

MLA 72nd Annual Meeting

Friday, March 6, 2026



Thank you Forum Board Rep



Katie Werner



MLA Staff



Executive Director & President
Patrice McCarron



Associate Director
Chris Payne



Office Operations Manager & Secretary
Shannon Butler



Director of Advancement
Kevin Kelley



MLCA Landings Publisher
Melissa Waterman



Treasurer
Ralph Chauvin
Volunteer



MLA Board of Directors



Bob Baines
So Thomaston



Joshua Beal
Milbridge



Brian Billings
Stonington



Herman Coombs
Orrs Island



Gerry Cushman
Port Clyde



Jim Dow
Bass Harbor



Jordan Drouin
Cutler



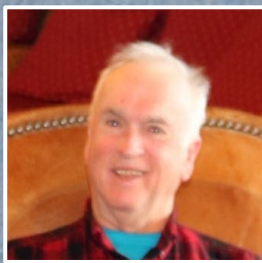
Adam Gamage
South Bristol



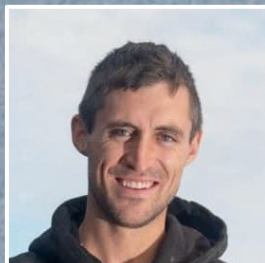
Andy Havener
Friendship



Richard Howland
Islesford



Bobby Ingalls
Bucks Harbor



Jacob Knowles
Winter Harbor



Christian LaMontagne
Long Island



Johnny McCarthy
Vinalhaven



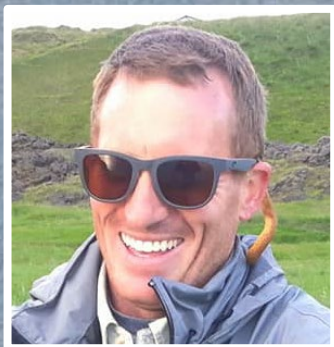
Troy Plummer
Boothbay



Chris Welch
Kennebunk



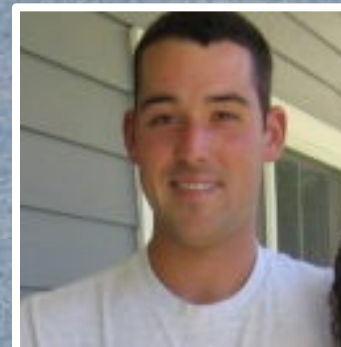
Thomas Werner
Cape Elizabeth



Chairman
Jarod Bray
Matinicus



Vice-Chair
Sonny Beal
Beals Island



Vice President
John Tripp
Spruce Head



Slate of Nominees

3-year term through 2029

Bob Baines, Spruce Head
Sonny Beal, Beals Island
Gerry Cushman, Port Clyde
Richard Howland, Islesford
Troy Plummer, Boothbay
Thom Werner, Cape Elizabeth

Thank you retired board member

Jason Joyce, Swans Island





WELCOME

**incoming
Chairman**

Sonny Beal



Visit the MLA Booth!



Membership Matters!



Join the MLA!
Or
Set your membership to
Auto Renew



Raffle for free
concert tickets!

stickers



2025 Highlights



MLA is not only about right whales



V-Notch Campaign





LANDINGS

News & Views from Maine's Lobstering Community

September 2025 | Vol. 33, No. 9

PROTECTING FEMALE LOBSTERS A MAINE TRADITION FOR GENERATIONS

By Patrice McCarron and Melissa Waterman

Maine lobstermen have recognized for generations that maintaining a healthy number of fertile female lobsters provides a good foundation for the long-term strength of the lobster stock. After all, less than 1% of lobster eggs will survive to become adults, so the more eggs that are released each year, the better the prospects for the future.

That's why egg-bearing females have been protected in different ways for more than 100 years.

In 1872, the Maine Legislature passed its first law to protect egg-bearing female lobsters. Two years later the state established a minimum legal harvest size for lobsters.

Then, in 1917, the state started its first marking program for female egg-bearing lobsters in order to bolster natural egg production. The Sea and Shore Fisheries Department bought female lobsters kept in pounds that had extruded eggs to stop the pound owners from scrubbing off the eggs and selling them. Wardens punched a hole in the center tail

flipper and released them. Maine lobstermen were forbidden from harvesting those lobsters.

