

## Sea Urchin Zone Council Research Subcommittee Meeting March 22, 2016 in Brewer, ME

**DMR staff:** Trisha Cheney, Carl Wilson, Maggie Hunter, Robert Russell, and Les White.

**SUZC members:** Teresa Johnson, Steve Eddy, Tracey Sawtelle, Larry Harris, Joe Leask, Chuon Muth, and Clint Richardson.

**SUZC Members not present:** Jeff Edwards and Mark Nickerson.

**Public:** Jimmy Ackley, Alice Ackley, Erik Scott, David Tarr, Jim Wadsworth, Bill Sutter, and Kim Ovitz.

### Sea Urchin Zone Council Research Subcommittee Meeting

#### Meeting commenced at 2:00pm

L. Harris: let's start with an update from the Blue Hill Closed Area meeting with harvesters last week.

C. Wilson: Provided presentation that was given to Blue Hill Fishermen at a meeting hosted in Belfast on March 17 [Appendix A]. When Carl took over Bureau of Marine Science position, he was asked by Commissioner to look at urchin fishery. There is a belief that there is a future in the urchin fishery; however it is currently at a tipping point. Much of western Maine currently is commercially extinct. Processors are at a critical point in terms of volume and fishing days. So, if biomass and landings were to go much lower, it would directly impact being able to sell the catch. Another issue that the Department has been dealing with is that we have not issued a new license for this fishery since 2004. We are starting to see some of impacts in number of license holders and activity dropping each year. Having a fishery without a license issued in 10 years is not a fishery with a future. We would like to change that. Moving forward, under the umbrella that DMR believes that the resource and the fishery have a future and we are in it for the long haul and a viable future is important for the state of Maine. This is underlying mechanism on why the Department is advancing this conversation. The long term goal is the rebuild the resource back to 2001 levels, which we consider a conservative goal of rebuilding. We would like to match that 2001 resource with a 2015 fishing removal. So, what percentage is being removed from a population relative to today, matched to a 2001 fishery. This would put us into a goal of a 4-5 million pound fishery, roughly two and a half times what the fishery is today, with the restrictions that we have on it right now. How we get from a 2 million to a 5 million pound fishery while trying to rebuild the resource at the same time, that is the point of uncertainty – how to get from point A to point B. So, the idea of the closed area that we have been talking about is doing a short term experiment that would help us get to that goal. The idea of the closed area itself is not trying to rebuild the resource for the state of Maine or in that area, but it trying to understand how the fishery is interesting with the resource and how that resource responds, in some cases with zero fishing, and can that inform our longer term goals of trying to rebuild the resource back to 2001 levels.

So, why do we want to consider a short term closed area? Essentially there is a need to bracket the extremes of the “Nuclear Option” which is no fishing, meaning impacting people that are fishing that area, the “Status Quo” which would be essentially the rules of the game you have now with the current number of days and tote limits, and “manipulation”, which some people within industry have an interest in taking low quality urchins and moving them into a more desirable area to bulk up or change the characteristics of the urchins. So, understanding how the nuclear option, status quo or manipulation will get us to a rebuilt fishery or moving in the right direction is something we can learn from this closed area. Importantly, we need to be able to monitor changes from DMR survey and also from industry perspective. I am learning more about how industry works, and I think perspective of industry is critical to understand what you are looking for. Is it a case of the metaphor of the operation was successful, but the patient died. Whiting & Dennys Bay was indicative of yes there were plenty of urchins and yes the area recovered, but when it was opened back up, it wasn't for the results that people were hoping for. That closure didn't result in benefits or understanding what went on. From what I understand, the closure didn't achieve the objectives that were set out.

T. Sawtelle: We wanted local management of the area. Only supposed to be closed for 2 years, but it was for three, which was too long. We couldn't go in and sample. Then we were told we could only have 8 days. It all went against what we wanted. Then there was the map that was handed out. So, for Blue Hill Bay, if people who traditionally fish that, when it reopens, shouldn't they be the ones that go back in there fishing? Or should it be everyone taking as much as they possibly can? It was 13 people who have

been fishing there, when it reopens, will it be 70 people? Every time you close an area and bring back the resource and make it good, there is absolutely no plan put in there to keep it that way. Everyone will go there.

C. Wilson: Idea of closed rea is not to rebuild the resource in that Blue Hill area to make a bullseye. It is to try to understand on a short term basis what no fishing does to the resource and can we monitor it through our survey and a new commercial based survey which understands how you guys go in and assess an area.

T. Sawtelle: That is what we wanted to do, but were told we couldn't do that by DMR.

J. Leask: When we first started these meetings, this is why I had suggested Tracey be at these meetings as he has this knowledge.

C. Wilson: Agreed, it's good.

J. Leask: His knowledge of what has happened before is helpful. I want to make it clear across the board that the Blue Hill fishermen that I have spoken to are against this. Steve Bichard wanted me to quote him that they are concerned about funnel fishing, forcing those fishermen out of there. As Tracey said, guys that historically fished in Cobscook Bay, in that corner, they had to fish elsewhere and that impacts other fishermen. Those fishermen should be let back in – you came to our area, we are going to go to yours. The idea of closing an area down, I am firmly in support of closing the right area down and I am becoming more and more convinced that Blue Hill is not the right area based on the number of fishermen in that area. On the landings reports, many of us don't disclose exactly where we fish, and for good reason. But there is also a need to know where guys fish as this recommendation was based on the information that was presented. So here we have two problems, surveys we do and diving we do is not protected yet. When Cobscook Bay came forward I had never been there, but the first day it opened I had a pretty good idea of where to do for urchins. You just put a bullseye on it. Now we have the makings of a bullseye on Blue Hill. I don't want the same approach to fishing for urchins as we do for scallops, as they are two different species.

C. Wilson: Just to back up a bit, again, the basis for moving this forward is not to rebuild the resource in the Blue Hill area. It is to understand that if the resource does change from no fishing.

J. Leask: I can show you evidence of this if you could come out with me to see areas that Clint and I have helped to restore. The information is out there. Larry has years of this research already and I am concerned about redoing work that we have already done. I want to do new things like the transplant at Cat Ledges. I have received a lot of input that last few weeks since Blue Hill has been discussed from divers who said they would gladly donate their time to do what in a nut shell you are asking for. Taking a dead area and bringing it back. The western part of the state needs the most help and since it is already basically closed down it would give you the laboratory you want as it would impact no fishermen. The is biomass in Zone 1 and scientific information that Larry has as well.

C. Wilson: So, point number 3 is trying to figure out how to support doing that work.

J. Leask: I just don't want to get fixed on Blue Hill as that is the only option.

T. Sawtelle: Some places will work some wont. How long are you proposing to close Blue Hill?

C. Wilson: We were proposing 3-5 years.

T. Sawtelle: This is something that everyone needs to know. What happens if 10 times the biomass is there than before it was closed? Then what are you going to do? Is it going to be posted everywhere for everyone to go and clean it? When traditionally the people who have always fished that property they already have to leave and find new spots.

C. Wilson: If you had a 10 fold increase in biomass in 3-5 years, that is not a piece of information that we have a leverage. We don't have that piece of information. The whole idea of this is a collaboration with industry with some agreed upon objective, which may include pulling the plug on it as well. If it is denuding all the algae so it is a barren and not worth money because no roe content, which is going again what the fishery is now that is more selective in quality product, that is what the rules have been pushing you to. Then we as a department should be able to pull the plug on that.

T. Sawtelle: That is what I am saying.

J. Leask: The area those guys are working, they are already keeping the urchins at bay so to speak. There is enough biomass and they take the feed line, they are already being overrun. It doesn't take a year sometimes, sometimes less than that. We fish as much as legally possible right now due to restrictions and we cannot keep them at bay. It was clear as of 3-4 months ago that it was recommended at previous council meeting that it is status quo for this year and that Commissioner wasn't going to do anything. Robert made his testimony that things are on an uptick from the survey, even he saw that and industry has spoken of that. The idea that we are going to close this down, I do get the sense that you want to be flexible.

C. Wilson: The idea of the closed area is to inform the larger and longer term goal of trying to rebuild the resource to support a 4-5 million pound fishery.

