

before the moult. Thus a lobster from the Northumberland Strait would grow from 7 ounces to about one pound and would moult twice, whereas its counterpart in a cooler habitat would average 10 ounces and moult only once.

Temperature is also a factor in the age at which a lobster attains sexual maturity. Female lobsters in the Northumberland Strait may mature at 7 ounces or three years of age while their counterparts in the Bay of Fundy will not mature sexually until they are about 1.5 pounds and eight years of age.

CATCHING SEASONS

In Atlantic Canada there are no less than 38 lobster fishing districts with 26 different opening and closing periods. Suffice to say that lobster is caught through out the year in Canada. There are two periods in which the bulk of landings are made - later April to late July and December 1 to January 30. About 75% of landings occurs between the first of May and the end of July.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Canadian lobster landings have increased steadily from 19,000 tonnes in 1978 to almost 39,000 tonnes in 1988. The resource is biologically the healthiest of the world's lobster resources. This is the result of rigorous resource management.

The regulatory regime has been in existence since 1873 and has evolved over time to provide stability in landings in the face of strong competition between fishermen, variations in catch rates and cyclical variations in year classes.

The earliest regulations placed restrictions on soft shell lobsters, egg bearing females and lobster sizes. These changes were driven largely by market requirements.

Over the past 20 years the first regulations were put in place to curtail fishing capacity and infuse the industry with more stability. Trap limits were introduced followed by limited entry. A buy-back program retired some 1600 licenses.

The result of these measures has been a substantial increase in landings while average catch per vessel and value of catch per vessel have increased as