According to the Sea and Shore Fisheries, by the mid-1930s, the state of Maine was purchasing "60,000 pounds of seed lobster, from the fishermen through dealers, at market prices"

The state's lobster fishery experienced a bust in the 1920s and 1930s, when landings slumped for two decades. In 1933, Maine established the "double gauge" law, establishing a minimum and maximum carapace length to legally harvest lobster in an effort to rebuild the fishery.


During the 1930s lobstermen became convinced that illegal harvesting was causing their low catches. Lobstermen felt that protecting reproductive females would augment the stock and support for lobster conservation measures grew steadily. During this time the practice of voluntarily V-notching began to spread.

As landings slowly increased lobstermen were certain that V-notching benefitted themselves, the entire fishing community, and was a way to build up



Ensuring that female lobsters can produce eggs is a Maine practice begun many generations ago. J. Knowles YouTube photo.

Continued on page 4



V-NOTCHING

A TRADITION OF STEWARDSHIP & SUSTAINABILITY


WHAT IS V-NOTCHING?


A conservation measure where lobstermen cut a small "V" in the center right tail flipper of an egg-bearing female lobster and return her safely to the ocean.


FACT


It is illegal to harvest a notched lobster in Maine, even if she's not carrying eggs.


WHY V-NOTCHING MATTERS

- 

Simple but powerful conservation measure that does not disrupt lobster markets
- 

Boosts Lobster Population
Each v-notched lobster with 1/4" notch can reproduce 2-3 more times
- 

Produces More Eggs
Notched lobsters grow larger & produce 9x more eggs than un-notched lobsters.
- 

More Eggs = More Lobsters & a future for Maine's lobster fishery!
- 

V-notching has **no significant impact** on health, survival, or disease

THE LEGACY OF V-NOTCHING

- 1917: First broodstock marking
- 1975: Notch moved to right tail flipper
- 2002: Law passed to require v-notching
- 2025: Still a cornerstone of conservation

Maine lobstermen take pride in protecting the future of the fishery. V-notching is a simple act that shows we care.

FAST FACTS

- Less than 1% of lobster eggs survive to maturity
- Maine has the strictest "zero tolerance" v-notch law in the U.S.
- A single v-notch can protect a lobster for three molts
- Maine's egg protection efforts date back to 1917



MAINE LOBSTERMEN'S ASSOCIATION
est. 1954



DrTail
CRUSTACEAN CO.

Free V-notch tools and membership to our 150 new harvesters (thru 2024)!

DID YOU KNOW?

A V-notch can make a big difference!

A 1/4-inch v-notch remains visible for several molts, giving females multiple chances to reproduce & be protected again!



Maine Lobstermen Notch!

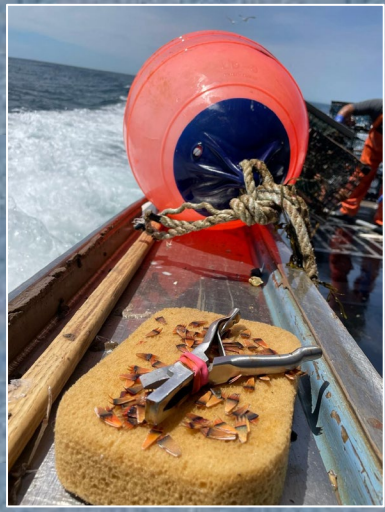


Conserve the resource.
Protect the future.

LEARN MORE

www.vnotch.info







www.vnotch.info



Learn More



V-Notch Campaign



MLA Collaborations



FREE SAFETY & DRILL CONDUCTOR TRAINING
These classes are helpful for captains, crew, and family members.

🕒 May 1-2 | Jonesport
🕒 May 5-6 | Southwest Harbor

Day One, **Safety & Survival:** Through hands-on training, fishermen learn about EPIRBs, Signal Flares, MAYDAY Calls, Man Overboard Recovery, Firefighting, Flooding & Damage Control, Dewatering Pumps, Immersion Suits, PFDs, & Life Rafts.

Day Two, **Drill Conductor:** Learn new information in cold-water survival, helicopter rescues, stability, liability and emergency procedures.

Fishermen who complete these two days of training are AMSEA certified Drill Conductors, which meets USCG requirements under 46 CFR 28.270(c).