J. Leask: We may be on that track right now.

L. Harris: Cat Ledges was initiated by fishermen. It is a very small area closed for a period of time so manipulation can take place which isn't exactly the same thing that we are talking about now. Nobody has come forward and said they want to do this.

J. Leask: I have.

L. Harris: One of the things you mentioned is the fishermen who historically fish that area to be able to have access. I am suggesting that is there was a collaborating with a team of divers that work with Robert and others who want to help and allow them to be the only ones to fish. That was the problem with Cobscook Bay.

C. Wilson: If people are being asked to sacrifice, they should be able to benefit. I think that is where there is a little bit of a rub with Whiting & Dennys Bays – it was a free for all and wasn't thought through.

T. Sawtelle: it was thought through it was just that the Department didn't think it thought. We had meetings with the Department and they thought it was a great idea, David Etnier was there. Then LaPoint came to Eastport and said we can't do it. It is already closed now and it can't be reopened. Togue Brawn was there. It was like what happened to the last meeting? That is why people don't want it. Unless it is in writing, it has happened so many times. Just like scalloping. There is no place to park, and some towns came up with mooring grids. Then the towns get letters that the Commissioner didn't like this. Then we get closed down early because so many boats were there. Then the other areas got reopened – Machias, Jonesport, Gouldsboro. Why don't you go through and ask how many people in the Cobscook Area went to fish down there scalloping?

T. Cheney: I know of three. It was open to everybody.

T. Sawtelle: Why is that?!?! Because there was no place to tie up!!! It doesn't matter what fishery it is, that isn't right. That is what I keep telling people. If you close an area, then everyone else will go and hit it and it will be in worse shape than before it started.

C. Wilson: So, again. The idea behind this closure is not to create a bullseye in Blue Hill. We as a group, industry needs to say – what does that mean? And to move forward with it is to understand how that can inform into the long term objective of rebuilding.

C. Richardson: The thing is, that is what you are accomplishing. Driving people out and driving people in. I understand the total view of it is information, but you are accomplishing what he [Tracey] is talking about.

C. Wilson: So, to go through our thought process, what asked "What Defines An Area?" We wanted to work in a productive area. We don't want to work in an area that is not being fished such as western Maine that hasn't recovered in 15 years despite no fishing. We wanted to find an area that has some productivity. We wanted to find a mix of sizes from DMR – small and big stuff. Ability to access it and monitor it. There was some conversations around scallop rotations and potential impacts of having areas open and closed relative to the scallop fishery, but that wasn't the driving force. We wanted to minimize the impact to industry. We are looking at Upper Blue Hill Bay which includes two scallop rotations. Maggie took the harvester logs and the locations that people are reporting for this area over two different seasons and it was 10 divers and 3 draggers over those two seasons, so impacting 15 people.

J. Leask: On those reports, do they write down coordinates or landings ports?

M. Hunter: Coordinates.

J. Leask: I have spoken o a couple of divers who said they don't write down coordinates, they put landings reports. I write down coordinates, but I put them out in the middle of the ocean where it won't disclose where I fish.

C. Wilson: based on the feedback from the local industry meeting we had last week, let's say it is double that.

T. Cheney: There was a fisherman who said they just started fishing that area this year.

M. Hunter: We haven't looked at this current year yet as it isn't complete.

C. Muth: Are we going to be able to catch 5 million pounds from this year on?

C. Wilson: No, we would like to rebuild the resource to a point that it supports a 4-5 million pound fishery.

C. Muth: I don't believe that the market could take 5 million pounds of urchins.

M. Hunter: How about if it were gradual?

C. Muth: We do want to increase the processing and catching more with the same amount of days fishing. The most we could do is about 3 million pounds. We only have 38 days and 2 million pounds and we have had to shut down.

T. Sawtelle: But if the resource was brought up so you could take that much, it doesn't mean you would have to.

J. Leask: So, what you are saying is that it will take you time to build back your market position.

C. Muth: Yes, that is what I am saying.

C. Wilson: This isn't going to happen overnight. So today if you were given 4 million pounds, you couldn't deal with it.

J. Leask: Let me go to the other side of it, could you survive on half the urchins you had this year.

C. Muth: No. We can live at about 3 million pounds at 5 processors. Shelf live is 3 days. In the short term we can't move it, the market can't take it. Add more days, 3 days/week, maybe.

C. Wilson: That would be a goal of rebuilding the resource as the regulations over the past have tighten access to the resource, and those rule have not produced a return of the biomass.

C. Muth: The last three years we have lost 50-60% of our workforce. The market won't take it either.

S. Eddy: If industry is taking 3 million pounds is enough, and then we can work towards that.

C. Muth: Just keep the same number of trays, just more days to work on it.

C. Wilson: I would hope that discussions around this closed area could inform questions like how quickly could the resource rebuild. Could it happen over night, 3 years like Whiting & Dennys Bays or longer time.

C. Muth: The sea urchins are already protected. There are areas that no one is going to go there. If you close them, then the urchins will rebuild and everyone will go there and destroy them again.

C. Wilson: part of the conversation is going to an area that is already fished to understand what is happening there.

C. Muth: The area is already protected with seven trays. If they don't find time and they can't get 7 trays, they won't go there.

T. Sawtelle: I see your idea and it is not that I am opposed to it. I just feel that the people that have always been there for year would have some sort of saw, seniority or endorsement on that area.

C. Wilson: We are getting there. What are the questions that we want to address in the next 3-5 years? One is changes in the resource whether we expand our DMR survey or develop a new survey that can identify what is a positive change in the resource to industry members like Tracey. We need to identify those goals and objectives. The long term survey Robert has been doing may be connected to what you are seeing and it may be disconnected. Second, we don't need to monitor reo content. If that is the currency of the industry, then we need to monitor that. Third, we don't monitor settlement. We want to do enhancement experiments. How do we accomplish that? Representative Devin put a bill in a couple of years ago – would that have accomplished enhancement experiments? Bottom line is that we actually want fishing to continue in 50% of area. Any access would come with potentially a tracker. If you are going to go into that area, we would want to monitor that, and you could have access to that area. There are 101 days a year that are open to urchin fishing, and you can fish 38 of them. The ability to have a tracker on board could allow you to potentially fish your 38 days because we could monitor you electronically.

T. Sawtelle: That is what they told us about the swipe cards too, but the only way it would work is if you had to pick Tuesdays or Thursdays.

C. Wilson: Right. So, there are 101 days. And why a tracker? We need to understand how harvesting is impacting the resource. If we go in and do a survey before the season starts. Then we see that during the season 10 guys are fishing the area. Then we go back in and monitor what has happens, that is really important to know. If urchins are protected and we are taking such a small segment of them that suggests that there is something more than fishing that is impacting the resource right now.

J. Leask: Where is DMR in respects to the closure?

C. Wilson: It is still a conversation.

T. Cheney: We have the April 7 meeting so this conversation can be had by the full council. In the meantime, we have had conversations with Blue Hill harvesters, and are continuing to have subcommittee meetings. But today, the full council will set the season. So we will have a separate meeting on April 7 so everyone can fully vet out what draft final plan would look like. So, it is still evolving.

C. Wilson: More importantly than this closed area is the goal of trying to rebuild the resource back to 2001 levels and to 3, 4 or 5 million pounds over time. If people are in agreement that they want to rebuild fishery that means we need to know how to do that. What are the tools? And we don't have a mechanism to go from Point A to Point B right now; we don't have the knowledge base to get us going in that direction.

J. Leask: Fishermen on their own are doing that on their own and have had a lot of success. Implementing it on a larger scale without a closed area is way to go. I trust you guys on this, but in the past Larry mentioned what happened at the 2001 meeting. The council made a recommendation that was completed discarded.

