

well. The fishery now supports a viable and prosperous industry with a core of professional fishermen who derive most of their livelihood from lobster.

Canada is now reviewing legislation to increase minimum size of the carapace to match United States regulations. The US has a schedule of yearly incremental increases in the carapace size which will culminate in a 3 5/16 inch carapace length by January 1992.

Canadian lobster currently vary in carapace size from 2 1/2 inches around PEI to 3 3/16 in much of Nova Scotia, the Bay of Fundy area of New Brunswick and in Newfoundland. Canada currently benefits from a US exemption of its federal regulation of mandatory minimum size of 3 1/4 inch. However, the New England States have their own regulations preventing the sale of these Canadian undersized lobsters.

The biological argument for increasing the carapace size is to leave more animals in the water for increased egg production. Over the long run this should mean greater numbers of lobster and a high percentage of larger size lobster. Initial losses in landed weight as a result of carapace increase would also be replaced by gains in the resource biomass.

Currently there is much debate in Canada on the wisdom of minimum sizes. A key argument against is that the waters of the Gulf of St. Lawrence where much of the Canadian catch is taken is substantially warmer than the Gulf of Maine the principal US fishing area. Lobsters caught inside the Gulf mature more rapidly and at a smaller size than lobsters outside the Gulf. There is no mixing between Canadian and US stocks. Nevertheless it is clear that the supply of young lobsters for the fishery could be improved thereby raising the overall level of productivity of stocks.

STRUCTURE OF THE INDUSTRY

Lobster fishermen normally sell their catch to buyers who in turn hold the lobsters for short periods of time before selling them to larger buyers, processors. Tidal pound operators or retailers. The processors in turn produce whole frozen lobster, or frozen or canned lobster meat, paste and tomalley products and other specialty products.