

RI Seafood Marketing Collaborative

2023 Annual Report

June 2024



Letter from the Chair



As the appointed chair of the Seafood Marketing Collaborative (SMC), it is my pleasure to provide an update on the momentous growth that RI Seafood has been able to achieve in one year. After 13 years of research, content building, and strategic planning we are turning the dial in consumer awareness to focus on locally caught seafood species, where to buy them, and the businesses that provide them. With the continued partnership of the SMC, we are pleased to announce that we have exceeded the efforts outlined in our five-year strategic plan. We have exponentially grown our social media channels, newsletter subscribers, and participating places and spaces offering locally harvested and grown RI Seafood (as of April 30, 2024, we are at 97).

The momentum towards RI Seafood being recognized as a statewide brand has helped small businesses, including restaurants, markets, processors, dealers, and direct sale fishermen all be known as local seafood destinations, both statewide and regionally. We have transitioned from purely content creation and consumer awareness to building state and regional recognition while providing small business support and economic growth for our seafood providers.

Our presence at local fairs, festivals, and events has surpassed previous years and some of our biggest successes are outlined in this annual report. From hosting the popular 7th Annual Quahog Week and “shellebrating” the industry with Governor Dan McKee, to securing RI Seafood’s presence at the international Seafood Expo of North America, attending and tabling at several partner events, and publishing two cookbooks; we couldn’t be prouder of the waves the SMC and RI Seafood are making. RI Seafood held three public Seafood Marketing Collaborative meetings throughout the year featuring participating seafood businesses, including, Little Fish Tacos and Ceviche and Dune Brothers Seafood.

We are a small but mighty team of two here at RI Seafood. Both coming from multi-generational fishing families, we understand the importance of knowing your seafood source. We dedicate the RI Seafood content to highlighting the diversity of the fishing industry by featuring the faces of fishers, their roles in the community, the diversity of available finfish and shellfish, and how seafood can be prepared. As the appointed chair of the SMC, I oversee the day-to-day programmatic initiatives, budget, grant proposals, collaborative coordination and meetings, and partner relations. The seafood marketing specialist manages all content including social media, fishermen correspondence, event coverage, and visual production.

However, it would not be without the help of our SMC partners that we achieved our goals in 2023. We are so grateful for our partners’ continued commitment to promoting local seafood consumption, helping the participating businesses in promotion, and their guidance in everything that RI Seafood does.

Cheers to another year of fishy business from your friends at RI Seafood,

Molly Moran-Ogren



Fishermen Greg Matarones unloading monkfish



F/V Cailyn and Maren returning to port

“I am immensely proud of the growth and continued successes of the Seafood Marketing Collaborative and the RI Seafood team. Now, more than ever, we are engaging consumers in a variety of ways and providing small business support to our commercial fishermen and harvesters. I am grateful for the Governor’s inclusion of state funding in his FY 2025 budget recommendation for this program for the first time ever!”

-Terry Gray, Director of RIDEM



History of the SMC

Est. 2011

The Rhode Island Seafood Marketing Collaborative (SMC), chaired by the RI Department of Environmental Management, was established by the Rhode Island General Assembly in 2011. The objective of the SMC is to support local fishermen and small businesses by increasing awareness and consumption of locally fished species. Choosing local species allows us to develop stronger, direct connections with our food and reduce food miles. Our mission is to allow consumers both statewide and regionally to find what seafood is available, where it can be purchased, how it's harvested, and how to cook it. By supporting local businesses, we can increase the demand for delicious Rhode Island seafood and support a stronger, more sustainable, and resilient local food system that is less dependent on out-of-state sources.

RI Seafood is aimed at creating small business support for our partners. This includes promotion on our social media channels through statewide media campaigns, and our monthly newsletter.

The SMC is actively engaged in various programs and activities aimed at promoting increased demand for local seafood products. The RI Seafood logo is at the heart of the seafood marketing campaign launched by the SMC. In addition to developing and trademarking the Logo, the Collaborative has a website, (<https://seafood.ri.gov>), that serves as the focal point for the marketing campaign.

