

You see, they believe that my friend can catch just as many lobsters with far fewer traps. And they might be right, even though that didn't work out too well in the '60s and '70s.

**Haves, have-nots**

But what brought my friend to pause was something I had no clue about. He said, "Andy, the older generation of lobstermen accepted changes to the fishery that didn't help us at the time, but surely helped the next generation make a damn fine living. We welcomed them into the business, helped them to compete for their fair share of the catch, and watched them grow into highliners."

Highliners is the term fishermen use to describe the man who catches the most lobster.

"Now," he said, "many of those same lobstermen come right out and say they want to be protected from the cutbacks sure to come."

I told my friend that it sounded like the "haves" in the business wanted to change the system that allowed them to be successful. As he nodded his head yes, I asked him how, then, could the next generation be successful?

As he shook his head no and shrugged his shoulders, I asked him, "Well, what does that have to do with managing the lobsters off the coast of Maine anyways?"

As he looked to the floor, there was no answer.

"I really don't know what to think of it all," he said, "but it sure does look like

the richest generation of lobster fishermen this coast has ever produced want it all."

Perhaps, I said, they'd be happy with getting just most of it. We laughed but it really wasn't funny, now that I think about it.

Now, I don't know about you, but it seems to me that the whale protectionists and the green protectionists and the market protectionists have an awful lot to say about what my lobsterman friend can do.

You know nothing stays the same forever, but wouldn't you think the lobster managers would stick to managing lobster and lobstermen would just stick together so they all could make a living instead of dividing each other up into haves and have-nots?

Sad, isn't it? That our picture of the Maine lobster fisherman would be so different from what it really is.

Dan Morris

*Dan Morris survived an attack of the fishing bug while growing up in Port Clyde, ME and then spent 25 years with the Maine Marine Patrol. Upon retiring in 2001, he had a relapse and is now lobster fishing once again in Port Clyde when he's not watching Andy Rooney on "60 Minutes."*



**Guest Column**

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this group will remain under days-at-sea.

There are some who advocate that the common pool does not need hard TACs. However, it will be very important for this group to adhere to hard TACs.

Imagine, if you will, that the fishermen in the Port Clyde sector and the other sectors fish very carefully all year and do not go over the TACs for their sectors. They do a good job.

Then along comes the common pool with no hard TAC. They catch too many fish and the overall limit for the Gulf of Maine is exceeded. Next year, everyone takes a cut because of this inefficiently regulated group.

Granted, the number of days-at-sea for the common pool likely will be small. But to have a wild card like that out there is a cause for concern. If fishermen who play by the strict rules of a sector get burned by this, there will be plenty to answer for by those who did not think hard TACs for all were necessary.

**Fish for the future**

I will close by quoting Maine Department of Marine Resources Commissioner George Lapointe. He did not coin this phrase, but I think he appropriately applied it to our groundfish fisheries dilemma.

He said, "Doing something over and over again the same way and expecting a different result is the

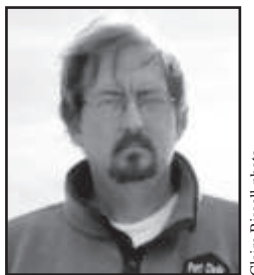
***If fishermen who play by the strict rules of a sector get burned by this, there will be plenty to answer for...***

definition of insanity."

It is time to do things differently. Our fishery, our fishing communities, our local economies, and the fishermen of the future – our children and grandchildren – make it imperative that we at least give it our best shot.

Glen Libby

*Glen Libby is a life-long, second-generation fisherman from Port Clyde, ME. He currently serves as chairman of the Midcoast Fishermen's Association and president of the Midcoast Fishermen's Cooperative.*

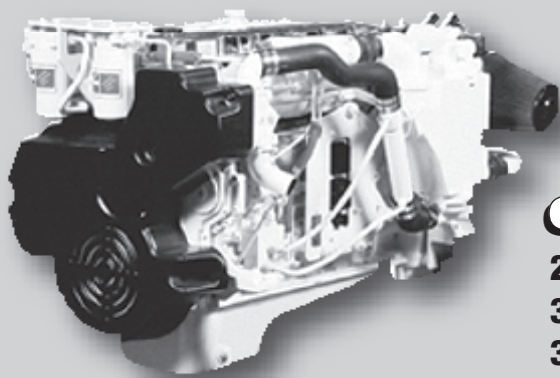


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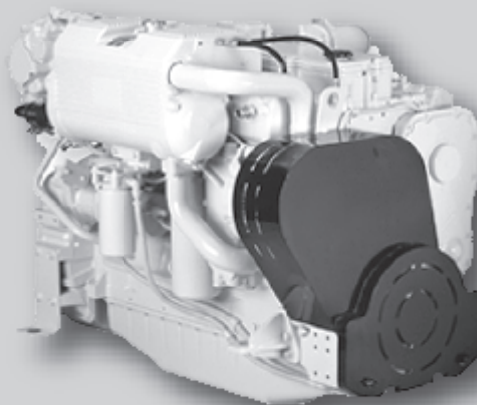
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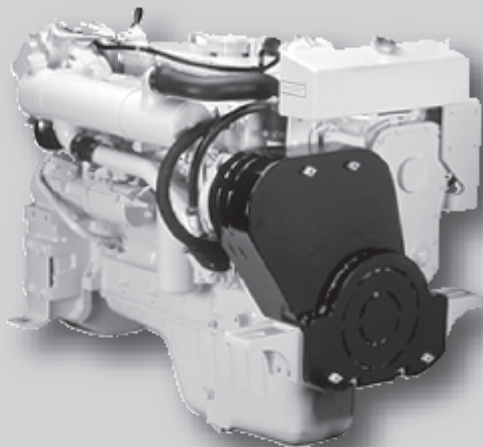


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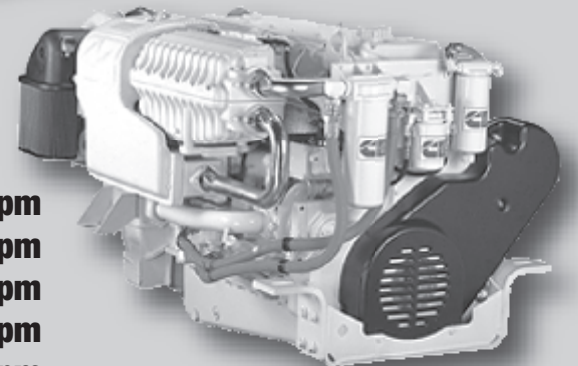
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