

Sea Urchin Zone Council Meeting Summary November 16, 2016 in Ellsworth, ME

DMR staff: Trisha Cheney, Maggie Hunter, Robert Russell, Lessie White, Carl Wilson and Rob Watts.

SUZC members present: Teresa Johnson, Duane Carver, Larry Harris, Joe Leask, Mark Nickerson, Clint Richardson, Chuon Muth, and Dean Norris.

SUZC members absent: Tracey Sawtelle, Atchan Tamaki, Jason Leighton, and Steve Eddy.

Public: Aaron Gilpatrick, Jessica Card, Jeremy Card, Steve Rappaport, Eric hall, Jim Taylor, Brian Langley, Danny Fitzsimmons, Danny Jodway, Merrill Matthews, Steven Tinker, Shane McPherson, Daniel McCurdy, Brian Swartz and Kim Ovitz.

Sea Urchin Zone Council Research Subcommittee Meeting Summary

Meeting commenced at 1:00pm

The subcommittee discussed updates on the Cat Ledges Project. Larry Harris provided an overview of his draft Saltonstall-Kennedy Program grant proposal, which is due December 9th. The pre-proposal was accepted and the group was invited to submit a full proposal. The estimated budget is for \$240,000 and the majority of funds would go to hatchery rearing of the juvenile urchins which are to be outplanted to the Cat Ledges site. The goal of the project is to establish a lease site for aquaculture while also establishing methods for restoring a reef. The project would need to add 3 additional sites to the project to help in evaluating this. Currently, Steve Eddy and Dave Quimby have a Limited Purpose Aquaculture (LPA) site and under a Special License and they are evaluating the outplanting success of hatchery reared urchins. With this work, Steve has been able to find the optimal size of hatchery reared urchins to outplant. The goal with Cat Ledges would be to outplant urchins until there is a critical mass which can maintain itself. It is a collaborative effort between the University of Maine, University of New Hampshire, DMR and industry members. Some participants expressed the desire to move additional totes of urchins ASAP while water temperatures are warm, possibly the first week of December.

Larry also described a new larval collector which allows for animals to be collected from the water column prior to settlement and preserved in formalin permanently with cinderblocks and PVC piping. It also excludes other all other animals, so no predation on the settlers, which has been an issue with the AstroTurf collectors.

The group discussed crab predation and asked that Department staff present data collected on crabs through their multiple monitoring programs at the next meeting, and if possible, to overlay with urchin data, to examine trends.

C. Muth mentioned that there is a group of harvesters in the Lubec area who would be willing to move urchins at the end of the season from an area of high density and low roe content to better areas so they could improve their roe yield. A long discussion ensued which hashed over the lengthy history of the past failures, with some minor success in one case, of these type of projects and the issue of who gets to harvest them first (early or late season, divers or dragners). The Cat Ledges project is moving urchins by hand [diving], whereas some of the past transplant project failures have been due to dragging urchins from cooler, deeper water and then having mass mortalities from heat shock as well as dragging damage.

Sea Urchin Zone Council Meeting

Meeting commenced at 3:00pm

Welcome & Introductions

J. Leask welcomed the group and asked everyone to introduce themselves around the room.

T. Cheney asked that there be a moment of silence to remember Killer Smith, who was a past SUZC member and involved in the urchin fishery for many years.

August 17, 2016 Meeting Summary

C. Richardson moved to accept; D. Norris seconded.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS. Approval of minutes passed.

DMR Updates: License Fluctuations

R. Russell presented information [**Appendix A**] detailing the number of licenses issued by year. Some of the fluctuations were the result of leasing and new licenses being issued before 2002. After that, the fluctuations can be attributed to the number of licenses issued by the tribes in any year. For example, the Passamaquoddy tribe has ability to issue up to 20 commercial licenses and unlimited 'sustenance' license.

DMR Updates: Spring Survey

R. Russell presented information from the spring survey [**Appendix B**]. The survey was conducted in the spring, and unfortunately while there was a slight uptick in Zone 1, mostly driven by Tenants Harbor, Zone 2 had a decline, driven primarily by a decrease in the Roque Island – Quoddy Head area (Region 8). When looking at the charts, keep in mind that historically, both indices are several magnitudes of order lower than prior to 2001, which was the end of the crash and when the survey started. Cobscook is off the charts with small urchins this year. There was some discussion regarding crab predation, and the possibility that while all the management measures may have helped somewhat stem the decline, the resource from a biological perspective is not recovering.

DMR Updates: 2016-17 Season

L. White provided a presentation on data collected through the swipe card program, which is a collaborative program funded through the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) in conjunction with other states and fisheries in an effort to collect more accurate and timely landings information. During the first few weeks there were some issues with the software company pushing out updates without being vetted, causing the swipe card readers to crash in the field. However, those issues have been resolved and everything seems to be working smoothly now, as DMR staff will be notified prior to updates being pushed so they can test them first. The project has also resulted in greater communication between Department staff and buyers/dealers. Harvesters still need to report with logbooks as effort and location data are obtained through that data stream.

L. White provided the SUZC with information up to the previous fishing day, while the all the data from last season has yet to be received, and the season before that is still being QA/QC, so this is a vast improvement. To date, 666,099 lbs. of urchins have been harvested at a value of almost \$2million. The average price/lb. is \$2.98 this year and roe on average was 10.7. For more information, such as how this compared to previous years, please see **Appendix C**.

DMR Updates: 128th Legislative Session

T. Cheney informed the council of a Department bill which would potentially allow the Department to keep a larger portion of their license fees vs. going to the General Fund, which would be deposited into a dedicated account for conducting research projects. There is potential that some of these funds could be used to support urchin work. Also, there will be a Department bill submitted for an owner-operator requirement for draggers in both the urchin and scallop fisheries. Following this was a discussion regarding entry, and while some of the council members firmly support the idea of transferability, the Commissioner does not as none of Maine's licenses are transferable. If the intent is to get more people into the fishery, issuing new licenses is to be the mechanism, not making license transferable. Council members feel it should be a waited lottery of some sorts that takes into account experience in the fishery, such as a tender or sternman, safety concerns and sustainable harvest practices.