L. Harris: it was a Saturday workshop at Ellsworth High School where council and industry had set the season that was agreed upon. Then George unilaterally changed the season. Then there was another workshop and there was a whole lot of unhappiness and George came and nothing constructive was don't. Next council meeting you could cut the tension in the room. I got one the council in 2000, and in the past there has been significant tension between DMR and fishing industry, where one would proposed something and the other would say that is not good. That did horrible things to moral. What I have seen in the last few years is a change in the willingness and ability, such as the Cat Ledges Project where fishermen came up with the idea and DMR supported it. We have spent little to no research money. It is an actual collaboration. Here if we can work out a way that allows a fishing component and we can work together, I think it would be really valuable to have that new industry survey to get the fishermen's perspective of what is happening to the resource, not just Roberts really good survey, I am a big fan of what Roberts does. But it would be really nice to have a fishing industry input in how they analyze the resource. I think it is a great idea, but the details

obviously need to work out. It is really important to be thinking in terms that if you do this, you need to have a partnership with the fishermen in that area, and not kick them out of the area, but how can you work together.

C. Wilson: We would agree Larry. That is goal. Alienating 15 people that are potentially impacted by having half of their back door closed is not the objective. Overall objective is that the Department wants to see the resource recovered to a modest level.

L. Harris: Everyone in this room would like to see this recover.

C. Wilson: It is really how do you get to that point – how do we do that – is what we are trying to figure out through this. There are big questions still. Most other fisheries, when they try to rebuild, use a Total Allowable Catch (TAC). So, you have a TAC that is supposed to achieve a certain result. But then you have Teresa's work that says we should be managing the fishery on a ledge by ledge basis. And the decision that an individual harvesters make to take or leave product on each ledge and what leads to a ledge flipping. These are huge extremes to managing the fishery.

J. Leask: That almost seems like the path you are leaning towards – survey, roe counts, different mechanisms to manage...

C. Wilson: It is far easier for the department to put in a TAC and let that manage it.

J. Leask: We already have a TAC. We have tote limits and days and that equates to a TAC. We have a hard catch limit.

C. Wilson: Ok, if that is true, that hard catch limit has not resulted in the resource, based on our survey, rebounding areas.

J. Leask: Robert stood up and said there were upticks.

R. Russel: We are at a low, flat, sustainable level of biomass for the 200 active fishermen that are left in the fishery.

J. Leask: Based what you have said, DMR puts a lot of weight on your survey and for two years you have said there are upticks, and fishermen are saying there are upticks. As a result, we are at status quo again this year.

C. Wilson: We are not at our lowest level, but we are not close to 2001 levels.

J. Leask: It has never been established what a healthy level is.

C. Wilson: Yes, exactly.

J. Leask: Who is to say we are not at a healthy level now and we have seen an uptick. I hope things continue to get better. But who is to say we won't have a die off this summer? We already have had a warm winter – the cards are in place. What I am pushing now is to protect resource by moving. Cat Ledges is a great start, but it is a drop in the bucket.

C. Wilson: Is moving resource protecting resource or enhancing resource?

J. Leask: We have been given stewardship of the resource from the very beginning, the planet. In moving urchins is it protecting them from dying if it is clear we are going to have a hot summer?

C. Wilson: My thoughts were from our last conversations was moving urchins or low quality and bringing them into an area with better conditions to bulk them up.

J. Leask: You want an area to study. You told Steve Bichard a lab is what you need. There is a lab down in Boothbay and the potential is there to do the work in your backyard.

R. Russell: No one is fishing down there though. That is the problem. I was stalking to Steve after the meeting is that we need an area with a current fishery. That line down by Casco Passage that is a very large area. But within that area there could be a line in the water that within that zone we do different things. Let's have some ledges that are off limits, that is Carl's "nuclear options". What happens to a ledge that was actively being fished, and then that stops completely and monitor that. There is other nearby

ledges that continue to be fished and with some sort of tracking or monitoring that we can see do they fish it every day, every other day; basically we can see how you were fishing that ledge. So, you would have different things happening within that zone. Closing the whole thing and keeping folks out doesn't give us much information. But if we are going to have these conversations down the room where all we are going to do is take days and take more trays away from you that may not help the resource because of the way that you fish. Fishing a certain way can produce certain results for certain places.

C. Wilson: The objective is not to use a closure to rebuild the resource. It is to use the closure to understand what could potentially be other tools to rebuild the resource. We are not trying to set up a scallop rotation area.

J. Leask: I am not trying to be a lead balloon, but I think we are trying to do the same thing over and over again. When the Commissioner came in he said we want to do new things, there are new proposals out there.

C. Wilson: If you move product, Tracey could come in and harvest them tomorrow.

J. Leask: Not when you are talking about closed areas, areas of research. Areas of abundance are not commercially viable because they are not necessary junk areas, because they still contribute to spawning and the biomass. But there is a balance in what we learned from the begging, where if you push the urchins back far enough and others are coming back up behind them, they are healthy. It is a principle that we have all operated on, weather dragging or diving. Tip that balance, and I appreciate the flexibility in this closed area, I applaud that. It would be very easy to tip a ledge over. But it still comes down to pushing fishermen into other areas, or allowing a select few to fish an area, and then letting folks back into the area.

C. Wilson: Based on our information, that area represents 5% of the overall landings for Zone 2. But in that 5% of the area, we are encouraging fishing to occur in 2.5% of the area, just as it always has been. If we can understand how it is being fished, that is the intent. Now you are taking 2.5% of the landings and putting that effort somewhere else.

J. Leask: That is still an arbitrary number; those are not hard numbers. One fisherman showed up at your Blue Hill meeting and said he doesn't even do his landings reports.

C. Wilson: And we don't know how he has a license.

J. Leask: That is true. Tracey can point to men who have gotten a license in recent years. Maybe they are fishing in there for human consumption.

R. Russell: The idea of using the 5% as bar graphs on the chart was a way for us to determine "what size of an area are we talking about?" How many people are we going to impact? Other options on the table that we looked at impacted a higher number of people, and that is not our goal. We want to have an area with some active fishing, and you can choose all sorts of places, but an area that you can do what you are doing in Cat Ledges and replicate that in that area, as well as other things. This area has a wide variety of habitat.

T. Sawtelle: I have never fished down there, have no desire to. Somehow I would like a way for industry and the Department to come together on some kind of agreement and do it. As far as the study, I think it would be good to study something like that. Will it come back better? Why yes, I really do think so. In a non-active place I don't believe it. So you need a place that urchins keep coming back to do this study.

C. Richardson: What kind of a tracker are you talking about?

C. Wilson: We have been working with a company which we have right now on a couple of scallop boats this season. It is a \$600 unit that is a satellite based tracker that uses the Iridium satellite system, so it is a bit more expensive than cellular based units. And you pay on a per ping basis like a satellite phone on your boat. As a highball estimate it would probably be around \$1000 bucks for the season, with \$400 of that for the service.

J. Leask: Is DMR going to pay for that?

C. Wilson: Let's say there 30 guys; do we have \$30,000 for this – no.

J. Leask: So industry will have to pay for this themselves.

C. Wilson: If there are 101 days that are open for fishing urchins along the coast of Maine and you could fish 38 of them.

C. Richardson: Does that include Zone 1?

T. Cheney: Yes, basically we looked at what days do processors have their doors open.

C. Wilson: The fisheries doors are open 101 days/season.

C. Richardson: But Blue Hill Bay is not open all those days as some are Zone 1 September days.

T. Cheney: Correct. If you are looking at Zone 2 only, then it is open 87 days from October to March.

C. Wilson: Maybe that is the trade off – we learn more about how fishing is going on in this area and we allow the guys more flexibility to not have to go out on all the bad weather days.

B. Sutter: Supposed this works better than you would think in your wildest dreams. Then, what goes beyond that. What is the goal beyond proving something? What do you do next? Are you working towards areas along the whole coast? Do you require trackers of everyone?

C. Wilson: That is the ongoing conversation. I think it would be wrong for me to say we are going to do X, Y and Z. There is a lot to learn. But if there is a general agreement that the Department would like to see a resource that climbs back to 2001 levels and work towards a 4-5 million pound fishery, with those objective in hand and the information from the closed area discussions, how fishing impacts the resource or if it doesn't, that informs the next steps.

