Lobster Quality
Preseason Sampling Program
Southwest Nova Scotia LFA33 & LFA34

Preseason Summary Report

November 2026

Submitted by:

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2026 LFA 33 & 34 Lobster Quality Preseason Sampling Summary

HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2026

A total of 4,280 lobsters were sampled on 44 preseason sampling location-dates.

Average BRIX levels remained low again in 2026 preseason samples in most locations in both Inside and Outside areas resulting in an overall low average BRIX level of 7.94 mg/mL –the lowest overall average in the time series since 2020.

Legal-sized counts per sample in 2026 trended downward on average in all November samples with the exception of Lobster Bay (Inside) and Yarmouth Bar (Outside) samples. Overall average legal-sized counts per trap were 9.85 counts/trap, up 15% compared to 2025 values of 8.6 counts/trap.

Compared to 2024, bottom temperatures in 2026 were warmer in early to mid-October then declined.

%Weaks (<1%) and %Soft (<2%) lobsters were negligible in all areas in the 2026 preseason samples similar to 2025. There is no evidence over all areas that the proportion of sublegals ("shorts") are decreasing.

Introduction

This report summarizes results of preseason at-sea sampling in 8 locations within LFA33 and LFA34 from August 31 to November 10, 2026. This sampling program represents a continuation of the longstanding Atlantic Lobster Moult and Quality Project (ALMQ) 21-year longitudinal database that has continued uninterrupted since 2006. Preseason sampling was conducted by Coldwater Lobster Association in 8 different locations – the designated 'Inside' and 'Outside' areas of Lobster Bay, St. Mary's Bay, Yarmouth in LFA34, and Port La Tour in LFA33 (see also Google Map for details).

Data were collected for lobster sex, carapace length, blood protein (BRIX), hardness, moult stage, and egg-bearing status. This report focuses on BRIX trends over preseason samples as a key indicator of start of season lobster quality. Data analyses were carried out with the cooperation of the Lobster Quality Centre, Marine Research Centre, Université Sainte-Anne, Petit de Grat Campus. We acknowledge this opportunity to maintain the ALMQ longitudinal database and to develop it for future use by the Nova Scotia lobster industry and researchers.

From 2020 to 2025 financing for this project was provided by the Atlantic Fisheries Fund (AFF) with continuing support of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada (DFO), the Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, and our industry partners. In 2026-27, funding has been exceptionally provided by DFO (Ottawa), and the NS Department of Growth, Development, and Defence Industries for an additional year of sampling.

It has been made very clear to the ALMQ partners (Coldwater Lobster Association, and the Lobster Quality Centre of the Université Sainte-Anne) by DFO (Maritimes Region) and the NSDFA – that new sources of financing from the lobster industry sector are required if the ALMQ database and analysis is to be continued and maintained into the future. As has been the case in the past, it is the ongoing objective of the partners to seek out new financing sources from the lobster industry – for whom the sampling and reports are prepared – toward maintaining the ALMQ database and its research

legacy for the sustainability and benefit of the valuable lobster resource.

2026 Sampling Protocols

As in previous years, individual lobster data on blood protein level (measured via a refractometer as the BRIX Index (mg/mL) – Figure 1), manual shell hardness (soft, medium or hard scale), moult stage (from 40 selected lobsters' pleopods per sampling point examined under a microscope), carapace length, and sex (male, female, berried female) data were collected manually for 4,280 individual lobster samples over 44 sample location-dates (for 100 lobsters/sample, as available) across all 8 sampling locations. These lobster data, collected manually on-board survey vessels by the Coldwater Data Collection Technician and recorded electronically (Figure 2), represent determinants of lobster quality. Quality lobsters are suitable for live storage and shipping, and have high meat content for a superior dining experience. Lobster data analysed in this report are provided as indicators to the Nova Scotia lobster industry about the early season status of the post-moult lobster harvest in the eight designated sampling subareas.



Figure 1. Lobster blood sample used in refractometer to determine lobster blood protein (BRIX) level.



Figure 2. Lobster preseason sampling equipment.

The results presented in this report focus on the distribution of the recorded BRIX levels for 2026 compared to past years' samples from the same preseason time and sampling locations over the full ALMQ preseason database period 2006-2025. This information enables the industry to compare the 2026 sample results to known past years of observed preseason lobster quality and status.

In 2026, as in the past, BRIX index values which are below 6.0 mg/mL in a single sampled lobster provide a probable indication of "Poor" quality lobster that is less than fully-meated, and is also less suitable for the live market for storage and shipping and for presentation at the dining table. BRIX index values between 6.0–7.99 are deemed as "Moderate" quality and indicate that lobsters may still be recovering from a prior moult, and are of concern with respect to quality. BRIX levels at 8 or above are indicative of "Good" quality, are more fully-meated lobsters, and more suitable for live product storage and shipping and presentation for consumption. Table 1 below summarizes the assignment of lobster quality and BRIX level indicator categories used in this report.

Table 1. Lobster Quality Indicators and BRIX Index Categories

Quality Indicator:	**"Poor"**	**"Moderate"**	**"Good"**
Meat Content:	**Most likely low**	**Not likely fully-meated**	**Likely fully-meated**
Storage/Shipping:	**Not ideal**	**Concerns**	**Likely suitable**
Observed Lobster Quality Indicators:			
Blood Protein Level, BRIX index (mg/mL)	Less than 6.0	6.0 to 7.99	8.0 or greater
Shell Hardness	Potentially "Soft" (2)	Potentially "Medium-Hard" (4), recovering from previous moult	Likely "Hard" (5)
Appearance	Pale colour, evidence of carapace abnormalities, and/or shell disease	Acceptable colour, little evidence of carapace abnormalities or shell disease	Spring black-bodied, few carapace abnormalities
Shape/size	Culls, misshapen claws, damage to carapace	Small size, misshapen claws, limited damage to carapace	Commercial size, good body shape

The manual (carapace squeeze test) assessment of lobster shell hardness is a subjective indicator of lobster quality. Guidelines are in place for manual estimates of shell hardness on a subjective scale of 2 ("Soft"), 4 ("Medium-Hard"), and 5 ("Hard"). "Soft" lobsters are of poor quality, "Medium-Hard" lobsters are generally of mediocre quality, and "Hard" lobster are generally acceptable for further consideration with regard to quality.