Discussion: Picking Days

T. Cheney presented a Strawman for how the potential picking of days could work [Appendix D]. Swipe cards could enable the possibility in the future of harvesters being able to pick their days. This first year will allow us to test the infrastructure and work out any issues. In past conversations we have come to the conclusion that it is likely that some set days are going to be required for this to work from the dealer's point of view, as they don't want to be sending trucks Downeast seven days a week. There would also likely be a reduction in the number of days that harvesters get as weather days are currently a conservation measure. The days would need to be spread out to prevent a derby in the fishery, such as a harvester can only use so many days per month over a 3 month period for example. Currently, fishermen have about a 3 day work week and perhaps they could be given 4 possible days to choose to fish their 3 based on weather, markets and personal obligations.

Participants expressed concern that everyone would want to fish in December and that losing any more days was not palatable. Some of the dealers stated that they want to keep the calendars the same and to keep it at 3 days/week. Many people supported the idea of exchanging bad weather days for days at the end of the season. This could be facilitated through the use of swipe cards, and Trish provided an overview of how that could work. However, in general, many in the room expressed reluctance to changing the way the season has been set through 8 different calendars, which has evolved over years. Some worry that it may hurt the markets.

T. Cheney then explained that the Department developed this Strawman in response to the desire to have the flexibility to choose days and not be stuck to set calendar days and that the swipe card could enable this. However, overwhelmingly, the participants were not in support of changing the current calendar structure and that they rather have 3 day weeks.

Other Business

C. Muth expressed concern over the picking of the calendar days this year. Last year the buyers compromised and came up with a calendar at the February meeting, which was revised at the March meeting by a new set of stakeholders who wanted to fish different days and were not at the February meeting. T. Cheney explained that this year, all calendars will be approved together as a package so that the dealers can examine how the days in each season, zone, gear type overlap to ensure there are 3 day weeks.

Meeting adjourned at 5:40pm. The next meeting will be hosted on **Wednesday, January 25th at 5:00pm in Ellsworth City Hall**. The 2017/18 Season will be the main discussion topic.

Appendix A

Robert Russell's License History Information.

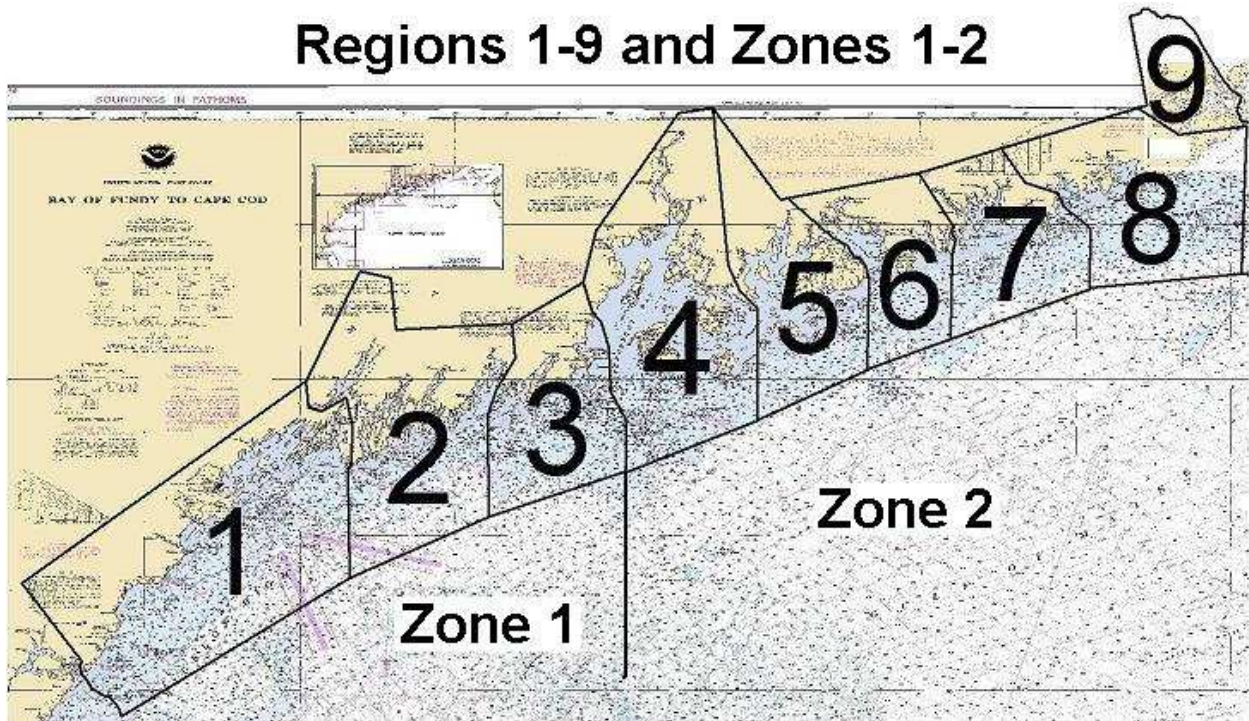
Annual Counts of Maine Commercial Sea Urchin Licenses

