Interviewee Name: Anne Hayden

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Interviewer(s) Name(s) and Affiliation: Corina Gribble (College of the Atlantic) and Natalie Springuel (Maine Sea Grant)

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Interview Description:
Anne Hayden, senior fisheries program manager at Manomet from Brunswick, ME, talks about her experiences researching river herring restoration in Maine. She touches on the impact of the bait crisis on alewife restoration, her joys in working with fishermen and other stakeholders, and her hopes for the future of the industry.

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Transcribed By: Corina Gribble

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[00:23:51.2]

CG: Corina Gribble
NS: Natalie Springuel
AH: Anne Hayden

[00:00:00.0]

CG: If you could go ahead and state your name and spell it, for the record, please.

AH: Anne Hayden, A-N-N-E H-A-Y-D-E-N.

CG: And where are you from? What do you consider your home port to be?

AH: Brunswick, Maine.

CG: Okay. And what brings you here today to the Maine Fishermen's Forum?

AH: I have come to the Fishermen's Forum every year for at least 20 years. And I really wouldn't miss it. It is the event of the year to really hear from fishermen, what's important to them, um, what the trends are, what's happening, um, where the pressure points are in the various fisheries, and in aquaculture, and in, I love the, more recently all of the programing around education and the educational programs. I come, I guess more specifically, for my work as a senior fisheries program manager at Manomet, uh, for some research I'm doing on river herring and river herring restoration and the impact of river herring restoration on coastal food webs. So, I was very interested in the session today on, uh, the Alewife Harvesters of Maine, uh, put on.

[00:01:22.8]

CG: I was walking through the Forum and there was a booth that had to do with the river herring population and the—I don't remember her last name—I think her name was Sarah and she's doing some research with the populations of them with the current bait crisis issue, with, saying how in previous years it wasn't economically viable to use those populations as a main, uh, bait resource. Are you seeing that that's starting to become a newer utilized resource with the bait crisis?

[00:02:04.9]

AH: Well, the, it's gonna increase the price, but the harvest Alewives has traditionally been for bait. Um, in eastern Maine, it's also been for the, kind of a local delicacy known as "bloaters," which is a, a, uh, smoked alewife. But the main market has been bait for a long time because in the spring the lobstermen don't have access to any fresh bait. They have the herring that's been salted and/or frozen in barrels. And when they're just putting out their traps they love to have some fresh bait, but what we're hoping is the, the harvest is starting to increase with all the

restoration efforts and, uh, the Alewife Harvesters of Maine, have, have announced a goal of 50 million, uh, fish. And, uh, you know, I don't, I can't estimate what landings that will generate, but it will definitely be a boost to the, to the, uh, to the bait market. Whether it will make much of a difference this year is not clear, and there is some risk that it will increase poaching—which we don't want. Um, so, it's never a simple story with fisheries. But, yes, the goal is, in the long term, can add substantially to the bait market (coughs).

[00:03:24.2]

CG: Earlier you had mentioned "pressure points," could you elaborate on what you meant exactly by that?

AH: So, one of the things that's really fascinating to me about fisheries is they're very complicated. And I tend to look at them from a perspective of, uh, what the academics call socio-ecological systems, which means you, you can break them down into their ecological components, their, their social components, the fishermen, and then the economic components and you can break each one of those down even, um, even further. So, a pressure point, for example, in river herring, is there's going to be a lot of demand for bait. Can we sustain the management of the fishery under that kind of pressure and prevent poaching? Um, but there's been discussion about right whales at the Forum and the need to protect the species that is listed as an endangered species. And can we protect them without, um, putting undue burdens on the lobstermen? And can we find a—and can we find a compromise there. Um, let's see, I think probably in every session I've been in, you know, they're, that's why we have the sessions because they're something that's, you know, an issue, I was just in the, the, uh, session on warming waters and emerging species and, um, green crabs are an emerging species. They're invasive, they've been eating our clams, uh, and we're working on developing a fishery for them. But, there're issues with that with the Department of Marine Resources, um, you have to get a permit to harvest them. And, and, people are like, "Well if you want to get rid of them, why are you making people sign up to get a permit?" You know, those kinds of things and they explain why: "Because we need the data, and the cost of the permit is very low, but it's the only way we can find out what's going on with the fishery." So, that's another kind of, um, pressure point, and climate change—I haven't heard so much this year about the climate changes, I thought I would given the news. There's just a big study published in Science yesterday, er, recently. About the global impact of climate change on fisheries, where the, the, the production of seafood is projected to decrease because of climate impacts. And that's a, that's a big concern when we have growing human populations and we have fishermen who, um, you know, depend on these species. So, it's not—this is not something that's happening that we need to worry about in 50 years; which is sometimes we think about in terms of climate change. But, the impacts are, are happening today. And, especially here in the Gulf of Maine, which is famously warming faster than 99% of the rest of the world's oceans.

