

Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative's 2023 CONSUMER SURVEY FINDINGS

Each year, Maine Lobster Marketing Collaborative (MLMC) conducts a nationwide survey of consumers to gauge sentiment about Maine Lobster, the fishery behind it, and how current issues are (or aren't) impacting perceptions.

Findings are used to inform MLMC's work throughout the year as well as the industry on the overall perception of Maine Lobster.

KEY FINDINGS

PUBLIC PERCEPTION

- A wide majority of consumers (**69%**) hold positive views of lobstermen, and **80%** of consumers view the fishery as important to Maine's economy.
- Solutions-oriented messaging on the fishery's evolution resonates most strongly with consumers.

CONSUMER HABITS

- More than half of consumers (**58%**) view the Maine Lobster fishery as sustainable. But, only **27%** are influenced by sustainability certifications.
- Freshness (**76%**), price (**57%**), and trusted source of origin (i.e., product provenance) (**50%**) are the most critical purchasing factors to seafood consumers.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

- **30%** of consumers are aware of the North Atlantic right whale (NARW) issue. Interestingly—data shows that those more familiar with the issue are more inclined to support the industry.
- **52%** of those aware of the NARW issue learned about it from television while **47%** learned about it via the Internet.
- Only **14%** of consumers are aware of ropeless fishing, with **80%** of that cohort believing it is a viable solution to protect NARW. However, only **20%** of consumers would pay more for ropeless harvested lobster.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR THE INDUSTRY

- While sustainability is important—certification losses are unlikely to sway consumers already eating Maine Lobster.
- Our environmental protection story is resonating. Develop content across multiple channels, focused on proactive efforts taken by the fishery - but avoid more negative political and legal storylines.
- Continue telling stories of the human, small-business element of the fishery and its positive impact on Maine communities.
- Find opportunities to educate consumers on ropeless fishing, maintaining a realistic outlook on the current state of the technology, its costs & challenges.



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