Lobster Lines

FALL 2026 · NEWSLETTER

CITIZEN SCIENCE

eMOLT Provides Real-Time Data to DMR Scientists



An eMOLT sensor mounted on a lobster trap.

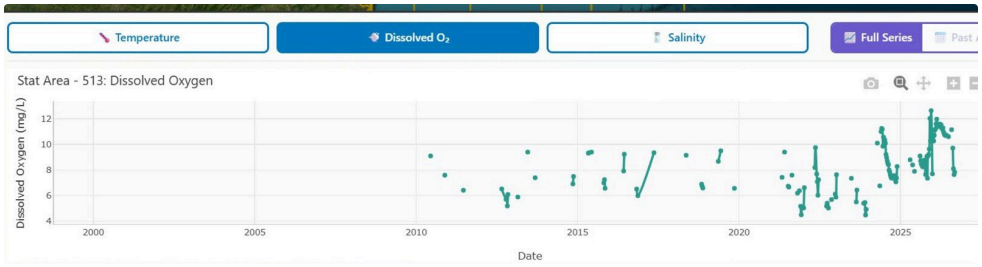
In September 2026, Kathleen Reardon, Maine's Department of Marine Resources Lead Lobster Biologist, contacted George Maynard, eMOLT coordinator at NOAA's Northeast Fisheries Science Center, to ask if we had any recent dissolved oxygen (DO) readings in Casco Bay. She was looking for some information that might help her understand the large algal bloom caused by *Karenia mikimotoi*, a species of algae that is extremely harmful to lobsters and other marine life.

George was able to send Kathleen real-time dissolved oxygen readings that are being collected by our local fishermen in the Portland and Harpswell areas. George had DO data from Casco Bay that showed a reduction from 100% saturation to 72% saturation in just three days in early September. George shared with Kathleen the different ways to look at the data, including our ERDDAP server and how to access the raw data.

100% → 72%

Drop in dissolved oxygen saturation recorded by eMOLT sensors in Casco Bay over just three days in early September.

In addition, thanks to a small grant from Mascoma Bank, we were able to send more DO sensors to our current eMOLT participants in Casco Bay to increase the data collection in that area. Thanks to the continued efforts of our eMOLT team and participating fishermen, we are able to provide important data to scientists who are monitoring the negative impacts from this algal bloom. It's a perfect example of citizen science and collaboration at work and the mission of GOMLF!



eMOLT dissolved oxygen readings (mg/L) for Stat Area 513.

CASCO BAY DO SENSORS SUPPORTED BY Mascoma Bank

ABOUT US

The Gulf of Maine Lobster Foundation is a nonprofit organization working to support a healthy lobster fishery and sustainable resources in the Gulf of Maine. *Lobster Lines* presents our projects, programs and partners. Thank you for your ongoing support of GOMLF and our programs.

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PROGRAM PORTFOLIO

eMOLT
Dissolved oxygen and temperature monitoring

Gear Grab
Ghost gear, gear balls and voluntary disposal

Student Drifters
Place-based curriculum for ocean science

PAST PROJECTS
Bottom Line Project · Sea Samplers · Bottom Current & Groundline Project · Youth Summit 2017

STUDENT DRIFTERS

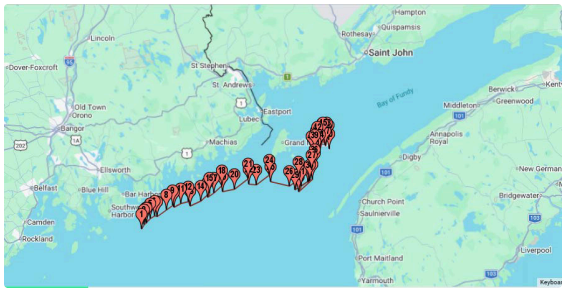
Student Drifter from UNE Lands in Nova Scotia



University of New England students with GOMLF drifters.

Students from the University of New England (UNE) in Biddeford, Maine, are studying ocean currents, and they are using GOMLF drifters to help! Dr. Will Kochtitzky, Assistant Professor at the School of Marine and Environmental Programs, launched two drifters this spring just outside Saco Bay. The goal is to have the students in his classes compare the surface current data from drifters to the NASA SWOT (Surface Water and Ocean Topography) satellite data and analyze the observations between the two methodologies. He hopes to teach the students technical skills in satellite data analysis and inspire them to understand the ever-changing ocean.

After a successful launch in mid-April, one of the drifters took to the seas and headed west, then south, then took a turn north towards the southern tip of Nova Scotia. Thanks to a recovery effort from a commercial fisherman out of Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, the drifter was saved from landing on the rocks.



The drifter's tracked path across the Gulf of Maine.

The crew of FV *L&J Swell Ride* weren't sure what the unit was but were able to decipher that it was from UNE and was a long way from home. They sent a Facebook message that was intercepted by an old drifter colleague, who then contacted Jim Manning, our retired NOAA oceanographer and drifter guru, to let him know the drifter was in good hands.

After a couple of emails and conversations back and forth, Jim educated the fishermen on what the drifter was for and how we use drifters to study the currents, and the fishermen were very curious. They were interested in learning about where their waters go, where they come from, and what else they could do to help with the project.

> *After speaking with Jim, the captain of the FV L&J Swell Ride redeployed the drifter back near where they found it, and it's still transmitting today!*

OUR PARTNERSHIPS

Gear Grab
geargrab.org

eMOLT
emolt.org

Student Drifters
studentdrifters.org

REQUEST A DRIFTER

Scan to inquire about a student drifter for your classroom.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- How much of the build will my students take on?
- When in my curriculum will I incorporate this project?
- Do I need support to find funding?
- Do I need help connecting with a fisherman to launch the unit?