2023 SMC Board Members

Ken Ayers
Azure Cygler
Ben Goetsch
Fred Mattera
Hiro Uchida
Tom Lafazia
John Delgado
Kevin DiLibero
Katherine Farrington
Matthew Behan
Mike McGiveney
Scott Olszewski
Perry Raso
Lori Pivarnik
Julianne Stelmaszyk
Stu Meltzer
Lucy Fontes



Fisherman Davy Andrade of F/V Reaper
after a day of quahogging



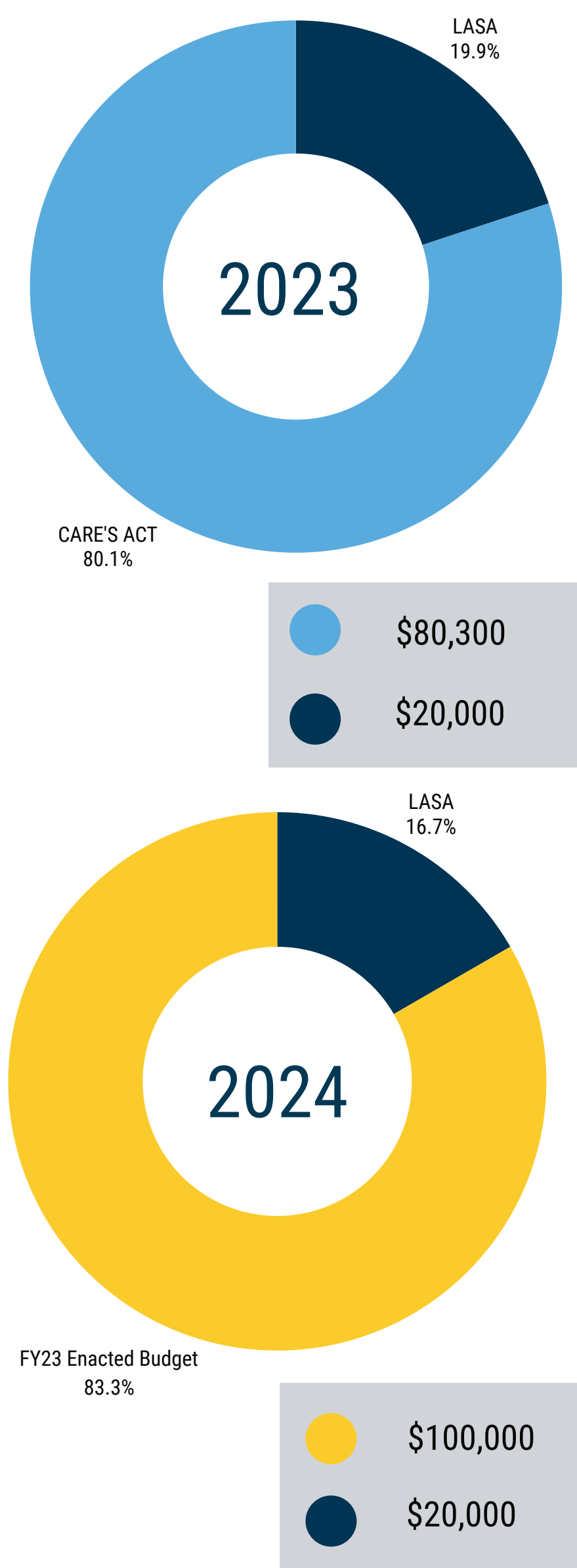
DEM Division of Marine Fisheries conducting
one of their various stock assessments



RI fisher Azure Cygler and quahogger Jody
King harvesting sugar kelp

Highlights

The SMC and RI Seafood up to 2023 has not been funded with state general revenue.



In 2023, three funding source proposals were submitted to continue the work of the SMC: The State RIDEM budget proposal, a LASA proposal, and a NOAA Saltonstall Kennedy proposal.

RI Seafood works to promote the hardworking men and woman throughout the Ocean State. By choosing RI Seafood, consumers are supporting local food systems and bolstering the local economy. Through our various media outlets, the program promotes the benefits of local seafood and raises awareness of the various ways to access it, while reducing the burden on businesses.

We are immensely grateful for the support that RI Seafood has continued to receive over the course of 2023. The SMC celebrated 12 years since its inception. Our success would not be possible without our wonderful seafood partners, to whom we are very thankful.

At the end of 2023, the RI Seafood campaign has expanded to 86 seafood venues throughout the Ocean State, including seafood markets, restaurants, direct sellers, and wholesale. A full interactive Google Map of these partners allows consumers to find locations near them!

RI Seafood hit exciting benchmarks throughout the year, including reaching more than 2,000 followers on Instagram and exceeded 8,800 followers on Facebook. We attended more than 25 events including the Taste of Rhode Island, National Oyster Day at Narragansett Brewery, and Dave's Fresh Marketplace Local Vendor Days! We continue to produce monthly newsletters, which has grown to over 500 recipients! RI Seafood launched its *Summer Seafood Series* and a *Fall Fishes Seafood Series* cookbook, sponsored by Dave's Fresh Marketplace and Andy Moran Photography. Both can be found at your local Dave's Fresh Marketplace, virtually on our website, your local library, or RIDEM Offices.



