (MLA), the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, and Molloy Disposal at the MLA headquarters in Scituate, MA.

The event gave commercial lobstermen a dedicated opportunity to



responsibly dispose of unwanted, outdated, or damaged gear. Fishermen were encouraged to clear out old gear from their yards, helping remove gear that's been sitting around unused for years from working waterfronts and surrounding properties.



In total, approximately 2,100 lbs., was collected and properly disposed of, keeping it out of the water and off local property.

The goal is simple: give lobstermen a practical, responsible way to get rid of gear that's no longer usable, whether it's on the boat, at the dock, or sitting in the yard.

At the same time, it helps reduce marine debris, protect the marine environment, and support the long-term health of the fishery.

Building on this momentum, the upcoming "Scrap It!" North Shore Lobster Gear Cleanup Initiative (April 27-29) will continue to give lobstermen a simple way to safely dispose of old gear and keep Massachusetts waters clean.

LFOM GRAPPLING PROJECT UPDATE

LFoM is seeing steady progress on the grappling with technology project. In November 2025, a successful engineering test was conducted using both pole mount and tow body setups in a busy, working channel.

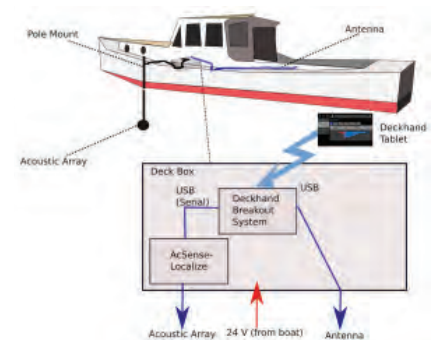
Heavy boat traffic, noise, and real

fishing conditions did not slow the system down.

It was still able to detect and track multiple geo-locators and provide reliable location data for gear recovery under conditions that closely mirror real fishing operations.

The focus now is on refining system performance, so it operates more smoothly, adapts to changing environmental and operational conditions, and integrates more naturally into existing fishing practices.

Additional geo-locators are also being developed to support continued testing in real-time fishing scenarios.





From a cost standpoint, grappling with technology offers a more affordable alternative to pop-up buoy systems, which are costly to purchase, deploy, and maintain.

Grappling with technology will help reduce gear conflict between fixed and mobile gear fisheries and support NARW conservation by eliminating vertical lines in the water column, lowering entanglement risk while maintaining effective gear location and recovery.

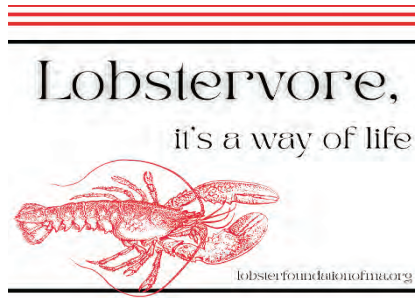
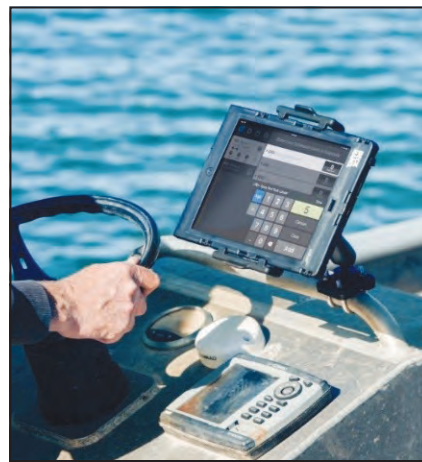
Looking ahead, five more vessels will be outfitted in Fall 2026 ahead of Winter 2027 trials to evaluate performance under real-time fishing scenarios.

LFoM will continue working closely with fishermen to improve the system, ensuring the tools are practical, reliable, cost-effective, and suitable for everyday use on the water.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

I recently completed the *Writing for Green* program, a 40-hour course focused on helping people communicate environmental and conservation work in a clearer, more practical way, especially when it comes to building programs that actually work out in the field and can get supported and funded.

As Program Coordinator, I'm always thinking about how we share



information with the industry. If it's not clear or useful to the people on the water, it doesn't really do its job.

I'm working on sharpening these skills because effective communication matters in this work. It helps keep things understandable, keeps people connected, and makes sure what we're doing actually makes sense where it counts, in the fishery.

CLOSING THOUGHTS....

As the season opens and boats head back out, it's a reminder of what this fishery delivers; delicious, nutritious lobsters, harvested from our coastal waters.

In Massachusetts, lobster isn't just part of the fishery, it's part of who we are. It's built into our coastal communities, the working waterfronts, and the families who have made their living on the water for generations.

Lobstervore
[lob-ster-vore] adjective



a person whose diet consists of high protein lobster, that is locally and sustainably harvested.

The heart of "Lobstervore" is putting lobster back where it belongs: **front and center**. Not as a luxury food or an afterthought, but as a go-to, high-quality, sustainably harvested protein that comes straight from our waters and our commercial lobstermen. This is seafood royalty, no occasion required.

Sweet, clean, and distinctly New England, it carries the pride of a fishery built on hard work, stewardship, and tradition that still holds strong today.

Being a "Lobstervore" is simple, it means recognizing what we have here is worth choosing, worth eating, and worth keeping in the conversation every time you think about what's for dinner.

Wishing you a safe and productive fishing season,

*Tracey Abboud
Program Coordinator*

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Lobster Samples Needed for Cooperative Research: Genetic population structure of lobster in U.S. waters for stock delineation



GLOUCESTER MARINE GENOMICS INSTITUTE

Project Summary

The Gloucester Marine Genomics Institute (GMGI) is using genetic tools to evaluate the population structure

of American lobster across the Gulf of Maine, Georges Bank, and Southern New England to establish biologically accurate stock boundaries. By analyzing samples collected by lobstermen and regional biologists, the study will provide data to inform fisheries management and improve understanding of lobster adaptation to changing environmental conditions.