In 2026, as in previous years, shell hardness measures are not well-correlated with continuous measures of lobster BRIX levels. Shell hardness measures are effective when used together with other information, e.g., lobster appearance, shape/size, weak status, and including information on when and where lobsters are harvested. Individual subjective indicators of quality, including shell hardness, are generally not considered as a sole determining factor in lobster quality prediction but may be used in conjunction with other indicators, e.g., BRIX, to assign quality to an individual lobster.

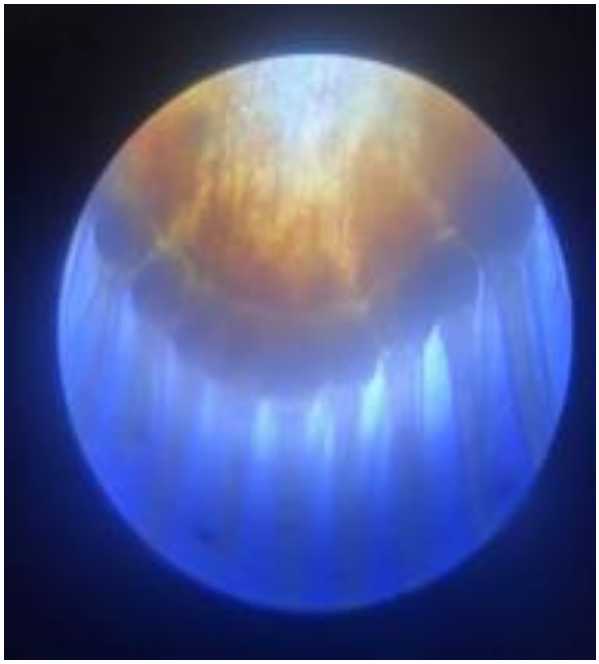


Figure 3. Lobster pleopod under microscope.

In 2026 preseason sampling, 40 lobsters were selected for further pleopod analysis from a full set of 100 lobsters sampled by location-date for their biological characteristics including BRIX values at harvest. Each lobster's moult status is determined by microscopic analysis of the lobster pleopod (swimmeret). Moult stage levels of zero (0) indicate no moult activity is occurring; advanced moult stages (3+) indicate the moult is approaching and imminent. Pleopod analysis in female lobsters may also indicate the onset of the egg bearing cycle and the presence of cement glands. Figure 3 illustrates a lobster pleopod view for interpretation of moult stage by the technician-reader. Further analyses of pleopod data and lobster moult staging are presented in the annual report released in the Spring of 2027.

Overview of the 2026 Preseason Survey

In 2026, a total of 4,280 preseason lobster samples were taken over the 12-week period from August 31 to November 10, 2026 over 44 sample location-dates, or 5 to 6 samples for each of the 8 locations. The 2026 sampling protocols were adjusted in 2024, to accommodate the shift to a reduced financing operation. This is the second consecutive year of lobster on-vessel data collection by Coldwater Data Collection Technician, Courtney Thomas. Courtney is the third Coldwater Data Collection Technician to work in the revised lobster sampling program since 2020. Courtney's ongoing participation as a lobster fisherman, as well as her commitment to the lobster sampling program, is commendable, and we take this opportunity to thank her for her valuable contribution to the lobster sampling program in southwestNova.

2026 Survey Sites. Figure 4 below illustrates the Google map for southwest Nova Scotia survey sites in 2026. The inserted map table in Figure 4 illustrates a sampling location in Port La Tour (Outside) that took place on September 30, 2026. The interactive map[1] is freely available to review and enables users to examine in detail each of the survey points including identification of the starting string longitude and latitude, depth, bait used, weather conditions at haul, count of lobsters landed, average BRIX value of the sampled lobsters, percentage Brix quality categories, and numbers of designated weak lobsters as a percentage of the total sample.

The QR code provided below links directly to the 2026 Lobster Preseason Survey Google map:

[1] Readers of this report may access the Google Map of the 2026 Lobster Preseason Survey by clicking the underlined designated hyperlink. The map displays the sites of the 2026 preseason surveys as well as sites of each of the 2020 through 2025 surveys. For further information on accessing this map, contact: Daniel.Lane@uSainteAnne.ca.