Year	Zone 1					Zone 2					Statewide							
	Dive	Drag	Rake	Unk**	Total	Dive	Drag	Rake	Unk**	Total	Dive	Drag	Rake	Unk**	Harv. Totals	Tender	Buyer	Proc.
1992											829	246			1,075			
1993											1,437	567			2,004			
1994											1,725	1,000			2,725	843		
1995	611	237	3		851	580	404	5		989	1,191	641	8		1,840	736	96	18
1996	501	167	2		670	562	327	4		893	1,063	494	6		1,563	730	70	19
1997	405	133	1		539	514	287	2		803	919	420	3		1,342	648	65	20
1998	348	95	1		444	460	260	1		721	808	355	2		1,165	544	51	18
1999	332	87	2		421	437	252	2		691	769	339	4		1,112	538	42	15
2000	313	74	2		389	407	242	2		651	720	316	4		1,040	530	31	18
2001	281	65	2		348	383	240	2		625	664	305	4		973	453	30	11
2002	246	53	2		301	343	242	1		586	589	295	3		887	355	23	12
2003	182	44	2		228	289	224	1		514	471	268	3		742	276	18	13
2004	134	30	2		166	261	206	1		468	395	236	3		634	212	12	12
2005	106	27	1		134	234	187	1		422	340	214	2		556	155	13	13
2006	83	24	0		107	213	178	1		392	296	202	1		499	150	13	12
2007	75	24	0		99	195	164	1		360	270	188	1		459	142	12	12
2008	61	21	0		82	188	163	1		352	249	184	1		434	138	13	12
2009	60	18	0		78	181	152	1		334	241	170	1		412	192	12	13
2010*	54	18	0		72	167	157	2		326	221	175	2		398	97	11	11
2011*	49	15	0		64	156	159	1		316	205	174	1		380	78	7	10
2012*	47	16	0		63	143	143	5		291	190	159	5		354	67	11	10
2013*	49	15	0		64	125	134	3	3	265	174	149	3	3	329	62	9	7
2014*	47	14	1		62	109	125	9	12	255	156	139	10	12	317	46	11	5
2015*	46	14		1	61	108	134	1	1	244	154	148	1	2	305	40	11	5

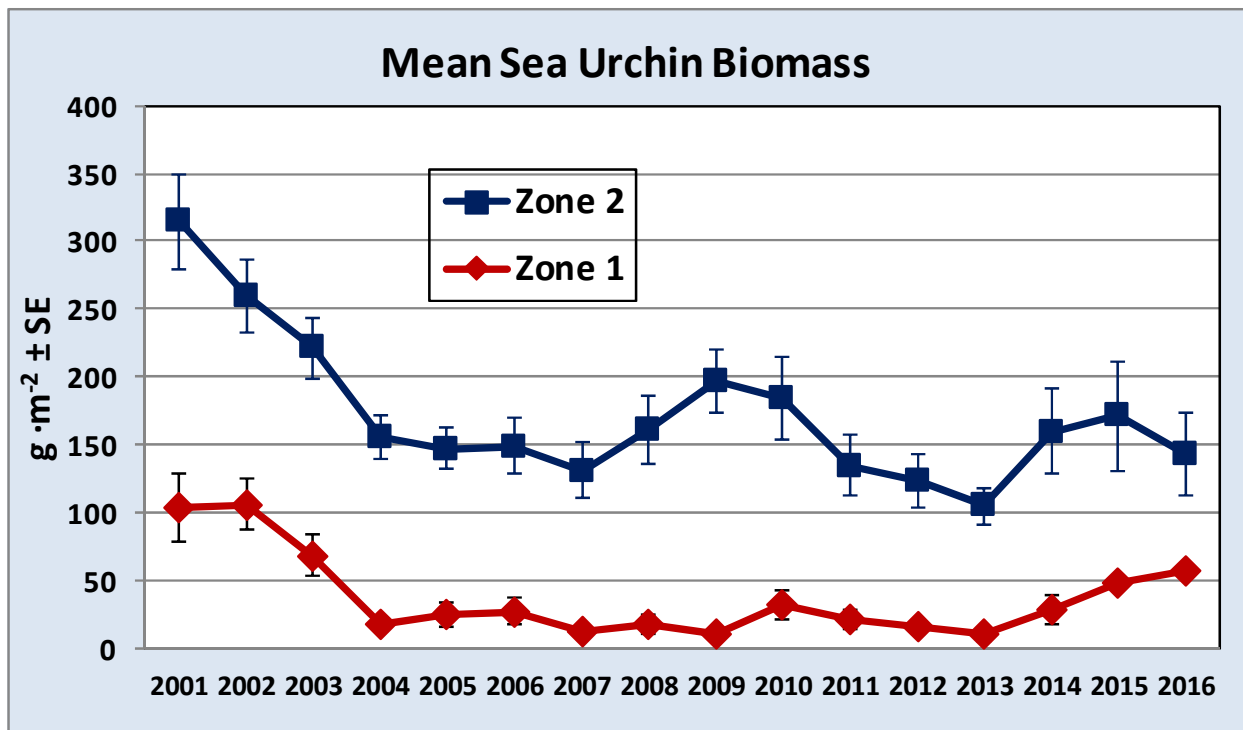
Appendix B

Robert Russell's Spring Survey presentation slides.