We are looking for lobstermen to collect lobster legs from late-stage or hatching eggger females (June to December 2026) collected from offshore locations in US waters.

The red points in the map above indicate general locations of need for the project, not exact locations. If you are fishing in these areas and want to participate, please contact Tim

O'Donnell (contact info below).

Participating vessels that collect the desired 25-40 legs from a location will receive a \$500 stipend.

For more details, please contact **Tim O'Donnell**, the Principal Investigator on the project, at GMGI via text, call, or email:

Cell: 267-574-1042

Email: tim.odonnell@gmgi.org

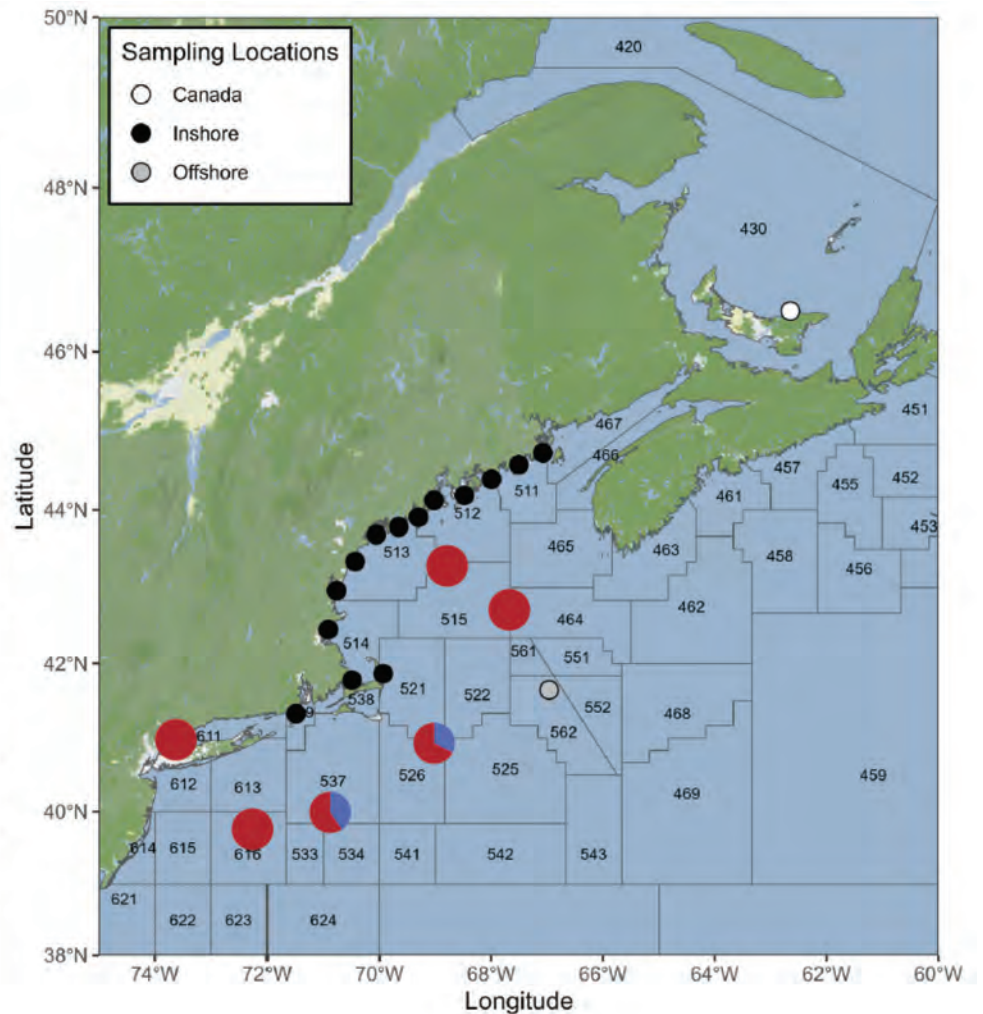
LOBSTER LEG COLLECTION



What we're looking for:

- 25 - 40 walking legs
- late stage to hatching females
- metadata with location, egg stage and collection date for each sample

Location	Area	Samples Collected	Samples Needed
515 NW	Offshore	0	40
515 SW	Offshore	0	40
526	Offshore	12	25-40
537	Offshore	17	25-40
616	Offshore	0	40
CT/NY	Inshore	0	40



GLOUCESTER MARINE GENOMICS INSTITUTE

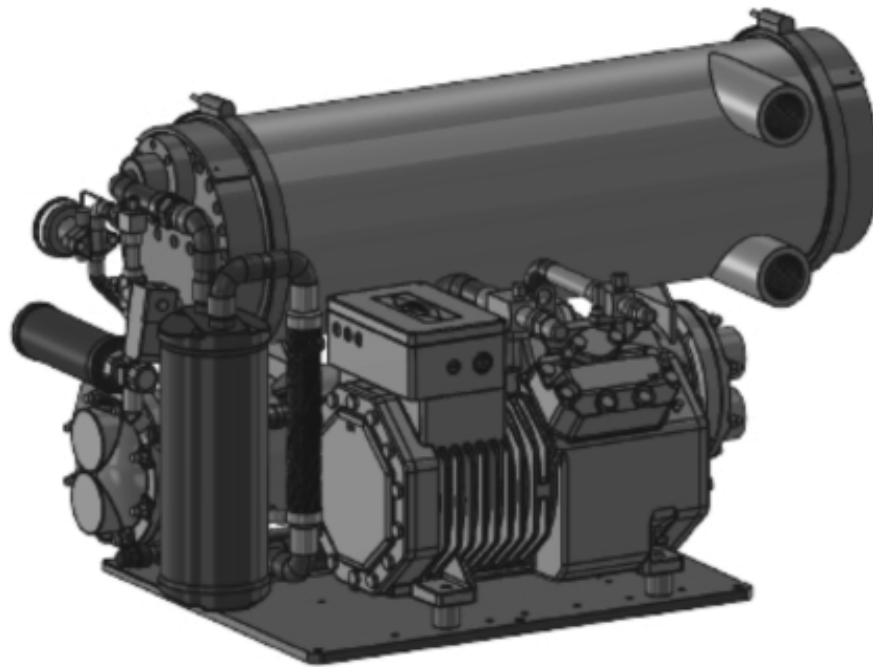
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Director