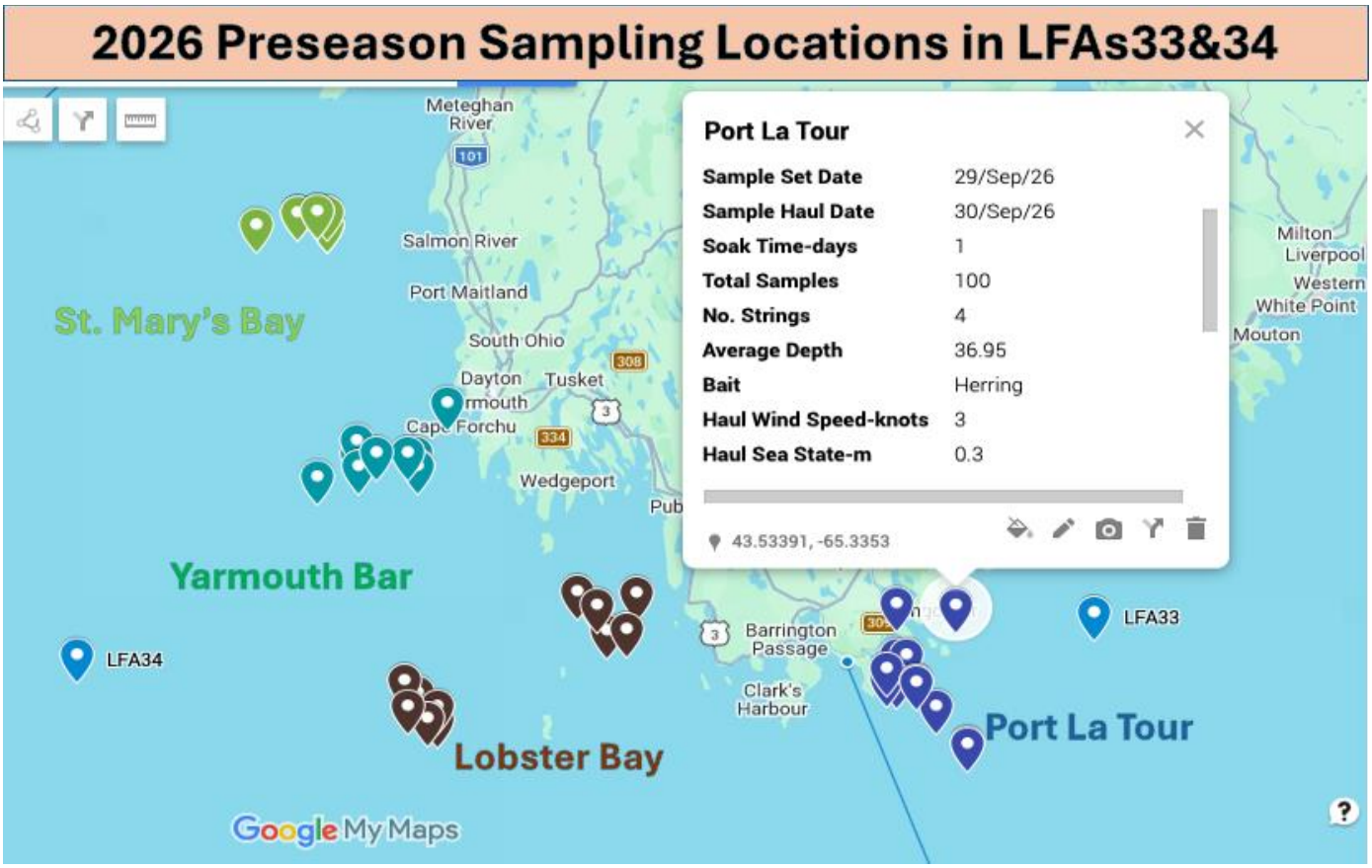


Figure 4. Map of 2026 Preseason Lobster Sampling Locations

2026 Program Participation. Sampling on the survey sites was executed with the assistance of southwest Nova Scotia lobster harvesters. These members (Table 2) used their fishing vessels to carry out the protocols of the ALMQ program with the assistance of the Coldwater Lobster Association Data Collection technician. We acknowledge – with gratitude – their expertise and invaluable contribution to the ongoing work of the preseason lobster sampling program in LFAs 33&34.

Table 2. Vessels and Captains Participating in the 2026 Lobster Quality Preseason Sampling Program

LOCATION	CAPTAIN	VESSEL NAME
St. Mary's Bay	E. Deveau	*Lady D. I*
Yarmouth Bar	K. Penney	*Betty Ann & Brats*
Lobster Bay	T. d'Entremont	*Jane Rose*
Port La Tour	W. Smith	*Little Lady I*

2026 Weather Conditions. Weather conditions throughout the 2026 pre-season sampling period were particularly favourable, with consistently cooperative conditions allowing the survey to progress smoothly and efficiently. Only a couple of minor weather-related delays were experienced throughout the preseason sampling period, with minimal impact on the overall schedule. All scheduled survey sets were successfully completed within the anticipated timeframe, allowing ample time for data compilation, analysis, and completion of the final report well ahead of the LFA 33 and 34 opening days. The favourable weather conditions, combined with the flexibility and cooperation of participating captains, contributed significantly to the successful and timely completion of this year's preseason survey.

2026 Bycatch. Jonah crabs were less of a concern throughout the 2026 pre-season sampling period compared to previous years, with notably lower overall numbers observed across sampling locations. This was particularly evident in St.Mary's Bay, where Jonah crab abundance remained relatively low and continued to decrease as the preseason period progressed. The reduced presence of Jonah crab was a positive observation, particularly given fisher's ongoing concerns regarding the potential relationship between higher Jonah crab abundance and lower lobster catch rates. An increase in cod observations was noted at the Port La Tour Outside sampling location compared to previous years. Spiny dogfish were also occasionally observed across some sampling locations; however, their presence remained minimal and was not considered a significant concern.

2026 Lobster Damage and Blacken Shell Observations. As in past years, the recorded database assigns codes in the event of observations of lobster damage and blacken shell observations. Damage observations were recorded for 261 lobsters of a total of 4,280 lobsters (6.1%) sampled in the 2026 preseason. Specifc lobster damages were recorded as: (a) missing claw ("cull"- 108 observations), and (b) a "small claw, regenerating" (134 observations).

Blacken shell observations (potential epizotic shell disease) account for only 6 observations of carapace and tail evidence in samples from Lobster Bay (3 observations), Port La Tour (Inside) (1 observation), and Yarmouth Bar (Inside) (2 observations). These amount to only 0.14% of all sampled lobsters. These data are consistent with past observations of damage and blacken shell in sampled lobsters.

Industry members are asked to report any and all such evidence of blacken shell and potential epizotic shell disease to the Marine Research Centre, Petit de Grat at their earliest convenience.

Temperature Observations. This summary report provides feedback on available temperature information at sampling site locations in the 2026 preseason period. This information includes set and haul water temperatures compiled by captains and the data collection technician, as well as soak times and soak time bottom temperature data downloaded from attached HOBO temperature loggers on sampling traps. Bottom temperature data recorded at regular intervals (e.g., every 15 minutes) are downloaded and summarized as minimum, average, and maximum bottom temperatures during sampling soak time periods as reported in Table 2a below.