B. Sutter: Let me make an observation. My kid brother remembers going fishing with me as a junior in High School. He graduated in 1969. I have been doing it for a little while in different places. In all that time I have seen urchins come and go and come again. I have seen them go away and not come back for 30 years. I have seen other places with the white stuff on bottom and them not come back. What I have seen in that 50 years of urchining is what happens when you have no control to access to an area. And right now we don't have control. We have two zones with a very large scale management system. I have come to my conclusion that the only way that urchin management can work is on a much finer scale, period. You can go all through these things and create ledges, Cobscook Bay was a good example where you create something beyond your wildest dreams, but it doesn't work. Really we have to be looking at management and how we are going to do it, before we do manipulation and how we are going to do it. Unless you get the first one settled, the second one will not work, guaranteed. I solidly urge you to think how to create smaller scale management. There are those within the industry those that travel and those that don't. They are the ones you are going to have to come to an agreement with. The bottom line is that you just can't go where the picking is best and expect to have an industry that is any different than it what we have had in the last 25 years, which is downhill.

C. Wilson: I am confused. It is not that I disagree with your conclusions. Your opening sentence was that you have seen places come and go, get fished and not fished, repopulate and not repopulate. And then the next sentence was that we can manage the areas. To me that means we can manage them on a local basis and you have talked through the different ways that can happen. There is probably something in between. If there is going to be a die off, it will probably happen. But you can probably tweak it a bit more than what has been done up to now. There is an inconsistency there of saying it is all mother nature going up and down and we are not doing anything to help it.

B. Sutter: You said it right there.

C. Wilson: So if that is the case, then that doesn't lead you down the line of small scale management, which directly says we can manage it for an expected outcome.



B. Sutter: The management has to be with access on a finer scale. If you have a limited area in which you have access and it goes away, then you go away because you can't pick up and move to where someone else has a limited area. You have to deal with the area that you have. Live or die by it. That is the only way that the management will work.

C. Wilson: But under that scenario, if you believe that we have no control over the resource, then you will live and die by it.

B. Sutter: That is right, you will. Absolutely.

C. Wilson: Living and dying by it is not managing it.

B. Sutter: In Zone 1 we have 7 draggers and 30 divers going, I am not sure how many licenses. It is going down, and where are 95% of the urchins being caught right now in Zone 1? Tenants Harbor. And therein lays the problem. If the whole zone is working in one little area, you can deplete it to a point of economic depletion. You can't take the little ones or the big ones, can't take them all. But it will be an economic depletion.

C. Wilson: So there again, the purpose of this closed area is to bracket both ends of the spectrum of the nuclear option – closing fishing and seeing what happens to the resource - and the status quo.

B. Sutter: And back to my initial question, if that works beyond your wildest dreams, then what are you going to do? How do you apply it?

C. Wilson: I think it informs the conversation. If there is a general desire by the industry to return to 4-5 million pounds, to try to understand how are we are going to get there? Right now we don't have the knowledge base on how to get to that outcome.

J. Leask: Is it possible to do what you guys want to do with the area still being open? It is Alaskan style of management – having biologist dive on the ledge and make the determination to open. Perhaps you have a ledge to shut down, a smaller scale area, where it doesn't impact 15 men. Would it be possible to scale this down?

C. Wilson: I think we have had examples of this in the past and what I am told is that there were enough problems with those efforts that the results that came out of those efforts suspect. Whether positive or negative, there was enough variability of people poaching the areas, the areas being too small. So I think we need a larger sample size to say not all areas are created equal. Again our thought process for Blue Hill Bay was this is a big area and there are going to be good spots and bad spots. Trying to tease that apart – it might look like a good spot for Roberts transect study, with enough area to go up the side of a bed and see the changes, but it might not satisfy what you would say are positive changes at all.

J. Leask: Much of what I mentioned at the beginning refers to Cobscook, but it was not the only one. There were two transplants done previous with other closed areas like Pemaquid or Schoodic. I don't want that research excluded or discounted, and I don't think you guys are and there is stuff that we learned. WE do know that urchins will go crazy. We talked about it pretty thoroughly the point of all this is to get the darn things to spread out further to seed ledges that have been dormant for years bounce back. I have seen it happen, I have helped it happen. I have benefited from it happening. Bill spoke of the natural way of doing things, and my hope is that things will naturally continue on an uptick. You said yourself we are at a delicate balance right now. I don't want this project to tip that balance. If we are on an uptick, I don't want a large scale project to tilt it the other way.

C. Wilson: If our math is correct, if the reports are correct, we are potentially impacting 2.5% of the landings.

J. Leask: Sounds like we are going to have to cypher out some math and with the timeframe that has been given, it may not be enough.

C. Wilson: One of your questions was is there additional information on how you are evaluating urchins? How are you evaluating it? If that part of the conversation starts to move forward so we start to understand what your goals on how you evaluate urchins are different from what we evaluate on our survey, just that conversation going forward, it starts to push the needle with coming up with some common expectations for the resource.

J. Leask: You have some expectations already. We can get this stuff done right now with urchin abundances in a lot of places. From the industry's perspective we are not going to harvest junk areas anyways. Industries interest is to take those junk places and bring them back to where they are manageable. Maybe there could be cooperation for something along those lines. The ledge that I will take you too is a ledge that I harvested for years. It went through depletion and went back to two or three trays and we kept it for rainy days and all the sudden the place is overrun with urchins. We didn't get to it this year, but it is my hope that we can take those urchins and move them to a ledge nearby. We all know that Tenants Harbor in Zone 1 is all we have and we need to expand Zone 1. We need to get more urchins into Zone 1 and get it healthy. We need to find out from the scientific side of things if the western side of the state can even be done. The bottom has changed over. Cat Ledges is a microcosm of Zone 1. Sheepscot has been a phenomenal place before for years. If there is anywhere where urchins can survive it is in Sheepscot. There is a lot of tide there, a lot of nutrients and the water is cold, not a lot of populations and it is right outside your back door. I am quite sure that we can accomplish what you want to do there and Zone 1 benefits.

C. Wilson: That does accomplish one of those bullets – the enhancement experiment.

J. Leask: But it is not just an experiment, it is a transition for an area that needs to transition. It is restoring health for Zone 1. We are going to focus resources and time of talented people who want to apply themselves. And in addition to Zone 1, a fisherman has suggested Sullivan River, which I have suggested, said that would be a phenomenal place and said he saw quarter sized urchins. Measuring the impacts of fishing up there right now, we could benefit from Steve being right around the corner. We could introduce hatchery urchins. Let's get that rolling. We have talked about this for 20 years at these meetings. I have reservations to Blue Hill and the impact to the area and the domino effect of effort. It may be a good idea; I just don't want us to strong arm places this year.

S. Eddy: So have you talked to some of those who will be impacted?

C. Wilson: Yes.

S. Eddy: What did they have to say?

C. Wilson: I think this pretty well encapsulates the conversation. Overall, and a couple of the guys here today where there, I think they can correct me if I am wrong, but overall the goal of rebuilding the resource and the fishery and coming up with some plan for entry in the long term is something there is support behind. I think there is some disagreement if this is the mechanism to get us to that end, and rightly so if they are being impacted by a closure. That would be a very difficult thing to say – here is your back door and it is closed to you. We totally get that. That is part of the conversation.

J. Leask: They appreciate that. They made it very clear at that meeting.

C. Wilson: To the point of someone saying what about doing it in this area? Where another fishermen said you are just pushing it from our backdoor to another fishermen's back door. It is going to be a hard conversation no matter where it is.

J. Leask: There are some fishermen from the Sullivan River that are in support of that. There is enough awareness of the target mentality and whether there is a resource survey and whatnot, resources are limited at the DMR level. But the Sullivan River is easy to enforce and access and Steve is right there. If we are going to do a closed area, let's cover all the bases.

C. Wilson: Correct me if I am wrong, but we talked about the Sullivan River internally and we were concerned about the area having had the whole east side of MDI representing 5%, being susceptible to having die offs.

M. Hunter: Frenchman's Bay area.

J. Leask: Frenchmen's Bay yes, but I have never received any input of die offs in Sullivan River. My experience has been that when the tide is running hard, the urchins are much better, the water quality is much better.

