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[Canadian/U.S. Lobstermen's Gather for a Town Meeting](#)

Lobstermen from Long Island Sound to Nova Scotia gathered in Portland, Maine on April 23 for the first ever Canadian/U.S. Lobstermen's Town Meeting, hosted by the Lobster Institute. The Town Meeting attracted over 165 people - mostly lobstermen. Other industry members, scientists, and interested parties also attended. All came together to discuss the state of the lobster resource and its habitat. "Lobstermen from all geographic areas of the fishery attended and shared what they are seeing and what their theories are about the status of the lobster resource. What impacts the fishery in one area could very well impact the fishery in others, that's why we invited lobstermen from Canada down through to Long Island Sound to join us," said Dana Rice of Bunker's Harbor, chairman of the event's planning committee. "A distinctive feature of this meeting was its emphasis on the lobstermen's perspective, shared through a true "town meeting" style discussion," said Rice. "Rather than fishermen listening to scientists, scientists were listening to the fishermen."

The primary goal of the Lobstermen's Town Meeting was to provide fishermen with an opportunity to share with one another what they are observing in their day-to-day operations, what their theories might be as to why they are seeing what they see, and how resource managers and scientists might use the information they can provide. This allowed fishermen to get a more complete picture over the range of the entire resource, -- including commonalities, differences and potential future impacts.

Following the morning Town Meeting, attendees had an opportunity to meet a variety of lobster researchers who had set up displays on their various research projects. This was followed by small group discussions on key topics that came up during the Town Meeting session. From these discussions emerged questions intended to help frame future research efforts. Examples of some of the areas stressed by the lobstermen and related research questions raised are:

§ Water quality -- “Some areas are seeing a decrease in eel grass and plankton...can the water be ‘too clean’?”

§ Safeguarding lobster health -- “What is the baseline for a healthy lobster?”

§ Learning more about the lobsters’ needs and habits surrounding nutrition, reproduction and growth -- “Is there enough food available?”, “How does water temperature affect growth and weight gain?”



A breakout session on lobster health during the Canadian/U.S. Lobstermen’s Town Meeting.

“This was an opportunity for lobstermen to help set the agenda for needed research for the fishery on an industry-wide basis, research geared toward both preservation and the responsible use of the resource, while maintaining the vitality of the industry,” said Dr. Robert Bayer, executive director of the Lobster Institute. “A key role of the Institute is to foster communication between all geographic areas of the fishery to reinforce the fact that all share and rely on a common resource that must be protected so that everyone to enjoy a successful fishery.” An exchange of information and frank discussions were the order of the day. “It was the first time I’ve been to a lobster meeting where you heard Nova Scotian accents, Long Island Sound accents, and Downeast Maine accents all in the same room,” said Sherman Hoyt, a member of the Maine Marine Extension Team that helped moderate the meeting.

The Town Meeting was recorded and the Lobster Institute will make audiotapes and or written transcripts available to interested parties. In addition, summary reports of the Town Meeting and afternoon breakout discussions will be compiled and made available on request. Those interested in receiving reports should call the Lobster Institute at 207-581-1443. Z

**The Lobster Institute extends its thanks
to the primary sponsor of its
Canadian/U.S. Lobstermen’s Town Meeting:**

Darden Restaurants

(Red Lobster, Olive Garden, & Smokey Bones)

As well as other sponsors:

**Fisheries Products International,
Maine Import/Export Lobster Dealer’s Assn.
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A Simplified Method of Assessing the Nutritional and Physiological Condition of Captive Lobsters

Did you know that the Lobster Institute was instrumental in introducing a quick, nondestructive method of assessing the nutritional and physiological condition of captive lobsters? Developing a noninvasive field method of evaluating a lobster's physiological state without sending samples for laboratory analysis was essential to improve techniques for storing lobsters. Lobster Institute Executive Director Dr. Robert Bayer and Dr. Dale F. Leavitt, a former student at the University of Maine, devised a refractometric method of determining the serum protein concentrations of lobsters ...a reliable indicator of muscle mass weights and the nutritional adequacy of the lobsters' diet. It is now common practice at lobster storage/shipping facilities to use a total solids refractometer to measure serum protein concentrations in lobster, allowing on site assessment of facility conditions and feeding programs. z

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2003 Friends of the Lobster Institute

We sincerely thank the over 125 annual donors - businesses, foundations and individuals - who supported the work of the Lobster Institute this past year. We also are grateful to those grant makers, sponsors and others who provided assistance for our projects in 2003. We look forward to your continued support in 2004.

