

ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAMS



Casco Bay Estuary Program • 207.780.4820 • www.cascobay.usm.maine.edu • March 2001

CASCO BAY

Casco Bay lies at the heart of Maine's most populated area. The health of its waters, wetlands, and wildlife depends on the activities of nearly a quarter million residents who live in its watershed. The arrival of European settlers in the 18th century brought unprecedented changes. Lands were cleared, towns and cities built, and dams constructed for power. All changed the landscape and impacted water quality.

FACTS ABOUT THE ESTUARY

- Lobster landings in Casco Bay represent at least 20 percent of Maine's total landings.
- Over 25 percent of Maine's population lives in the Casco Bay region.
- The population of the region is approximately 254,429 and growing. The area leads Maine in population growth.
- Clamming in the region generates an estimated \$12 million in economic activity.
- The largest industries in the area, in terms of the revenues generated, are the service industries followed by retail trade and durable goods manufacturing. The retail trade is the largest employer in the region.

HEALTH OF THE ESTUARY

- Only ten of the 106 sites monitored for water quality fell below the recommended state standard for dissolved oxygen.
- Over the last decade, low levels of dissolved oxygen levels have accounted for considerable pogy kills at the mouths of these ten rivers.
- The largest subwatershed, the Presumpscot River, drains 648 square miles and has high bacterial concentrations and/or low dissolved oxygen content at several water quality test sites.
- Most of the pollution in Casco Bay comes from countless small sources throughout the watershed.
- Elevated levels of heavy metals (lead, zinc, mercury) occur in and around Portland where combined sewer overflows still exist and where there has been a history of heavy industry such as tanneries, metal coating plants, and Liberty Ship construction along the still active waterfront.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE ESTUARY PROGRAM

- Completed four years of atmospheric deposition monitoring (a significant contributor of mercury and nitrogen) at a coastal site in partnership with the State of Maine.
- Acquired over 150 acres of significant wildlife habitat in the Casco Bay Watershed for protection within the last three years
- Reopened almost 37,000 acres of shellfish areas in Casco Bay formerly closed to harvesting since 1994.
- Worked with partners on a ten-year combined sewer overflow removal plan for the City of Portland.
- Planted a 17,000 square foot vegetated buffer and installed interpretive signs along Portland's most popular hiking and walking area.
- Casco Bay volunteers continue water quality monitoring at 106 sites, providing the only long-term collection of Casco Bay water quality data available for evaluation.

Lobster Newburg

1 lb lobster meat cut into bite-sized pieces
6 tbl butter
3 tbl flour
1 1/2 cups half and half
3 beaten egg yolks
3 tbl sherry
1 tbl fresh lemon juice
paprika

In a skillet over medium heat, melt butter then stir in flour to form a smooth paste. Add half and half slowly, stirring constantly until thick and bubbly. Stir half of the mixture into egg yolks then return to skillet. Mix together and stir in lobster meat. When lobster meat has heated through (about 2-3 minutes), stir in sherry and lemon juice.

Serve immediately over white rice, patty shells or toast points. Garnish with paprika.

Fresh, steamed asparagus goes perfectly with this dish.

Serves four.