Beer battered skate wing from the Summer Seafood Series



Black Sea Bass and Tautog Crudos from the Summer Seafood series



Rock Crab Jalapeno poppers from the Fall Fishes Seafood Series



2023

YEAR IN REVIEW

12

YEARS OF THE SMC



2,115 INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS



8,900 FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS



27,200 WEBSITE VIEWS



86 PARTICIPATING SEAFOOD VENUES



19 Markets/ Grocers

46 Restaurants

21 Direct Sellers

7TH ANNUAL QUAHOG WEEK

40+ Participating venues

2 In-person events with 500+ attendees



2 COOKBOOK PUBLICATIONS



Submission of 3 Proposals

- 1.State RIDEM budget proposal
- 2.NOAA Saltonstall Kennedy Grant
- 3.LASA



ATTENDANCE AT 20+ FAIRS & FESTIVALS



12 MONTHLY NEWSLETTERS TO 512 RECIPIENTS

Quahog Week



7th Annual



RI Seafood and partners from Eating with the Ecosystem & the RI Food Policy Council



RI Quahogs



Shellfisher's handing out shucked clams to consumers in attendance



Governor Dan McKee enjoying shucked quahogs and signing a State House Proclamation and resolution with various RI Shellfishermen.

2

In-person hosted events at Narragansett Brewery and The Guild Warren, totaling over 500 people each in attendance

42

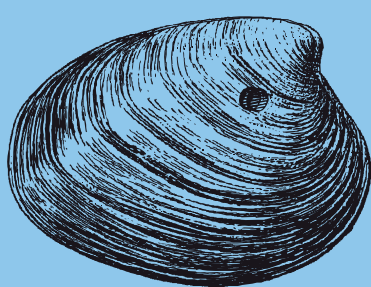
Participating venues offering/featuring clams during quahog week

30

Returning quahog week venues



2023 Partners



F/V Black Gold



2024 Outlook

The SMC and RI Seafood are excited for all to come in 2024! Here is a sneak peek of what you can expect to see!



Fisheries Marketing Specialist Jordyn Kastlunger and SMC Chair Molly Ogren tabling at the Taste of Rhode Island.

- **Statewide Marketing Campaign:** RI Seafood in partnership with DDL Advertising, a woman owned company, will run a statewide marketing campaign from February to July to promote the faces, places, and spaces providing local seafood. This campaign will highlight local fishers, seasonal recipes, and more! The campaign will include billboards and promotional advertisement on social media platforms.
- **Events:** The RI Seafood team will have an educational table on select weekends in the Port of Galilee and various Farmer's Markets throughout the state.
- **8th Annual Quahog Week:** Quahog Week took place from May 11th-18th. There were two events to "shellebrate" at Narragansett Brewery and The Guild Warren. At these events, consumers enjoyed free samples of shucked clams from the RI Shellfishermen Association, as well as cooked samples from various RI Seafood partners.
- **Allocated funds in Governor McKee's RIDEM budget:** In response to a request from RI Seafood and RIDEM, Governor McKee's budget included annual support for the Fisheries Marketing Specialist. This position will continue managing content creation for social media, fishermen correspondence, event coverage, visual production, and more.
- **Quarterly Seafood Marketing Collaborative meetings:** Meetings will take place quarterly to discuss RI Seafood.
- **Rhode Island Seafood tabling and events:** Tabling with partners like Dave's Vendor Days, National Oyster Day at Narragansett Brewery, farmers markets, Calamari Festival, and more!
- **Continued growth:** Distribution of monthly consumer newsletter, weekly organic social media posts, outreach to future venue sign-ups and partner features.

2024 Outlook

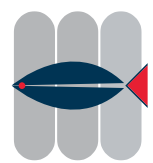
Seafood Expo North America (SENA)



RHODE ISLAND
COMMERCE



Seafood Expo
NORTH AMERICA



Seafood Processing
NORTH AMERICA

RI Seafood is excited to announce that for the first year ever, in collaboration with RI Commerce, we had a booth at the Seafood Expo North America (SENA) in Boston! The convention ran from March 10th-12th, and is North America's largest seafood trade exposition. Exhibitors from over 50 countries come together to discover, sample, network, and source seafood.