Table 2a. 2026 Preseason Sampling Temperature Data Summary

LFA Subarea 2026	Site Location	Set Date/ Time*	Haul Date/ Time*	Soak Time (Hrs:Mins)	Soak Time Min Bottom Temp (˚C)	Soak Time Ave Bottom Temp (˚C)	Soak Time Max Bottom Temp (˚C)	String Depth (F)
Lobster Bay	Inside	08-31 19:26	09-01 7:30	12:03	11.9	12.4	13.1	19.30
LFA 34		09-14 18:59	09-15 7:35	12:35	12.9	13.2	13.6	18.85
		09-30 18:16	10-01 6:35	12:18	14.3	14.5	14.6	18.88
		10-12 19:39	10-13 7:39	12:00	13.8	14.2	14.3	19.23
		10-26 19:40	10-27 7:40	11:59	11.1	11.2	11.4	20.18
		11-07 19:55	11-08 7:55	12:00	11.0	11.2	11.3	18.18
	Outside	-	-	-	-	-	-	35.70
		09-13 8:10	09-14 9:10	25:00	10,6	11.2	15.0	32.80
		09-29 18:16	09-30 7:20	13:04	14.6	14.9	15.2	34.38
		10-11 19:16	10-12 7:25	12:09	12.0	12.3	12.5	33.05
		10-25 21:20	10-26 9:30	12:10	11.5	11.6	11.7	33.88
		11-06 21:35	11-07 9:35	12:00	10.78	10.83	10.9	39.93
Port La Tour	Inside	09-01 19:36	09-02 7:21	11:45	7.6	9.6	11.0	9.28
LFA 33		09-15 19:51	09-16 8:21	12:30	9.7	10.3	11.8	9.28
		09-30 22:36	10-01 10:36	12:00	15.5	15.52	15.55	9.28
		10-15 10:00	10-16 0:00	14:00	13.7	13.9	14.0	9.28
		10-28 15:30	10-29 7:40	16:10	10.6	13.3	14.1	8.51
		11-09 20:41	11-10 8:41	12:00	9.7	9.9	9.94	8.51
	Outside	-	-	-	-	-	-	36.25
		09-15 1:06	09-15 13:21	12:15	4.6	4.7	4.74	36.45
		09-30 3:46	09-30 15:46	12:00	7.9	9.6	11.0	36.45
		10-12 2:08	10-12 14:08	12:00	5.7	6.2	6.8	36.45
		10-27 0:00	10-27 12:00	12:00	11.7	11.8	11.9	36.45
		11-08 21:11	11-09 9:11	12:00	8.7	9.4	10.0	36.45
St. Mary's Bay	Inside	09-09 1:20	09-09 13:20	12:00	10.7	10.9	11.9	27.00
LFA 34		09-21 22:48	09-22 10:48	12:00	10.8	10.9	11.3	28.75
		10-06 23:03	10-07 11:03	12:00	12.3	12.8	13.3	29.50
		10-19 1:30	10-19 13:30	12:00	11.6	11.65	11.72	28.75
		11-03 0:52	11-03 12:52	12:00	11.3	11.4	11.5	30.25
	Outside	-	-	-	-	-	-	45.00
		09-21 1:27	09-21 13:27	12:00	10.7	10.8	10.8	45.50
		10-05 3:37	10-05 15:37	12:00	13.1	13.3	13.7	45.00
		10-19 1:30	10-19 13:30	12:00	11.3	11.4	11.5	46.50
		11-02 3:18	11-02 15:18	12:00	10.7	10.75	10.79	46.50
Yarmouth	Inside	09-08 18:50	09-09 6:50	12:00	10.9	11.0	11.1	21.00
LFA 34		09-21 18:40	09-22 6:40	12:00	10.8	11.0	11.1	20.25
		10-06 18:57	10-07 6:57	12:00	13.4	14.2	14.5	20.00
		10-19 19:40	10-20 7:40	12:00	11.9	12.1	12.12	18.25
		11-02 21:27	11-03 9:27	12:00	10.9	11.0	11.02	10.25
	Outside	-	-	-	-	-	-	40.25
		09-20 19:08	09-21 7:08	12:00	10.6	10.7	10.8	39.25
		10-04 20:14	10-05 8:14	12:00	12.6	13.2	13.7	43.50
		10-18 19:59	10-19 7:59	12:00	8.2	11.8	12.1	40.25
		11-01 20:29	11-02 8:29	12:00	10.9	11.0	11.1	48.25

N/A - Temperature logger data not available/not recorded.

*Times for set and haul refer to String 1 where available.

Bottom temperature data are presented for observational input and reader feedback. Bottom temperature data have long been considered to be important to understanding lobster dynamics, the moult cycle, and catchability. This information is meant to be compiled annually during the preseason sampling period and compared year-over-year to note any interannual differences. Data have been collected in the 2024, 2025, and 2026 preseason periods. Average soak time bottom temperatures are retrieved and compared across these three latest preseason sampling years.

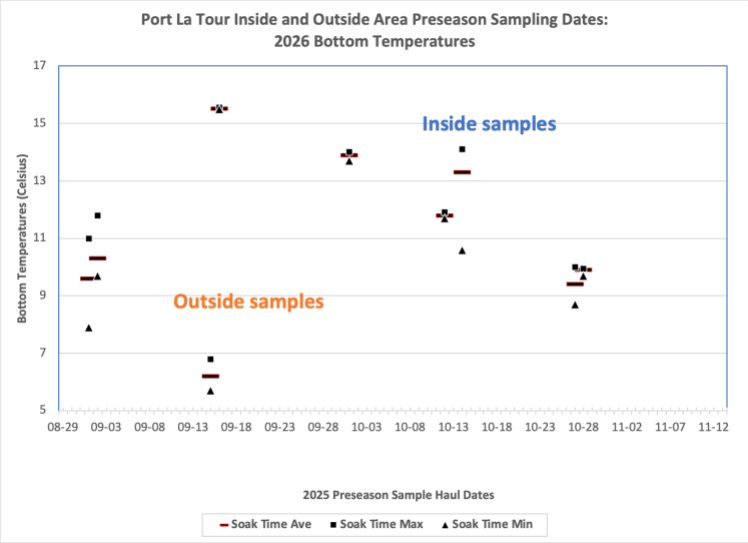


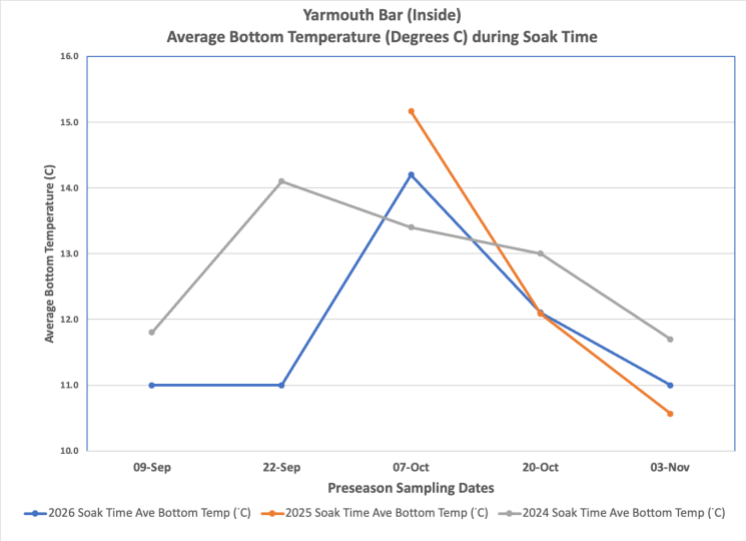
Figure 6. Port La Tour Inside and Outside Samples Bottom Temperature

