

The Lobster Conservancy

Sustaining a thriving lobster fishery through science and community

Spring 2012

Dear Volunteers and Friends of The Lobster Conservancy,

The Lobster Conservancy's mission is to strive to sustain a thriving lobster fishery through science and community. Our periodic (we try for quarterly) newsletter keeps members and volunteers informed of recent research, education and outreach activities.

News from the Board of Directors

Helen Muther will present the Sarah Orne Jewett award to Diane Cowan on behalf of the Maine Women's Fund at the Holiday Inn by the Bay in Portland, Maine on May 2nd. The Sarah Orne Jewett award is given to a Maine woman who exhibits the attributes of the women in Jewett's works of fiction: true grit, independence, courage, humor and discipline. Sarah Orne Jewett was noted for her works of fiction that highlighted those she was most familiar with - the everyday world of villages and ordinary people in Maine. Diane is delighted to accept the award. For more information or to order tickets to the leadership luncheon, please visit

http://www.mainewomensfund.org/news_and_events/2012_leadership_luncheon/

In the press: The Maine Community Foundation has awarded a \$4,500 grant to The Lobster Conservancy, which will use the funds to install a new tide gauge at Friendship in support of the Conservancy's 2012 Juvenile Lobster Census.

Since 1992, this volunteer-based census has counted post-larval and early-juvenile lobsters in their shoreline nursery habitats -- from Green Harbor, Massachusetts to Beals, Maine -- that are exposed only during the lowest tides each month. The study has produced unique and uninterrupted time-series data on the settlement, abundance, and growth patterns of these baby lobsters.

Unfortunately, many of the lobster nurseries under long-time study have recently become inaccessible because the tide no longer recedes low enough for TLC to count the lobsters on a reliable basis. This is likely due to rising sea levels. Changes in the habitat at the lobster nurseries may also be influenced by rising sea levels.

The Maine Community Foundation funds will be used to help install and maintain a tide gauge in Friendship. NOAA now maintains four tidal gauges in Maine (at Seavey Island, Portland, Bar Harbor and Eastport), but none of those is suitable for generating accurate data on tides along the mid-coast -- including Friendship. The Lobster Conservancy intends to measure the local tides in order to better learn how the tides influence lobsters and lobster habitat.

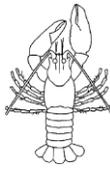
Research

Progress on tide gauge

Work on the Friendship Tide Gauge has begun! Physical oceanographer, Dr. Vitalii Sheremet -- research scientist affiliated with the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and University of Rhode Island -- visited in March to scout out suitable locations for tide gauges and current meters and returned last week to start deploying gear.

Thus far we have installed a "reel" tide gauge at the Fishermen's Heritage Lobster Co-op, "pivot" tide gauges inside and outside of the lobster pound on Friendship Long Island, and a current meter in the channel inside the lobster pound. Stayed tuned for further developments.

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Diane Cowan takes notes standing by the research vessel (that looks a lot like a canoe!) used to deploy the current meter inside the lobster pound at Friendship Long Island. Photo by Vitalii Sheremet.



Above, Vitalii Sheremet admires newly installed pivot tide gauge that measures low tide level inside lobster pound at Friendship Long Island. Photo by Diane Cowan. Arrow at right, PVC pipe attached to piling serves as enclosure for reel tide gauge. Photo by Vitalii Sheremet.



Volunteers needed in Marblehead, MA

The Lobster Conservancy is looking for a few new volunteers to help census the lobster nursery at Gerry Island in Marblehead, Massachusetts. We prefer a long-term commitment of several years and require volunteers to be available to sample during the lowest tides of each month from May through October – mucking around in rubber boots, braving all sorts of weather, and

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heading out in darkness and in light. If you think you are interested, contact Diane at dcowan@lobsters.org, and then show up for recruitment and training (details below under upcoming events).

Media, Outreach and Presentations

March 29. Diane attended and gave a presentation at the Fisheries Roundtable on Global Warming at the Island Institute

Upcoming Events

April 19. Cary Institute Seminar, Millbrook, NY. 11 am. “A year in the life of a Maine lobster” by Diane Cowan

May 2. Noon – 2 pm. Maine Women’s Fund leadership luncheon. For more information, go to http://www.mainewomensfund.org/news_and_events/2012_leadership_luncheon/

May 5 & 6. Marine Ecology Symposium at Bowdoin College. “Social life of lobsters” oral presentation by Diane Cowan.

May 7 & 8. Marblehead lobster census. Recruit and train volunteers to continue ongoing lobster studies at Gerry Island. Oral presentation to orient prospective volunteers to the juvenile lobster census will take place at 6 pm on Monday, May 7 (location to be announced). Hands on volunteer training will take place at Gerry Island field site beginning at 6 am on Tuesday, May 8.

July 20. 10:30 am – noon. Pemaquid Watershed Association. Hands-on learning experience for kids to meet and learn about live lobsters from Diane Cowan.

July 28. 9-11 am. Friendship Day Touch Tank. The Lobster Conservancy at 6 Waldoboro Rd, Friendship, Maine.

Yours in TLC,

Diane F. Cowan, Ph.D, Executive Director