RI Seafood was at booth #2575 featuring American Mussel Harvesters, Tony's Seafood, Dune Bros., and Metro Lobster and Seafood. We would like to extend our gratitude to Rhode Island Commerce for making our attendance at SENA possible. With their help, we had the opportunity to connect with new and existing Rhode Island businesses. During the show, we had the privilege of engaging with thousands of people, talking about our 86 partners and businesses that signed up for the RI Seafood Marketing Campaign, providing small business support to our venues, handing out our seasonal cookbooks, and spreading information about the abundance and variety of seafood in the Ocean State.

6+

Rhode Island Seafood Venues

utilized the booth space for business and meetings with other vendors

SENA 2024



Brought more than **19,780** seafood professionals together

Exhibit Space
of **249,665**
Square-Feet

which is **5%** larger than last year

Exhibiting Companies
from
49 countries



The RI Seafood Booth at the Seafood Expo North America



NOAA Assistant Administrator for Fisheries and former DEM Director Janet Coit along with other partners and visitors stopped by the booth to learn more about RI Seafood.

Thank you to our SMC partners



DEM
RHODE ISLAND



**RHODE
ISLAND**
COMMERCE



DISCOVER
NEWPORT
RHODE ISLAND

Sea Grant
Rhode Island



NARRAGANSETT
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND



COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
CENTER OF RHODE ISLAND



Seafood.RI.com



[RISeafoodRocks](#)



[RI.Seafood](#)