REGISTER TODAY: Call | Text | Web

📞 774.779.1070 📱 text 🌐 fishingpartnership.org



Drill Conductor / First Aid

FISHING PARTNERSHIP

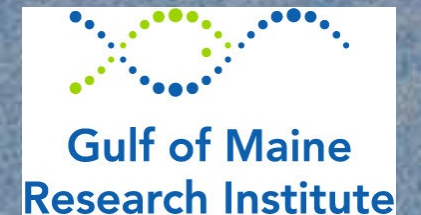


SUPPORT SERVICES

Socio-Economic Survey

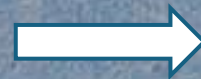
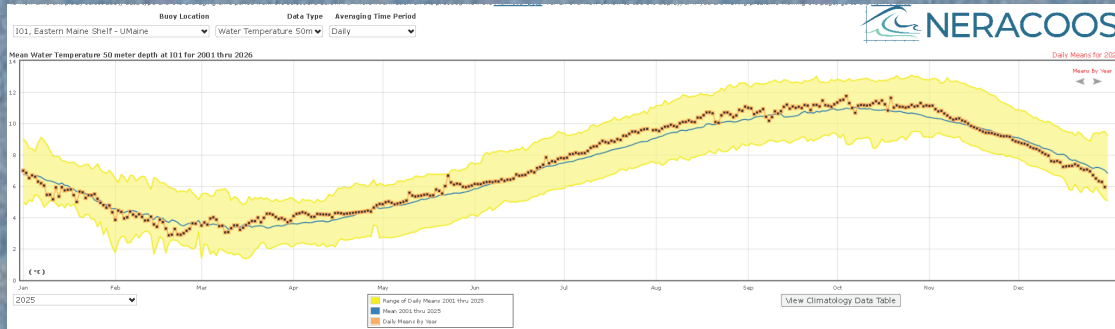


Protecting Working Waterfronts



Issue of the Year - Profitability

Colder Water Impacted Fishery



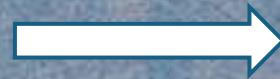
Slow start to season
Late Shed

Hauling fewer days

Landings late
Lower landings

Overall
decrease
in profits

Tariff Uncertainty Impacted Markets



Costs way up
Bait, traps, fishing
supplies, etc

High inflation

Market uncertainty

Boat price not
keeping pace with
costs

MLA MEMBERS SURVEY RESULT

YOUR VOICE MATTERS!

The 2025 lobster stock assessment came as no surprise to lobstermen who have long understood that lobster abundance would decline from its historic peak in 2016.

The MLA heard from a lot of lobstermen about ideas that might make the industry stronger and the resource more resilient, so we asked our members what they thought.

The survey results clearly demonstrate Maine lobstermen's strong stewardship ethic and provide a guidepost for future management options.



