

## **To the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy**

### Buffer Zone.

The tide comes in, the tide goes out. In coastal waters, that means sediments stirred up by draggers and trawlers get carried by local currents to areas far removed from the actual dragging. Eelgrass on distant mudflats can be affected by loss of sunlight due to settling sediments and particles in the water column.

I see a need for a buffer zone around inshore marine protected areas, or areas deserving protection such as all sea grass beds, that would prevent inadvertent harm to habitats remote from actual harvesting operations.

### Robbing Peter to Pay Paul.

Sea worms are harvested from mudflats in Maine to send to the Middle Atlantic States for use as bait by the recreational fishing industry. Trouble is, local species need those worms to survive. Flounders eat sea worms, horseshoe crabs eat sea worms, gulls and other birds eat sea worms, yet we steal their food from their natural habitats and ship it out of state so fish in other climes will strike at our bait.

This is foolishness. Please ban harvesting and interstate transport of sea worms. They are needed where they are.

Inshore habitat protection is, or should be, our highest priority. Please, help protect us from our shortsightedness.

### Horseshoe Crabs.

The isolated population of horseshoe crabs in Taunton Bay, Hancock County, Maine, is said to be the northernmost breeding population anywhere in the world. This is thought to be the last unharvested population on the East Coast.

Species at the extremes of their range should not be harvested for human consumption; they are stressed enough by local conditions.

Please, in drafting management plans for horseshoe crabs, exclude this small group from the pressures of harvesting for bait, research, fertilizer, curiosity, or other human uses.

### Gulf of Maine.

We can have no higher priority than restoring the fisheries in the Gulf of Maine. Aquaculture is no substitute. What we need is research and education, not only so that we know what we are talking about, but to guide what we are doing. Please give careful consideration to promoting research and education concerning inshore habitats, species, and community composition so that we do not treat every species as we have cod, haddock, halibut, and other gulf species, assuming they would provide for us forever.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

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