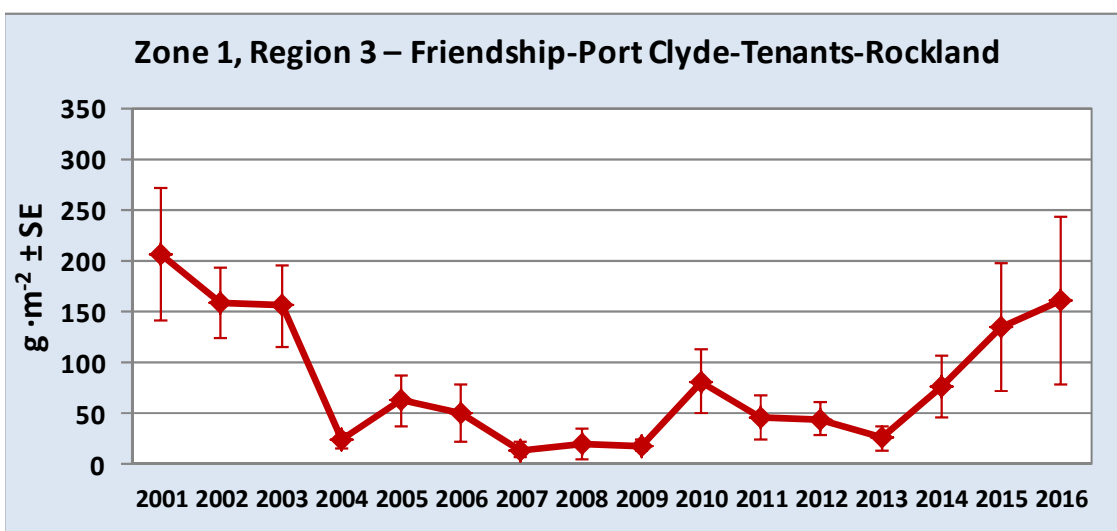
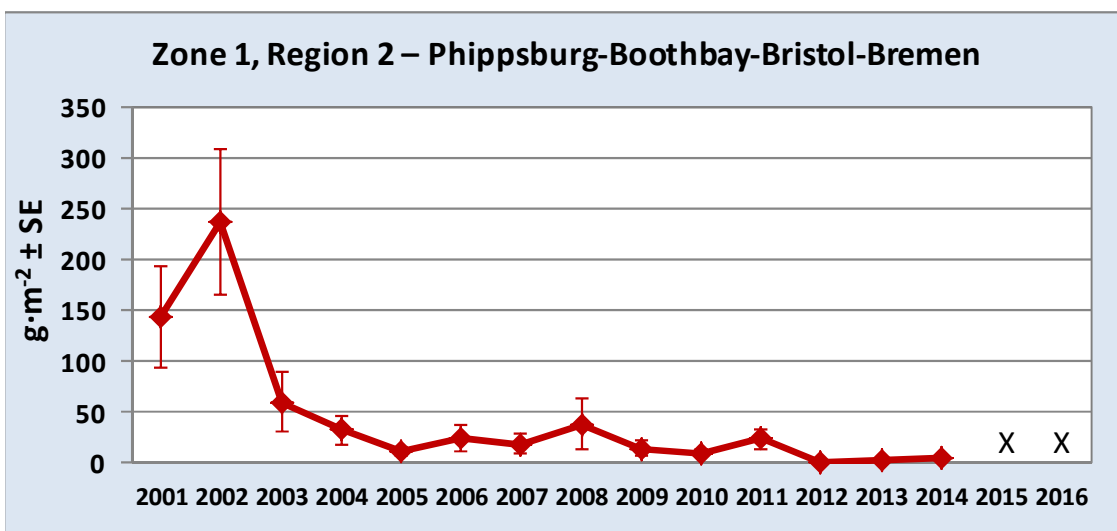
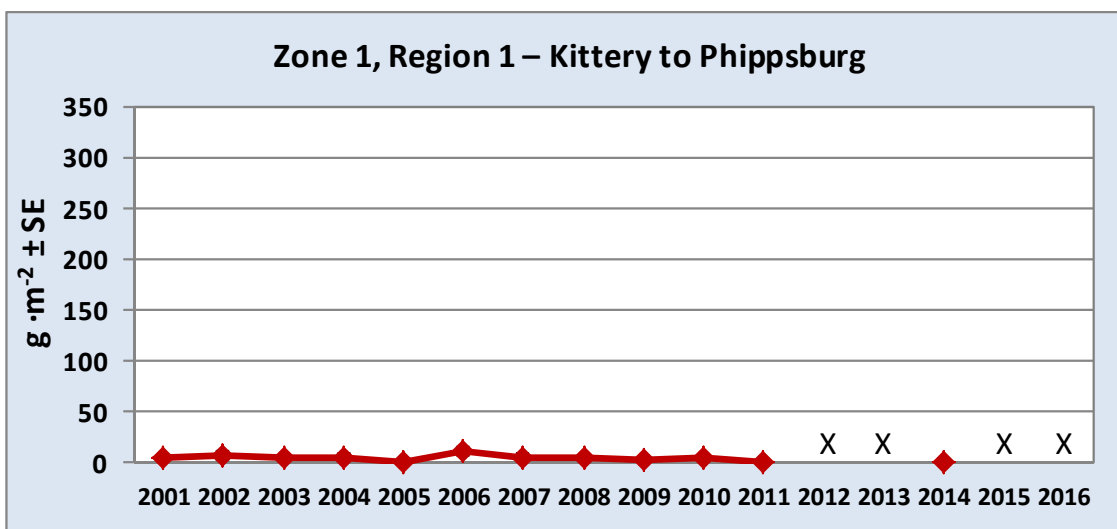
Regions 1-9 and Zones 1-2



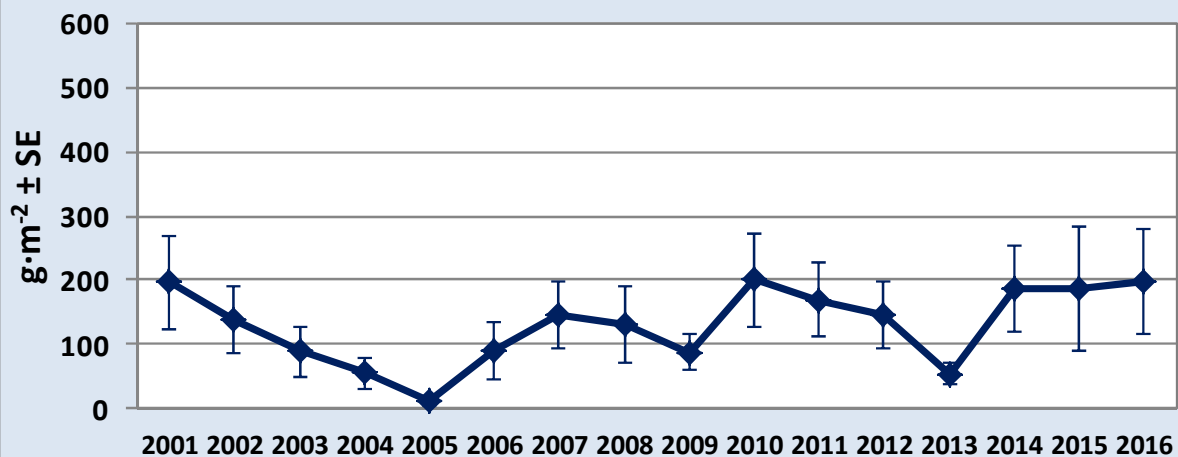
Maine Sea Urchin Survey, Biomass Indices by Zone