RI Seafood Finder: Direct Sellers & Farmers Markets



Sun Farm Oysters
Block Island, RI



It's ok to be a little shellfish

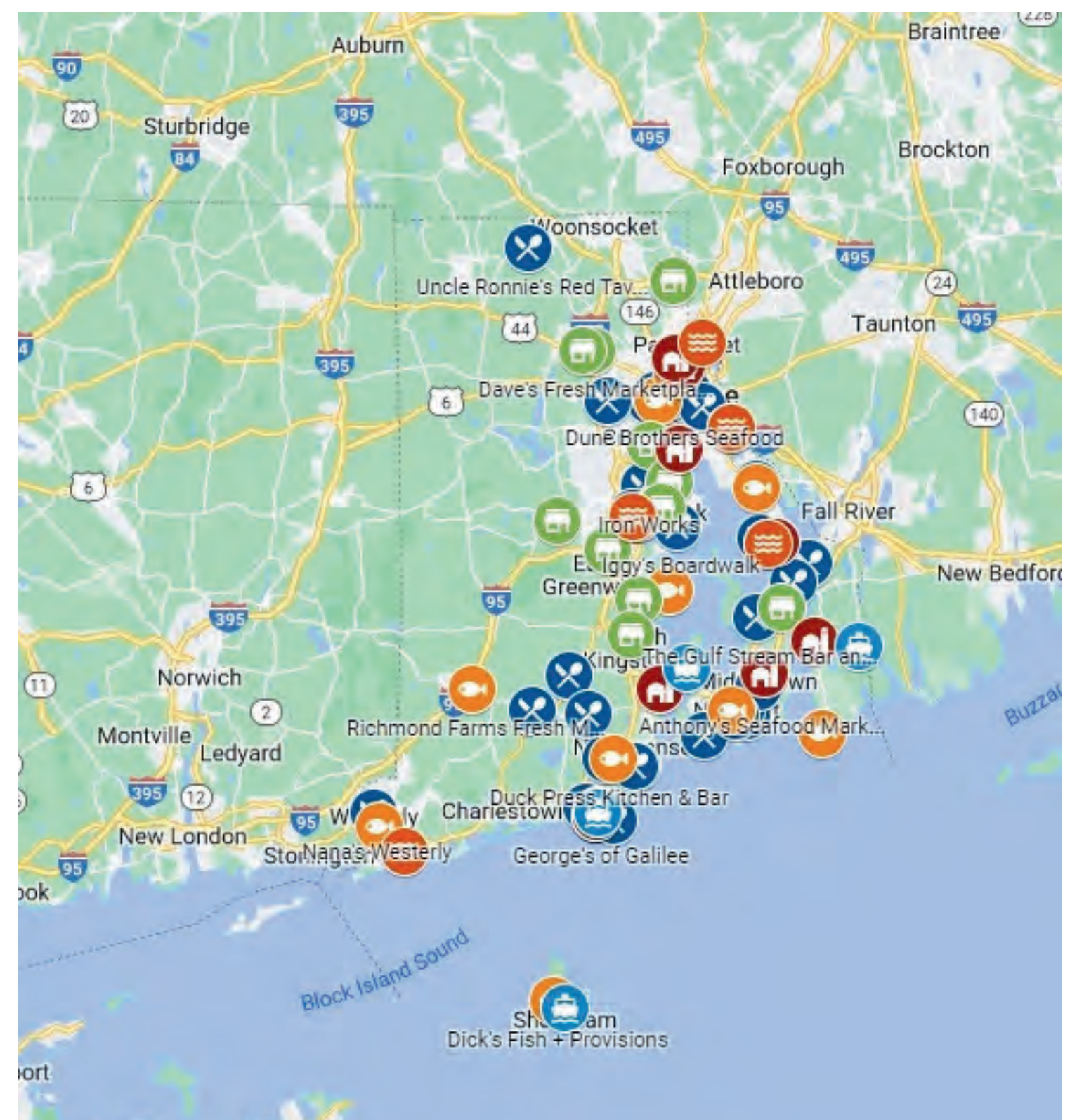


Commercial Fishers/ Direct Sales

- F/V Erica Knight
- F/V Karen Ann
- F/V Kathleen Mary
- F/V Ocean Rhody
- F/V Wendy Gail
- F/V Kristen J
- F/V Select
- F/V Miss Stacie
- Sediment
- Triton Seafood



<https://seafood.ri.gov/ri-seafood-finder>



#Findyourfresh

RI Seafood Finder: Restaurants



BAR'CINO



Middletown, RI



bywater



George's of Galilee



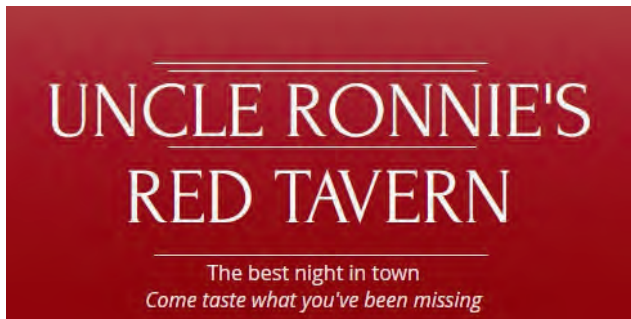
GIUSTO NEWPORT



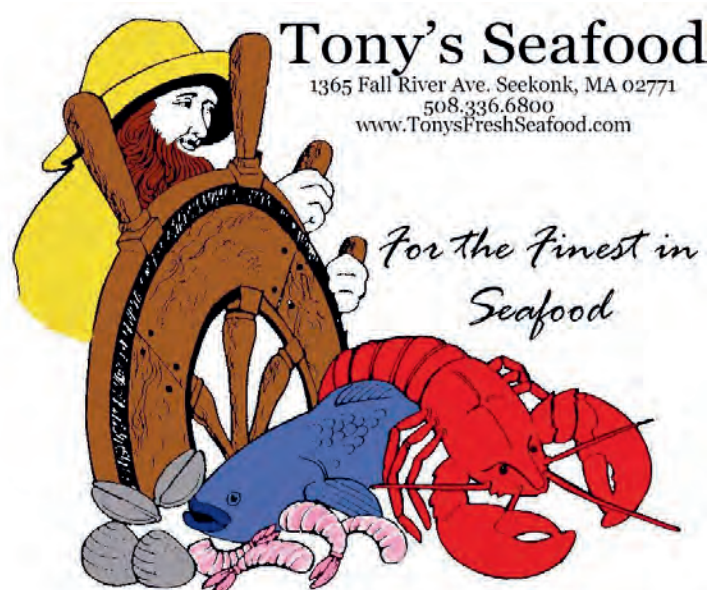
HEMENWAY'S



nicks on broadway
Oberlin



RI Seafood Finder: Markets & Grocers

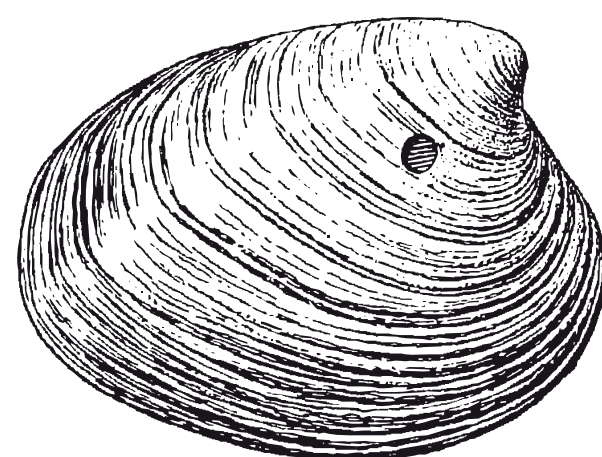


FEARLESS
FISH MARKET

In-Kind Donations



AndyMoranPhoto.com



F/V Black Gold