

# Doubt over Maine lobsters' ability to invade Europe

BY FRED BEVER  
MPBN

Maine's congressional delegation is trying to step up its defense of Maine's lobster industry now that the European Union says it will take the next step in considering Sweden's call for banning live American lobster from the EU.

Over the years, Sweden has reported finding a total of almost three-dozen American lobster off its shores — the leading edge of an existential threat to native European lobster, according to Swedish officials. Sweden says American lobster could bring new diseases to vulnerable native populations or interbreed with them.

Last week an EU science panel backed Sweden's risk assessment, opening the door to a full review that could lead to an import ban on live American lobster as early as next spring.

"Maine is lobster. Maine is moose. Maine is blueberry pie and it's Moxie. Maine is lobster, so this is our brand. This is who we are," said Rep. Bruce Poliquin, who joined Rep. Chellie Pingree and Sen. Angus King for a show of bipartisan unity staged at the waterfront shipping dock of Portland's Ready Seafood Co.

The trio, along with Sen. Susan Collins, sent a letter to the EU calling attention to a ban's economic effects — the U.S. and Canada sell about \$200 million worth of live lobster to EU countries each year — and for an up-

date of the Swedish risk assessment that adheres to the highest possible scientific standards.

"We believe in our lobsters. Our lobsters are strong and great — but they're not going to take over all of Europe," King said.

He said only a handful of American lobsters have been found off Sweden over the years, and with rubber bands on their claws to boot, demonstrating that they were most likely escapees from holding pens or a dock rather than actually breeding in the Northeast Atlantic.

There's no evidence, he said, that the mere presence of those lobsters has enough of an effect on local ecosystem to mark them as an invasive species.

"In fact, there have been attempts to propagate North American lobster in other waters around the world by the thousands and it hasn't worked," King said. "So if they've tried to do it to make them grow as a conscious decision, then how do we expect the few strays to suddenly take over?"

At the most, King and the delegation argue, EU countries should take better precautions to ensure that American lobster do not escape as they are shipped from shore to the European kitchens where, after all, the Old World's enjoyment of Maine's New World crustacean is well-established.

Delegation members said they had not seen any



MATT MCCLAIN | THE WASHINGTON POST

A man sorts lobsters at Ready Seafood on April 28 in Portland.

evidence that Sweden was simply trying to boost the value of native species by getting rid of the popular imports.

On the science, the politicians were backed by Bob Steneck, a University of Maine marine scientist who has studied Maine's lobster for decades. He said that while there is one example of a lobster found in the Northeast Atlantic that carried fertilized eggs that

were a hybrid of the Euro and American species, there is no evidence that such eggs would hatch, or that once hatched the larvae would stand a chance of survival, never mind propagate to threatening numbers.

"Cold winter temperatures are very important to the egg production of lobsters. And in fact it also brings into synchrony their reproduction, so the

lobsters hatch at a time when the babies are settling to the sea floor at a time when they can grow. Those cold winter temperatures just simply do not exist in European waters," he said.

Steneck said the Swedes' reaction to the few American lobsters they've found would be akin to Maine scientists reacting to recent sightings of what may be a giant anaconda in West-

brook with a ban on constrictor snakes.

It's unclear just how seriously EU officials may ultimately take Swedish fears. After study by its "Alien Species Committee," the question of a ban would be voted on by the EU's 28 members.

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## Wind

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be resolved and optimistic that EDP will find long-term, out-of-state buyers of electricity from Number Nine and potentially other wind projects in Aroostook County, she said.

EDP, along with a number of other renewable energy developers, is waiting to hear whether their projects were selected by the New England Clean Energy RFP, a joint effort by state governments and utilities in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island to procure long-term renewable energy supplies for their residents.

EDP proposed supplying the states with between 250 and 600 megawatts of electricity and if selected for more than 250 megawatts the company could expand Number Nine to up to 400 megawatts or develop another wind farm in Aroostook County, Chapman said.

Proposals from New England Clean Energy RFP were supposed to have been selected by late July, but that process has been extended and there have been no decisions yet. "If not selected" for the RFP, "we would seek another buyer," Chapman said.

Meanwhile, the Number Nine project's application with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection is on administrative hold and could either be amended or refiled as a new application, depending on the results of the New Eng-

land RFP, Chapman said.

"If we're selected for 250 megawatts, there's not a lot of work to re-amend," Chapman said. "If we're selected for 600 megawatts, that would be a significant change and we would likely submit a new application."

The state's largest functioning wind farm is the 62-turbine, 185-megawatt facility in Bingham in Somerset County.

Chris O'Neil, director of public policy for Friends of Maine's Mountains, a group opposed to the Number Nine and other wind farms, said the delays in the wind project may not derail the project but that they suggest some concern among utilities about wind projects dependent on grid changes. O'Neil added that EDP also has to resolve a number of environmental issues in its application, including concerns about potential impacts to bats that were raised by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife in their comments with the DEP.

