

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# Report Back from LD 28

Provided by DMR

March 15, 2021



1. The current biological status of the fishery;
2. Current exit-to-entry ratios in each limited-entry zone;
3. Latency of licenses and trap tags;
4. The current policy for student lobster and crab fishing licenses; and
5. Any other factors the department finds relevant to its examination.

The department shall also revisit the findings and recommendations made in the report prepared for the department by the Gulf of Maine Research Institute pursuant to Resolve 2011, chapter 62. The report must include recommendations regarding the long waiting periods for entry into a limited-entry zone. In making any recommendations, the department shall account for potential impacts to the lobster fishery as a result of any proposed new federal regulations to address protections for endangered right whales. The joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over marine resources matters may report out legislation to the First Regular Session of the 130th Legislature based upon the report of the department.

# 1. Current Biological Status of the Fishery

American Lobster Benchmark Stock Assessment completed in 2020

- Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank (GOM/GBK) Stock
  - Record high abundance and recruitment
  - Not overfished nor experiencing overfishing
- Southern New England
  - Record low abundance and recruitment
  - Severely depleted with poor prospects for recovery

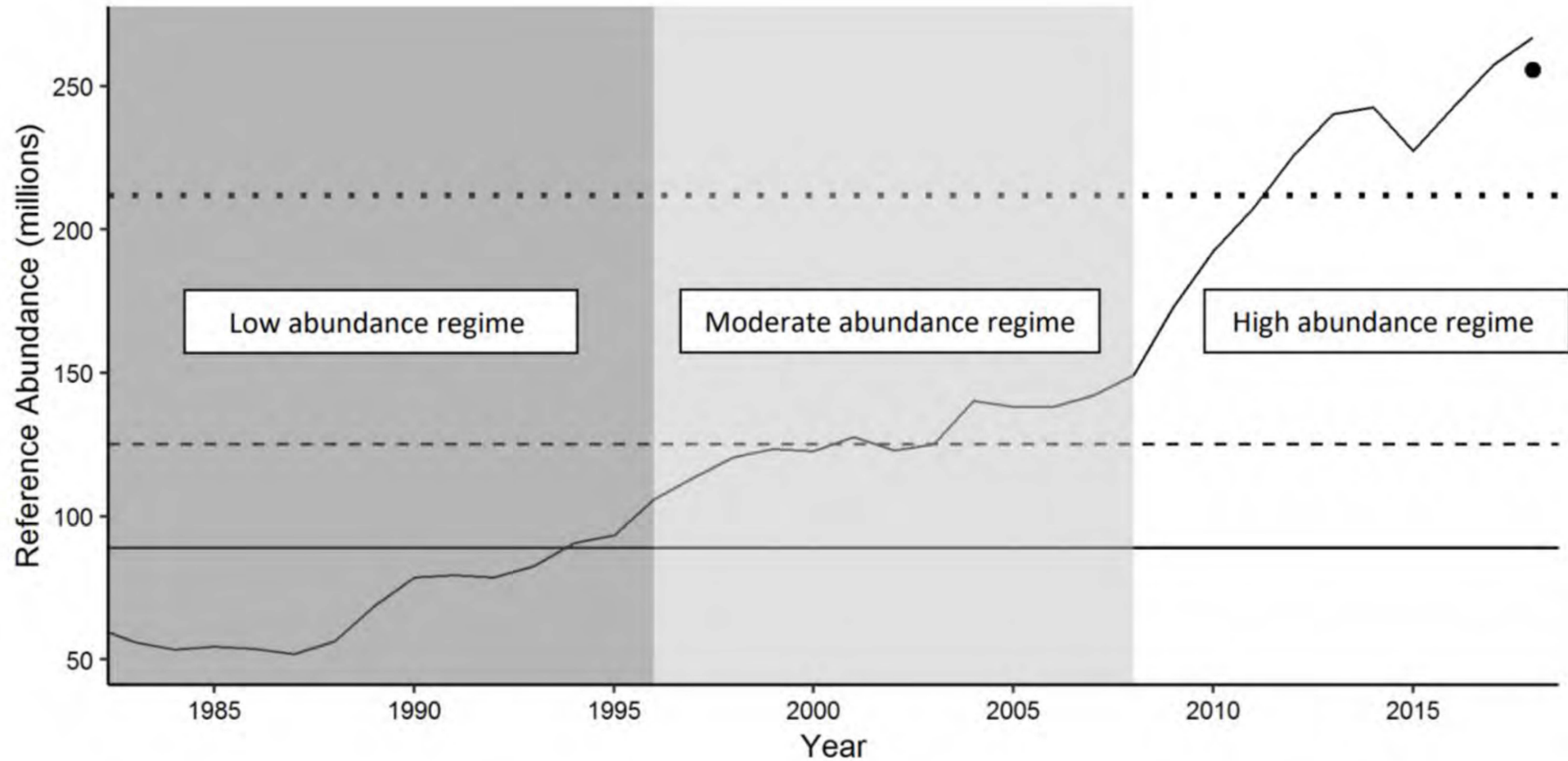
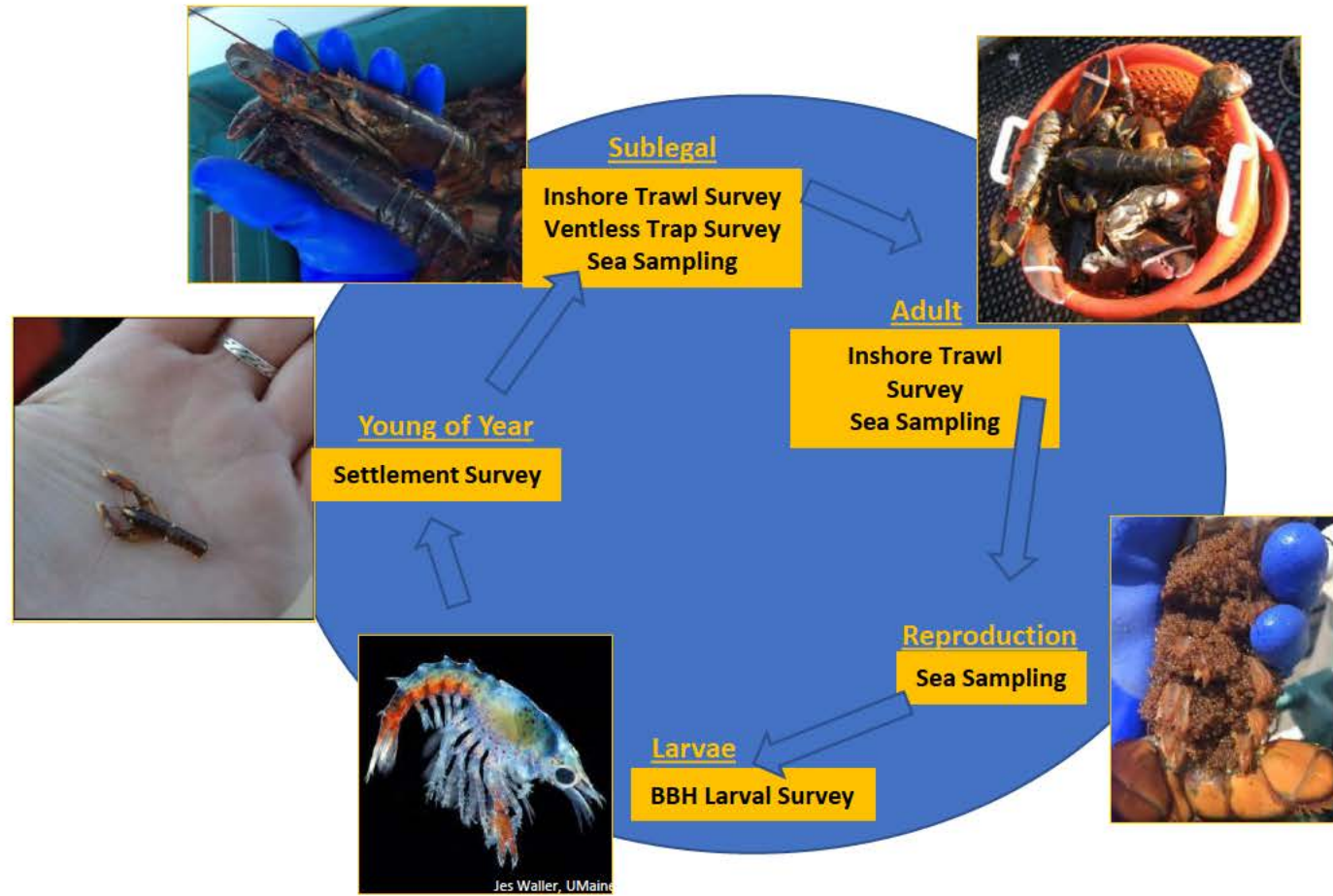


