

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The molluscan shellfish industry is one of Maine's most valuable marine sectors. In 2006, the industry generated \$29.9 million in direct output and \$21.5 million in labor income from sales of soft-shell clams, mahogany quahogs, mussels, oysters, scallops, and hard clams. Because the industry sells much of its product out of state, it brings new money into the Maine economy. The shellfish sector's linkages to other local industries circulate money within the Maine economy, boosting sales and incomes in businesses that serve the shellfish industry (indirect impacts). The household income created by shellfish sales and associated personal spending boost sales and income for numerous businesses that serve Maine residents (induced impacts). Indirect and induced impacts from shellfish sales accounted for another \$26.1 million in output for the state's economy. The total economic impact of the shellfish industry is estimated at \$56.0 million, with \$29.9 million accruing to Maine residents as labor income in 2006.

More than 2,000 Maine fishing license holders, 56 aquaculture leaseholders, 107 certified shellfish dealers, as well as their employees and sternmen, depend directly on the shellfish industry for their livelihoods. An additional 264 jobs are created from the indirect and induced effects of the industry.

The economic benefits are dispersed primarily among Maine's eight coastal counties. Washington County accounts for the largest portion of the economic value and is most dependent on the industry.

Despite the high economic value of the shellfish industry in 2006, shellfish landings, especially of soft-shell clams, are well below the level achieved in 2001. The 2006 total economic impact is \$16 million below its 2001 level of \$72 million (in 2006 dollars, adjusted for inflation).

Given Maine's abundant coastal and marine resources, there is the potential to reverse recent declines and expand this economically and culturally important industry. Better management of shellfish areas, shellfish habitat conservation, improvements in water quality, limiting closures to only the extent necessary to protect public health, expansion of shellfish aquaculture, and marketing and promotion initiatives could enhance the economic value of the shellfish industry for the state of Maine.