

# Martha's Vineyard Fishermen's Preservation Trust

2020  
*Year in Review*





John Keene, President and  
Shelley Edmundson, Executive Director

Photo credit: Mark Allan Lovewell, courtesy of the Vineyard Gazette,  
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# DEAR FRIEND,

Last year we told you that with your help we would rise to the challenges of the coming year. While we never could have anticipated how challenging a year it would be, we are proud of our accomplishments and grateful once again for your support and engagement. Despite an unprecedented pandemic that affected every aspect of our lives, local fishing businesses, and markets, we had some remarkable achievements, and we hope they will provide the groundwork for new programs going forward.

Our mandate is to support our local small-boat fishermen in their work to survive as viable businesses here on the island and to promote the landing and sale of local seafood. Until this year, our primary efforts have involved the purchase of expensive fishing permits and quotas to make them affordable and accessible to our commercial fishing community. But without a market to sell their catch, a fisherman could have all the quota and permits in the world and still not be able to make a living. Fortunately, we were able to pivot and find new ways to help.

The pandemic not only made it difficult to ply a trade out on the water, restaurant closings and event cancellations decimated the sale and distribution of local seafood. At the same time, layoffs and shutdowns created an enormous need for food assistance on our island. Our Community Seafood Program, made possible by grants and generous donations, first purchased local sea scallops and later sea bass, scup, and lobsters to be

## Board of Directors

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Peter Lambos	<i>Staff</i>



*Safeguarding Martha's Vineyard's fishing heritage and future by supporting the island's small-boat, owner-operated fishing fleets and their sustainably harvested catch*

distributed either directly or after further processing to our island's local food organizations. In this way we helped alleviate two problems at once and laid the groundwork for some exciting opportunities for the future of our local fisheries and wholesale markets. We also converted our annual Meet the Fleet event to a series of films available on our website that make it possible to actually "meet" and get to know in an intimate way the people who work hard to bring us our seafood.

While adversity can be uncomfortable, it can also result in unexpected gifts. One of the greatest gifts of the past year is the realization that there are a lot of people, both in the spotlight and behind the scenes, that are working to support our commercial fishing industry, the community that embraces it, the scientists who work to understand it, and the regulators and Coast Guard who try to protect it. Building a common trust between all of these groups is one of our exciting challenges going forward.

We hope next year brings a more normal world both on the island and out on the water. We hope you and your families have been safe and healthy and can come back and join us in person at Meet the Fleet next summer. Thank you again, for your participation and support.

John Keene,  
MVFPT President

Shelley Edmundson,  
MVFPT Executive Director

# COMMUNITY SEAFOOD PILOT PROGRAM



During the COVID-19 crisis restaurant closings severely reduced demand for fresh seafood landed by our local fleet. At the same time increased unemployment created hardship and elevated needs at our local food banks.

Starting with a generous grant from the Fink Family Foundation we were able to launch the Community Seafood Pilot Program in April to help mitigate these two problems with one solution. We purchased day-boat sea scallops from local fishermen which we then donated to local organizations addressing the food insecurity needs in our community.

The success of this program garnered much local support including additional donations and a grant from the Permanent Endowment for Martha's Vineyard. Over the course of the program we bought 6,075 servings of local sea scallops which we donated to six organizations: the Island Food Pantry, the Good Shepherd Parish, the Emergency Food Program, The First Congregational Church of West Tisbury, Island Grown Initiative, and the Charter School.

The success of this pilot program led to the expansion of the concept and became the Lobster Mac and Cheese Meals and Black Sea Bass Stew programs described in the following pages. We were proud to help island fishermen feed our local families. Thank you to all community members who contributed to this effort!

