

2019 Maine Fishermen's Forum

Podcast Q&A with Jon about MFF panel discussion

Panel: Friday, March 1 at 2:45pm in the Rockland Room

Intro:

Hello and welcome to our Northeast Fisheries Science Center podcast "2019 Maine Fishermen's Forum: Together We Achieve More." My name is Heather Soulen, social media manager and science communicator at the Northeast Fisheries Science Center, and today we have our director Jon Hare with us to talk a little about the upcoming NOAA Fisheries Leadership Panel at the Forum. This panel is an open, 2-way conversation and an opportunity for Maine's commercial fishing industry, stakeholders, and related partners to share their insights and concerns with Leadership.

HS: Welcome Jon! The Forum runs Thursday, February 28th to Saturday, March 1st with the Leadership panel on March 1st at 2:45pm in the Rockland Room. Tell us why members of NOAA Fisheries participate in the Forum?

JH: The Forum is a great place to talk with people involved in fishing in Maine. It's an opportunity to hear their perspectives and concerns. There are also interesting sessions this year -- from "Fishery-dependant data, what's in it for you" and a session on lobster science and management updates. The Forum is informative, interesting, and enjoyable so NOAA Fisheries attends and benefits from the Forum.]

HS: How many times have you attended or participated in the Forum and why is it important to you that you go?

JH: This is my third Forum as director of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center -- I've gone every year -- I think it's important for me to go because this is a meeting organized by fishermen for fishermen. So it's an excellent opportunity to hear the perspectives of fishing in Maine. I'm honored to be able to attend. Some of the issues that are sort of present in fishing in Maine are tough and I think the Forum provides an excellent venue for us, NOAA Fisheries, to have conversations with fishermen and the fishing industry in Maine [to have] open and honest conversations about those issues.

HS: A few scientists from our Science Center are attending or participating in some capacity at the Forum -- What's the value in having our scientists at this Forum?

JH: I think it's critical for Northeast Fisheries Science Center scientists to attend the Forum because it's an opportunity to learn about the fisheries of Maine. Last year when I was at the Forum, it really became clear to me that fishermen are scientists too -- they just have a different training and so I think having the opportunity for our scientists who are trained one way to

interact with fishermen who are trained in another way. It's an excellent way for all of us to combine our knowledge to think about the tough issues that we face.

HS: How are you going to use commercial fishermen and industry input into the work that happens at the Science Center?

JH: There's a number of issues that will be discussed at the Forum. Our Fisheries' Sampling Branch will have staff there to discuss the observer program and putting observers on commercial fishing vessels. Our cooperative research branch will be there to talk about collaborative research that is done between the Science Center and the fishermen. Some of the other issues that will be discussed -- North Atlantic right whales, lobsters, changing climate, aquaculture, groundfish, wind energy development. We've been working in all these different areas [and] have different ways of including information coming from fishermen. There's no one answer to all of those issues, but we really are working to strengthen the inclusion of expertise from the fishing industry into all of these issues that we're going to be talking about at the Forum.

HS: Let's talk about the panel discussion on Friday, March 1st "Open Forum with NOAA Fisheries Leadership" -- You know panel discussions are a great opportunity to have two-way conversations and to hear what the audience is thinking. What sorts of things or topics or concerns are you most interested in hearing about from the panel audience?

JH: I've already started to list some of the issues which will be discussed at the Forum -- right whales, lobsters, changing climate, aquaculture, groundfish -- so I'm open and interested in having discussions on any of those issues. As a scientist, one of the things I think we bring to the Forum is an outlook which has a longer time frame than just the immediate what's the fishing going to be like this year and so I'm always interested in hearing people's perspectives about a changing climate -- what changes have they seen over time? How might they be adapting for the changes that we think will happen going out into the future? I also think the groundfish issues are tough. There's a number of issues related to observing on groundfish trips, discarding on groundfish trips. I've talked with a lot of people and their concerns with the accuracy of our assessments. I always find talking with individuals about those issues very informative so I'm looking forward to those conversations as well.

HS: Jon is there anything else about the Forum in general or something you'd like to talk about regarding the forum or commercial fishing in Maine that you'd like to share at this point?

JH: Two other things that I'd like to talk about. One has been sort of a thread through our previous questions and answers, and the other is a new topic. The thread is the value of scientists engaging with fishermen to learn together. I think for a very long time we've tried to separate science from management and from fishermen and one of the perspectives that I

would like to bring to the Science Center is bringing scientists much closer to fishermen and managers to try to learn together -- create solutions together. And so that's one thread which I think is very important to bring up at the Forum -- it's an opportunity to have those conversations. The other other is that I plan to attend the alewife harvesters of Maine annual meeting. I was there last year and was really just encouraged by the success that they're having in Maine in terms of recovering alewife. They've got a plan, they're executing their plan, the number of alewives in the rivers have been growing steadily for a couple of years. They've got commercial harvest based on it. The rivers are healthier for the alewives being there and the alewives are providing prey for a number of other species, so I think looking at alewife in Maine as a success of species recovery -- I think there's a lot we can learn in NOAA Fisheries and I think there's a lot we can learn regionally so I'm looking forward to that as well.

Sign-off:

Thanks for joining us for this podcast interview with director Jon Hare about the upcoming Maine Fishermen's Forum in Rockport, Maine. To learn more about the Forum, please visit [the Forum's website](#). You can always visit the [NEFSC website](#) and be sure to follow us on Facebook -- [@NOAAFisheriesNEMA](#) -- and on Twitter -- [@NOAAFish_NEFSC](#). Want to learn more about all the latest happenings at the Science Center? Then subscribe to our "Science News eNewsletter" on our homepage. As always, we are science in service to the public, working with others to find opportunities and solutions.