Fixed Gear Fishermen of Massachusetts,

Marine Fisheries will be conducting its annual spring trawl survey throughout state coastal waters beginning May 4, 2026. Surveys have been conducted each May and September since 1978 to provide a consistent sampling of benthic fishes and mobile invertebrates. Survey data is used to monitor the condition of various marine stocks. The data is also used to inform the environmental review process, which advises on ways to minimize construction impacts on fisheries resources. Maintaining access to the planned sampling sites is critical to the integrity of the survey.

Please review either the live map on our website or the attached tables and maps of station locations. The live map displays all remaining tow locations, the map can be found on our Review trawl survey updates (<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/review-trawl-survey-updates>) web page. The live map has a feature which allows you to display your current location. On the upper lefthand side of the map page select the "scope icon" button just below the home button. With the location feature toggled on, your device will display your live location on the map in relation to tow circles and historical tows. This feature can be used to assure gear is not in conflict with planned tows. **We kindly ask for your cooperation and insist that all fixed gear be kept clear of the shaded station tow circles by the dates listed in the table.** The coordinates of each selected point are provided in the attached table. The live map and attached figures show the station with a 1.5 n. mi. diameter circle around the selected point. All station circles are trimmed to the appropriate stratum which represents actual station outline. This survey notice can also be accessed on our Review trawl survey updates (<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/review-trawl-survey-updates>) web page. We will make every attempt to complete stations as timely as possible to minimize inconvenience to fixed gear fishermen. Completed stations will be updated and announced daily to notify fishermen that gear can be returned to the area. *Marine Fisheries* is prepared to attach restrictions to permits (under 322 CMR 7.01 (7)), mandating that fixed gear is not set on designated trawl survey sites between the announced date and notification of station completion. It remains our hope that this action will be unnecessary.

Each day, the Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association (MLA) will be notified of survey progress and all completed stations will be removed from the live map. The MLA will also post survey information on their website, Lobstermen.com, as well as on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/MASSLOBSTERMENS>) (username: lobstermensassoc).

In the event of a delay due to weather, the schedule will be resumed as soon as working conditions permit. Fishermen can contact the R/V *Gloria Michelle* on VHF channels 13 or 16 to determine the updated daily schedule.

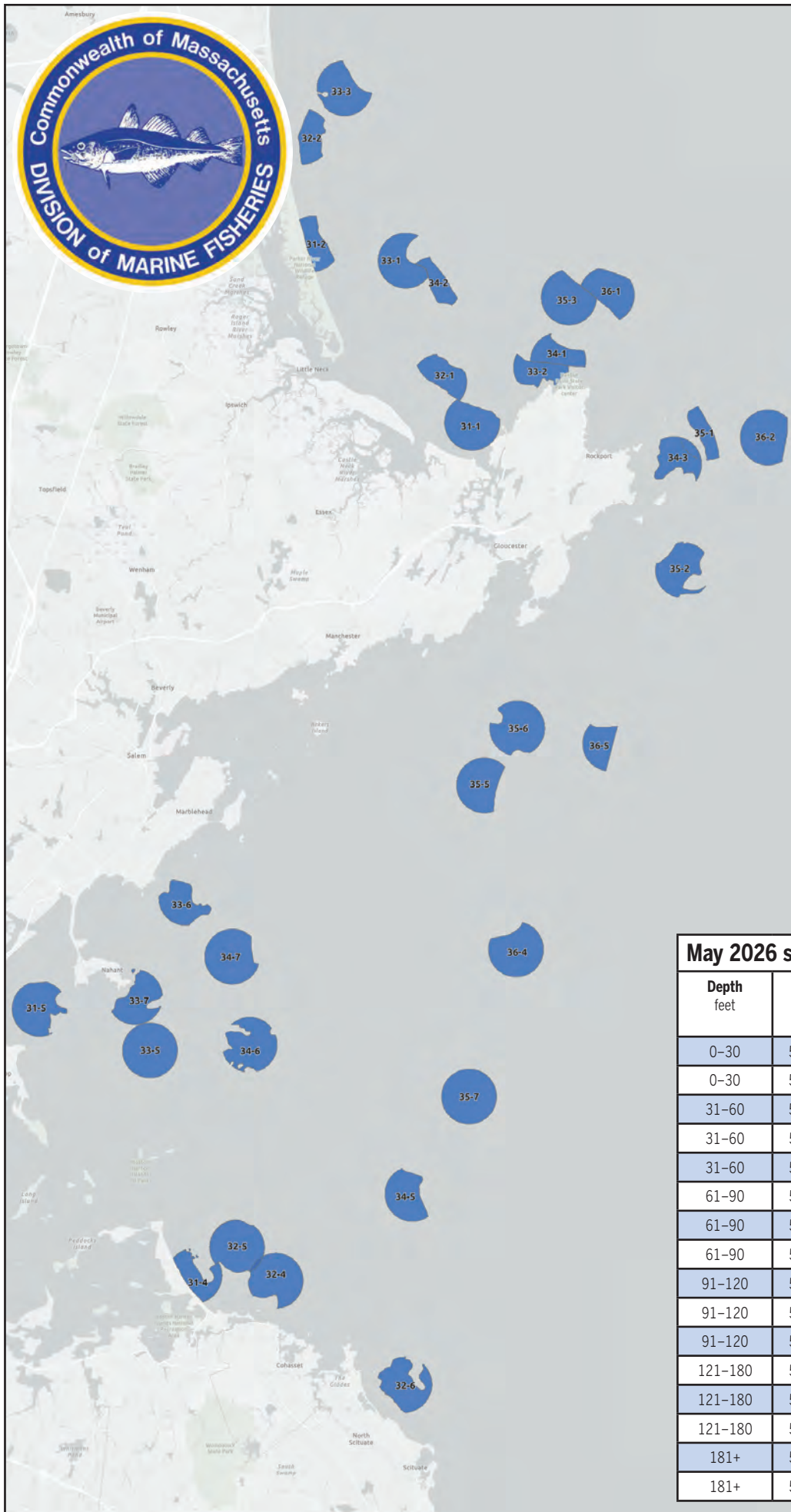
Personnel aboard the NOAA R/V *Gloria Michelle*, a 65' western rigged steel stern trawler with a blue hull and white deckhouse, will carefully check each site for marked gear by cruising along a selected tow path before the net is set. Twenty-minute tows undertaken at 2.5 knots cover approximately 0.8 nautical miles. We encourage communicating helpful information to the R/V officers (via channels 13 or 16).