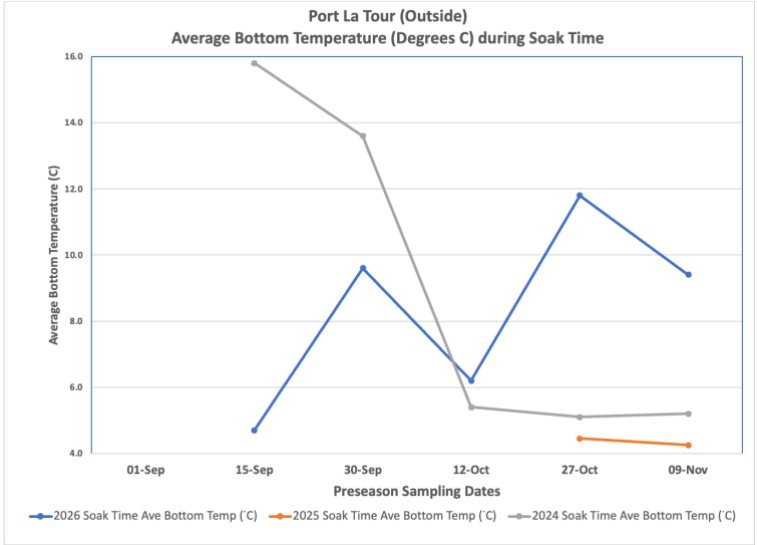
Figure 6 show bottom temperature information from the 2026 sampling program for Port La Tour (Inside and Outside). The observational data provide a snapshot of the status of the bottom ecosystem that undoubtedly impact lobster status and catchability. It is recognized that the date and location of sampling, and the depth of sample traps impact observations of temperature data. For example, it is noted in Table 2a that for all sampling locations, bottom temperatures for Inside areas generally exceed those for the deeper Outside areas This is attributable to shallower Inside and deeper Outside bottom depths for similar dates.

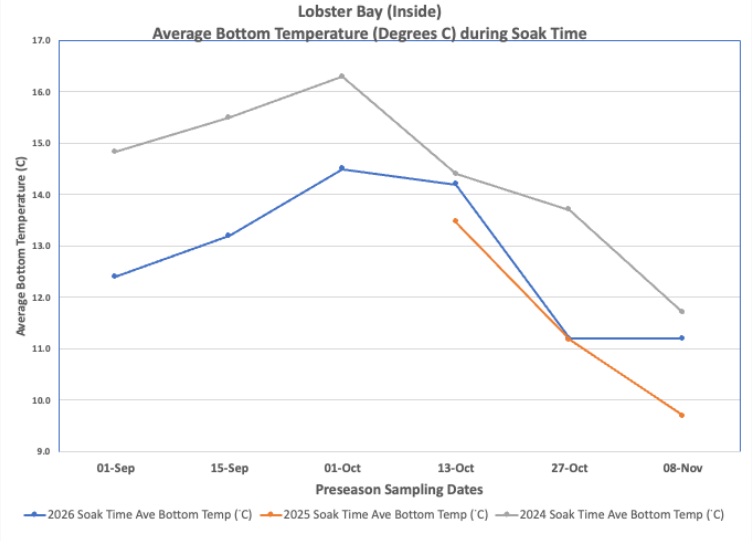
In 2026, on average, Lobster Bay average bottom temperatures (12C) are about +2 degrees warmer than Port La Tour (10C). St. Mary's Bay and Yarmouth Bar are intermediate at 11-11.5C average bottom temperature over the preseason period (Table 2a).

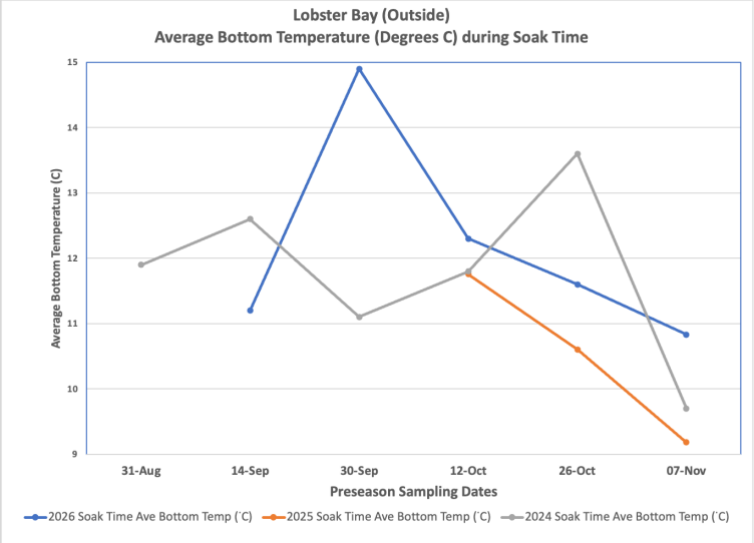
In all areas, early to mid-October bottom temperatures are somewhat elevated (globally, October 2026 is noted as being the warmest October on record) (Table 2a). As expected, in all areas, samples at the end of October and into early November show declining bottom temperatures.

In the figures below, sample soak time bottom temperatures are compared for the 3 preseason years of data: 2026, 2025, and 2024 for several areas: Yarmouth Bar (Inside), Port La Tour (Outside) and Lobster Bay (Inside and Outside). In these cases, the rise in average bottom temperatures at end September-early October samples in 2026 are observed. In 2024, bottom temperatures were initially about 2C warmer than 2026 at the start of preseason sampling (early September) with the 2024 peak in samples earlier in the year at mid-September before cooling off into November for most areas. In 2026, early to mid-October bottom temperatures were warmer by about 3C than 2024. Bottom temperatures into November were similar for 2026 and 2024 but a degree above those of the limited 2025 samples as noted in the figures below.