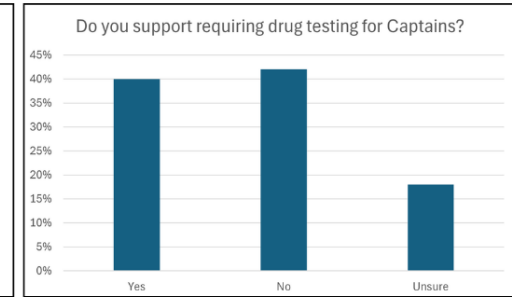
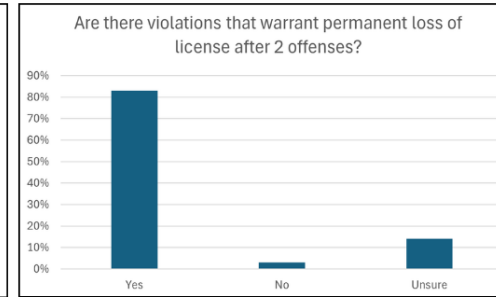
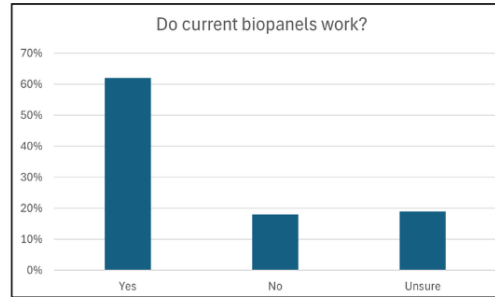
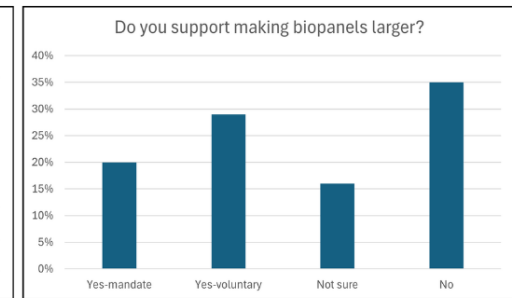
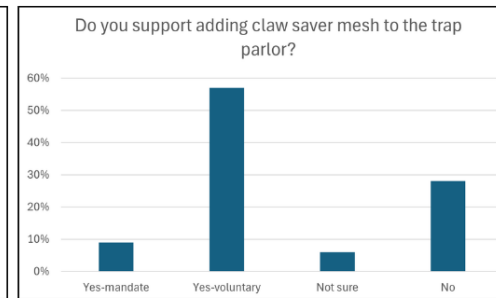
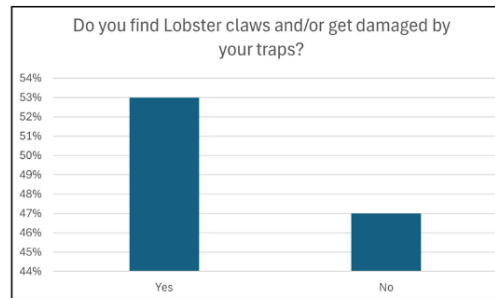
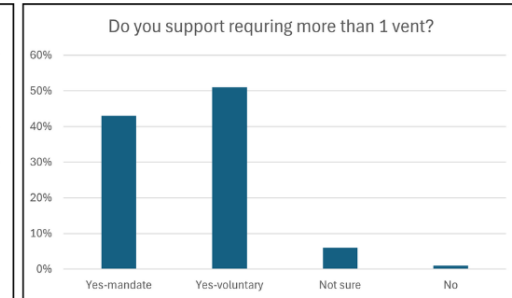
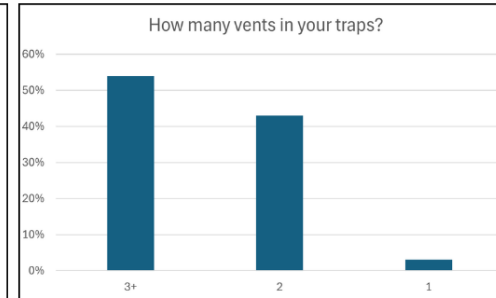
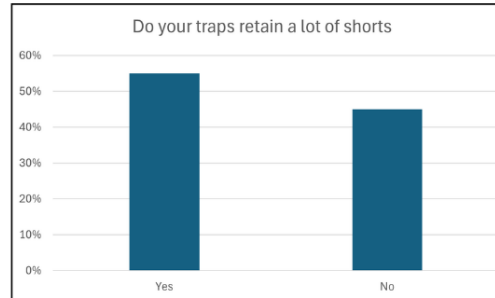
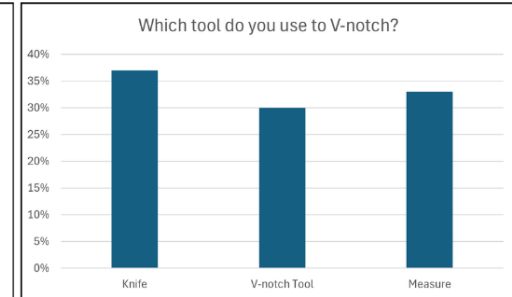
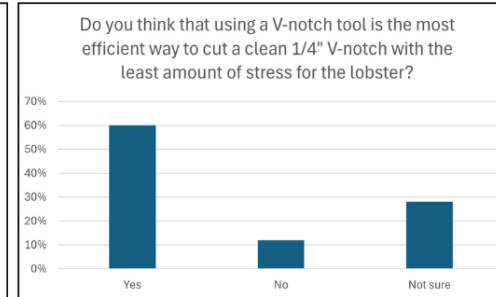
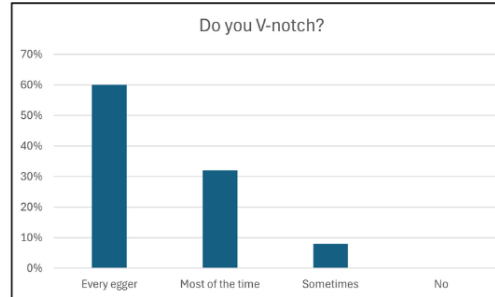
V-notching