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated and is vital to the effective monitoring of marine resources in the Commonwealth. If you have any questions about the survey, please contact me (steve.wilcox@mass.gov or (978) 559-9260). If you have any questions about the *Marine Fisheries* website, or Facebook, please contact Story Reed (story.reed@mass.gov or (617) 626-1524).

Sincerely,

Steven Wilcox
Senior Marine Fisheries Biologist

Cc. Dan McKiernan, Director



Massachusetts Marine Fisheries Spring 2026 Planned Tow Locations - Massachusetts Bay to New Hampshire

May 2026 spring trawl survey station locations for
Cape Ann and north.

Depth feet	Date to relocate gear by	Latitude DD MM.mmm	Longitude DD MM.mmm	Latitude DD.dddd	Longitude DD.dddd	Station ID
0-30	5/8/2026	42°40.332'	-70°41.539'	42.6722	-70.6923	31-1
0-30	5/8/2026	42°45.176'	-70°47.437'	42.7529	-70.7906	31-2
31-60	5/8/2026	42°41.434'	-70°42.760'	42.6906	-70.7127	32-1
31-60	5/8/2026	42°48.084'	-70°47.796'	42.8014	-70.7966	32-2
61-90	5/8/2026	42°44.726'	-70°43.991'	42.7454	-70.7332	33-1
61-90	5/8/2026	42°41.834'	-70°38.998'	42.6972	-70.6500	33-2
61-90	5/8/2026	42°49.396'	-70°46.247'	42.8233	-70.7708	33-3
91-120	5/8/2026	42°42.018'	-70°38.369'	42.7003	-70.6395	34-1
91-120	5/8/2026	42°44.076'	-70°42.964'	42.7346	-70.7161	34-2
91-120	5/7/2026	42°39.203'	-70°34.100'	42.6534	-70.5683	34-3
121-180	5/7/2026	42°40.066'	-70°32.874'	42.6678	-70.5479	35-1
121-180	5/7/2026	42°36.327'	-70°33.764'	42.6055	-70.5627	35-2
121-180	5/8/2026	42°43.731'	-70°37.973'	42.7288	-70.6329	35-3
181+	5/8/2026	42°43.791'	-70°36.577'	42.7299	-70.6096	36-1
181+	5/7/2026	42°39.928'	-70°30.634'	42.6655	-70.5106	36-2

May 2026 spring trawl survey station locations for Massachusetts Bay.

Depth feet	Date to relocate gear by	Latitude DD MM.mmm	Longitude DD MM.mmm	Latitude DD.dddd	Longitude DD.dddd	Station ID
0-30	5/6/2026	42°17.110'	-70°51.782'	42.2852	-70.8630	31-4
0-30	5/7/2026	42°24.392'	-70°57.494'	42.4065	-70.9582	31-5
31-60	5/6/2026	42°16.979'	-70°48.788'	42.2830	-70.8131	32-4
31-60	5/6/2026	42°17.882'	-70°50.214'	42.2980	-70.8369	32-5
31-60	5/6/2026	42°14.143'	-70°44.034'	42.2357	-70.7339	32-6
61-90	5/6/2026	42°23.261'	-70°53.423'	42.3877	-70.8904	33-5
61-90	5/7/2026	42°27.414'	-70°52.086'	42.4569	-70.8681	33-6
61-90	5/7/2026	42°24.714'	-70°53.981'	42.4119	-70.8997	33-7
91-120	5/6/2026	42°19.348'	-70°43.724'	42.3225	-70.7287	34-5
91-120	5/6/2026	42°23.412'	-70°49.746'	42.3902	-70.8291	34-6
91-120	5/7/2026	42°25.813'	-70°50.392'	42.4302	-70.8399	34-7
121-180	5/7/2026	42°30.477'	-70°41.100'	42.5080	-70.6850	35-5
121-180	5/7/2026	42°32.030'	-70°39.879'	42.5338	-70.6647	35-6
121-180	5/6/2026	42°22.002'	-70°41.636'	42.3667	-70.6939	35-7
181+	5/7/2026	42°26.014'	-70°39.925'	42.4336	-70.6654	36-4
181+	5/7/2026	42°31.613'	-70°36.449'	42.5269	-70.6075	36-5



May 2026 spring trawl survey station locations for western Cape Cod Bay.