Yarmouth Bar (Inside)
Average Bottom Temperature (Degrees C) during Soak Time
Average Bottom Temperature (C)
16.0
15.0
14.0
13.0
12.0
11.0
10.0
09-Sep
22-Sep
07-Oct
20-Oct
03-Nov
Preseason Sampling Dates
2026 Soak Time Ave Bottom Temp (˚C)
2025 Soak Time Ave Bottom Temp (˚C)
2024 Soak Time Ave Bottom Temp (˚C)


Port La Tour (Outside)
Average Bottom Temperature (Degrees C) during Soak Time
Average Bottom Temperature (C)
16.0
14.0
12.0
10.0
8.0
6.0
4.0
01-Sep
15-Sep
30-Sep
12-Oct
27-Oct
09-Nov
Preseason Sampling Dates
2026 Soak Time Ave Bottom Temp (˚C)
2025 Soak Time Ave Bottom Temp (˚C)
2024 Soak Time Ave Bottom Temp (˚C)


Lobster Bay (Inside)
Average Bottom Temperature (Degrees C) during Soak Time
Average Bottom Temperature (C)
17.0
16.0
15.0
14.0
13.0
12.0
11.0
10.0
9.0
01-Sep
15-Sep
01-Oct
13-Oct
27-Oct
08-Nov
Preseason Sampling Dates
2026 Soak Time Ave Bottom Temp (˚C)
2025 Soak Time Ave Bottom Temp (˚C)
2024 Soak Time Ave Bottom Temp (˚C)


Lobster Bay (Outside)
Average Bottom Temperature (Degrees C) during Soak Time
Average Bottom Temperature (C)
15
14
13
12
11
10
9
31-Aug
14-Sep
30-Sep
12-Oct
26-Oct
07-Nov
Preseason Sampling Dates
2026 Soak Time Ave Bottom Temp (˚C)
2025 Soak Time Ave Bottom Temp (˚C)
2024 Soak Time Ave Bottom Temp (˚C)

Details of the 2026 preseason sampling period and comparisons are presented in Section 3 below. Table 3 below presents a summary of the survey results for each of the 24 location-date samples in the survey program including sample dates, and total lobster counts. Table 3 also reports soft and weak lobster percentages by sample and overall, as well as average BRIX per sample and overall.

Table 3. 2026 Preseason Sampling Survey Program

Sampling Location	Sites Subarea	Sampling Dates	Total Counts Harvested	Total Samples	Sample Ave BRIX	Sample % Soft	Sample % Soft+Med	Sample % Weak
Lobster Bay LFA 34	Inside	01-Sep	1555	100	8.38	3.00%	75.00%	2.00%
		15-Sep	1813	100	7.25	3.00%	76.00%	3.00%
		01-Oct	1229	100	8.39	2.00%	41.00%	0.00%
		13-Oct	1667	100	8.70	1.00%	41.00%	0.00%
		27-Oct	1133	100	8.40	3.00%	45.00%	3.00%
		08-Nov	1082	100	7.76	6.00%	55.00%	1.00%
	Outside	31-Aug	709	100	7.87	3.00%	89.00%	1.00%
		14-Sep	1099	100	7.54	0.00%	79.00%	0.00%
		30-Sep	955	100	7.70	0.00%	39.00%	0.00%
		12-Oct	1385	100	8.09	2.00%	39.00%	0.00%
		26-Oct	1082	100	8.91	0.00%	19.00%	0.00%
		07-Nov	837	100	8.94	0.00%	27.00%	0.00%
Port La Tour LFA 33	Inside	02-Sep	474	100	7.79	0.00%	73.00%	0.00%
		16-Sep	432	100	6.73	7.00%	67.00%	2.00%
		01-Oct	282	100	8.14	3.00%	34.00%	0.00%
		14-Oct	243	100	7.51	2.00%	41.00%	0.00%
		28-Oct	432	100	8.72	3.00%	28.00%	0.00%
		10-Nov	268	100	8.41	3.00%	29.00%	0.00%
	Outside	01-Sep	105	55	6.21	10.91%	96.36%	0.00%
		15-Sep	167	99	6.12	2.02%	98.99%	0.00%
		30-Sep	334	100	6.55	2.00%	64.00%	0.00%
		12-Oct	261	100	6.61	2.00%	59.00%	0.00%
		27-Oct	553	100	6.93	2.00%	64.00%	2.00%
		09-Nov	482	100	7.02	1.00%	52.00%	0.00%

Sampling Location	Sites Subarea	Sampling Dates	Total Counts Harvested	Total Samples	Sample Ave BRIX	Sample % Soft	Sample % Soft+Med	Sample % Weak
St. Mary's Bay	Inside	09-Sep	163	100	7.86	0.00%	1.00%	0.00%
LFA 34		22-Sep	440	100	8.07	1.00%	48.00%	0.00%
		07-Oct	449	100	7.73	0.00%	35.00%	0.00%
		20-Oct	591	100	7.69	0.00%	40.00%	1.00%
		03-Nov	376	100	7.58	1.00%	40.00%	0.00%
	Outside	08-Sep	44	26	9.34	3.85%	69.23%	0.00%
		21-Sep	156	100	8.00	3.00%	53.00%	0.00%
		05-Oct	433	100	7.53	2.00%	33.00%	2.00%
		19-Oct	603	100	7.67	1.00%	36.00%	2.00%
		02-Nov	540	100	8.16	1.00%	41.00%	0.00%
Yarmouth	Inside	09-Sep	492	100	7.77	3.00%	83.00%	0.00%
LFA 34		22-Sep	443	100	8.89	0.00%	34.00%	0.00%
		07-Oct	683	100	8.90	0.00%	24.00%	0.00%
		20-Oct	513	100	10.16	1.00%	8.00%	0.00%
		03-Nov	316	100	9.82	0.00%	21.00%	0.00%
	Outside	08-Sep	375	100	8.22	0.00%	86.00%	1.00%
		21-Sep	622	100	7.94	0.00%	52.00%	1.00%
		05-Oct	575	100	8.09	3.00%	28.00%	1.00%
		19-Oct	735	100	7.96	1.00%	36.00%	0.00%
		02-Nov	679	100	7.57	0.00%	51.00%	0.00%
			Total Counts	**Lobsters Sampled**	**Overall Ave BRIX**	**Overall % Soft**	**Overall % Soft+Med**	**Overall % Weak**
TOTALS			27,807	4,280	7.94	1.73%	50.00%	0.51%

Review of the 2025 Preseason Survey Results

In 2025, average BRIX levels observed over the preseason samples (September to November) fell for both Inside and Outside areas across all locations. Early preseason surveys tend to fall through September and then continue to rise from mid-October to the end of preseason sampling in early to mid-November with Inside areas relatively stable and Outside areas increasing by the end of the preseason period. This typical rise in BRIX did not happen as usual in 2025. Rather, samples' average BRIX levels declined in both the Inside and Outside areas over the preseason resulting in an overall low average BRIX level of 7.98 mg/mL– the lowest average overall BRIX value (to 2025) in the time series since 2020.

