October 28, 2021

Sea Grant Announces
2021 American Lobster Initiative Efforts

Professor Jeff Shields measures the underbelly of an egg-bearing female lobster at Virginia Institute of Marine Science in March 2021, part of the research initially funded in fiscal year 2019 by Sea Grant's American Lobster Initiative (Photo by Aileen Devlin | Virginia Sea Grant).

Sea Grant announces $2 million in support of the Sea Grant American Lobster Initiative to address scientific and stakeholder needs associated with this important fishery.

This is Sea Grant's third year of research and extension funding to address critical gaps in knowledge about how American lobster is being impacted by environmental change in the Gulf of Maine, Georges Bank and southern New England. The focus of this work is based on specific language in Sea Grant's fiscal year 2021 appropriations language.

One of the most iconic modern American fisheries, the American lobster (*Homarus americanus*) also represents one of the largest and most valuable single-species fisheries along the Atlantic coast. The landing value of the American lobster fishery was estimated at $524.5 million in 2020 (Source: NOAA Fisheries). However, ecosystem shifts, food web changes and ocean acidification all present threats to the American lobster fishery. While lobster landings continue to remain above historical averages, NOAA Fisheries data showed a 19 percent decline in pounds of American lobster landed in 2020 from data collected in 2018.

This year's funding will support Sea Grant's Northeast Regional Lobster Extension Program in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and Rhode Island in addition to supporting continuing efforts for three research projects initially funded in 2020 and six new research projects for 2021. The six, new extramural research projects in 2021 encourage research partnerships between state agencies, academia and industry to address the American lobster's life history parameters, distribution and abundance, and species interactions.

Read the full announcement, including a list of funded research projects

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