[00:06:39.4]

CG: If we could maybe, look at your perspective on aquaculture and how it plays into the dependence of working waterfronts on different types of fisheries and that as a way to diversify that dependence type?

[00:07:03.9]

AH: Oh, aquaculture is, is a key, um, tool for diversifying incomes along the coast. And it's one that's near and dear to my heart because it was the first job I had when I came to Maine was working on an oyster farm in the Damariscotta River. It has—it's had such an interesting trajectory over 30 plus years in Maine. I can't remember when the first lease was, but I want to say it was in the 70s—Does that sound right? Yes, I think in the 70s. And, uh, I was actually on a task force, almost 20 years ago, because of controversies over aquacultures. The explosion of aquaculture in Maine, uh, in that case it was Salmon aquaculture. And we had a really interesting policy discussion. Changes were made, um, a little more monitoring requirements on the industry, some—making it, uh, more of a public process to get a lease so that, um, nearby residents could have a say. And it, it's seems like it's, we've come around again now the explosion is in shellfish aquaculture. And, um, should there be another task force to discuss these issues? The aquaculturists feel as though, well that's just going to result in more regulation and we don't want that. On the other hand, there's a lot of controversy, and a number of lease applications are going through multiday hearings, so clearly something isn't working right. Um, so I think we really need to find a way to ensure that this industry continues to thrive. And in particular, fishermen get entry into this industry and that the small-scale farmers, um, get a fair shot at leases.

[00:09:02.6]

CG: A big thing going around with aquaculture and, you just mentioned, the small-scale ones. In the lobster industry a big thing is the owner-operator presence. Do you see that shifting into aquaculture and Maine's future aquaculture practices, versus, big businesses coming and having major aquaculture schemes?

[00:09:31.7]

AH: Well, I'm not sure that there's a 1:1 comparison, in terms of owner-operator, in aquaculture and in fisheries. Um, partly because, if you—it works in the, in the lobster fishery because you can require, as, this is the case in the lobster fishery, that the person operating the boat is, um, the owner of the license. It doesn't translate to aquaculture because there—it's very rarely a one-person operation. And because they require, um . . . well not more investment . . . they probably do, eventually, require more investment. But the, the financial structures are, are different. So, um, you don't have a license to be out there on the raft cleaning the oysters. If that was the case, maybe you could—I don't know if we have a mechanism for enforcing the, the concept of, how do we ensure small-scale aquaculture. And, you know, I think that's something we need to, we need to figure out. We don't have a mechanism for insuring that we have mom and pop stores downtown, so, um. We need to—This is why, I, I mean, I really enjoyed on the previous aquaculture task force because we wrestled with a bunch of these ideas. Uh, one of the things people complained about at the time was that the Department of Marine Resources was responsible for both promoting and regulating aquaculture. We probably talked about that one for six minutes and said, "Well that's easy to fix." And the promotion went over the Department of Ag. Now there other, policy solutions, are otherwise not always so easy to come up with. But I

felt like we did a good job, although one, um, oyster farmer that I talked to this morning said, “You know we've been reading your, the report that task force and making copies of it.” He said, “Do you know it's 188 pages?” Of course I didn't remember. He said, it was really interesting, 'cause he said we started with identifying the policies, the principles that were important. He said, “You know those are still true today.” So I think, you know, go back to, well what is it that's really important to the state Maine about, you know, whatever it is, coming at it from that sort of basic principles is a really good place to start.