Vents

Claw Save Bottoms

Bio-panels

Stricter Enforcement Penalties





Cheryl Clegg Photography

MLA Policy Highlights - ASMFC

Lobster Management



- Addendum 27 measure increase repealed
- MLA opposed measure increase
- Worked on issue starting in 2017 when it was first introduced
- ASMFC to initiate outreach with lobster industry on management goals

Bait



- Advocated to preserve menhaden quota for bait fishery
- Large proposed quota cut of up to 55% reduced to 20% for 2026
- Will be revisited for 2027 and beyond

Lobster Stock Assessment

DECEMBER 11, 2025

Maine lobster industry working to counter national headlines on minor overfishing finding

A stock assessment finding minor overfishing led to national news, and the Maine lobster fishery is working to correct the record on sustainability.



Chris Chase published in Supply & Trade



The Maine lobster industry is working to counter a viral story on an overfishing finding that was reported by national media | Photo courtesy of Jane Rix/Shutterstock

6 MIN READ

LOG IN TO LISTEN

SHARE

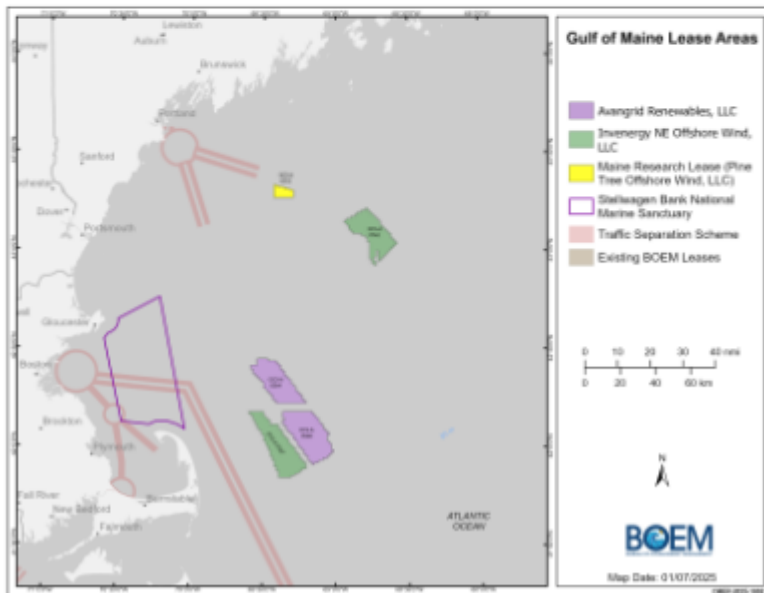
In late October, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) issued its determinations on lobster stock in the Gulf of Maine, recommending NOAA keep management of the stock the same in 2026. Included within that decision was a stock assessment, which indicated that the population was experiencing minor overfishing. Maine Lobstermen Association President Patrice McCarron told SeafoodSource that soon after the

MLA Policy Highlights – Offshore Wind

What's New?



The Department of the Interior and BOEM are implementing *President Trump's memorandum* temporarily halting offshore wind leasing on the Outer Continental Shelf. The memorandum also pauses new or renewed approvals, rights-of-way, permits, leases, or loans for offshore wind projects pending a review of federal wind leasing and permitting practices.



Gulf of Maine Lease Areas

Gulf of Maine Leases

- January 2025. All offshore lease areas paused
- July 2025. All designated wind areas rescinded for areas where leases were not sold
- April 2025. PUC suspends negotiations to sell Research Array power
- Jan 2026. Bottom trawl survey of research array began

Maine offshore wind array on pause

Maine Public | By Peter McGuire

Published April 1, 2025 at 5:36 PM EDT



▶ LISTEN • 1:02



Robert F. Bukaty / AP

In this Friday, Sept. 20, 2013 photo, the University of Maine's 9,000-pound prototype wind turbine generates power off the coast of Castine, Maine. It was the country's first floating wind turbine.

The developer of Maine's first offshore wind array has paused the project amid the Trump administration's backlash against the industry.

Pine Tree Offshore Wind asked to suspend negotiations with state regulators on a deal to sell power from its planned 12-turbine floating development in the Gulf of Maine.