In 2025, total landings counts of legal and sublegal, and male and female lobsters were 22,850 lobsters or 13.06 lobster counts per trap (for 1,750 total traps in 2025). This represented an increase of +55% over the 2024 value of 8.44 total lobster counts per trap (1,425 traps in 2024).

In 2025, Inside areas had relatively stable lobster counts with Lobster Bay exceeding other areas by a factor of 2 (20 average total lobster counts per trap versus 5-15 counts per trap in other areas). In the Outside areas, average total lobster counts increased in all Outside areas with amounts rising by the end of the preseason period to the higher Lobster Bay levels of 15 to 20 average total lobster counts (legals plus sublegals) per trap. In terms of legal counts per trap over all 8 locations, average legal counts per trap in 2025 (8.6 legal-sized counts per trap) were up by 25% compared to the 2024 values of 6.9 legal-sized counts per trap.

In 2025 there was a return to negligible levels of Soft lobsters in all areas as was the case in the pre-2023 preseason periods (overall below 2% per sample on average). It was acknowledged that the interpretation of the 2025 data on carapace hardness is not likely to impact the quality of lobster for the 2025-26 commercial season as indicated by the preseason samples across all areas.

It was noted in the 2025 preseason summary report that the range of sublegal catch counts percentages by sample varies over a wide range from near zero sublegal catches to 75% and more over preseason sampling. Moreover, catch counts of sublegals in Inside areas vary similarly with Outside areas. The 2025 results are similar to results for prior years 2020 to 2024. Consequently, it was concluded that the catch of sublegals as a proportion of total catch counts do not appear to exhibit a decreasing trend over the observed time frame in LFAs33&34.

The percentage of "weak" lobsters observed in 2025 preseason sampling over all areas and samples was estimated to be at historical low levels below 1%. These observations represented an overall decline in the numbers of sampled weak lobsters compared to past preseason sampling years 2020 to 2024.

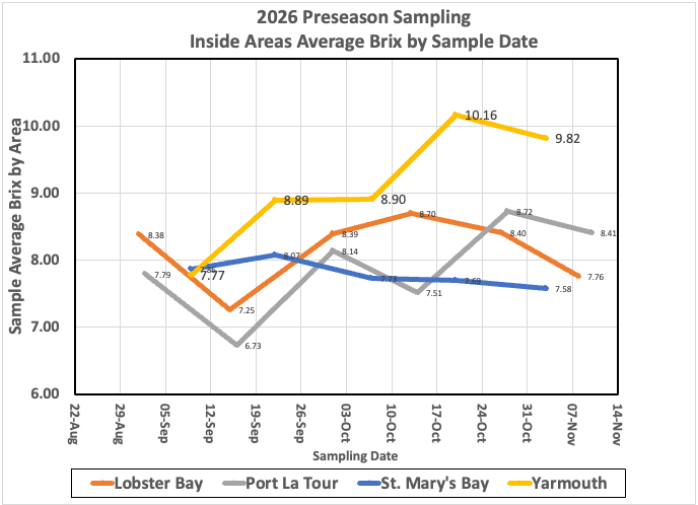
Detailled information on the 2025 Preseason Survey can be found in the Lobster Quality Preseason Sampling Summary Report for 2025 (November 2025) and the Lobster Quality Preseason and In-season Sampling Final Report (April 2026).

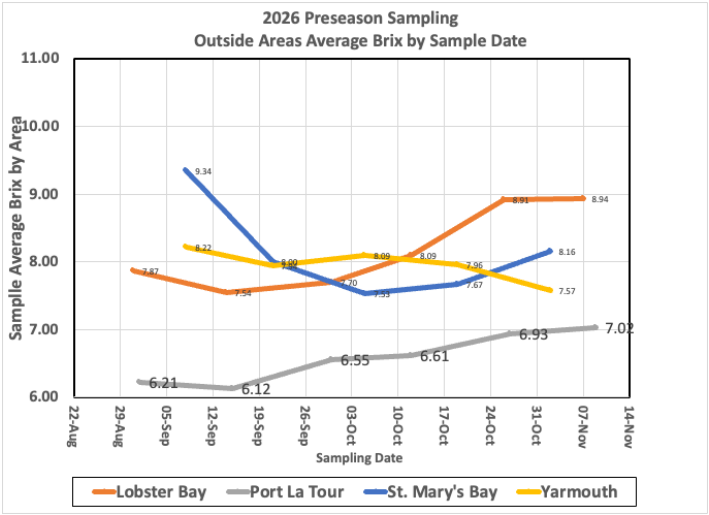
2026 Preseason Summary Quality Indicators

2026 Preseason Summary highlights are summarized below for: (1) BRIX level values; (2) lobster total counts per trap; (3) lobster carapace hardness values; (4) lobster sublegal counts proportions and (5) percent weak lobsters in the samples.

1) BRIX Level Values

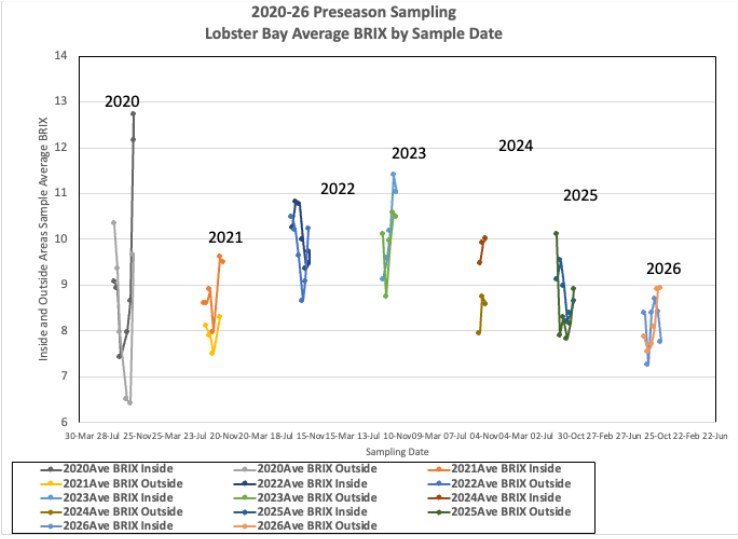
In 2026, average BRIX levels observed over the initial preseason samples at end August and early September generally fell for both Inside and Outside areas across all locations. As in past years (2020-2025), early preseason surveys tend to fall through September and then rise from mid-October to the end of preseason sampling in early to mid-November with Inside areas relatively stable and Outside areas increasing. This process was observed in 2026 preseason samples with some exceptions. In Yarmouth Bar, Inside samples BRIX continued to climb over the preseason, whereas Yarmouth Bar Outside samples declined slightly – the opposite of expected BRIX behaviour, e.g., as exhibted in Lobster Bay, St. Mary's Bay, and Port La Tour where Inside area samples are relatively stable toward the end of preseason samples, and rising over the Outside area samples (see also the figures below). Overall areas average BRIX level of 7.94 mg/mL (Table 3) is the lowest average overall BRIX value in the time series since 2020 and slightly below the previous minimum overall average BRIX of the 2025 preseason of 7.98 mg/mL. Overall average BRIX levels were notably higher in Yarmouth Bar (Inside) at 9.11 mg/mL, and lower in Port La Tour (Outside) at only 6.60 mg/mL) for preseason sampling.