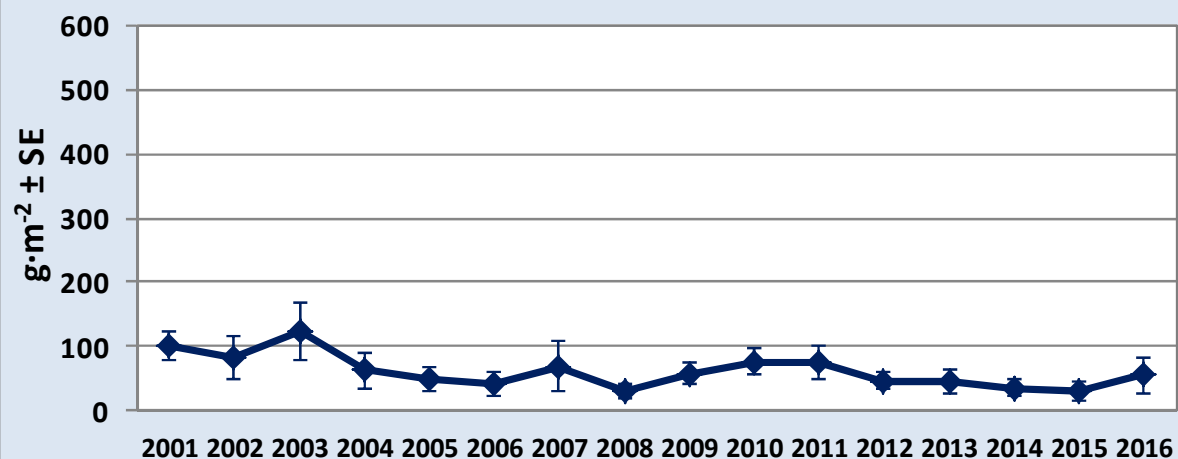
Maine Sea Urchin Survey, Biomass Indices by Region



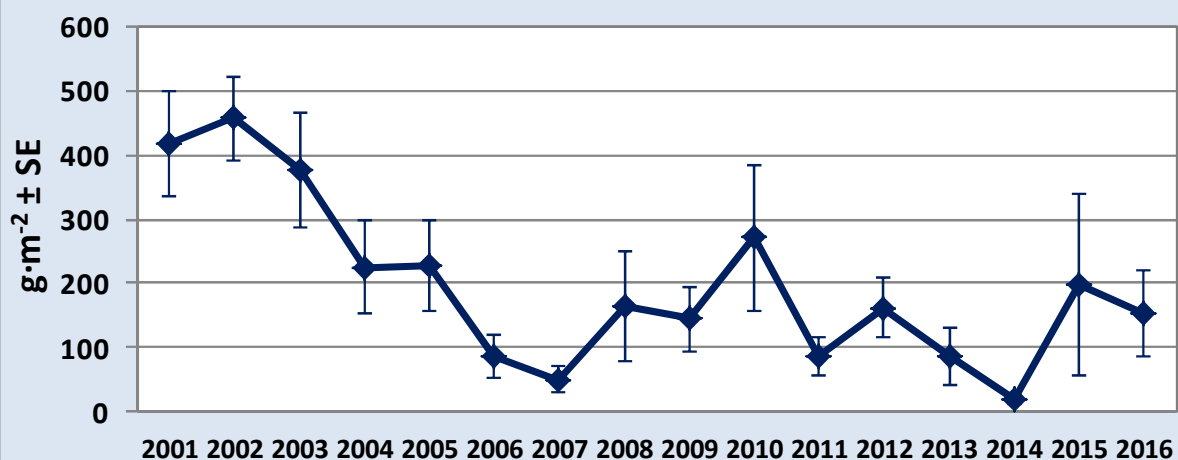
Zone 2, Region 4 – Isleboro-Vinalhaven-Stonington



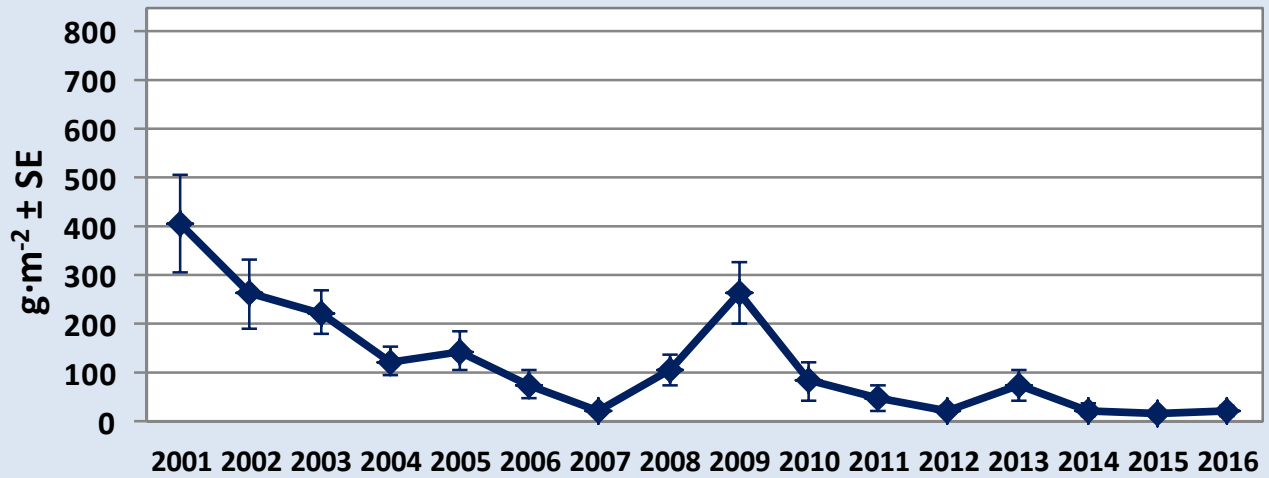
Zone 2, Region 5 – Bluehill-Swans-Mount Desert Is.