Figure 1. GOM/GBK stock abundance compared to the fishery/industry target (dotted black line), abundance limit (dashed black line), and abundance threshold (solid black line) reference points based on detected low (dark grey period), moderate (light grey period), and high (white period) abundance regimes. The circle is the three-year (2016-2018) average reference abundance.

# DMR Lobster Monitoring Programs



## 2. Current exit-to-entry ratios in each limited-entry zone;

Zone A: Licenses 1:3

Zone B: Licenses 1:3

Zone C: Licenses 1:1

Zone D: Tags 1:5 (800:4000)

Zone E: Licenses 1:5

Zone F: Tags 1:5 (800:4000)

Zone G: Tags 1:5 (800:4000)

# Waiting list length and entry

ZONE	# on WL	LONGEST WAIT	2020 ENTRY: OFF WL	2020 ENTRY: STUDENT UPGRADES
A	61	2016	10	20
B	33	2010	6	8
C	12	2020	33	9
D	40	2009	5	7
E	14	2012	3	0
F	38	2010	5	4
G	29	2006	3	3
	227		65	51

# Latency of **licenses** and trap tags

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Commercial lobster licenses	4,884	4,850	4,833	4,769	4,750

## **In 2017 (4850 commercial licenses):**

- 1141 license holders (24%) = zero landings
- 282 license holders (6%) = less than 1,000 lbs
- 838 license holders (17%) = 1,000-10,000 lbs

Total: 2,261 licenses holders (47%) take only 3.9% of the landings

# Latency of licenses and trap tags

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total Commercial lobster TAGS	2,866,949	2,868,188	2,846,869	2,888,304	2,854,132

## 2017:

392,391 – Number of trap tags purchased by license holders (1141) with no landings.

847,952 – Number of additional trap tags that could be purchased by existing license holders

1,240,343 – Total number of additional trap tags that could be fished.

# The current policy for student lobster and crab fishing licenses

## Apprenticeship Program Requirements:

Fishing Time (either your own gear with sponsor sign off OR with sponsor)

1000 hours

200 days

2 years

AND

Drill conductor's safety training

# The current policy for student lobster and crab fishing licenses

Student license eligibility:

**Age:** 8 years of age or older – 22 years of age or under

8- 10: 10 traps

11-13: 50 traps

14-22: 150 traps

**Enrolled:** Attending a public day school/alternative to a public day school, or enrolled in a half time course of study at a postsecondary institution accredited by a state recognized accrediting agency.

# Obtaining a commercial lobster license without going on a Waiting List

Finish Apprenticeship Program BEFORE turning 18:

Can obtain commercial lobster license (beginning with 300 trap tags) upon completion of the program as long as individual is at least 17 years of age.

Finish Apprenticeship Program AFTER turning 18, before turning 20:

Can obtain commercial lobster license (beginning with 300 trap tags) upon completion of the program as long as individual has their high school diploma or GED.

Finish Apprenticeship Program AFTER turning 20, before turning 23:

Can obtain commercial lobster license (beginning with 300 trap tags) upon completion of the program as long as individual began the AP before turning 18 AND the individual has been at least a half time student every year since turning 18.

Any other factors the Department finds relevant

**Uncertainty created by federal whale rules**

- Biop requires a 98% risk reduction over the next 10 years
- To meet this target, the fishery will need to be reinvented
- What does this mean? No one knows.

**Latent effort remains significant**

# Findings and Recommendations of GMRI Report (2011)

***Deficiency: Latent Effort***

***Recommendation: Tiered Licensing System***

***Deficiency: Long Waiting Periods***

***Recommendations: Change trap tag accounting; Encourage zones to revisit exit-to-entry ratios; Tiered Licensing System***