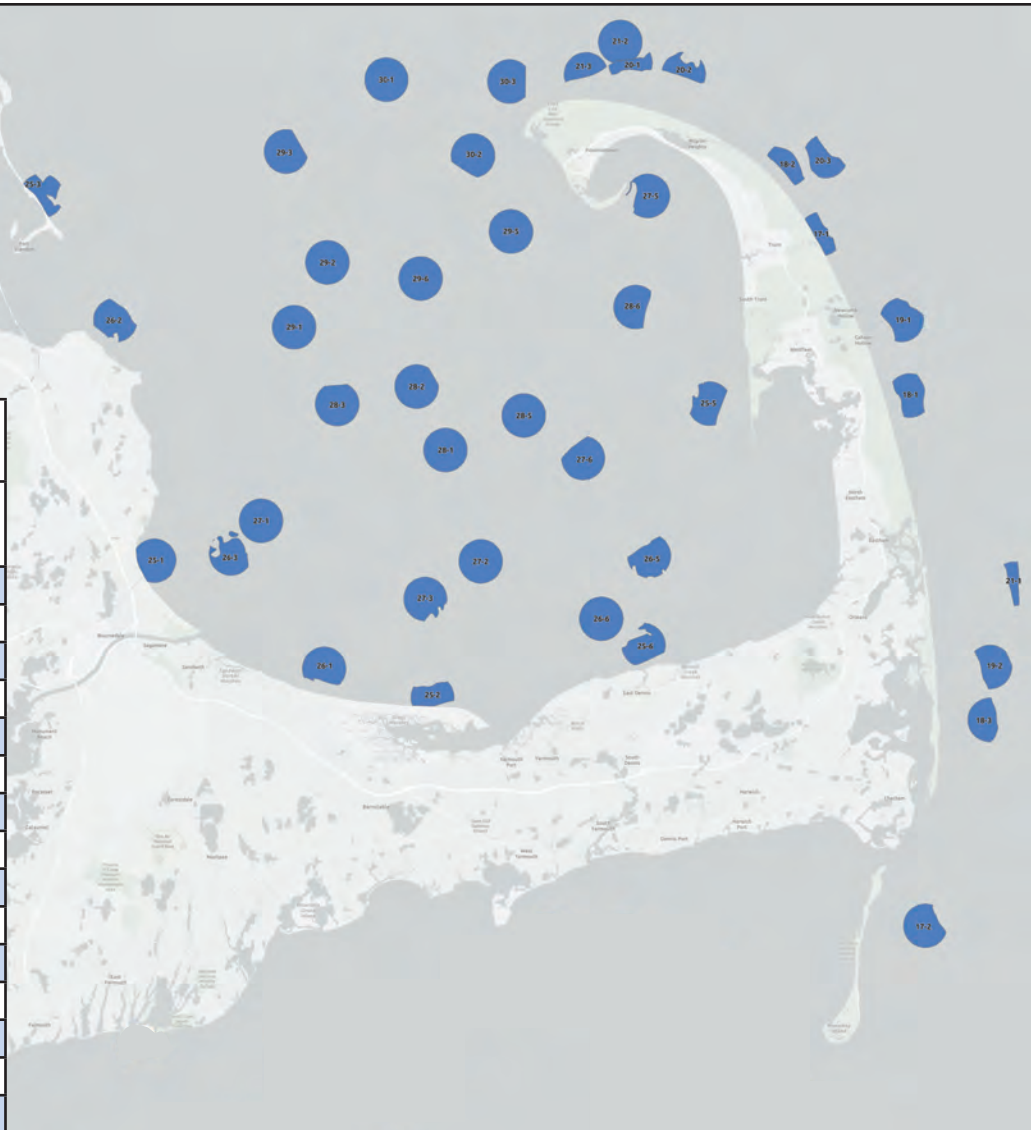
Depth feet	Date to relocate gear by	Latitude DD MM.mmm	Longitude DD MM.mmm	Latitude DD.dddd	Longitude DD.dddd	Station ID
0-30	5/4/2026	41°49.130'	-70°31.759'	41.8188	-70.5293	25-1
0-30	5/4/2026	41°44.434'	-70°18.989'	41.7406	-70.3165	25-2
0-30	5/4/2026	42°01.622'	-70°36.960'	42.0270	-70.6160	25-3
31-60	5/4/2026	41°45.420'	-70°23.985'	41.7570	-70.3997	26-1
31-60	5/4/2026	41°57.376'	-70°33.574'	41.9563	-70.5596	26-2
31-60	5/4/2026	41°49.377'	-70°28.268'	41.8229	-70.4711	26-3
61-90	5/4/2026	41°50.500'	-70°26.869'	41.8417	-70.4478	27-1
61-90	5/4/2026	41°49.109'	-70°16.763'	41.8185	-70.2794	27-2
61-90	5/4/2026	41°47.816'	-70°19.321'	41.7969	-70.3220	27-3
91-120	5/4/2026	41°52.926'	-70°18.386'	41.8821	-70.3064	28-1
91-120	5/4/2026	41°55.102'	-70°19.711'	41.9184	-70.3285	28-2
91-120	5/4/2026	41°54.501'	-70°23.365'	41.9084	-70.3894	28-3
121-180	5/4/2026	41°57.133'	-70°25.348'	41.9522	-70.4225	29-1
121-180	5/4/2026	41°59.353'	-70°23.815'	41.9892	-70.3969	29-2
121-180	5/4/2026	42°03.145'	-70°25.718'	42.0524	-70.4286	29-3

May 2026 spring trawl survey station locations for eastern Cape Cod Bay.

