

Gulf of Maine Lobster Foundation

A nonprofit organization
working to support a
healthy lobster fishery and
sustainable resources in the
Gulf of Maine.

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White Honored With Captain David H. Hart Award

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission presented Patten White, Maine lobsterman and long-time ASMFC Commissioner, the Captain David H. Hart Award, its highest annual award, at the Commission's 70th Annual Meeting in Boston, Massachusetts.

"Pat truly exemplifies the spirit of Captain Dave, bringing together a rich fishing history, a commitment to sustainable fisheries management... and an unquenchable enthusiasm and optimism for doing the right thing in an easygoing and friendly way," stated Jack Travelstead, Chair of ASMFC's Award Committee. "He treats members of the public, fishermen, fellow Commissioners, and congressional representatives with the utmost respect...and in doing so, has elevated the role of fishermen in the fisheries management process."

A lifelong commercial lobsterman, White has been passionately committed to the success of marine fisheries management at the state, regional, and national levels for over 20 years. He helped to establish GOMLF in 2000 as a non-profit with the goal of increasing scientific collaboration with fishermen in the Gulf of Maine. Pat has been President of the GOMLF Board of Directors since its inception, and eleven years later he contin-



Patten White receives the Capt. David H. Hart Award, flanked by his wife Enid, George Lapointe (I) and Vincent O'Shea, ASMFC director.

ues to be an essential part of the programs and daily operations, reaching out to industry, managers and scientists.

Through his leadership at the Maine Lobstermen's Association, the MLA became actively involved in the New England Fishery Management Council's management process. In 1995, he was made Governor's Appointee to ASMFC for the State of Maine to ensure that the state's fishermen had a strong voice in the Commission's fisheries management process. Pat

was a member of the Pew Oceans Commission, and is a long-standing member of the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team, convinced that it is possible to have good lobster fishing while simultaneously protecting our nation's endangered species.

Through all of his endeavors, Pat carries himself in a positive, friendly, and effective way that is a model for all. Congratulations, Pat! And thanks for all you do!

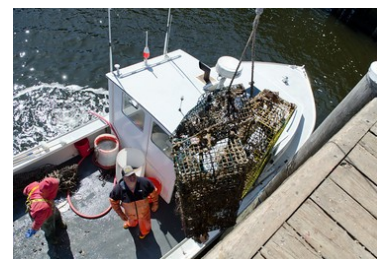
GOMLF Receives Funds for Gear Recovery

We are pleased to announce that GOMLF has received two additional grants to continue work on derelict fishing gear projects.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Fishing for Energy Fund (F4E) provides funding for additional at-sea gear recovery efforts in zones F and G during Feb-April 2012. In addition, GOMLF will offer four voluntary gear collection events to provide lobstermen the opportunity to dispose of

old, used fishing gear in order to encourage proper disposal and eliminate costs they might incur at their transfer station. Over 43 tons of old gear was collected in Portland and Kennebunkport this fall through this program. The next collections will take place in the Harpswell and Camp Ellis areas in spring of 2012.

NOAA's Marine Debris Program also awarded GOMLF funds to continue at-sea gear recovery in 2012-13, which



will be supplemented with coastline trap clean-ups and voluntary gear collections in four areas. We will also work with divers to mark and recover gear. Stay tuned!

Ghost Gear Thanks to Yacht Clubs!

The Ghost Gear project was enhanced with the help of Maine-based yacht clubs that donated a total of \$6,500 towards the 2011 gear recovery effort. A big thanks goes out to:

- Northeast Harbor Fleet
- New York Yacht Club
- Eastern Yacht Club
- Kollegewidgwok Yacht Club
- Camden Yacht Club

With their contribution, we were able to offer two additional days of recovery with seven boats in the Southwest Harbor area. During those two days, the boats collected 335 traps, of which 187 were saved to be returned to their owners.



Going Green!

To cut down on paper waste and receive the electronic version of Lobster Lines, please email us at info@gomlf.org



Recovery Report

A two-year gear recovery program funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation has come to a close just as two more programs begin.