M. Hunter: Our main argument about Sullivan River was that there was no fishing going on there, so what would we learn.

J. Leask: I fishermen I spoke to wanted to come today and couldn't that fishes that area said he would be in support of it versus 15 guys in a room making it very clear that they did not support shutting it down.

C. Wilson: They did not support shutting it down, but at the same time they were not supporting of trying to learn more about what is happening in the system. So it is that complicated push and pull of something that will directly impact me and looking to rebuild. It was a very knowledgeable group of fishermen. Some of them have intimate knowledge of that area we are interested in.

J. Leask: Can I ask you in the event that we get back to a 4-5 million pound fishery, what does DMR have in mind? Am I going to be able to harvest more totes? Are you going to bring more fishermen into the equation? We have the FMP which we have discussed at great lengths with different vehicles, an apprenticeship program, whatever the vehicle is. What are we going to do?

C. Wilson: My assumption would be yes.

T. Cheney: Ultimately, we are trying to grow this fishery to not only support the people in the room, but with an eye for a new generation to come in. The reason we are focused on one closed area was to evaluate different things that could help us address the entire fishery moving forward. One of the things that I thought might be important for doing something like this was that you could be able to document what you have been doing in the industry to enhance urchins and have those sets of methods to be able to pass on to a new participant through an apprenticeship program. So there is some way for those new entrants into the fishery to have some knowledge to be able to sustainably harvest the resource. I also see as part of these experiments is getting that information out there so we can be more informed when they come in so they don't tip the balance.

J. Leask: But the Cobscook idea where we did not do that back then.

T. Cheney: We did not.

J. Leask: We are stuck with a closed area without putting those other vehicles in place first. My experience in my area has been the quickness is how those urchins have spread.

C. Wilson: We can continue to work towards the goal of a 4-5 million pound fishery without a closed area.

J. Leask: I would like to get it put in writing, like what Tracey said, when we bounce back when a lot of people sacrificed to bring it back. There are people who have lost their licenses who want back in and they know how to harvest the resource.

C. Wilson: The state of Maine needs this resource to be viable and contributing to the coastal economy.

J. Leask: We are all in agreement there. It is how we get there that is the sticking point.

T. Cheney: I don't think it is unreasonable to allow a little more access in the future if things get to a 4-5 million pound fishery so folks can get all their 38 days or perhaps a few more. But at some point people have to ask themselves do the benefits of this go to the current participants or should new people benefit? We need to flush that out in the FMP. Obviously the people who rebuilt it should benefit first on some level, but we also believe whether it is a 1:1 ratio of someone going out another can come in, but there needs to be some way for folks to get in.

J. Leask: We haven't figured it out with ground fishing, or other fisheries. I see where lobster is at.

C. Wilson: Lobster does have an entry system.

J. Leask: They do, but they have many new licenses being proposed to come in? Is that fair to the lobstermen who put the years in and made the sacrifices? Is it fair for the guys who used to harvest 20 totes of quality urchins a day who is now cut back to 7 to let new guys come in to harvest the same amount? It will be maddening to them.

C. Wilson: A rebuilding resource does allow for conversations to be had.

J. Leask: I would like to get back to the Blue Hill Area conversation.

C. Wilson: The Blue Hill area feeds into these conversations.

J. Leask: So, it is an open forum if anyone wants to provide input.

J. Wadsworth: I was just curious if Chuon could shed a little light on quality of urchins this year comparable to back in the heyday of late 1990s?

C. Muth: Quality has improved in the past 4-5 years. But this early fishery this year – early Zone 1 & early Zone 2 the quality if not there.

J. Wadsworth: Part of the issue in this fishery is the mentality of if I don't take them, someone else will. Is that still a mentality?

C. Muth: Yes, I think it is still.

J. Leask: You saw it when you were buying them. There is the good weather mentality and the bad weather I will take what I can get in where I can go mentality. Stuff is spawning, so how do I find deep urchins mentality. Overall I think the quality if better. Maggie can speak on behalf of the guys who never got 7 trays and are now getting 7 trays and what kind of urchins are they harvesting as a result.

C. Muth: Zone 1 12 trays is not good because guys just want to fill up trays. I think you should cut a few trays out and give them more days. If guys go and get quality urchins, they will only get 8 trays.

M. Hunter: After the 12 tray limit when into effect, it did not impact the diver's quality at all. It did bring the draggers quality up from 7-8% to 10%.

C. Muth: And when you have a scallop and an urchin day on the same day, the quality will go down. We tried to avoid overlapping scallop and urchin days. It will affect Zone 2 early zone divers as they need Mon, Tues and Wed, so it will hurt us on having a 5 or 6 day week.

J. Wadsworth: Are they seeing a good mix of sizes on the beds or are they smaller sizes overall now?

C. Muth: From a buyer we don't know.

Harvester: I can't keep up with my beds and a lot of them are growing up past the max size. There are not a lot of divers in our area though.

M. Hunter: When I was looking at roe from dealer reports from the past couple of years with 2001 as that is a place we would like to be. The roe being reported in 2001 is a couple of points better than it was today. One reason we wanted to look at roe and monitor it and figure out why we are not getting as good roe today as we were 15 years ago if there is enough feed. It might have to do with there being less resource so there is less for folks to choose from. Maybe you are going out on more bad weather days and you are taking what you have to. The roe is pretty important for this fishery and if it is not as good as it used to be, we need to try to understand that.

C. Richardson: In Zone 1 we are so compressed into one area. Whereas 15 years ago we were not, we could fish all the way to Portland.

C. Wilson: SO you could be a little more picking in the places that you were fishing.

C. Richardson: Oh yeah.

J. Leask: We had more choices and if you went to a place with junk urchins you wouldn't stay there as you wouldn't get paid for them. Zone 1 now is compressed – you have not choice of where you can fish.

L. Harris: I think using the word closed zone rather than experimental management zone sends the wrong message. Closing an area and excluding everybody is not going to have much acceptance. What you are really talking about is an area that you are working in a different way and you would gather more information than you have historically gathered. It is to be managed in a somewhat different way, more data collection and much more focused. It isn't to be closed and to kick everybody out. I think calling it a closed area sends the wrong message.

T. Cheney: I think it also reflects an evolution of where we have come from. Out of the door we were thinking of closing an area and since then we have now backed off that and are thinking just 50% of the area would be closed. This represents an evolution in our discussion and thought process and I would agree, the place we are at now would more adequately reflect an "Experimental Management Region or Zone" versus a closed area. However, I want people to be aware that there are areas that we are looking at restricting harvest and to those individuals who fish there, those areas would be closed.

C. Wilson: If we just closed the area we would have far less information from this than we would if fishing were happening.

C. Richardson: If you do this in Blue Hill Bay you are affecting 15 people at least. Half of those people could get tablets to go in there to fish which will cost them about \$1000/year. Do you have any idea of how many people would spend that amount of money to stay there rather than move to another area? I have a good idea – it would be zero.

C. Wilson: Trish and I were talking about this on the way up. If that \$1000 meant that you got to pick your 38 days out of 87 potential fishing days...

C. Richardson: That would change things a lot.

C. Wilson: Wouldn't that be addressing some of the other issues you have had in the past?

C. Richardson: I didn't realize that you could pick your own days.

T. Cheney: These are the incentives that we are thinking of putting out there to try to get guys to work with us. So perhaps this could be a group of pilot fishermen who could use the tracking system to help evaluate the swipe card for picking their days.

J. Leask: You guys could offer a few extra days to do it and I am sure you would get plenty of volunteers.

J. Ackley: To get back on the roe count, I am sure folks remember when buyers used to do the crack test and then weigh out the roe to give you percentage. Now they just hope on the back of the truck and crack a few urchins. How do you know that percentage back in 2001 is the same as now if you are not comparing apples to apples?

