



ALLIANCE™

[.https://www.globalseafood.org](https://www.globalseafood.org)**Responsible
Seafood**
ADVOCATE Fisheries

V-notching awareness campaign highlights responsible Maine lobster fishing technique

22 July 2025

By Responsible Seafood Advocate

Efforts are underway to promote a conservation technique that can help to safeguard the future of lobsters

The Maine Lobstermen's Association (MLA) and the New England Fishermen's Stewardship Association (NEFSA) have launched an awareness campaign to promote a key conservation measure among lobstermen.

V-notching is a practice used in lobster fisheries to protect egg-bearing females by keeping them where they belong, in the ocean.

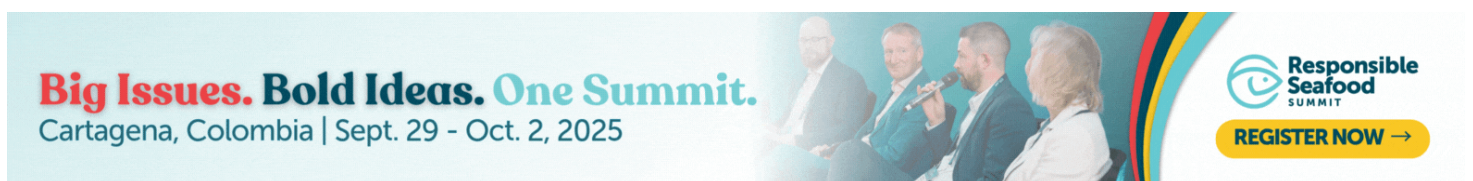
It involves cutting a small, harmless V-shaped mark on the outer corner of the tail fans of female lobsters before returning the lobsters to the water. This makes them easily identifiable to other fishermen that they are protected breeders that should not be landed or sold.

The practice helps to keep lobster populations healthy by allowing breeding females to continue producing eggs. It also contributes toward the long-term sustainability of lobster fisheries and provides a valuable resource for future generations by ensuring a continued supply of lobsters. The idea is that



Maine Lobster advocacy groups launched an awareness campaign to promote a key conservation technique, v-notching, which lobstermen employ. Photo from vnotch.info.

female lobsters bearing eggs are more valuable being protected rather than harvested.



(<https://cvent.me/m23mdm>).

Although v-notching became mandatory in Maine in 2002, lobstermen have been voluntarily using this simple but powerful technique for decades. Studies show that it's an extremely effective practice that makes lobsters produce significantly more eggs. This is important, since it is estimated that less than 1 percent of lobster eggs survive to become legal-sized lobsters.

The MLA and NEFSA are promoting v-notching together, in line with the Maine lobster fishery's international reputation for environmental stewardship. Videos, tools and essential information will be shared throughout the season through direct outreach, social media, and a new resource hub at

vnotch.info (<https://www.vnotch.info/>). MLA and NEFSA will be working to keep the focus on v-notching, especially in places such as co-ops, wharves and buying stations. Both anticipate that the campaign will run through November.



Balancing protection and production: Diving into the North Atlantic right whale conflict with lobster and crab fishing

A closer look at the conflict between North American fixed-gear fisheries and North Atlantic right whale protection measures.



Global Seafood Alliance

“Maine lobstermen have been v-notching proven breeders as a tool to keep the lobster stock healthy for many decades. It’s common sense,” said Jarod Bray, chairman of the MLA board of directors. “Ensuring an egg female has a chance to breed again is like putting money in the bank. This investment is a way to ensure that the fishery is healthy for the next generation.”

“Maine lobstermen have ably stewarded our resource for decades,” added NEFSA COO Dustin Delano, a fourth-generation lobsterman. “As regulators get more active in our fishery, it is critical that lobstermen lead by example and underline our commitment to best sustainability practices. After all, no lobsterman wants to catch the last lobster.”

Author



RESPONSIBLE SEAFOOD ADVOCATE

editor@globalseafood.org (<mailto:editor@globalseafood.org>).

Copyright © 2025 Global Seafood Alliance

All rights reserved.