During the at-sea gear grappling program, 58 boat captains and their helpers worked for a total of 16 days during the early months of 2010-11, volunteering their time and vessels in exchange for a small fuel stipend and the satisfaction of recovering lost gear. They kept a log of every tow, and together they recovered 3,372 traps from all 7 lobster zones (see sidebar). Of those, 1,792 were salvageable and GOMLF contacted lobstermen to let them know where the traps could be picked up. Over 1,100 were claimed, and the remaining good traps were delivered to the Marine Patrol in Rockland to be held for auction in late 2011. GOMLF contracted with Corcoran Environmental Services to handle the rest, including 21 tons of “trash traps” which were recycled for metal scrap and 5 tons of waste (scrap rope, junk buoys, etc.) that were incinerated at **ecomaine**, a



Crushing trash traps to be recycled.

waste-to-energy facility in Portland. Thanks to NFWF, DMR, Maine Marine Patrol, our great helpers, and the industry for the hard work and time in helping to clean up the ocean. We'll be at it again in 2012!

You Don't Know What You've Got 'Til It's Back

Besides mussels, mud, barnacles and sea squirts, what did we find in all of the old traps, you may well ask?



Photo by Alexandra Daley-Clark

GOMLF contracted M a i n e D M R lobster scientist Melissa Smith to analyze the logbooks kept by each participating captain during the recovery project. From the information recorded about each recovered trap, we learned that 15% of the lost traps held live, marketable lobsters, even though a large percentage of the traps had biodegradable escape panels that functioned properly &

had released. It remains a mystery whether the lobsters were trapped by the “ghost” fishing ability of the trap, or instead had elected to use the trap as “habitat”. More research is needed in order to make any connection between vent functionality and lobster by-catch.

Of the 2,980 traps that were documented in logbooks during the two-year project, 49% of the traps had open bio-vent panels while 29% did not. For the remaining traps, information was not available due to trap condition (i.e. crushed), missing door or absence of bio-panel vent from trap construction. There were a total of 1473 lobsters and over 800 crabs liberated from derelict fishing traps during this project. Other marine life we observed in the course of recovering traps included: sculpin, Acadian redfish, sea ravens, wrymouth eels, lumpfish, a few cod, sea cucumber and mussels. Other marine debris removed included trawl cable wire, mooring chains, and even lost grapples. All traps were recovered from state waters during March and April.

Maine Ghost Gear Has Impact In Hawai'i

GOMLF was invited to attend the 5th International Marine Debris Conference, sponsored by NOAA Marine Debris Program and the Ocean Conservancy and held on Waikiki Beach in March 2011, to present on our NFWF-funded trap recovery project. Representatives from 38 countries attended the week-long gathering to learn about marine debris mitigation efforts around the globe. GOMLF was the only fishing industry organization at the conference, presenting on one of the few projects that featured commercial fishermen as active participants in the



recovery of lost fishing gear. GOMLF was proud to demonstrate a model for other fisheries interested in collaborating with scientists and managers.

Project Director Laura Ludwig presented twice (pictured left) on the gear recovery project, highlighting the lack of data about lost gear in Maine and the importance of a no-fault approach to the issue.

Melissa Smith, DMR Lobster Scientist on the project, presented on the ‘ghost-fishing’ capacity of derelict traps, and recommended controlled experiments to weigh the impacts of traps lost on the ocean floor.

Upcoming Endline Rule Spawns Gear Trawling Experiment

Maine lobstermen have been adjusting to the federal sinking groundline regulation since 2009, and are now waiting for the next regulation, due in 2014, intended to reduce the risk of serious injury or mortality in large whales from vertical lines. The NMFS has indicated it will consider all reasonable proposals from industry that would minimize the likelihood of a large whale becoming entangled in the endline (also called the main warp, or buoy line), and offered a series of “scoping meetings” to hear ideas and feedback from the industry.

A series of lobster conferences hosted by GOMLF earlier this year brought together NMFS representatives, scientists, managers and industry and provided a constructive, friendly environment for discussing the issue of endline risk reduction.