M. Hunter: You are right; we are just taking the information reported in the dealer reports.

J. Ackley: How can you compare the whole process of weighing it all out to now eyeballing it from a couple of eggs?

M. Hunter: Actually, they are really good.

J. Ackley: It is two different ways of doing roe count.

D. Tarr: That has been my fishing area over the past 15 years or so, Blue Hill. I was at that meeting and it was pretty negative against doing anything like this. Mainly, the basic complaints were what happens when it opens back up. Not just to the adjacent areas, because if I can't fish there I am going somewhere. So, it has to put pressure on somewhere else next door to me. And then when this area gets opened back up it will put 3-4 times more harvesters in there than there are now. It looks like a huge area, but the areas that we actually harvest in there are not that huge. There are not urchins everywhere in that area. My concern is opening back up. Having 50% access to it may alleviate some of it. But I can't say I'm 100% behind it. I am supportive of the Department trying to do something, but I feel it is a little bit on our shoulders a little bit and maybe if it is closed for 3-5 years with some limited access, maybe there is a way to slowly open it back up with the people who are currently in it, to even it out and not make it a bonanza. Then they would get a chance to study some of these areas.

C. Wilson: David, would you say something like if 50% of it is closed the first year, then say 25% is closed the second year, 12% the third year and 6% the year after that? Something like that so you could evaluate it.

D. Tarr: I think you could learn something from that and it wouldn't get hammered.

C. Wilson: I think that would be interesting.

D. Tarr: And as far as the number of people who are fishing in there, I think your original estimate of about 13 guys is right. I lobster there, I urchin there, I scallop there – I am there. I know who the boats are. That is my home fishing grounds, that whole bay. We have had more boats there in the past 4-5 years compared to back 8 years ago when they first started showing back up. It is a dynamic area. It is selective harvest. I can see the early season guys out and I know not to go behind them in late season and bother fishing those areas. It has got some little stuff. This year is the first year we have had stuff make it to the maximum size, but some of the stuff getting by us, not a lot, I think it is a good thing. As far as something like a black box that would let me fish more of my days, then yes, I would do that. If I could fish my days, then I would do it. I think from a buyer's perspective, I think it is a hard thing for you guys. Maybe a person is not early or late, maybe they spread their days out over both calendars.

C. Wilson: All we did David was count the total number of days that are open fishing days.

T. Cheney: When is there a truck Downeast?

D. Tarr: I am a late season diver. Say there is an early season diver. If you are going to buy into that program where you are picking your days, you can't be late or an early season diver because they buyers need consistent product throughout that buying time. You have to spread that out a little bit. You can't take all your days at Christmas.

T. Cheney: When we did this, we were just thinking of the small population of the 13 guys in Blue Hill. What could we do for those guys that would make it worth it for you? It would be worthwhile for the Department to have those people testing out the swipe cards for picking days with the use of the tracker. We realize that if we were to eventually move to allowing folks to pick their days, there would have to be some bounds on it. We heard that at the meeting in January.

D. Tarr: As far as the trackers go, I don't think that everyone would want to do it. Some of them are on the line; they go a bit east or west. So it may be easier for them to fish elsewhere. Not as many buyers for us here, and that is why some guys go further Downeast because there are more buyers there and more competition for their urchins. I am not completely against it is what I am saying, but I am not for closing it down as I am just worried about an area opening back up. There needs to be a way to ease it back out.

C. Wilson: Thank you David for your thoughtful comment.

J. Leask: We will take a little break and start the season setting meeting.

## **Sea Urchin Zone Council Meeting**

**DMR staff:** Trisha Cheney, Carl Wilson, Robert Russell, Maggie Hunter, Les White, and Rustin Ames.

**SUZC members:** Teresa Johnson, Steve Eddy, Tracey Sawtelle, Dean Norris, Larry Harris, Jason Leighton, Duane Carver, Atchan Tamaki, Joe Leask, Chuon Muth, and Clint Richardson.

**SUZC Members not present:** Jeff Edwards and Mark Nickerson.

**Public:** Paul Cox, Jimmy Ackley, Alice Ackley, Erik Scott, Yarann Im, David Tarr, Gregory T. Brown, Jim Wotton, Aaron Gilpatrick, Brad Scott, Atit Ya, Barry Huckins, Raymond Huckins, Adam Scott, Sheldon Dorr, Mike Pott, Ron Kennedy, Jim Wadsworth, Rodney Dame, Fred Gray, Jim Campbell, Tim Peterson, Brian Preney, Bill Sutter, Bob Percy, Mike Cox, Brad Kennedy, Donnie Kennedy, Joe Greggo, Tim Proulx, Lewis Reed and Kim Ovitz.

### **Meeting commenced at 4:10pm**

#### **Welcome & Introductions**

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

#### **February 24 Meeting Minutes**

C. Richardson motioned to approve, D. Norris seconded. VOTE: UNANIMOUS. Approval of minutes passed.

#### **DMR Updates**

M. Hunter provided an update on Landings (Appendix B for slides). It is still averaging a 2 million pound/year fishery with 2015-16 landings running behind previous season, value was \$2.69/lbs. which is mixed this season compared to previous season. Even though fewer people are fishing, value remains around \$5 million so the guys staying in are making a little more money. Still waiting for December reports to come in, so these numbers are preliminary.

J. Leask: 2006-07, value wise we are slowly climbing.

C. Wilson provided an update to the full council on the meeting with stakeholders from the Blue Hill Closed Area, which has now been newly coined as the Blue Hill "Experimental Management Region", as well as the research subcommittee meeting discuss.

T. Cheney provided an overview of the upcoming rulemaking process. This meeting council will set the season. Next meeting on April 7 the council will discuss the Blue Hill Experimental Management Region. Department will try to host another meeting with impacted harvesters in Blue Hill before then. We will try to release rule later in April, public hearings in May with the DMR Advisory Council approving the rule in July and ready for the season start in September.

B. Preney: I am surprised that we are even here to set a season. I thought we were moving forward with a swipe card system that would allow us to pick our days. Has the DMR scrapped that idea?

T. Cheney: It is absolutely on track and we have all the regulations in place right now to implement it this upcoming season. We held back last year to make sure everything was ready last year, but we will move forward this upcoming year for both urchins and scallops. All dealers will get swipe card units and fishermen will be receiving a card, which can be used across all fisheries. Next year we just want it in place with current season as structures, but after next season we want to move to allowing folks to pick their days. We had a lengthy conversation on that in January as there needs to be some bounds on that as processors don't want to send truck Downeast everyday.

B. Preney: So for next year we have swipe card with the set days.

T. Cheney: Yes, we will be phasing it in.

J. Wadsworth: Will swipe card affect the mode of payment?

T. Cheney: No. It is just used to track the poundage and value and when the card is swiped, harvester information along with that is sent to the Department. The harvester will still be required to submit their reports as that is how we get effort information, but we are hopeful to be able to get electronic reporting in place in the future for harvesters so we can move away from paper reports.

J. Campbell: The dealers will still give us a physical receipt when we swipe?

T. Cheney: Yes, there will be a duplicate receipt and you will get a copy and know exactly what is being reported on your license.

J. Campbell: Awesome.

J. Leask provided a brief update on the US Fisheries & Wildlife inspection issues, which seems to have improved as guys shipping Mon-Fri now. Director Woody has helped. Also, made council aware of a new International Trade Tracking System that is being implemented to track seafood shipments around the world. Also, Marine Patrol numbers are down and it is on our shoulders to help police this fishery. It is our industry and we need to take ownership of it. We are here to set the season today.

### **Discussion: 2015-16 Season Setting**

J. Leask: At this point we break into the groups to set calendars.

B. Preney: Before we do that, why is there no tray limit reduction for increased days in Zone 1 on the calendar that was drafted at the last meeting? At the January meeting we had a lot of people who wanted less trays and more days.

J. Leask: It is status quo for right now – Zone 1 is 15 days and 12 trays.

T. Cheney: At the last meeting we did discuss the potential reduction in trays to 7, which would have resulted in 20 days as not all harvesters' area currently reaching the 12 tote limit. That would have represented a decrease in the total number of overall totes for each harvester in that zone of 40 totes to a total of 140 totes compared to the potential of 180 totes guys can current get with 15 days and 12 trays. There was a handout that is included in the appendices of the February minutes that shows that equation. Unfortunately, there were not a lot of Zone 1 harvesters at the last meeting, only Clint and Jim Taylor were in attendance, and Clint thought it would be a hard sell to take guys down to 7 trays at only 20 days, so we stayed with the recommendation of status quo for next season.

