

# The Lobster Conservancy

*Sustaining a thriving lobster fishery through science, community and education*

Winter 2015

Dear Volunteers and Friends of The Lobster Conservancy,

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

## **Research News**

### *Juvenile Lobster Monitoring Program*

Two bits of news from the Juvenile Lobster Monitoring Program: one concerns an invasive species: the green crab, *Carcinus maenus* that many are trying to eradicate; the other concerns a native macroalgal species: the rockweed, *Ascophyllum nodosum* that many are trying to protect. The Lobster Conservancy (TLC) is interested and has data on both of these species. We are interested in *Carcinus* because it **shares** habitat with the American lobster, *Homarus americanus* and in *Ascophyllum* because it **is** lobster habitat.

### Green Crab, *Carcinus maenus*

Since JLMP (TLC's census of juvenile lobsters dubbed the Juvenile Lobster Monitoring Program began in 1993, we haven't just been counting lobsters. We also have what I call "other species" data from about 100 other species of macroalgae, flora, and fauna – including the illustrious green crab. Unfortunately, with the exception of some of the rock crab, green crab and Asian shore crab, very little of the "other species" data have been digitized. Spurred on by the current interest in apparent green crab population explosion, The Lobster Conservancy has been awarded a contract to delve into our crab data as part of a pilot project spearheaded by John der Kinderen who received an award from Maine Technology Institute. Former TLC Executive Director Dr. Sara Ellis is focusing primarily on the volunteer-collected data from our citizen science program while Dr. Cowan is working on the year-round data collected by TLC scientists and former graduate student Marissa McMahan. Preliminary graphs of crab abundance and GIS data are being delivered to and uploaded by Kappa Mapping. We'll keep you posted.



Juvenile cancer crab sampled during Jan 2015 lobster census at Bramhall Deep Cove on Friendship Long Island. Photo by Diane Cowan.

### Rockweed, *Ascophyllum nodosum*

Meanwhile, data collection continues at long-term monitoring site on Friendship Long Island censused by Dr. Cowan. In January, Dr. Cowan was disappointed to see that the *Ascophyllum nodosum* (rockweed) from her top lobster producing transect and as far as we know the location that harbors the most recently settled juvenile lobsters per unit area of anywhere in New England, had

# The Lobster Conservancy

been harvested. See also

[http://www.lobsterconservancy.org/uploads/1/1/3/3/11330998/2013\\_tlc\\_summer\\_newsletter.pdf](http://www.lobsterconservancy.org/uploads/1/1/3/3/11330998/2013_tlc_summer_newsletter.pdf)



This is a photo of “Deep Cove East” one of The Lobster Conservancy transects that has been censused year-round on a monthly basis since 1999. The white line is a tape measure laid out to mark the transect line placed in same location each time lobster census is taken. White square is square meter quadrat used to count number of lobsters per unit area (in this case square meter). Yellow box is drawn around *Ascophyllum* hanging down ledge. Arrows indicate where *Ascophyllum* would extend or hang down if it had not been cut by seaweed harvesters. The point is that the rocks the lobsters lived under that used to be covered by *Ascophyllum* that grew to great lengths and draped down to shield and protect the lobsters has been cut and no longer serves its protective sheltering purpose. That’s too bad. We did what we could with written and oral testimony year after year at legislative hearings at State House in Maine. We asked for lobster habitat to be protected. Obviously, even this precious little strip of bottom was not deemed worthy of protection.

Deep Cove East transect at Bramhall Deep Cove on Friendship Long Island after *Ascophyllum* harvest. Photo by Diane Cowan.

## Education

*Student Visitors in January*



The Lundquist Family came all the way from Rochester, Michigan to learn about Maine for Maggie’s school project. Although Maggie chose Maine because her favorite beast is the Moose, she liked learning about lobsters, too. From left to right: Diane and Sula Cowan, Maggie, Katie and Amy Lundquist. Photo by Chris Lundquist.

# The Lobster Conservancy

## Winter Tales and Seascapes

*Photos and commentary from the Lobster Life Studies Center on Friendship Long Island*



**Part of Medomak Valley Land Trust parcel near center of Friendship Long Island**



**View of Bramhall Deep Cove at high tide**



**Outhouse where field gear is stored**

To gather field based biological data year round, one must be able to access ones field site. Getting to Bramhall Deep Cove – The Lobster Conservancy’s site for Juvenile Lobster Monitoring Program on Friendship Long Island since 1999 has never been more difficult. It took four days of breaking a bit more trail each day to make it across the island in snow shoes. It took ten days to find four suitable days to even try it! Half way there the camp on the Old Schoolhouse property owned and stewarded by the Medomak Valley Land Trust never looked prettier. Once there, water over Deep Cove was water not ice, but that was a week ago. Big tides coming in just a few days. If weather allows, sampling will take place. Dug out outhouse to make it possible to get field gear out.

# The Lobster Conservancy



Research Vessel *Zoster marina* encased in ice Feb 2 - ?, 2015



Scallop delivery to Lobster Life Study Center



Lobster Life Study Center in long, shadowy, dreamy February light at sunset

Meanwhile on this side of the island, life is good. Billy Moony and his crew delivered a gallon of scallops to the Lobster Life Studies Center before the ice took hold. Been iced in since 21:00h on February 2, 2015. The lobsters don't seem to mind. Internet working fine. Plenty to eat with scallops and deer meat and the stores from an incredibly successful garden. Can't even run out of books these days what with Kindle and internet and all that. No worries with where to put all the snow. Shovel it off the wharf right into the bay. Off the porch right into the pond and never occurred to an island dweller to shovel a path in the dooryard or in the woods. Packing the snow down with snow shoes works much better and now we're walking on top of the world.

The Lobster  Conservancy



**Jimmy Wotton, Captain of Fishing Vessel Overkill breaks through ice from Friendship Harbor to just west of Lobster Life Studies Center**

**Links to Recent Press**

<http://knox.villagesoup.com/p/grant-to-support-local-lobster-census/1288464>

<http://knox.villagesoup.com/p/grant-to-support-local-lobster-census/1288464>

<https://newstral.com/en/article/en/970408103/lobster-conservancy-receives-5-000-grant>

Yours in TLC and Friendship,

Diane F. Cowan, Ph.D.  
Senior Scientist

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