Policy Highlights - Legislature



| | |
|--|--|
| MLMC Reauthorization | LD 2002. Marine Resources Committee amended to reauthorize for 2 years (not 5 years). |
| Emergency authority to protect marine mammals | LD 2013. Marine Resources Committee amended to require an annual report back to Legislature and DMR to consult with the industry before actions are implemented. |
| 2nd Zone Tags | DMR reported on its consultation with the zone councils. Four zones (A, C, D, F) support status quo (49%) and three zones (B, E, G) supported lower or 0%. Marine Resources Committee no action. |
| 2 licenses / 1 boat | DMR reported on its consultation with the lobster and scallop councils. None supported allowing two license on a single vessel. Marine Resources Committee no action. |
| Pilots for the Cat | LD 1477, carried over. Transportation Committee amended to requires the Cat to use local pilots. Requested \$325,000 appropriation. |
| Menhaden Licenses | LD 1353, carried over. Marine Resources Committee amended to change entry qualifications to obtain a menhaden license in 2026 which would allow up to 20 new entrants. 1:1 exit ratio at 350 licenses. |

But...

**MLA still spends a lot
of time on right whales**

**This issue threatens our
heritage**



MLA Policy Highlights – Right Whales

Accountability



Legal Defense and Advocacy



RW Stats

| Right Whale Summary | | | |
|---------------------|-----|--------|--------|
| | Pop | Calves | Deaths |
| 2020 | 359 | 10 | 5.66 |
| 2021 | 371 | 20 | 10.86 |
| 2022 | 373 | 15 | 6.77 |
| 2023 | 376 | 12 | 5.2 |
| 2024 | 384 | 19 | 5 |
| 2025 | | 22 | |

Source: Linden 2025

- Supporting reform of MMPA and ESA
- Whale plan timeline pushed back 1 year to incorporate new data
- Oppose ropeless fishing for Maine



Looking Ahead to 2026



The Year Ahead

Enhancing Stewardship Practices

- V-notch campaign 2.0
- Build on the MLA survey results
- Common sense ways to enhance our proven conservation programs
- Small changes that yield strong gains



Support the next generation

- Jr Harvester Program
- V-notch tools to new entrants
- Maine Lobster Leadership Program
 - Business Training and Mentorship
 - Advocacy on science and management
 - Sternman training



Survey Results

- V-notch. 100% yes / 90% every or most lobsters
- Vents. 94% support more than one vent
- Claw Saver bottom. 66% support adding to bottom of parlor
- Bio-panels. 49% support larger bio panels
- Permanent license loss. 83% support after 2nd offense of egregious violations.

Advocacy

- Advance critical work with our legal team
- Prepare for the next round of whale rules
- Lawsuit against Monterey Bay Aquarium
- MMPA and ESA reform



Guest Speaker



Eugenio Piñeiro Soler
Assistant Administrator
of NOAA Fisheries



MLA Golden V-notch Award

Thank you for your leadership and support in preserving
Maine's lobster industry!



Machias Savings
Bank



Bar Harbor Bank
& Trust



First National
Bank



Visit the MLA Booth!



Membership Matters!



Join the MLA!
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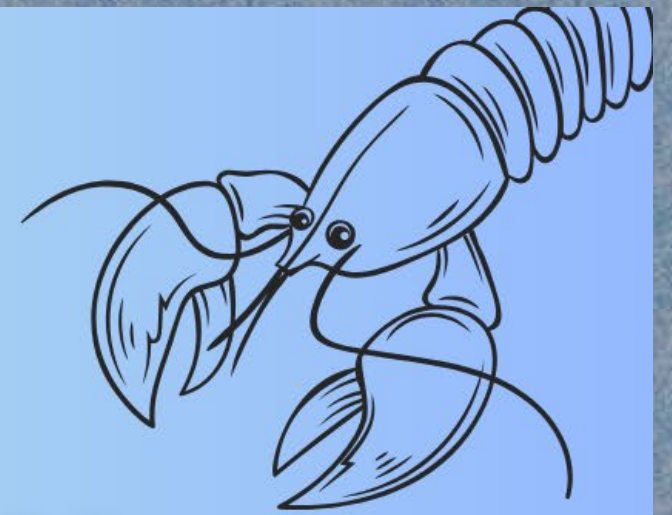


Raffle for free
concert tickets!



**YOU'RE
INVITED**

Join us!



MLA Social Hour

When: Friday, March 6
4:30-6pm

Where: Golf Club, Samoset Resort

*All are invited—stop by, enjoy a free drink,
and have a great time with the MLA!*