J. Leask: Is there anyone here who wants to change that?

J. Campbell: Yes, I represent a whole lot of harvesters who wanted more days. I went to the first meeting in January; I missed the second one in February. In January we spoke about getting more days. Last year I lost a whole lot of money. We have 15 days, I think Zone 2 should work a little bit around us so the market doesn't get jammed up in December like it did last year. I only have 15 days and three of the days I only got half of the price I was supposed to get. I believe even the Commissioner was completely on board with us spreading out season out.

J. Leask: The only issue on spreading the season out is coming to a consensus amongst your group. It is Zone 1 guys in your group and you need to have a discussion on that.

D. Norris: At the last meeting they broke into groups but there were only two Zone 1 divers.

T. Cheney: There were only two, but we had a lot of input from all the buyers and processors, especially Chenda who mainly buys Zone 1 urchins, who had a lot of influence on the Zone 1 calendar.

J. Campbell: Why don't we have Zone 2 fill out their calendar first and then us Zone 1 guys can go after? With the schedule that you came up with from the last meeting, I can see I am going to be in the same boat as last year. If everybody is fishing at the same time and these guys can't keep up processing, I lost \$1.50/lb, in December. We will discuss this and see what we come up with.



Harvester: I am late season Zone 2 and I want to know who set the season? Why are we going Fridays and Saturdays?

T. Cheney: The buyers and processors had a lot of input in pulling together all of the calendars at the last meeting.

Harvester: For 26 years we have been going Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

J. Leask: Before this gets away from us, these are issues that can be settled in the groups. The option is there to change them. You will have the buyers going around to help you. At the last meeting there was very little input for Zone 2 late.

T. Cheney: WE had a few guys.

C. Muth: The reason we put Wednesday, Thursday and Fridays was because we don't want to have overlap with the scallop draggers.

Harvester: What does the scallop schedule have to do with urchins?

C. Muth: There is a quality issue.

Harvester: This meeting is for urchin divers, not scallop draggers.

J. Leask: In the last meeting we based a lot of the days on what the processors recommended. You can change things, but make sure you have a processors input. This is the third of three meetings to discuss the season where you can all show up and be part of it.

T. Cheney: Part of the reason they are trying to compress both the divers and draggers in the late season so they are going together at the same time to help them save on overhead costs associated with travelling Downeast as they are on the brink of collapse. Also, they put the days later in the week. Scallop season for draggers is Monday through Wednesday and Thursday and that is not likely to change. So this was an attempt to get higher quality urchins and compress the season. When it is not scallop season, it is a 4-5 day a week and during scallop season, the urchin season is compressed to 3-4 days a week.

J. Leask: If you want to cypher out your season, lets break into the groups.

J. Ackley: How do you determine between early and late season if the early season is going for a longer period of time than the late season guys.

J. Leask: The late season guys have the ability to choose their days just as the late season guys do.

J. Ackley: Then it should be just a season. Shouldn't be early and late. They go longer than we do. Traditionally, early and late season would only overlap a few weeks in the season and then the early season guys would be done. Now early season goes the whole season.

J. Leask: This is the dialogue we had at the last meeting. If it would make things go smoother, we could change the title of it. It is just the way we have done stuff since we started since we broke things into zones and early and late.

R. Huckins: It only started last year.

J. Leask: You mean the fishing into the late season.

B. Huckins: It screwed the price up for us late season guys in February. We lost the best prices as we couldn't go! The roe was so bad at the end last year the buyers quit. Same this year.

J. Leask: Each year we try to set the calendars so everyone get a chance to make the most money. We need to get the calendar hammered out and break out into groups.

Everyone broke into groups to pick their days. Then calendars were populated and voted on starting with Zone 1 Early Dive. However, as the council worked through the calendars and came to the last one, the Zone 2 Late Drag, the processors realized at that point, after many Zone 2 divers had already left the meeting as their calendars had already voted in, that they needed to go back and amend that calendar. The council did not want to amend that already recommended calendar as the harvesters had already left. This resulted in the Zone 2 Late Dragers having to put 4 days in November, which was not very popular with these harvesters. Therefore, in future season setting meetings, all calendars will be populated and voted on as a package, after the processors have had a chance to review them all together to make sure the season as a whole comes together appropriately.

## Appendix A

### Carl Wilson's Zone 2 Closed Area Slides

## Urchins are at a tipping point

- Relatively stable but low population levels
- Much of western Maine has not recovered even with minimal or zero fishing
- Processors are at critical point with regards to volume and fishing days
  - Need more high quality volume
  - Importing product from Canada and further afield
- A new license has not been issued since 2004

## The DMR believes

- The resource and the fishery have a future
  - We are in it for the long haul
  - A viable fishery is important for the State of Maine
- The long-term goal is to rebuild the resource to 2001 levels and match a 2015 fishing rate to it
  - 4 to 5 million pound fishery
- Short-term experiments can inform goal
  - Develop a common language to proceed

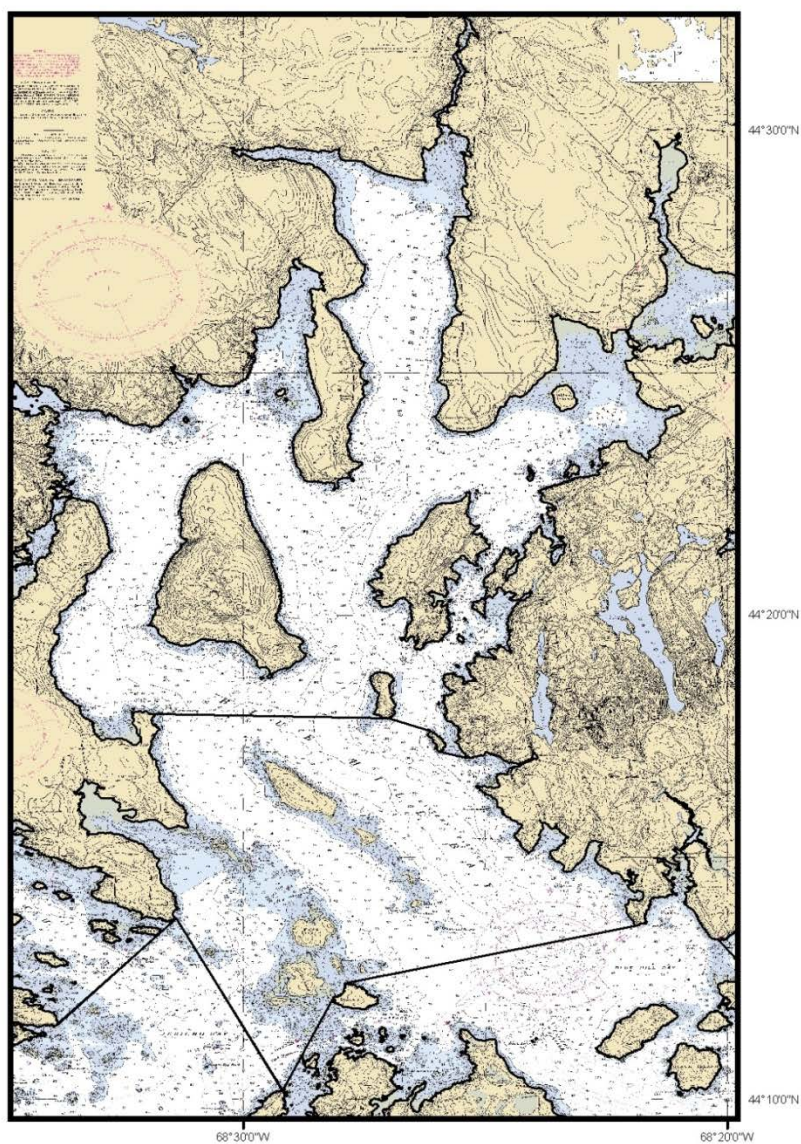
## Why a closed area

- Need to bracket:
  - Nuclear option (no fishing)
  - Status quo
  - Manipulation
- Monitor changes
  - From the DMR perspective
  - From industry perspective