Scallops being distributed, along with other food items at the Island Food Pantry in May





# FUNDING FISHERMEN, FEEDING FAMILIES

Built on the success of the Community Seafood Pilot Program we secured a large grant from Catch Together, a non-profit organization that invests capital in support of fishermen, fishing communities, and ocean conservation throughout the country. The purpose of the grant was to assist fishermen, fish processors, and families in need of food. With the awarded funds we were able to create a needed market for fishermen to sell their catch. This fall we purchased 40,000 lbs of black sea bass and 5,000 lbs of scup from 19 local boats, supporting 28 captains and their crew.

After purchasing the fish we were able to partner with two fish processing companies, Ocean C Star and Red's Best, to fillet, package, freeze, and transport the fish. This collaboration helped employ over 20 fish processors.

We are now in the final stage of the project and we are aiming to create over 100,000 servings of delicious local fish stew and chowder to be donated to local families this winter!

Photo: Nick Wilbur and Will Diamond unloading black sea bass and scup in Menemsha

Photo credit: Peter Lambos



# LOCAL LOBSTER MAC AND CHEESE MEALS

An additional grant from Catch Together also allowed us to buy lobster from our local lobstermen. We partnered with Island Grown Initiative (IGI) to cook and pick over 400 lbs of lobsters. This winter IGI will develop a recipe for lobster mac and cheese to produce over 500 meals for our food organizations. Stay tuned!

Photo: The Island Grown Initiative team help pick lobster in the Camp Jabberwocky kitchen  
Photo credit: Elissa Turnbull



# MEET THE FLEET GOES VIRTUAL

We couldn't gather together this summer in Menemsha for our annual celebration of our fishing community and working waterfront. No crabs were raced, no fishing boats lined the docks, no Coast Guard helicopters kicked up a spray to soak us--but that didn't stop us from finding a way for you to Meet The Fleet! With the help of the Martha's Vineyard Film Festival, we produced a series of short profiles of some of our local fishermen. They are all available now on our website, by clicking here. Please take a look and we hope to continue to introduce you to the men and women who provide fresh seafood for our community!



Painting: Karsten Lasen



## OUR FILM IN FINAL EDIT

Our film about the Vineyard's fisheries, fishermen, history, and struggles to stay afloat in a changing world is in the final edit stages. We expect to finish the film early next year - maybe just in time for an on-island showing in the summer. All of us working on it are excited for you all to see it. We think it will do a great job entertaining and informing the public about the life, the beauty, and the necessity of our island's small-boat fishermen.

# VINEYARD WILD CAUGHT

Did you know that some of the world's best quality seafood is caught by our local fishermen in the pristine waters surrounding our island? Much of it travels off island to far-away places only to be replaced here in some of our markets and restaurants by imported fish.

We know, however, from the success of the local food movement that there is a large appetite for locally sourced food amongst tourists, residents, chefs, and caterers here on the island. Our Vineyard Wild Caught Guide, presently in the works, will help seafood lovers find high quality, locally caught and aquaculturally-grown seafood from our island's small boat fishermen and shellfish farmers.

The first step is knowing what is caught by local boats and when it is available. See our map to learn which local species are landed fresh in our harbors.

Photo: F/V Dixie W. VII  
Photo credit: Ollie Becker



## LOCALLY HARVESTED SEAFOOD:



Landing in  
**TASHMOO:** Scup Sea Bass  
Striped Bass Lobster Quahogs  
Bluefish Bay Scallops  
Tautog Conch Soft-Shell Clams

Landing in  
**VINEYARD HAVEN:**  
Striped Bass Bluefish Conch  
Scup Sea Bass Lobster  
Bay Scallops

Landing in  
**OAK BLUFFS:**  
Striped Bass Conch Scup  
Sea Bass Bluefish

from  
the **LAGOON:**  
Soft-Shell Clams  
Bay Scallops  
Quahogs

Landing in  
**EDGARTOWN:**  
Bluefin Tuna  
Striped Bass  
Conch Scup  
Sea Bass  
Lobster

from  
**CAPE  
POGUE:**  
Bay  
Scallops

from **KATAMA BAY:**  
Bay Scallops  
Oysters

from  
**MENEMSHA POND:**  
Bay Scallops  
Quahogs  
Oysters

Landing in  
**MENEMSHA:**  
Striped Bass  
Conch Scup  
Fluke Tautog  
Sea Bass Lobster  
Sea Scallops  
Bluefin Tuna