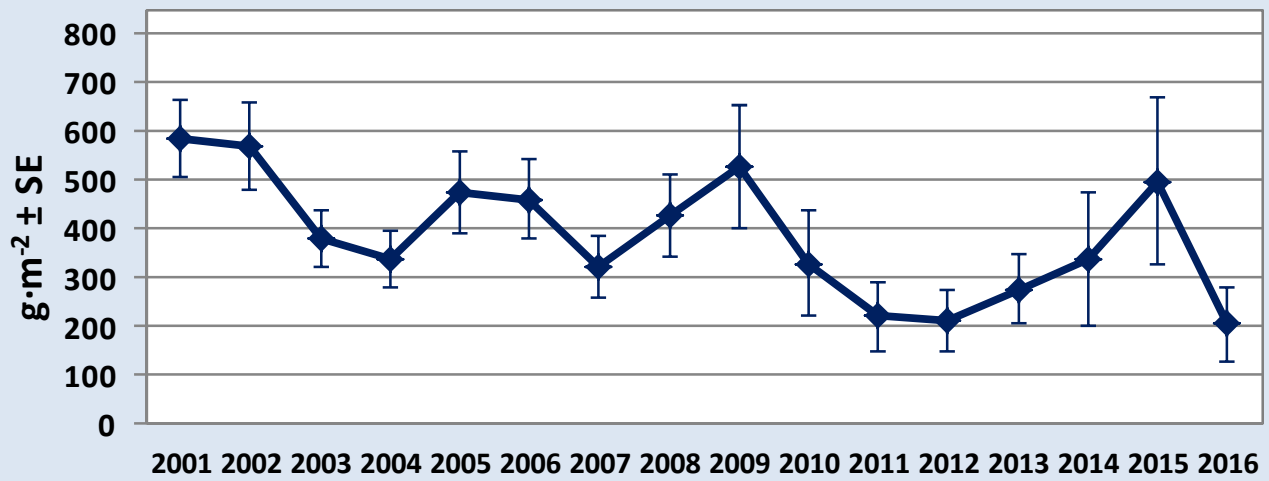
Zone 2, Region 6 – Frenchman Bay-Winter Hbr-Steuben



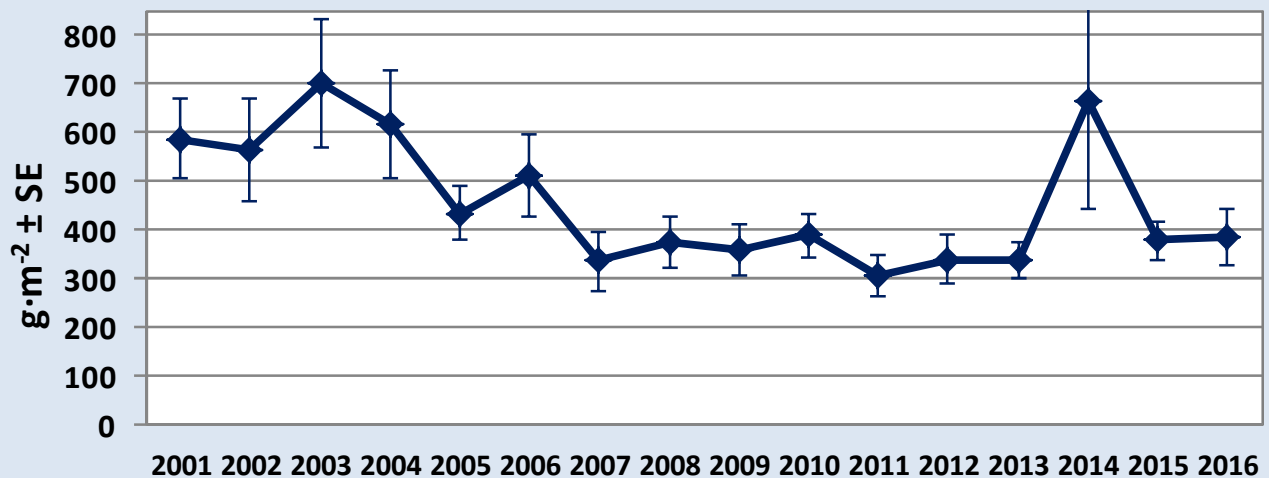
Zone 2, Region 7 – Milbridge-Addison-Jonesport



Zone 2, Region 8 – Roque Is-Cutler-W.Quoddy Head



Zone 2, Region 9 – Cobscook Bay Area



Preliminary Results Of The Swipe Card Program For Maine's Sea Urchin Resource

Lessie White Jr.
 Margaret Hunter

Maine Dept. of Marine Resources. Nov.16, 2016



Photo by Rachel Feaney, NEC, Sept. 2009

www.maine.gov/dmr

Number of Active Urchin Harvesters

Number of Active Harvesters (sold at least 2 lots) in 2013-14			
	Zone 1	Zone 2	Total
Divers	37	78	115
Draggers	6	80	86
Rakers	0	3	3
Total	43	161	204

Number of Active Harvesters (sold at least 2 lots) in 2015-16			
	Zone 1	Zone 2	Total
Divers			
Draggers			
Rakers			
Total			

Number of Active Harvesters (sold at least 2 lots) in 2014-15			
	Zone 1	Zone 2	Total
Divers			
Draggers			
Rakers			
Total			

Number of Active Harvesters (sold at least 2 lots) in 2016			
	Zone 1	Zone 2	Total
Divers	18	29	47
Draggers	0	27	27
Rakers	0	0	0
Total	18	56	75