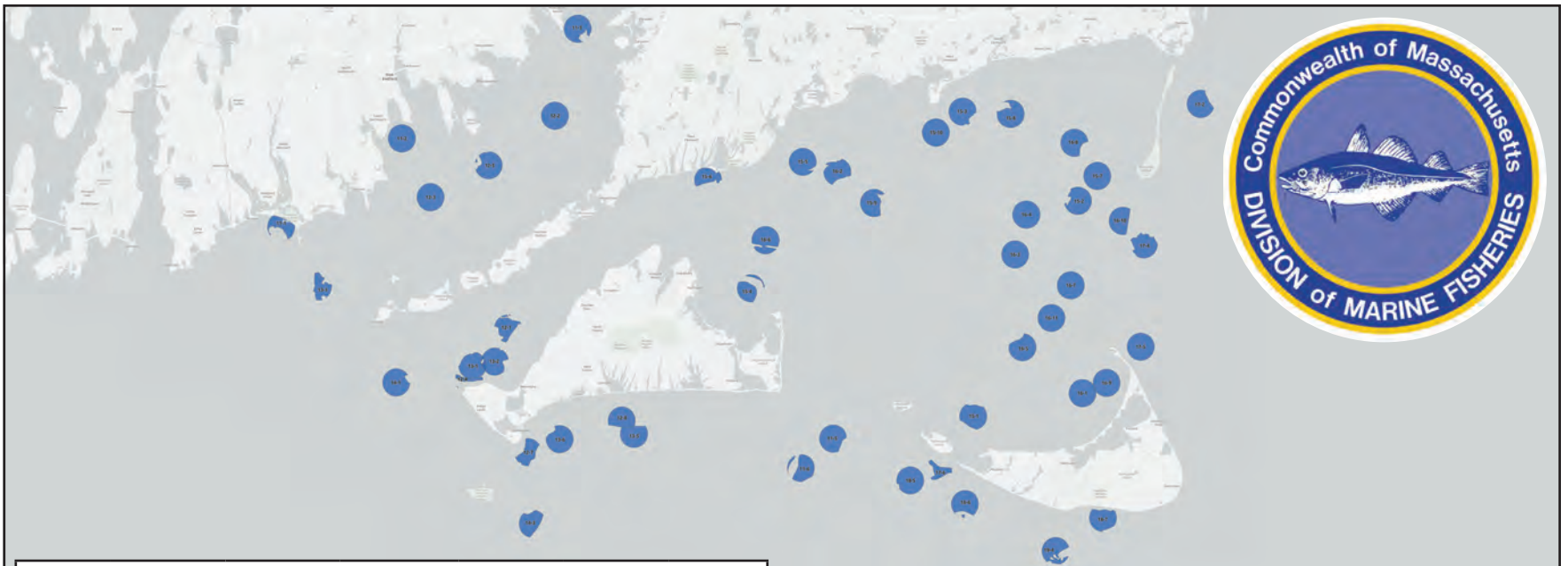
Depth feet	Date to relocate gear by	Latitude DD MM.mmm	Longitude DD MM.mmm	Latitude DD.dddd	Longitude DD.dddd	Station ID
0-30	5/4/2026	41°54.514'	-70°06.211'	41.9086	-70.1035	25-5
0-30	5/4/2026	41°46.233'	-70°09.270'	41.7705	-70.1545	25-6
31-60	5/4/2026	41°49.296'	-70°09.003'	41.8216	-70.1500	26-5
31-60	5/4/2026	41°47.136'	-70°11.212'	41.7856	-70.1869	26-6
61-90	5/9/2026	42°01.626'	-70°09.051'	42.0271	-70.1508	27-5
61-90	5/4/2026	41°52.653'	-70°12.039'	41.8776	-70.2006	27-6
91-120	5/4/2026	41°54.111'	-70°14.781'	41.9018	-70.2463	28-5
91-120	5/4/2026	41°57.824'	-70°09.618'	41.9637	-70.1603	28-6
121-180	5/4/2026	42°00.411'	-70°15.366'	42.0068	-70.2561	29-5
121-180	5/4/2026	41°58.801'	-70°19.526'	41.9800	-70.3254	29-6
181+	5/9/2026	42°05.598'	-70°21.089'	42.0933	-70.3515	30-1
181+	5/9/2026	42°03.008'	-70°17.095'	42.0501	-70.2849	30-2
181+	5/9/2026	42°05.536'	-70°15.418'	42.0923	-70.2570	30-3

May 2026 spring trawl survey station locations for areas east of Cape Cod.

Depth feet	Date to relocate gear by	Latitude DD MM.mmm	Longitude DD MM.mmm	Latitude DD.dddd	Longitude DD.dddd	Station ID
0-30	5/10/2026	42°00.324'	-70°01.090'	42.0054	-70.0182	17-1
0-30	5/11/2026	41°36.585'	-69°56.285'	41.6098	-69.9381	17-2
31-60	5/10/2026	41°54.794'	-69°57.004'	41.9132	-69.9501	18-1
31-60	5/10/2026	42°02.702'	-70°02.627'	42.0450	-70.0438	18-2
31-60	5/10/2026	41°43.665'	-69°53.324'	41.7277	-69.8887	18-3
61-90	5/10/2026	41°57.385'	-69°57.370'	41.9564	-69.9562	19-1
61-90	5/10/2026	41°45.483'	-69°53.307'	41.7581	-69.8885	19-2
91-120	5/9/2026	42°06.177'	-70°09.855'	42.1029	-70.1642	20-1
91-120	5/10/2026	42°05.791'	-70°07.406'	42.0965	-70.1234	20-2
91-120	5/10/2026	42°02.989'	-70°00.868'	42.0498	-70.0145	20-3
121-180	5/10/2026	41°48.342'	-69°52.179'	41.8057	-69.8697	21-1
121-180	5/9/2026	42°06.885'	-70°10.320'	42.1148	-70.1720	21-2
121-180	5/9/2026	42°05.779'	-70°11.892'	42.0963	-70.1982	21-3



**Massachusetts Marine Fisheries
Spring 2026 Planned Two Locations - Cape Cod Bay & East of Cape Cod**



May 2026 spring trawl survey station locations for Nantucket Sound.