Photo: Shelley displays a channeled whelk depositing its egg string

## SHELLEY JOINS THE COMMISSION

This year our Executive Director, Shelley Edmundson, was appointed by the Governor and sworn in as a member of the Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission. Her role is to advise on regulations to the fishing industry statewide. She will contribute with her experience and expertise in advocating for balanced laws that protect fishermen and the sustainability of the fish they harvest.

## PETE AND ELISSA ONBOARD

Elissa Turnbull has been brought on full-time as our Development and Operations Manager. She has been responsible for, among other things, this newsletter and coordinating the Community Seafood Program. We are grateful for her positive spirit, ability to learn anything and tackle any task!



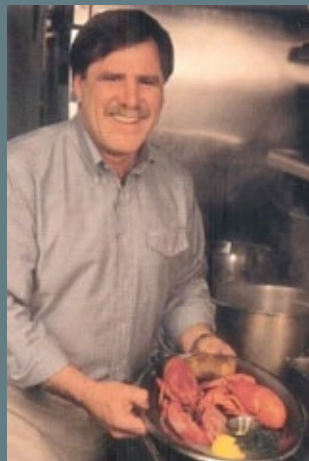
Thanks to the Catch Together grant, we were able to bring on Pete Lambos to act as Program Manager for our Black Sea Bass and Scup Chowder project. Pete is also working with us to develop some exciting new projects that we hope to announce early next year. His experience working in the non-profit sector and in wholesale fish markets make him an incredible source of knowledge as we grow our services.

## IN MEMORY OF WILL HOLTHAM

Will became owner of the Homeport in 1977. His favorite part was making people happy with his cooking. He was a generous man with a passion for cooking, eating, entertaining, teaching and bringing people together. Under his guidance, lasting friendships and extended families were formed and generations of employees developed an unrivaled work ethic. He will be fondly remembered by the many people whose lives he touched.

*-Written by Jessica Bradley, Will's daughter*

Photo: courtesy of Holtham family



# FUTURE PROJECTS AND GOALS

## EXPANDING PERMIT ACCESS OPPORTUNITIES

Thanks to the donation of a State Lobster permit with 19 trap tags from Jeffery Maida, a local fisherman will now have the opportunity to launch his or her fishing business. We held an open application period in November and are now in the process of selecting the right candidate for this permit. We also plan to continue increasing our sea scallop quota and find other permit opportunities for our local fishing fleet.

## CONCH FISHERY RESEARCH

In partnership with the University of New Hampshire and St. Joseph's College we were awarded a Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant to research escape vents in conch traps and alternative conch baits less reliant on horseshoe crabs. Preliminary lab research is underway and will expand into the field with help from fishermen during 2021.

## PROMOTING LOCAL SEAFOOD AND EXPANDING MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

We hope to continue to educate the community on our many local seafood options through our upcoming guide and help ensure the island has access to local seafood from our fishermen.

**Please consider making a contribution to help these programs succeed! All donations are tax deductible and can be made online at**

**[MVFishermensPreservationTrust.org/donate](https://MVFishermensPreservationTrust.org/donate)**

or by mailing a check to: P.O. Box 96, Menemsha, MA 02552

Photo: F/V Kathie C at sunrise  
Photo credit: Katie Carroll

A photograph of a fishing boat and a navigational buoy on the water at sunrise. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright, shimmering reflection on the water's surface. The boat is on the left, and the buoy is on the right. The sky is a mix of orange and yellow.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP IN MAKING THESE GOALS POSSIBLE!**



CLICK HERE TO  
**DONATE NOW!**



P.O BOX 96 MENEMSHA, MA 02552