## What defines the area

- Desire to work in a productive area
  - Approximately 5% of landings
- Mix of sizes from DMR survey
- Ability to access and monitor
- Scallop rotation
- Minimize impact to industry

## Blue Hill Bay Scallop Areas



### Questions to be addressed 3-5 years

- Changes in the resource
  - DMR dive survey
  - New industry survey
- Roe monitoring
- Settlement
- Enhancement experiments
- Access fishing (~50% of the area)

**Appendix B**  
Margaret Hunters Landings Slides

**Maine Sea Urchin Landings in Pounds**

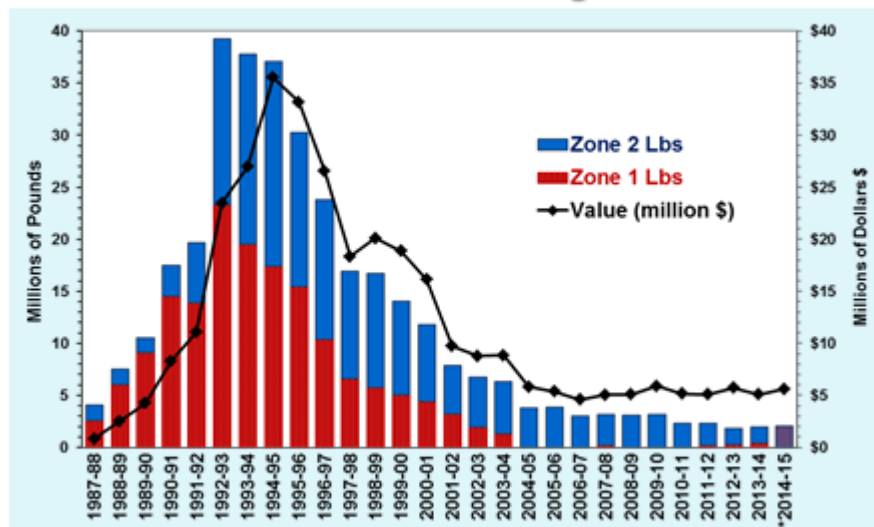
**2014-15\***

**2015-16\***

Month	Pounds	Price/Lb	Month	Pounds	Price/Lb
Sep	198,955	\$2.08	Sep	183,396	\$1.78
Oct	374,914	\$2.58	Oct	274,394	\$2.98
Nov	164,891	\$3.01	Nov	237,575	\$2.72
Dec	658,335	\$2.97	Dec	437,651	\$3.23
Jan	176,893	\$2.55	Jan	141,340	\$2.80
Feb	99,049	\$2.76	Feb		
Mar	365,706	\$2.79	Mar		
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,038,743</b>	<b>\$2.69</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,274,356</b>	<b>\$2.79</b>

*\* From preliminary dealer reports, as of 3/21/16.*

**Maine Sea Urchin Landings and Value**




*\* 2014-15 preliminary, not available by zone yet*

Appendix C

SUZC FINAL Calendar Proposal Recommendation for Rulemaking

**March 22 SUZC's Proposed ZONE 1 2016 - 2017 Calendar**

 = Open

 = Closed

Early Season for Divers, Rakers and Trappers

S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
				1 O	2 O	3 O
4	5 O	6	7 O	8 O	9 O	10
11	12 O	13 O	14 O	15	16	17
18	19 O	20 O	21 O	22	23	24
25	26 O	27 O	28 O	29	30	

Late Season for Divers, Rakers and Trappers

S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
				1 O	2 O	3
4	5 O	6 O	7	8 O	9 O	10
11	12 O	13 O	14	15 O	16 O	17
18	19 O	20 O	21	22 O	23	24
25	26	27 O	28 O	29	30	31

Early Season for Draggers

S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
				1 O	2 O	3
4	5 O	6 O	7	8 O	9 O	10
11	12 O	13 O	14	15 O	16 O	17
18	19 O	20 O	21	22 O	23	24
25	26	27 O	28 O	29	30	31

Late Season for Draggers

S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
			1	2 O	3 O	4 O
5	6	7	8	9 O	10 O	11 O
12	13	14	15	16 O	17 O	18 O
19	20	21	22	23 O	24 O	25
26	27	28				

S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
			1	2 O	3 O	4
5	6	7	8	9 O	10 O	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

**March 22 SUZC's Proposed ZONE 2 2016 - 2017 Calendar**

**○ = Open**      **□ = Closed**

**Early Season for Divers, Rakers and Trappers**

September 2016						
S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15 ○	16 ○	17
18	19	20	21	22 ○	23 ○	24
25	26	27	28	29 ○	30	

October 2016						
S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6	7	8
9	10 ○	11 ○	12 ○	13	14	15
16	17 ○	18 ○	19 ○	20	21	22
23	24 ○	25 ○	26 ○	27	28	29
30	31 ○					

November 2016						
S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
		1 ○	2 ○	3	4	5
6	7 ○	8 ○	9	10	11	12
13	14 ○	15 ○	16	17	18	19
20	21 ○	22 ○	23	24	25	26
27	28 ○	29 ○	30 ○			

December 2016						
S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
						1
4	5	6 ○	7 ○	8 ○	9	10
11	12	13 ○	14 ○	15	16	17
18	19	20 ○	21 ○	22 ○	23 ○	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

**Late Season for Divers, Rakers and Trappers**

December 2016						
S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
						1
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 ○	13 ○	14 ○	15	16	17
18	19 ○	20 ○	21 ○	22	23	24
25	26 ○	27 ○	28 ○	29	30	31

January 2017						
S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
1	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5	6	7
8	9 ○	10 ○	11 ○	12	13	14
15	16 ○	17 ○	18	19	20	21
22	23 ○	24 ○	25	26	27	28
29	30 ○	31 ○				

February 2017						
S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
			1 ○	2	3	4
5	6 ○	7 ○	8	9	10	11
12	13 ○	14 ○	15	16	17	18
19	20 ○	21 ○	22 ○	23	24	25
26	27 ○	28 ○				

March 2017						
S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
			1 ○	2	3	4
5	6 ○	7 ○	8 ○	9	10	11
12	13 ○	14 ○	15 ○	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

**Early Season for Draggers**

October 2016						
S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
						1 ○
2	3 ○	4 ○	5	6	7	8
9	10 ○	11 ○	12 ○	13	14	15
16	17 ○	18 ○	19 ○	20	21	22
23	24 ○	25 ○	26 ○	27	28	29
30	31 ○					

November 2016						
S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
		1 ○	2 ○	3	4	5
6	7 ○	8 ○	9	10	11	12
13	14 ○	15 ○	16	17	18	19
20	21 ○	22 ○	23	24	25	26
27	28 ○	29 ○	30			

December 2016						
S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
					1 ○	2 ○
4	5	6	7	8 ○	9 ○	10
11	12	13	14	15 ○	16 ○	17
18	19	20	21	22 ○	23 ○	24
25	26	27	28	29 ○	30 ○	31

January 2017						
S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

February 2017						
S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15 ○	16 ○	17	18
19	20	21	22 ○	23 ○	24	25
26	27	28				

March 2017						
S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
			1 ○	2 ○	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

**Late Season for Draggers**

November 2016						
S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21 ○	22 ○	23	24	25	26
27	28 ○	29 ○	30			

December 2016						
S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
						1
4	5	6	7 ○	8 ○	9 ○	10
11	12	13	14 ○	15 ○	16 ○	17
18	19	20	21 ○	22 ○	23 ○	24
25	26	27	28 ○	29 ○	30 ○	31

January 2017						
S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○	7
8	9	10	11 ○	12 ○	13 ○	14
15	16	17	18	19 ○	20 ○	21
22	23	24	25	26 ○	27 ○	28
29	30	31				

February 2017						
S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
			1 ○	2 ○	3	4
5	6	7	8 ○	9 ○	10	11
12	13	14	15 ○	16 ○	17	18
19	20	21	22 ○	23 ○	24	25
26	27	28				

March 2017						
S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8 ○	9 ○	10 ○	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	