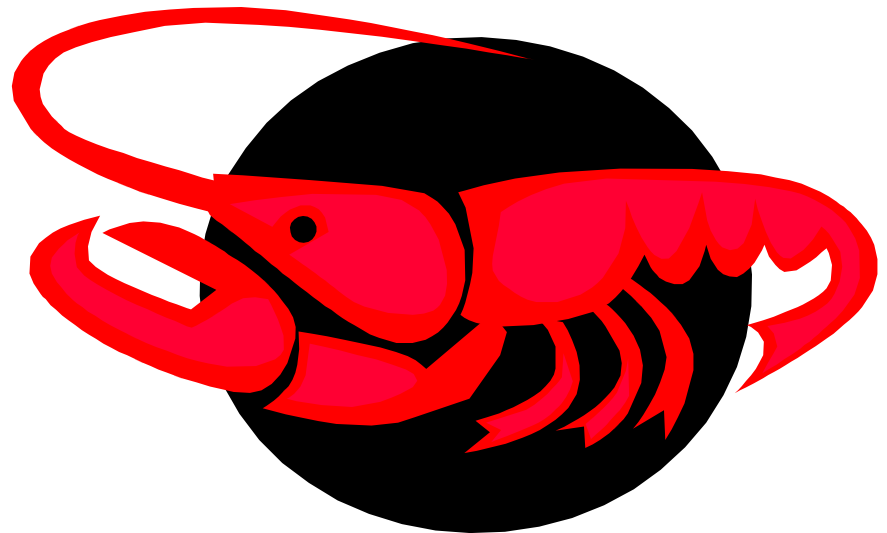




MAINE LOBSTER PATCH PROGRAM



Please complete the following number of activities according to your grade-level:

Daisy – 4

Brownie – 6

Junior – 8

Cadette and up – 10

1. **LOBSTER SHELLS** – Lobsters molt their shells. Find out: Why do lobsters molt? What affects them when they molt? What happens to the lobster when they molt? How often do lobsters molt?
2. **FOOD FOR PEOPLE** – Learn how to cook a lobster. Cook a lobster with your troop/group and learn how to pick the lobster to eat it.
3. **FOOD FOR LOBSTERS** – What do lobsters eat? How do they find their food? Who are predators of lobsters (other than humans)?
4. **LOBSTER BABIES** – Human women are pregnant for nine months before they give birth. How long is a lobster pregnant? Does the female lobster have more than one offspring at a time? How do you tell a male from a female lobster? What are the special rules or laws for catching female lobsters?
5. **LOBSTERWOMEN CHALLENGE** – Pretend you are a lobster gang (as the harvesters from a harbor or port are called).
 - Each girl should decide how many traps she will fish (at \$50/each).
 - Plot your territories on a chart of the coastal area (not called “map” when referring to the ocean).
 - Make a circle around your fishing area that claims your part of the ocean floor (this division remains unspoken but understood in lobstering society). How large an area do you think you can cover in a seven-hour work day moving at about 10-20 mph?
 - Lobstermen/women may earn about \$3.00 for every lobster sold to a lobster pound. How does that compare to what the consumer pays? Check on the current price of lobster at the supermarket and restaurants.
 - Assuming you catch an average of two lobsters per trap per day, how long will it take to pay off the cost of your traps?
 - What is the lobsterman/woman’s hourly wage?
 - What other expenses does a lobsterman/woman incur (boat, winch, license, fuel, lobster gauge, bait, barrels, rubber bands for claws, other gear)? Add all these costs together and then find out how many lobsters a lobsterman/woman may catch in one year. Figure out how much a lobsterman/woman earns from selling his catch after he pays all his expenses.
6. **LOBSTER BUOYS** – Buoys are used to help lobstermen/women find their traps. They are usually attached to either end of a string of traps. A string can hold up to forty traps, but it is most common to have fifteen to twenty. Before starting to make the buoys, decide on colors. Make a troop key that matches buoys and lobster harvesters. To construct a mock lobster buoy, tape an empty toilet paper roll to the mouth of an empty half-gallon plastic milk jug, then paint your buoys with your chosen colors (to make the paint stick to the plastic, try mixing a little liquid detergent in with the tempera paint). Remember, you have to have all your buoys different.

7. **LOBSTER HARVESTERS** – If you live in a coastal community, you could invite a lobster harvester and a marine patrol officer to show their gear and discuss lobster conservation. Your state fisheries agency may donate confiscated lobster traps and buoys to teachers to use for educational purposes.
8. **LOBSTER LANGUAGE** – Lobstermen/women have a language all their own. Stump each other with lobster riddles, such as:
- What do you call a *female lobster*? A hen.
 - When is a lobster a *chicken*? When it weighs about one pound.
 - When is a lobster a *pistol*? When it has no claws.
 - Why wouldn't a lobsterman/woman with *shorts* on want to meet a marine patrol officer? He has lobsters that don't meet the legal size.
 - Why shouldn't a lobster take a walk into the *kitchen*? It's the first chamber of a lobster trap (the inner chamber is called the bedroom or parlor).