[00:12:14.0]

CG: And in your job position, what stakeholder groups do you work directly with?

[00:12:23.1]

AH: So the groups that I'm working most directly with are the, um, the people that are really interested in, in, uh, bringing, uh, alewife, commercial alewife harvest, back online. So the, the harvesters themselves, [Bailey Batton?] who was here today, Darrell Young, [Jeff Peirce?], and it was, which one of the things that's interesting about Alewife restoration and one of the presenters talked about this this morning, it's never just the one group. Because there's also the people that, you know, the towns themselves are interested in this, because it's a source of income for them. The, um, there are people who are interested because they like to see, I think it was [Mike Taulhaouser?] from Maine Center for Coastal Fisheries said, they like to see osprey flying around with the alewives in their talons. And then there are the people, in eastern Maine in particular, who like to eat bloaters. So, it's, it’s, uh, really fun to see a diverse group of people come together. I came to this because of, um, my work with Ted Ames, the famous fishermen-scientists—who, I shouldn’t say from my work with him, from my understanding of his work, that the restoration of Alewives is one of the pieces of the puzzle required to bring groundfish back. So the, the idea that it's yes, um, restoration of Alewives on the Pennamaquan is really important to the town of Pembroke and to the harvester on that river. But collectively the restoration of the Pennamaquan, the Bagaduce, the Penobscot, the Union, the Orland River, you name it, collectively that's crucial to bringing the forage fish base back to our coastal food webs. So that the juvenile cod and haddock have something to eat. So it's, um, it’s kind of like concentric rings of stakeholders. There aren't—we don't have groundfishermen, very many groundfishermen left. But we'd like to give the fishermen we do have, whether they're lobstermen or scallopers or whatever access back into that ground fishery. It's going to be a long time coming. Um, but, but that's the goal.

[00:14:30.1]

CG: Over your years here on the Maine waterfront, what kind of changes have you noticed in the Gulf of Maine, as a whole on a large scale as well as local scale?

[00:14:41.7]

AH: Well, that's a great question. And I, and I like to talk about that because—and I do this party trick when I give slide shows, um, where I show a picture of, you know, the beautiful Maine

coast and I say, this is a picture of what the Gulf of Maine looks like with fish in it, and then I say, and here's a picture of what it looks like without fish in it, and of course it's the same picture because—of course if you have birders in the room you have to say, well there'd be more birds if there was more fish. Um, and I think this is one of the things don't realize, the general public, they look out there and this is why people love to come to Maine, because they can look out on the ocean and to them it's a wilderness. It is not a wilderness, it is, it is a dramatically altered ecosystem due to human impacts. Everything, um, from the big one, climate change, to overharvesting of fish, to the flipping of the ecosystem from one that was fish dominated to one that is crustacean dominated now, to more, um, you know, pollution—which, luckily we have relatively less of here than many other parts of the world. So there have been, um, uh, big, big changes. The, um, it is a sad fact that a lot of the fish we harvested out of the Gulf of Maine before we really started counting them. When the distant water fleet, the foreign fleet was here in the 1960s and so the National Marine Fisheries Service started counting, um, when things were fairly low and they say, "Look how much better it's gotten." But against where it could be, we have just not made near enough progress, so big changes.

[00:16:34.3]

CG: What kind of changes do you think can be made to take those bigger strides forward in re-establishing a healthy ecosystem in the Gulf of Maine?