Depth feet	Date to relocate gear by	Latitude DD MM.mmm	Longitude DD MM.mmm	Latitude DD.dddd	Longitude DD.dddd	Station ID
0-30	5/11/2026	41°19.569'	-70°12.934'	41.3261	-70.2156	15-1
0-30	5/11/2026	41°31.304'	-70°05.273'	41.5217	-70.0879	15-2
0-30	5/11/2026	41°36.164'	-70°13.711'	41.6027	-70.2285	15-3
0-30	5/11/2026	41°26.553'	-70°29.218'	41.4425	-70.4870	15-4
0-30	5/11/2026	41°33.431'	-70°25.411'	41.5572	-70.4235	15-5
0-30	5/11/2026	41°32.433'	-70°32.341'	41.5406	-70.5390	15-6
0-30	5/11/2026	41°32.658'	-70°03.851'	41.5443	-70.0642	15-7
0-30	5/11/2026	41°36.043'	-70°10.200'	41.6007	-70.1700	15-8
0-30	5/11/2026	41°31.189'	-70°20.194'	41.5198	-70.3366	15-9
0-30	5/11/2026	41°35.030'	-70°15.665'	41.5838	-70.2611	15-10
31-60	5/11/2026	41°20.824'	-70°04.941'	41.3471	-70.0824	16-1
31-60	5/11/2026	41°32.869'	-70°22.872'	41.5478	-70.3812	16-2
31-60	5/11/2026	41°28.391'	-70°09.871'	41.4732	-70.1645	16-3
31-60	5/11/2026	41°30.555'	-70°09.048'	41.5092	-70.1508	16-4
31-60	5/11/2026	41°23.329'	-70°09.334'	41.3888	-70.1556	16-5
31-60	5/11/2026	41°29.168'	-70°28.140'	41.4861	-70.4690	16-6
31-60	5/11/2026	41°26.711'	-70°05.793'	41.4452	-70.0966	16-7
31-60	5/11/2026	41°34.472'	-70°05.533'	41.5745	-70.0922	16-8
31-60	5/11/2026	41°21.383'	-70°03.176'	41.3564	-70.0529	16-9
31-60	5/11/2026	41°30.217'	-70°01.987'	41.5036	-70.0331	16-10
31-60	5/11/2026	41°24.927'	-70°07.215'	41.4154	-70.1203	16-11

May 2026 spring trawl survey station locations south and east of Nantucket.

Depth feet	Date to relocate gear by	Latitude DD MM.mmm	Longitude DD MM.mmm	Latitude DD.dddd	Longitude DD.dddd	Station ID
0-30	5/11/2026	41°28.941'	-70°00.455'	41.4824	-70.0076	17-4
0-30	5/11/2026	41°23.353'	-70°00.674'	41.3892	-70.0112	17-5
0-30	5/11/2026	41°16.562'	-70°15.496'	41.2760	-70.2583	17-6
31-60	5/11/2026	41°16.053'	-70°17.545'	41.2676	-70.2924	18-5
31-60	5/11/2026	41°14.762'	-70°13.535'	41.2460	-70.2256	18-6
31-60	5/11/2026	41°14.009'	-70°03.436'	41.2335	-70.0573	18-7
61-90	5/11/2026	41°12.198'	-70°06.897'	41.2033	-70.1150	19-4

**Massachusetts Marine Fisheries
Spring 2026 Planned Tow Locations
South of Cape Cod**

May 2026 spring trawl survey station locations for Buzzards Bay and Vineyard Sound.

Depth feet	Date to relocate gear by	Latitude DD MM.mmm	Longitude DD MM.mmm	Latitude DD.dddd	Longitude DD.dddd	Station ID
0-30	5/11/2026	41°29.886'	-71°03.593'	41.4981	-71.0599	11-1
0-30	5/11/2026	41°34.711'	-70°54.762'	41.5785	-70.9127	11-2
0-30	5/11/2026	41°40.658'	-70°41.885'	41.6776	-70.6981	11-3
31-60	5/11/2026	41°24.343'	-70°46.992'	41.4057	-70.7832	12-1
31-60	5/11/2026	41°35.942'	-70°43.555'	41.5990	-70.7259	12-2
31-60	5/11/2026	41°31.503'	-70°52.664'	41.5251	-70.8777	12-3
31-60	5/11/2026	41°21.556'	-70°49.842'	41.3593	-70.8307	12-4
31-60	5/11/2026	41°33.244'	-70°48.412'	41.5541	-70.8069	12-5
61-90	5/11/2026	41°22.329'	-70°49.597'	41.3721	-70.8266	13-1
61-90	5/11/2026	41°22.543'	-70°47.951'	41.3757	-70.7992	13-2
61-90	5/11/2026	41°26.655'	-71°00.888'	41.4442	-71.0148	13-3
91-120	5/11/2026	41°21.411'	-70°55.176'	41.3568	-70.9196	14-1

May 2026 spring trawl survey station locations southwest of Gay Head and south of Martha's Vineyard.

Depth feet	Date to relocate gear by	Latitude DD MM.mmm	Longitude DD MM.mmm	Latitude DD.dddd	Longitude DD.dddd	Station ID
0-30	5/11/2026	41°18.349'	-70°23.189'	41.3058	-70.3865	11-5
0-30	5/11/2026	41°16.730'	-70°25.544'	41.2788	-70.4257	11-6
31-60	5/11/2026	41°17.604'	-70°45.521'	41.2934	-70.7587	12-7
31-60	5/11/2026	41°19.332'	-70°38.668'	41.3222	-70.6445	12-8
61-90	5/11/2026	41°18.610'	-70°37.770'	41.3102	-70.6295	13-5
61-90	5/11/2026	41°18.317'	-70°43.212'	41.3053	-70.7202	13-6
91-120	5/11/2026	41°13.687'	-70°45.187'	41.2281	-70.7531	14-3



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NOAA'S NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS) 2026 MARINE MAMMAL AUTHORIZATION CERTIFICATE

A. Authorization:

Pursuant to Section 118 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA; 16 U.S.C. 1387), the implementing regulations at 50 CFR Part 229, and subject to the terms and conditions below, NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) issues this Authorization Certificate, which, when presented in combination with a current/valid state or federal fisheries permit, authorizes the taking of non-endangered/non-threatened marine mammals incidental to commercial fishing operations in Category I or II fisheries.