*Preliminary data through 11/15/16



Maine Sea Urchin Landings In Pounds

2014-2015 Maine Sea Urchin Landings (lbs)*

State Total	
Sep	198,955
Oct	374,914
Nov	164,891
Dec	658,335
Jan	176,893
Feb	99,049
Mar	365,706
Total	2,038,743

2015-2016 Maine Sea Urchin Landings (lbs)*

State Total	
Sep	183,396
Oct	274,394
Nov	237,575
Dec	617,972
Jan	244,981
Feb	194,034
Mar	297,642
Total	2,049,994

*Preliminary data

*Preliminary data

2016-2017 Maine Sea Urchin Landings (lbs) by Zone, Gear, and Month*

	Zone 1			Zone 2			State Total
	Dive	Drag	Total	Dive&Rake	Drag	Total	
Sep	139,629		139,629	64,523		64,523	204,152
Oct				151,567	158,699	310,266	310,266
Nov				77,026	74,655	151,681	151,681
Dec							
Jan							
Feb							
Mar							
Total	139,629	0	139,629	293,116	233,354	526,470	666,099

*Preliminary data through 11/15/16

2013-2014 Maine Sea Urchin Landings (lbs) by Zone, Gear, and Month

	Zone 1			Zone 2			State Total
	Dive	Drag	Total	Dive&Rake	Drag	Total	
Sep	182,023	0	182,023	0	0	0	182,023
Oct	15,747	0	15,747	112,467	200,038	312,505	328,252
Nov	0	0	0	86,184	109,143	195,327	195,327
Dec	106,899	79,474	186,373	213,186	236,978	450,164	636,537
Jan	0	*	*	111,248	15,982	127,230	127,230
Feb	0	0	0	154,548	70,101	224,649	224,649
Mar	0	0	0	172,219	57,471	229,690	229,690
Total	304,669	79,474	384,143	849,852	689,713	1,539,565	1,923,708

* January included in December

2016-2017 Maine Sea Urchin Landings (lbs) by Zone, Gear, and Month*

	Zone 1			Zone 2			State Total
	Dive	Drag	Total	Dive&Rake	Drag	Total	
Sep	139,629		139,629	64,523		64,523	204,152
Oct				151,567	158,699	310,266	310,266
Nov				77,026	74,655	151,681	151,681
Dec							
Jan							
Feb							
Mar							
Total	139,629	0	139,629	293,116	233,354	526,470	666,099

*Preliminary data through 11/15/16

Maine Sea Urchin Value In Dollars

2014-2015 Maine Sea Urchin Value (\$)

State Total	
Sep	\$413,376
Oct	\$984,308
Nov	\$507,160
Dec	\$1,951,826
Jan	\$442,670
Feb	\$273,756
Mar	\$1,030,103
Total	\$5,603,199

*Preliminary data

2015-2016 Maine Sea Urchin Value (\$)

State Total	
Sep	\$332,053
Oct	\$821,208
Nov	\$650,844
Dec	\$1,849,953
Jan	\$642,555
Feb	\$604,491
Mar	\$1,009,748
Total	\$5,910,852

*Preliminary data

2016-2017 Maine Sea Urchin Value (\$) by Zone, Gear, and Month*

	Zone 1			Zone 2			State Total
	Dive	Drag	Total	Dive&Rake	Drag	Total	
Sep	\$290,148		\$290,148	\$201,592		\$201,592	\$491,740
Oct				\$422,062	\$499,821	\$921,883	\$921,883
Nov				\$277,223	\$299,759	\$576,982	\$576,982
Dec							
Jan							
Feb							
Mar							
Total	\$290,148	\$0	\$290,148	\$900,877	\$799,580	\$1,700,457	\$1,990,605

*Preliminary data through 11/15/16

2013-2014 Maine Sea Urchin Value (\$) by Zone, Gear, and Month

	Zone 1			Zone 2			State Total
	Dive	Drag	Total	Dive&Rake	Drag	Total	
Sep	\$398,356		\$398,356				\$398,356
Oct	\$33,194		\$33,194	\$295,653	\$536,405	\$832,058	\$865,252
Nov				\$237,401	\$258,867	\$496,268	\$496,268
Dec	\$270,069	\$145,010	\$415,079	\$771,998	\$656,904	\$1,428,902	\$1,843,981
Jan		*	*	\$282,656	\$34,478	\$317,133	\$317,133
Feb				\$409,783	\$165,852	\$575,634	\$575,634
Mar				\$445,311	\$125,169	\$570,480	\$570,480
Total	\$701,620	\$145,010	\$846,629	\$2,442,801	\$1,777,675	\$4,220,476	\$5,067,105

* January included in December

2016-2017 Maine Sea Urchin Value (\$) by Zone, Gear, and Month*

	Zone 1			Zone 2			State Total
	Dive	Drag	Total	Dive&Rake	Drag	Total	
Sep	\$290,148		\$290,148	\$201,592		\$201,592	\$491,740
Oct				\$422,062	\$499,821	\$921,883	\$921,883
Nov				\$277,223	\$299,759	\$576,982	\$576,982
Dec							
Jan							
Feb							
Mar							
Total	\$290,148	\$0	\$290,148	\$900,877	\$799,580	\$1,700,457	\$1,990,605

*Preliminary data through 11/15/16

Maine Sea Urchin Mean Price/lb In Dollars

2014-2015 Maine Sea Urchin Mean Price/lb (\$)*

2015-2016 Maine Sea Urchin Mean Price/lb (\$)*

State Total	
Sep	\$2.08
Oct	\$2.58
Nov	\$3.01
Dec	\$2.97
Jan	\$2.55
Feb	\$2.76
Mar	\$2.79
Total	\$2.69

State Total	
Sep	\$1.78
Oct	\$2.98
Nov	\$2.72
Dec	\$3.04
Jan	\$2.67
Feb	\$3.12
Mar	\$3.43
Total	\$2.88