OPERATING PHILOSOPHY

1. Local knowledge, involvement and education
2. Feedback-driven improvement
3. Cross-industry connections
4. Working waterfront support
5. Improved ocean ecosystem
6. Support a sustainable lobster fishery
7. Fishery-led data and science

Support Our Work

Scan to make a donation to the Gulf of Maine Lobster Foundation. Thank you!

Follow us on Facebook **@lobsterfoundation** and Instagram **@mainelobsterfoundation**

GEAR GRAB

New England Gear Team Wraps Up Three Years of Ghost Gear Removal





Ghost traps, a gear ball and tangled rope brought in through Gear Grab.

In 2023, GOMLF joined the New England Gear Team to tackle derelict fishing gear under a NOAA Marine Debris grant through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Led by the Center for Coastal Studies, the team is a cohort of six organizations working side by side across Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts to address this problem from every angle. We are excited to keep collaborating across the region for years to come!

Here in Maine, the work was completed through our Gear Grab program, and it was done by fishermen. Contracted fishermen and their crews went out on grapple days to pull up ghost traps and gear balls, then landed them at local ports for disposal and recycling. We also held voluntary disposal days so fishermen could get rid of their old gear at no cost. The whole cohort crushed it!

Our Regional Gear Team Totals

Together We Are Strong!

Over 2 million	~30,000	100+	69
pounds of marine debris removed	lost or retired traps recycled	fishermen engaged	fishermen hired

Our part in Maine: Gear Grab brought in almost 2 million pounds of gear with 18 boats out of 6 ports, created 37 jobs for fishermen, crew and dock workers, and held 20 voluntary disposal days, including yard pick ups.

HOW A GRAPPLE PROJECT WORKS

PHASE 01
Planning with Community
Connecting with towns, land trusts, waste disposal, recyclers and artists to find places for the gear to go.

PHASE 02
Recruitment & Data Training
Getting fishermen and crew on a permit for ghost gear removal and training them on data collection.

PHASE 03
On the Water
Contracted fishermen go out for a set number of days and land the gear at their local ports.

PHASE 04
Reporting
We go through the data sheets to count what came in and what we learned each season.

The grant is wrapping up, but our work isn't. We'll keep working with the Center for Coastal Studies, OceansWide, Rozalia Project, Blue Ocean Society and Net Your Problem to keep ghost gear out of the Gulf of Maine. Most of all, thank you to the Maine fishermen whose hard work on the water makes Gear Grab possible. We couldn't do it without you!

PROJECT PARTNERS

Center for Coastal Studies
Provincetown, MA

Gulf of Maine Lobster Foundation
Kennebunk, ME

OceansWide
Newcastle, ME

Rozalia Project
Vermont

Blue Ocean Society
New Hampshire

Net Your Problem
New Bedford, MA

WHAT IS A GEAR BALL?

2,500 to 60,000+ lbs

A large mass of entangled marine debris, usually rope, nets and traps, that slowly builds over time due to currents and ground swells.

THANK YOU

A big thank you to Island Heritage Trust for providing a long-term disposal site, and to the towns and municipalities who helped us find places for the gear to go!

VISIT THE GEAR HUB

gear-hub.org
The New England Gear Team's resource hub

ICWL 2026

GOMLF Presents Gear Grab at the International Lobster Conference in Mallorca



Program Director Emma Weed presents Gear Grab at ICWL 2026 in Cala Ratjada, Mallorca.

This October, Executive Director Erin Pelletier and Program Director Emma Weed traveled to Cala Ratjada, Mallorca, Spain, for the 13th International Conference and Workshop on Lobster Biology and Management (ICWL 2026). About 130 people from 17 countries came together for a week of lobster science and fisheries management.

Emma gave a presentation on our Gear Grab program, *Ghost Gear in the Maine Lobster Fishery: Collaboration, Science and Education*, and shared how we work with fishermen to remove ghost gear from the Gulf of Maine. We received many questions from the audience and made connections all over the world, from Mexico to Norway and Australia! We are excited to see what collaborations we can think up next.

The week covered everything from aquaculture and climate change to genetics and stock assessment, along with a fishermen's workshop and a round table on fisheries management.

We are grateful to the ICWL organizers for including us, along with so many perspectives from Maine, including the Maine Department of Marine Resources and Maine Sea Grant.



GEAR GRAB SWAG

Rep Gear Grab on and off the water!

Show your support for keeping ghost gear out of the Gulf of Maine with our Gear Grab gear. Every purchase supports our programming. Let us know which program you would like to support!

Hat	$25
T-shirt	$40
Sweatshirt	$75
Tote bag	$35

To order, email erin@gomlf.org

ICWL 2026 AT A GLANCE

130	17	~50
ATTENDEES	COUNTRIES	INSTITUTIONS

WHEN
October 11–16, 2026

WHERE
Cap Vermell Cultural Centre, Cala Ratjada, Mallorca, Spain

HOSTS
Spanish Institute of Oceanography (IEO-CSIC) and IRFAP

LAST HELD IN MAINE
Portland, 2017

MAINE AT ICWL 2026

Gulf of Maine Lobster Foundation
Kennebunk

Maine Department of Marine Resources
Boothbay

Maine Sea Grant
University of Maine

EMMA'S PRESENTATION

Ghost Gear in the Maine Lobster Fishery: Collaboration, Science and Education

Emma Weed, Program Director
Gulf of Maine Lobster Foundation