Chapman said the company is working on resolving a number of those issues, including the question of "curtailment," the wind speed threshold for when turbines can start spinning that's set in order to avoid harming bats, which fly at low-wind speeds. IFW has suggested a curtailment speed of 6.5 meters per second (the equivalent of 14.5 mph), while the company's wind farms across the country generally have a curtailment of 5.5 meters per second (about 12.3 mph), Chapman said.

## On the Job



Crawford



McKaig



Philbrick



Gallant



St. Peter



Ridge

University Credit Union in Orono has announced the following promotions to its branch management team in the past quarter. Branch manager promotions include **Susan Crawford**, Rangeley Road branch in Orono, from assistant branch manager in Bangor; **Nancy McKaig**, Main Street branch in Orono, from assistant branch manager at the same location; **Catherine Philbrick**, Bangor branch, branch manager in Orono branch locations; **Katherine Gallant**, Brighton Avenue branch in Portland, from assistant branch manager at the same loca-

tion. Campus branch managers include **Norah St. Peter**, Memorial Union branch at University of Maine in Orono, from a member service representative at Orono locations; **Lesley Ridge**, Brooks Student Center, University of Southern Maine in Gorham, campus development officer at the same location.

New England law firm Bernstein Shur has announced the addition of **Jack Woodcock** as an associate in the firm's Portland office. Woodcock joins the firm's Litigation Practice Group, where his practice will focus on commercial litigation and dispute resolution for individuals and businesses. Before joining Bernstein Shur, Woodcock worked as a trial lawyer for the U.S. Department of Justice,



Woodcock

where he defended the United States in several civil lawsuits of national importance, including two separate bellwether cases involving Hurricane Katrina's flooding of New Orleans. Previously, Woodcock was a law clerk to the Honorable Warren M. Silver, associate justice of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court. Woodcock earned his juris doctor from the University of Maine School of Law, cum laude, where he was a managing editor of the Ocean and Coastal Law Journal. He also earned his Bachelor of Arts from Bowdoin College, and is admitted to practice in Maine and Massachusetts. He resides in Cumberland with his family.

**Frank Benedict** has been named vice president and regional mortgage development manager by Bangor Savings Bank covering Cumberland and York counties. Benedict is located at the bank's 20 Marginal Way office. Before joining Ban-

gor Savings Bank, Benedict served in mortgage operations and most recently as a regional sales manager at TD Bank. Before joining TD Bank, he served as a regional sales manager at H&R Block Mortgage. Benedict is active in his community, serving as the crew chief for the Autism Awareness Race. He also is involved with his children's sports teams, previously serving as a football coach. Benedict lives in Poland with his wife of 27 years and their five children. In his free time, he enjoys spending time with his family, camping, fishing, hunting, and pursuing his passion of restoring old cars.

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## Logging

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The PLC study, completed by the University of Maine, Farm Credit East and Northeast Forests LLC, estimated a large gap in that workforce data. It estimates that forestry and logging directly employs more than 4,600 people, twice the total in the federal data, with secondary employment of 7,342, including jobs in trucking, in 2014.

While the study points out the industry's importance, Doran stops short of predicting a future. He highlights the possibility that the country's most densely forested state is "ideally positioned to take a leading role in the global forest-based economy and write new chapters in its history if it can adapt to the realities of today's market and capitalize on the strengths of its abundant resources and experience."

## Forum

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number is 207-624-8570, and its website is [maine.gov/pfr/financialinstitutions/index.shtml](http://maine.gov/pfr/financialinstitutions/index.shtml).

Maine's Bureau of Consumer Credit Protection has published the Downeaster Common Sense Guide: Gone Phishing. It also contains tips to detect and avoid scams.

Find it online at CreditMaine.gov; it's listed under "Consumer Guides." Call the bureau (1-800-332-8529) with any questions about protecting your credit.

The Federal Trade Com-

mission also has a wealth of information on its website. Learn about phishing and other scams at [consumer.ftc.gov/scam-alerts](http://consumer.ftc.gov/scam-alerts).

Consumer Forum is a collaboration of the Bangor Daily News and Northeast CONTACT, Maine's all-volunteer, nonprofit consumer organization. For assistance with consumer-related issues, including consumer fraud and identity theft, or for information, write Consumer Forum, P.O. Box 486, Brewer, ME 04412, visit <http://necontact.wordpress.com> or email [contactdir@live.com](mailto:contactdir@live.com).

## Destroyer

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In April, Mabus announced that the DDG 120, also to be built at BIW, would be named for former Michigan Sen. Carl M. Levin. That destroyer, still in the early stages of construction, is scheduled to join the Navy fleet in 2020, the

Navy said at the time.

Construction of the DDG 122, the future USS Basilone, is scheduled to begin this fall. Wickenheiser said in August. The Maine shipyard will begin work on the DDG 124, the future Harvey C. Barnum Jr., in 2017.

Bath Iron Works will begin developing its bid for the next multiyear contract for DDG 51s next year, officials said last week.

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