[00:16:45.3]

AH: Well, not surprisingly, one of them I think is restoring river herring. And, um, one of the wonderful things about it is these fish are, um, . . . The Kennebeck River was just a wonderful example where there was a damn at the head of tide in Augusta called the [Edward's] Dam, it had been there for 135 years. The environmental community and the sport fishermen were like, "We need to take that damn out." And people were like, "Well what's going to happen?" "Well the fish will come back." "Well how do you know the fish are gonna come back?" Well, we didn't honestly really know. The dam came out, the fish came back the next year. And so they are—and then we've seen this in other restoration efforts up and down the coast, you take the dam out or the perched culvert or whatever it is, beaver dams. And the fish come back and it gives people this sense of hope, because something's getting better instead of getting worse. And, and it happens quickly. So, how quickly that translates to the cod and haddock coming back, um, is less clear. But, the work of some groups like the Maine Center for Coastal Fisheries and the Downeast Fisheries Partnership in, um, improving the, the capacity and the ability of local fishermen to participate in the governance of fisheries is another key to restoration and, um, . . . Just last year, the legislature passed a bill requiring owner-operator in the scallop fishery and so, um, you know, sometimes people say to me, oh you work in fisheries that must be depressing. And I'm like, "No!" (laughs). You know, it's all gonna go up for me here. I mean, I have to admit climate change is, is adding degree of difficulty points, that I wish we didn't have, but, um, it's just—Hearing a session on black seabass, and there were fishermen from Rohde Island saying, we don't fish for lobster anymore. We fish for black seabass, we fish for squid, um, we fish for conch—we would call them whelks, and, uh, they said, things are changing and we've adapted, and we're doing well and this is coming your way and get ready, it's a good thing. You know, I've heard lobstermen in the past say, we don't want the fish to comeback, the cod to come back,

'cause they're gonna eat the lobsters. And this, this fisherman today said, he said, bring the fish back if the government lets me fish, fish for them, um, I'm not worried about the impact of lobsters, I'm gonna take my chances. And I just, you know, the attitude of fishermen to be forward thinking to me is part of why I do what I do, because, you know, to me we are, it's the building blocks of success going forward.

[00:19:49.9]

CG: In trying to understand and write down history that was never written in terms of historical population of different fisheries and for progress and taking steps forward in redeveloping, or reestablishing, or conserving different fisheries, are you considering or currently collaborating with indigenous groups of Maine?

[00:20:24.9]

AH: Really good question. Um, when I first began to learn from the Passamaquoddy at Sipayik about their relationship to fish, I was blown away. Because I didn't realize how much I'd incorporated the world view that, which we have in the western world of, delegating people to go and catch out fish for us, or produce our food for us. And, you know, what they taught me was their way was producing all their own food. So, they said we don't, we just can't work with your western system of granting fishing licenses to a few people. We want our people, everyone, to be able to catch fish and eat fish. And, you know, they referred to this concept of food sovereignty, which was new to me. And, um, you know, it's a challenge for our regulatory system 'cause we're not set up to be able to do that. At least as, as things are currently conceived. So, it's a . . . I would, I would like to imagine we can get to a point where Native Americans can prosecute fisheries the way they have for 10 thousand years, maybe not quite that long, five thousand years here in the Gulf of Maine. And, we can still do things the way we've been doing them. But, it has been a tremendous lesson for me. And really opened my eyes, that there are—is more than one way to do things.

[00:22:13.1]

CG: Great, thank you. Do you have any questions to add, Natalie? Any closing remarks, anything you'd like to add?

NS: Hope for the future?

AH: Uh, I, I do have great hope for the future and it's part of the reason I come back the Forum because, I teach a class in fisheries at Bowdoin College, and my students were here yesterday. And, you know, it's just, you can't give them a better crash-course in what fishing means to the state of Maine, or to New England—I mean, this is the biggest fisheries event in New England. The fact that, and they said, well how many fishermen are here? I said, well, more than half the people here are fishermen. Um, and that the fishermen see the benefit of coming here and they're participating proactively, they're not just coming to, you know, complain to DMR or to NOAA higher-ups. They're here to solve the problems and make progress forward. So I have a lot of hope. And I think the fact that people now are much more discriminating about what they eat and

they want to know where their seafood comes from, the market is gonna help a lot, it's gonna drive, um, sustainability practices, and, um, local seafood, and that's a big part of the hope I have.

[00:23:41.9]

CG: Well thank you so much for sitting down and talking with us.

AH: You're welcome. You ask good questions.

CG: Thank you.

[00:23:51.2]