B. Terms and Conditions:

- **All incidental mortality or injury of marine mammals occurring in the course of commercial fishing operations must be reported to NMFS within 48 hours after the end of each fishing trip in which the incidental death or injury occurred, using the appropriate reporting form, even if the trip is observed.**
- This Authorization Certificate, or a copy of it, must be on board the vessel during commercial fishing operations.
- Authorization Certificate holders must comply with any applicable take reduction plans and emergency regulations.
- If requested to do so by NMFS or a designated contractor providing observer services to NMFS, an Authorization Certificate holder must take aboard an observer to accompany the vessel on fishing trips and must possess a valid Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Examination decal issued by the U.S. Coast Guard.
- When necessary to deter a marine mammal from damaging fishing gear, catch, other private property, or from endangering personal safety, the vessel owner, operator, or crew members may use measures which do not result in serious injury or death of the animal pursuant to the deterrence provisions of the MMPA.
- A marine mammal may not be intentionally killed in the course of commercial fishing operations except where imminently necessary in self-defense or to protect the life of a person in immediate danger. Such lethal taking **must be reported to NMFS within 48 hours** after the end of each fishing trip in which the mortality occurred, using the appropriate MMAP mortality/injury reporting form.
- Any marine mammal incidentally taken must be immediately returned to the sea unless directed otherwise by NMFS or a NMFS-authorized observer.
- This Authorization Certificate, or a copy, must be made available upon request to any state or federal enforcement agent authorized to enforce the Act, any designated agent of NMFS, or any contractor providing observer services to NMFS.
- This Certificate is not transferable. In the event of a change in vessel ownership, the Authorization Certificate is void and a new Authorization Certificate must be obtained by the new owner.
- If the registered vessel is sold or destroyed or is replaced by a new designated vessel, an authorization must be obtained for the new vessel.
- Any person who violates these Terms and Conditions, regulations under 50 CFR Part 229, or any provisions of Section 118 of the MMPA, shall be subject to the penalties set forth in the MMPA.
- This certificate is valid from January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026

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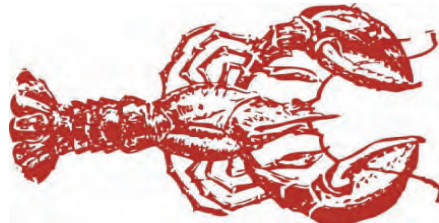
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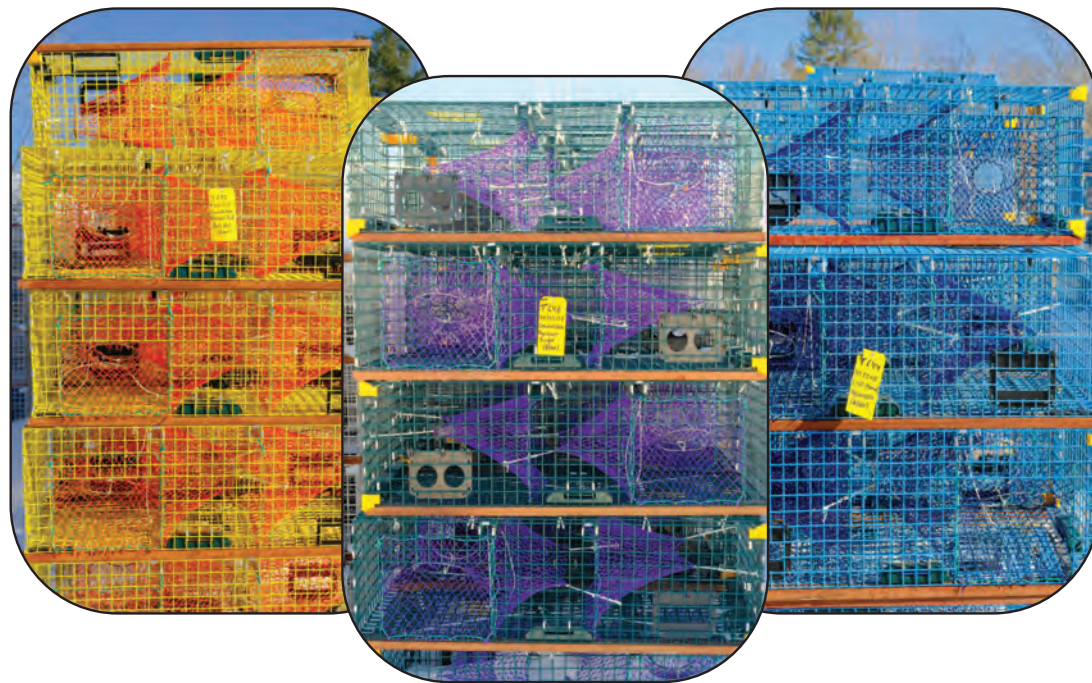
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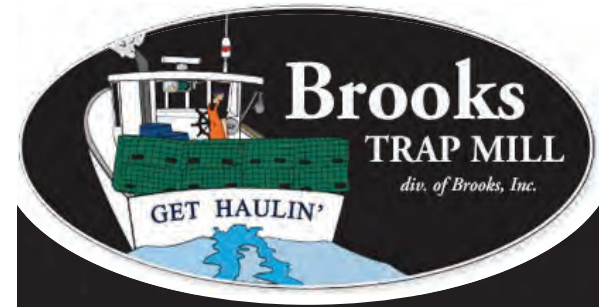
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