*Preliminary data

*Preliminary data

2016-2017 Maine Sea Mean Price/lb (\$) by Zone, Gear, and Month*

	Zone 1			Zone 2			State Total
	Dive	Drag	Total	Dive&Rake	Drag	Total	
Sep	\$2.09		\$2.09	\$3.12		\$3.12	\$2.38
Oct				\$2.77	\$3.14	\$2.95	\$2.95
Nov				\$3.54	\$4.02	\$3.78	\$3.78
Dec							
Jan							
Feb							
Mar							
Total	\$2.09	\$0.00	\$2.09	\$3.04	\$3.44	\$3.21	\$2.95

*Preliminary data through 11/15/16

2013-2014 Maine Sea Urchin Mean Price/lb (\$) by Zone, Gear, and Month

	Zone 1			Zone 2			State Avg.
	Dive	Drag	All	Dive&Rake	Drag	All	
Sep	\$2.19		\$2.19				\$2.19
Oct	\$2.11		\$2.11	\$2.63	\$2.68	\$2.66	\$2.64
Nov				\$2.75	\$2.37	\$2.54	\$2.54
Dec	\$2.53	\$1.82	\$2.23	\$3.62	\$2.77	\$3.17	\$2.90
Jan		*	*	\$2.54	\$2.16	\$2.49	\$2.49
Feb				\$2.65	\$2.37	\$2.56	\$2.56
Mar				\$2.59	\$2.18	\$2.48	\$2.48
Season	\$2.30	\$1.82	\$2.20	\$2.87	\$2.58	\$2.74	\$2.63

* January included in December

2016-2017 Maine Sea Mean Price/lb (\$) by Zone, Gear, and Month*

	Zone 1			Zone 2			State Total
	Dive	Drag	Total	Dive&Rake	Drag	Total	
Sep	\$2.09		\$2.09	\$3.12		\$3.12	\$2.38
Oct				\$2.77	\$3.14	\$2.95	\$2.95
Nov				\$3.54	\$4.02	\$3.78	\$3.78
Dec							
Jan							
Feb							
Mar							
Total	\$2.09	\$0.00	\$2.09	\$3.04	\$3.44	\$3.21	\$2.95

*Preliminary data through 11/15/16

Maine Sea Urchin Mean Roe Index

2014-2015 Maine Sea Urchin Mean Roe Index*

<u>State Total</u>	
Sep	8.9
Oct	12.0
Nov	12.3
Dec	12.0
Jan	12.9
Feb	13.2
Mar	13.2
Total	11.9

*Preliminary data

2015-2016 Maine Sea Urchin Mean Roe Index*

<u>State Total</u>	
Sep	7.7
Oct	12.2
Nov	12.0
Dec	11.9
Jan	11.6
Feb	13.6
Mar	13.3
Total	11.8

*Preliminary data

2016-2017 Maine Sea Mean Roe Index by Zone, Gear, and Month*

	<u>Zone 1</u>			<u>Zone 2</u>			<u>State Total</u>
	<u>Dive</u>	<u>Drag</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Dive&Rake</u>	<u>Drag</u>	<u>Total</u>	
Sep	7.9		7.9	11.5		11.5	8.9
Oct				10.9	11.9	11.4	11.4
Nov				11.5	12.4	12.0	12.0
Dec							
Jan							
Feb							
Mar							
Total	7.9	0.0	7.9	11.2	12.0	11.6	10.7

*Preliminary data through 11/15/16

2013-14 Maine Sea Urchin Mean Roe Index by Zone, Gear, and Month

	<u>Zone 1</u>			<u>Zone 2</u>			<u>State Avg.</u>
	<u>Dive</u>	<u>Drag</u>	<u>All</u>	<u>Dive&Rake</u>	<u>Drag</u>	<u>All</u>	
Sep	9.3		9.3				9.3
Oct	8.8		8.8	12.1	12.8	12.5	12.3
Nov				13.3	12.2	12.7	12.7
Dec	11.0	8.6	10.3	13.7	13.4	13.5	12.9
Jan		*	*	13.4	12.7	13.3	13.2
Feb				13.5	13.3	13.4	13.4
Mar				13.4	11.6	12.8	12.8
Total	9.6	8.6	9.5	13.3	12.8	13.1	12.3

* January included in December

2016-2017 Maine Sea Mean Roe Index by Zone, Gear, and Month*

	<u>Zone 1</u>			<u>Zone 2</u>			<u>State Total</u>
	<u>Dive</u>	<u>Drag</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Dive&Rake</u>	<u>Drag</u>	<u>Total</u>	
Sep	7.9		7.9	11.5		11.5	8.9
Oct				10.9	11.9	11.4	11.4
Nov				11.5	12.4	12.0	12.0
Dec							
Jan							
Feb							
Mar							
Total	7.9	0.0	7.9	11.2	12.0	11.6	10.7

*Preliminary data through 11/15/16

Trisha Cheney's Pick Your Days Strawman.

Pick your days straw man

- 1) Chose a window within which folks will fish, like mid-Sept thru mid-March, 3 consecutive days per week. The purpose here is to choose the range of dates when the processors need product, and also to limit the days in a week so that trucks don't have to be traveling 7 days/week. As communication between buyers and harvesters improves, we might be able to drop or loosen this second restriction someday.
- 2) Allow all harvesters to each fish a fixed number X of days, controlled by shutting their card off after selling on X days. " X " would be determined by DMR. Zone 1 and Zone 2 harvesters would have different X . If the zones are eliminated, historical Zone 1 harvesters could be assigned a lower X than Zone 2.
- 3) The determination of X is difficult. If it is too low (say, 20 days for Zone 2), the council (and industry) will not support the program. If it is too high (say 30 for Zone 2), there is a risk of over-harvesting the stock, since there are many harvesters who have been fishing fewer than 30 days.
- 4) Keep the daily tray limits.
- 5) Consider creating "speed bumps" to slow landings if too many folks are fishing the early days or landings are higher than expected. This will also require much thought. The threat of DMR in-season action may incentivize a derby fishery.