

Martha's Vineyard Fishermen's Preservation Trust

2019 Year in Review





Photo this page and cover: Katie Carroll



John Keene, President
and Shelley Edmundson, Executive Director

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DEAR FRIENDS,

The past year has been one of successes, challenges, and ever-increasing optimism. Thanks to your support, we have been able to help Martha's Vineyard's local fishermen harvest seafood from our waters and provide wild, fresh protein for the island's restaurants and family dinner tables. Our commitment and focus continue to be preserving our working waterfronts, commercial fishing businesses, and marine ecosystems.

Our tasks for the upcoming year remain to be that of securing access to fishing rights for our community. The success of our lobster trap tag and sea scallop programs are proof that this works. We plan to increase our ability to purchase the necessary permits, tags, and quota to assist more island fishermen.

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Shelley Edmundson	<i>Executive Director</i>
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Elissa Turnbull	<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

Each all-island fishermen's meeting we hold tops the previous meeting's attendance as island fishermen have become more aware of our role and more excited about the opportunities that we have created in their fishing futures. It has been an extremely rewarding task to be part of the preservation of such an important way of life.

We are forever grateful as a board and even more as a community for the trust that you have displayed in us, and for the encouragement that you have provided. With your continued support, we will rise to the challenges that we are excited to face. We are looking forward to the coming year and hope to see you around the docks.

John Keene,
MVFT President

Shelley Edmundson,
MVFT Executive Director

Photo: Elissa Turnbull





LOBSTER TAGS ARE IT!

This year we helped nine local lobstermen obtain otherwise out of reach lobster trap tags to keep them catching and landing fresh local seafood for our island.

Every commercial lobster trap must have a current tag attached to be legally fished (pictured at left). Usually trap tags are sold in large quantities (300+) and are expensive (\$35 to \$150/tag), making them cost prohibitive for independent local fishermen. Through creative and individualized financing, we helped 9 local lobstermen obtain lobster tags in smaller bundles.

Our goal is to remain ready and able to pounce on more of these kinds of opportunities when they occur. Your generous support makes that possible!

“Trap tags are expensive, so having the chance to purchase a smaller amount with a payment plan, helps make it possible to invest in my business.”

**-Capt. Tubby, F/V Elisabeth Mae,
Homeport Tashmoo**



Photo: Tubby Medeiros



“Having help in securing more lobster tags increases my ability to keep selling lobsters from Vineyard waters, instead of them coming from Maine or Canada on the ferry.”

-Capt. Paul McDonald, F/V Shearwater, Homeport Menemsha

Photo: Katie Carroll



VICTORIA'S WHELKS

This year our stellar intern, Victoria Scott, received a Vineyard Vision Fellowship to assist in her college degree at Bates College and to be our summer intern! She continued her important research on alternative whelk tagging methods and the MV Film Festival made a short film about her project ([**click here to view it**](#)). In the end she learned that whelks are able to re-grow shell in less than two weeks, a key fact to know if drilled holes are to be used as a method to mark whelks. Also, as an added surprise, 11 out of her 16 experimental whelks laid egg strings in the lab, inspiring more work for the future!

OUR FILM ROLLS ON!

This year we hired the award-winning editor of the film *Biggest Little Farm* and completed the rough cut of our documentary telling the story and the challenges faced by our local fishermen. Our goal is to raise the final funding to complete the film before summer 2020. Please contact us at [**mvfishermen@gmail.com**](mailto:mvfishermen@gmail.com) if you would like to help or become one of our Executive Producers.

Pictured right: NOAA Fisheries Survey Vessel, Henry B. Bigelow

Photo: Oliver Becker, shot possible through Permanent Endowment grant



WHAT TO EAT AND WHEN?

Many people ask us which fish and shellfish species are local and what time of the year they can find them at the markets.

Well, thanks to this great infographic shared by the Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance, you'll now know!

We are working on providing a guide with more specific information on who fishes for what species in our community--and how they do it, so stay tuned!



MEET THE FLEET #5 ROCKS THE DOCKS

Photo: Katie Carroll



This August we once again hosted our local commercial fishing fleet, U.S. Coast Guard, Environmental Police, historic F/V Roann from Mystic Seaport, distinguished visitors and scores of families to Menemsha for a great day of fun, music, support and celebration for our local island fishing community and working waterfronts.

A big highlight was the arrival of a Coast Guard Jayhawk MH-60 Helicopter for a live demonstration of an at-sea rescue right in the middle of the harbor! The mist from the chopper downdraft cooled off just about everyone gathered around to watch. It was a sobering experience to see the harrowing skills needed to rescue people at sea and brought to mind the risks fishermen take on to provide fresh food for our tables.

The band, Brothers Rye, filled the docks with bluegrass-style music, while the raw bar, fish printing, and crab races remained popular activities. This year we added a survival suit race, where fishermen donned immersion suits and swam across the harbor to reach a Coast Guard vessel.

Even though the event was free for everyone, it raised over \$30,000 for the MVFPT through sponsorships, auctions, and donations!

We'll do it again in 2020, so plan to come join us--and thank you!

Top photo: Fisherman Otto Osmers in survival suit contest
Bottom photo: Fisherman Andrew Wheeler with son Jackson



MORE SEA SCALLOPS!



Fisherman Sam Hopkins continued to land sea scallops in Menemsha this summer, offering the island community a chance to taste the freshest and highest quality sea scallops around!

On top of landing scallops, Sam brought out local crewmen, giving island fishermen a chance to learn the ropes, terms, and skills to harvest sea scallops.

One of our goals is to help foster opportunities for established fishermen to transfer the skills and confidence to safely and sustainably fish to the next generation. With the help of Sam's guidance, this is happening.

We aim to purchase more sea scallop quota in the future to help more island fishermen land sea scallops locally.

Top photo: Fishermen Sam Hopkins, Will Diamond, and Otto Osmer unloading

FUTURE GOALS

In the coming year our targets will be:

- **Creating a Revolving Loan Fund Program**

This program will allow fishermen the opportunity to apply for low interest loans to purchase permits and equipment needed to both establish and stabilize their businesses.

- **Developing a Local Seafood Guide**

We plan to revive our Vineyard Wild Caught marketing program to provide people with the information needed to learn who catches, what, when, and how!

- **Increasing our Sea Scallop Quota**

Our sea scallop program is running well, but we need more quota to offer to more local fishermen. Additional quota will provide a stable, reliable baseline for fishermen, bring dollars back to the community, create more jobs, and more local seafood.

- **Purchasing more permits**

We need to be at the ready to purchase fishing permits when they become available. These permits are then distributed to our island fishermen, guaranteeing access to fish our local waters.

**WE NEED YOUR HELP IN MAKING
THESE GOALS POSSIBLE!**



Photo: Katie Carroll

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

MVFishermensPreservationTrust.org/donate

by sending a check to:

'MVFPT' at P.O. Box 96 Menemsha, MA 02552

or by calling us at:

(508)687-0344

MANY THANKS!

CLICK HERE TO
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