Maine DMR also held a series of state informational sessions about endline risk reduction during August 2011. In conjunction with GOMLF, the DMR designed an experimental trawling-up program to retrieve information that would shed light on how using fewer endlines might impact fishermen currently fishing singles and pairs. DMR contracted GOMLF to conduct outreach to the industry about the project and to identify rocky-bottom lobstermen who would participate in the experiment.



The crew of F/V TOPCHOP readies an experimental trawl off Cribhaven.

Six lobstermen from zones C & D rigged their traps in configurations of 3-, 5-, 7-, and 10-trap trawls, and fished those trawls in areas where they would normally use pairs or single traps, due to bottom type or gear density concerns. The gear was hauled back on the regular hauling schedule for each lobsterman, and data about hauling time, catch, and lost gear were recorded in a logbook. Maine DMR intends to collate the data in December with an eye toward presenting the information at the next Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team meeting, to be held in early 2012.

For the latest updates, find us on Facebook



“friend” the Gulf of Maine Lobster Foundation and see what we are up to now!

Did You Know?

Lobster trap parts are often found on coastlines in far-away places.



This tag washed ashore in Gower, So. Wales, UK, and belongs to a Harpswell, ME lobsterman!

Thanks to Flotsam Diaries for the picture!



‘Tis The Season!

As the holiday season quickly approaches, GOMLF has the perfect gift for everyone on your list! Give something unique, local and environmentally smart by purchasing a colorful doormat made from recycled lobster lines. These rope mats are hand-crafted by Susan Volger of “Maine Rope Mats” in South Berwick, Maine, using the floating groundline collected at GOMLF exchanges.

Order yours today! Mats are \$50 each (shipping included) and can be sent directly to your loved one. Stop by our office on Route One in downtown Kennebunk, order online at www.gomlf.org, or call us at 207-985-8088 to place your order.

100% of the proceeds from sales of these colorful, durable doormats benefit our non-profit work within the lobster industry.



Photo by Sara Ellis

A Fond Farewell

After five years as the Project Director at the Gulf of Maine Lobster Foundation, Laura Ludwig is starting a new journey. Laura, who has been a driving force behind GOMLF's rope exchange program, ghost gear recovery projects and grant writing, will say goodbye in January to move closer to family in southern New England.

Laura's involvement with industry began in 1999 as sternman on F/V The Real Thing, continued through five years as DMR's first whale plan coordinator, and segued into the position at the Foundation. Laura has put GOMLF on the map through programs made available to lobstermen, including the multi-million dollar rope exchange project that helped Maine lobstermen come into compliance with federal whale protection rules. Most recently her focus has been on working with industry to recover lost lobster gear, an interest she hopes to pursue.

Lynda Doughty, fresh from a position at DMR, will take the helm of the ghost gear projects. We welcome Lynda, and wish Laura, our friend, colleague and industry advocate, the best in her new endeavors!



Ludwig moves on this winter. Photo by Alexandra Daley-Clark

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Wishing you a happy holiday season and all the best in 2012!



Virginia L. Hodgkins

From
your friends at GOMLF

Fishermen Needed For At-Sea Gear Recovery

With new funding from NFWF's Fishing For Energy Fund and NOAA's Marine Debris Program, GOMLF will capitalize on the success of earlier at-sea derelict gear recovery efforts to conduct four additional at-sea collection events over the next 18 months. Targeted areas are slated to include Winter Harbor, Stonington, Port Clyde and Harpswell. Along with enlisting commercial fishermen to grapple for derelict gear, we will incorporate a community-based shoreline trap recovery component in the same areas, working with fishermen and their families and friends to create a two-pronged approach to derelict gear recovery. We also will work with divers and lobstermen in two locations to retrieve traps from hard-to-grapple areas. Interested lobstermen, scallopers, shrimpers, groundfishermen and divers may contact GOMLF at 207-985-8088 to be kept up-to-date on these opportunities.



Lobster Lines is
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people in the lobster industry

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