MAINE LOBSTER: How to Protect the Name of a Famous Catch? Patrice McCarron

June 2014

Maine Lobstermen's Association advocates for a sustainable lobster resource and the fishermen and communities that depend on it.

- MLA is a fishing industry association established in 1954
- Advocate for interests of commercial lobstermen on a variety of regulatory and economic issues
- Educate lobster industry through monthly newsletter, e-weekly and social media



Established in 1954

Source: Maine DMR

Maine Lobster Fishery at a Glance

6,000 commercial licenses issued (2012)
70% are active (4,280)
60% landed > 1,000 lbs (3,650)
30% are latent (1,750)
Max limit of 800 traps (or less)
~3 million trap tags issued
~2.4 million trap tags > 1,000 lbs (80%)

Source: Maine DMR

Maine Lobster Fishery at a Glance Record 127 million lbs landed (2012) Landings 126 million lbs in 2013 Record value of \$364.5 million in 2013

• 80% lobsters graded as sweet "shedder"





Maine Lobster Fishery at a Glance

- Fishery is open year-round
- ~80% of lobstermen fish in coastal waters (within 3 miles)

Source: Maine DMR

Peak landings July – Nov

- Maine lobster fishery is open year-round
- Landings are highly seasonal
- ~80% of Maine's catch is landed in 5 months





Washington	23,666,416
Hancock	43,906,928
Knox	33,625,363
Waldo	688,306
Lincoln	6,083,152
Sagadahoc	2,077,077
Cumberland	12,041,348
York	3,865,287
Total	125.9



What *is* a Maine lobster?

- Lobster harvested in Maine, right?
- FDA regulates seafood names
- "Maine lobster" used to be an acceptable common name for all *Homarus americanus*
- Lots of confusion



- No enforcement; MA, CN and others market as "Maine lobster"
- The Seafood List FDA's Guide to Acceptable Market Names for Seafood Sold in Interstate Commerce

FDA – The Seafood List

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	Search:	lobster Show Ite	ms Clear 🛛 Search within the	se results Records Found: 40 Page 1 of 1
- 1	Туре	Acceptable Market Name(s)	Common Name	Scientific Name
	1	Langostino <u>or</u> Langostino Lobster	Squat Lobster	Cervimunida johni
	1	Lobster	American Lobster	Homarus americanus
	ĩ	Lobster	European Lobster	Homarus gammarus
	1	Lobster, Slipper	Japanese Fan Lobster	Ibacus ciliatus
	1	Lobster, Rock	Southern Rock Lobster	Jasus edwardsii
	1	Lobster, Rock	Cape Spiny Lobster	Jasus Ialandii
	1	Lobster, Rock	St. Paul Spiny Lobster	Jasus paulensis
	1	Lobster, Rock	Eastern Spiny Lobster	Jasus verreauxī
	1	Lobsterette	Caribbean Lobsterette	Metanephrops binghami
	1	Lobsterette <u>or</u> Baby Lobster <u>or</u> Scampi <u>or</u> Deep Sea Lobster <u>or</u> Bay Prawn	Lobsterette	Metanephrops challengeri
	1	Lobsterette	Urugavian Lobster	Metanephrops rubellus
	1	Lobsterette	Red-banded Lobster	Metanephrops thomsoni
	1	Langostino <u>or</u> Langostino Lobster	Squat Lobster	Munida gregaria
	1	Lobsterette	Florida Lobsterette	Nephropsis aculeata
	1	Lobster, Norway	Norway Lobster	Nephrops norvegicus
	1	Lobster, Spiny	Natal Spiny Lobster	Palinurus delagoae
	3	Lobster, Spiny	Common Spiny Lobster	Palinurus elephas
	1	Lobster, Spiny	Gilchrist Spiny Lobster	Palinurus gilchristi
	1	Lobster, Spiny	Pink Spiny Lobster	Palinurus mauritanicus

Why does it matter if a lobster is harvested from Maine?



- Maine, NH, MA, RI all catch Homarus americanus
- Canada catches *Homarus americanus*
- Maine harvesters care about it origin!

Maine's Lobster Conservation Measures

V-notch Protection



Zero Tolerance



3 ¹/₄" min carapace





Escape Vents



Trap Only Fishery



Oversize Protection >5"



Trap Limits (800 max)

No Sundays June-Aug; Daytime only June-Oct

Lobstermen return to the sea alive

50% to 80% of what they catch in traps

Measuring A Lobster Correctly









oversize





Eggers (& notch)

V-notch

Maine Lobster Industry programs

Zone councils

- Co-management
- Majority of gear fished in zone
- Only 49% of gear
 can fished in
 adjacent areas
- Limited entry and trap limits



C. Rubicam, 8/9/02, DMR Maine Whale Plan

Owner Operator

- No corporate ownership
- License and tags assigned to an individual and vessel
- No sale or transfer
- Revenue stays local which supports rural communities





Apprentice Program

- 2 year training program
- Work with licensed Captain

Maine... rural coastal economy

- Rural state with population of 1.3 million
- 3,500 mile coastline
- Small remote communities
- located on penninsulas
- 15 year round island communities
- Poor economic performance
- Lobster industry is a billion \$ industry

US Lobster Supply and Markets (2012)

• Maine lands 85% of US supply of Homarus americanus

Source: Maine DMR

- US exported 107 million lbs.
 - >68 million lbs exported to CN
 - >39 million lbs exported overseas
- US consumed 42 million lbs (28%)
- CN imported 68 million lbs (45%)



Building Value for Maine Lobster

Maine Lobster Promotion Council

- Established in 1991
- License fees from harvesters and lobster buyers
- Budget ~\$350k
- Replaced with MLMC in 2013

Harvesters lobbied for increasing investment in building demand for Maine lobster to bring more value to the boats!



Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative

- Established in 2013
- License fees from harvesters, processors, dealers
- Budget \$2.2 million in year 3
- Sunset after 5 years

Protecting Maine lobster



- MLPC established Certified Maine Lobster program
- "Certification mark" registered with US Patent and Trademark Office
- Identification program allowing retail and trade customers, as well as consumers, to know their lobster came from Maine.

Imposter Lobster

- Allows other lobster to take advantage of value of "Maine Lobster"
- Undermines the brand, diminishes value
- Country of Origin Labeling (COOL)
 - Adds to confusion about origin of product
- Traceability can help
 - Proof of origin and chain of custody
 - Maine Lobster is MSC certified

Origin Products need protection