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Research Report

Readers may contact the Lobster Institute for more detailed information on any of the projects reported.

✓ **Tagging of Weir Herring in the Bay of Fundy to Investigate Stock Structure, Movement And Migration** – In August 2002, the Fundy Weir Fishermen Association Inc., in collaboration with the New Brunswick Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Grand Manan Fishermen's Association, Connors Bros., Ltd., and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans initiated an extensive herring tagging program in the Bay of Fundy. The short-term objective of this project is to improve the knowledge of the patterns of in-season movement and migration of herring within the Bay of Fundy. These data can be used to investigate migration routes, within season distribution, and the degree to which the same schools of herring

contribute to catch in different areas of the bay. The long-term objective of this project is to update and improve the knowledge of herring stock structure for U.S. and Canadian transboundary science and management purposes.

According to Christa Waters, Weir Herring Tagging Project Coordinator, tag returns are critical to the success of this project. “We have been finding that a lot of tag returns have come from lobster fishers who find the tags in their bait,” said Waters. “Consequently we have decided to focus some of our promotional effort on the lobster industry in hopes of improving our return rate and the amount of information that we get back.” The tags have been applied to herring in such a way that they are easily recognized. External yellow t-bar tags are located in the middle section of the fish, at the base of the dorsal fin. Each tag is marked with a specific number as well as a Canadian and US address. For every tag received, the name of the recipient goes into a draw for up to **\$1,000** which is held every spring as a reward for tag returns. Since the start of this project over 46,000 tags have been applied.

Recovered tag, name & address of finder and location & date of catch can be sent to either:

§ Biological Station, 531 Brandy Cove Road , St. Andrew's, N.B. E5B 2L9, Canada

§ Dept. of Marine Resources, P.O. Box 8, McKown Point Road, West Boothbay Harbor, Maine, 04575, U.S.A.

For more information, contact Christa Waters at (506) 529-5888 or WatersC@mar.dfo-mpo.gc.ca .

✓ **A First Glance at Expressed Genes in the American Lobster**– David W. Towle, Ph.D., Senior Scientist and Director of the Marine DNA Sequencing and Analysis Center at the Mount Desert Island Biological Laboratory (MDIBL) reports that a combined effort of the MDNASAC and the Marine Genomics Project at Hollings Marine Laboratory is yielding a first glance at expressed genes in the American lobster, *Homarus americanus*. “To date, we have end sequenced over 5,000 clones in a normalized cDNA library produced from ten different adult tissues,” said Towle. “We are also producing ESTs for the little skate *Leucoraja erinacea* and the dogfish shark *Squalus acanthias*, as well as collaborating with University of North Carolina at Wilmington on ESTs for the blue crab *Callinectes sapidus*.” The resulting 5' ESTs and their annotations are currently available at www.marinegenomics.org .

Marine researchers who wish to receive *E. coli* stocks or plasmids of interesting clones can contact Towle at Mount Desert Island Biological Laboratory, Salsbury Cove, Maine 04672; call (207) 288-9880 x474 or email dtowle@mdibl.org.

✓ **University of Maine Students and the Lobster Institute Team Up on Research Projects** – An important advantage enjoyed by the Lobster Institute is its affiliation with the University of Maine. This connection allows the Institute to enlist the aid of graduate and undergraduate students in its research. A recent example is Amy Bouchard (pictured), a student in the Department of Animal & Veterinary Sciences, who worked with the Institute in an effort to determine the bacteria types found in lobster shell disease. Other student projects have included studies on Gaffekemia, lobster attractants, glucose monitoring in lobsters, and creating Lobster Cam - a live video feed to the Internet from inside a lobster trap.



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Sizing Up Your Lobster Dinner

As summertime approaches, lobster finds its way onto more picnic and dinner tables. Here is a handy chart for ordering up just the size lobsters you need:

Size	Min. Live Weight	Max. Live Weight
Chix		1.25 lbs.
Quarters	1.25 lbs.	1.50 lbs.
Halves	1.50 lbs.	1.75 lbs.
Selects #1	1.75 lbs.	2.00 lbs.
Selects #2	2.00 lbs.	2.50 lbs.
Selects #3	2.50 lbs.	3.00 lbs.
Jumbos	3.00 lbs.	+

General rules to enjoy your lobster at its best:

* Lobsters can live up to 2 days if stored properly (refrigerate; keep moist with seaweed or seawater – don't place directly on ice or in fresh water!)

* Cooked lobster is best eaten within 3-4 days

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