HOW TO TALK LIKE A LOBSTERMAN/WOMAN:

Sprinkle some of these words in your conversation, along with a few "Ay-uh's," and you'll be talking like a Downeaster in no time. Compare the standard definition with the lobsterman/woman's version:

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|---------------|
| • berries | • short | • crusher |
| • bugs | • keeper | • ripper |
| • "from away" | • pot | • chicken |
| • ghost fishing | • kitchen | • deuce |
| • snapper | • parlor | • jumbo |
| • pistol | • shedder | • lobster car |

For a complete reference of lobstering terms, refer to *The Illustrated Dictionary of Lobstering* by Kendall Merriam (1978, Freeport, ME: The Cumberland Press).

9. **CRUSTACEAN POEMS** – Who Am I? Identify these crustaceans. What is a crustacean?

A. I'm often seen in dips and scampi dishes.
I'm also a favorite food of bottom fishes.
A lobster looks a lot like me
When it's still a baby floating free.
(Answer: *Shrimp*)

C. My shell is round and green.
Hiding in seaweed is my scene.
I can protect myself with claws raised high.
But I'd rather just sit in a ride pool 'til you pass by.
(Answer: *Green crab*)

B. I'm orange below and green above.
My shell fits me like a glove.
I have a long tail and two strong claws.
But you'd never have to worry about my puny jaws.
(Answer: *Lobster*)

D. I glue my shell to rocks and stuff.
Try to pull me off if you think you're tough.
But beware, a mighty heave-ho
Might pull me out of my volcano!
(Answer: *Barnacle*)

10. **LOBSTER FACTOIDS** – Create posters or cartoons to illustrate some trivia facts about lobsters. The following and other facts with detailed explanations can be found throughout The Maine Lobster Pages and the lobster information sheets. Come up with your own factoids – you could even make up a lobster trivia game. On note cards, write the questions or unusual terminology on one side and the answers or explanations on the other side.

- Most lobsters weigh about a pound to a pound and a half when they are caught, but the largest lobster every caught weighed over forty-four pounds.
- Lobsters can be cannibals.

- In the summer, the primary diet of lobsters is the lobster bait inside traps or thrown over the side of lobster boats. Some lobsters crawl into traps to eat and then escape afterwards.
- You should never eat a green lobster!

11. LOBSTER ANATOMY – Trace the outline of the lobster’s anatomy to make a lobster puzzle to cut out and label the following: crusher claw, ripper or tearing claw, carapace, walking legs, antennae. Most books on lobsters also have illustrations of the parts of a lobster. Or you can cook and eat a lobster and label its left over parts! You will find lobster parts labeled on the lobster information sheets. Buy a male and female lobster from the market and learn to distinguish the sexes by the first pair of feathery fins on the underside of the lobster, the swimmerets. They are hard on a male, soft on a female.

12. LOBSTER STORIES – Write about:

- A Day (or Night) in the Life of a Lobster or a Lobster Harvester
- A Baby Lobster’s Life as Plankton
- What Happened When We Tried to Cook a Lobster
- A Lobster’s Rescue from the Pound to the Sea

Questions? Comments?

Contact the Director of Program 1-888-922-4763 (toll free in Maine only) or (207) 989-7474.

Patches are available at the Girl Scouts of Maine Council Shops in Bangor and South Portland.



LINKS:

octopus.gma.org/lobsters/lobsteractivities/lobactindex.html
octopus.gma.org/lobsters/NYTimes_article.html
www.state.me.us/dmr/index.htm
www.state.me.us/dmr/rm/lobster/lobster.html
server.dmc.maine.edu/default.htm
www.lobster.um.maine.edu
www.bigelow.org
www.lobsters.org
www.lobstermanspage.net
www.seagrant.unh.edu
www.whoi.edu/seagrant

BOOKS FOR ADULTS:

Lobster Gangs of Maine – James Acheson
The Lobster Almanac – Bruce Ballenger
The Book of the Lobster – Joey Dueland
The Biology of the Lobster Homarus Americanus – J. Factor
Lobstering and the Maine Coast – Kenneth Martin and Nathan Lipfert
The Illustrated Dictionary of Lobstering – Kendall Merriam
Lobster Lore – Wyatt Mitchell
About Lobsters – TM Prudden
Maine Lobsterboats – Virginia Thorndike
A Lobster in Every Pot: More Than Just a Cookbook – Susan White

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN:

Lobsters Inside Out: A Guide to the Maine Lobster – Robert and Juanita Bayer
Lobsters: Gangsters of the Sea – Mary Cerullo
The Nocturnal World of the Lobster – Joseph Cook
Lobster's Secret – Katherine Hollenbeck
Lobsterman – Dahlov Ipcar
Finest Kind O' Day: Lobstering in Maine – Bruce McMillan
Going Lobstering – Jerry Pallotta
The Lobster: It's Life Cycle – Herb Taylor

PROGRAM RESOURCES:

Thank you to the Gulf of Maine Aquarium for all the valuable information provided in developing this program.

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