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## Consistent numbers for Arrowsic green crabs

### Latest data based on recent one-day trapping assessment

BY DANEEM KIM

Times Record Staff

#### ARROWSIC

Data compiled from a green crab analysis last month revealed that crab population numbers on the Arrowsic coastline have stayed fairly consistent, according to Ruth Indrick, project manager of the Kennebec Estuary Land Trust.

“The numbers are really similar. It looks like in areas that we trapped crabs this year and last year, they’re within slight decreases at most sites, so not a significance change,” she said on Thursday.

The data was based on a one-day crab trapping assessment conducted near clam beds along the town’s coast by Arrowsic Shellfish Commission committee members and volunteers.

More and more municipalities have pursued green crab research since 2013 when clammers noticed an alarming increase in the green crab population and a decrease in clams.

Around that time, KELT also received a grant from the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund to purchase crab traps and hip waders to conduct more research, equipment that is available for town usage as well.

After comparing this year’s data to Arrowsic’s first assessment last year, Indrick said the consistency in population numbers is worth noting, especially since a harsh winter would have expected to kill off more crabs.

“A significant change would be if we’d had decreases in one location, but we didn’t and that’s interesting in itself,” Indrick said. “At one site, there were 237 (crabs) last year and this year it’s 220. That’s really close for a year difference — who knows what happened at that site to get within 17 crabs?”

And although the Back River Mill Isle location showed a slight decrease in crab population since last year — a drop from 69 crabs to three, Indrick noted that more trapping assessments would have to be conducted to see if this was an atypical event.

“One thing that’s nice about this is that you do kind of get to see the snapshot to see what’s going on,” she

said. “But it’s hard to know because we put out traps for one day. We’d almost have to try it again.”

[dkim@timesrecord.com](mailto:dkim@timesrecord.com)

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