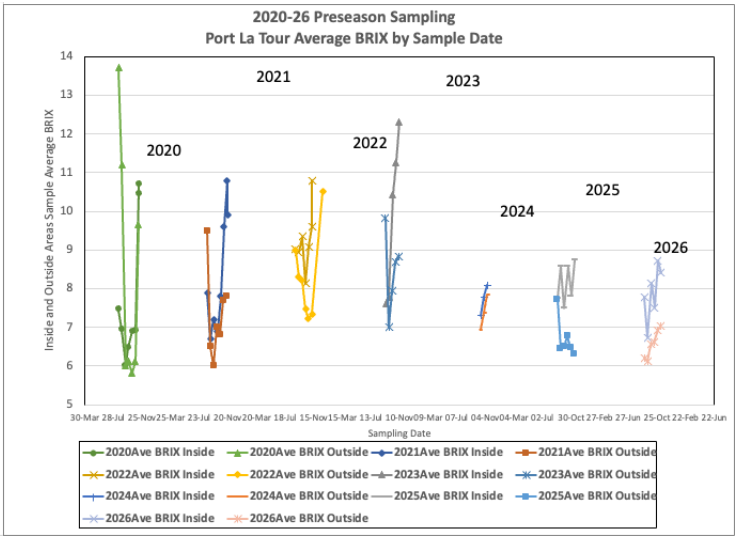




In 2026, average BRIX values across all samples by area were comparable to the BRIX averages for 2024 and 2025 preseason sampling. The 2024-2026 BRIX observations reversed the 2020 to 2023 trend over all locations that showed a rise in BRIX averages (see also figures below). In the Inside areas during 2026, overall average BRIX levels per sample vary between a low of 7.79 mg/mL (St. Mary's Bay) to a high of 9.11 mg/mL (Yarmouth Bar). In Outside areas, overall average BRIX per sample vary between low levels of 6.60 mg/mL (Port La Tour) to a maximum of only 8.18 mg/mL (Lobster Bay). These results are similar to the 2025 preseason average BRIX observations by area.

Average BRIX values are shown in the figures below for Lobster Bay and Port La Tour and include samples for both Inside and Outside areas and for each of the indicated years 2020 to 2026. For Lobster Bay, overall average BRIX values tend to rise from 2020 to 2023 and then fall in 2024 through 2026. The 2026 BRIX values for Lobster Bay are arguably the lowest BRIX level averages of the time series. Similarly, for Yarmouth Bar in 2026, overall average BRIX values per sample show a slightly rising trend from 2020 to 2023 and then a noticeable decline since 2024 and continuing into 2026. In 2026, Yarmouth Bar average BRIX values are comparable to the 2025 preseason values.





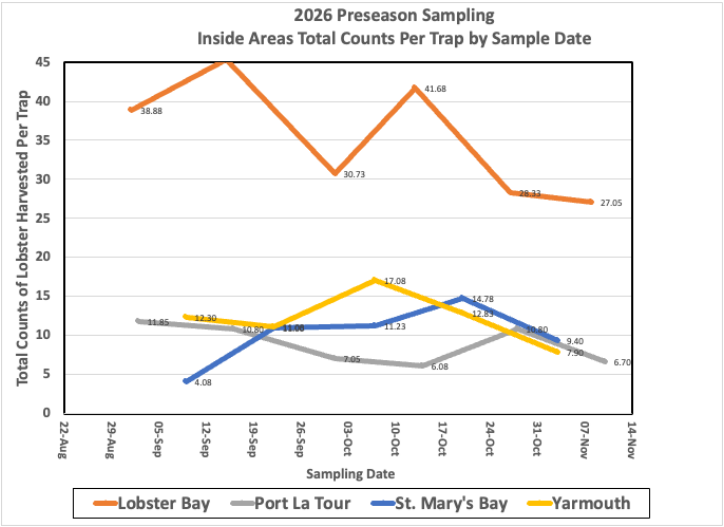
2026 preseason sampling results in LFAs 33 and 34 indicate that lobsters landed at the start of the 2026-2027 season in southwest Nova Scotia, appear to be of overall low or moderate-low (L or ML) quality by comparison with the average sample BRIX values by area for the entire 2006 to 2025 preseason database. For all locations in 2026, average BRIX values per sample are consistent with the lower level averages for BRIX since the 2014+ period.

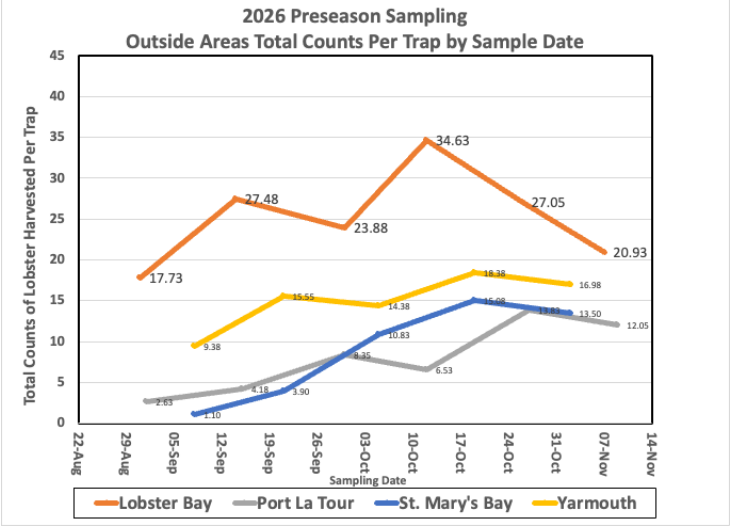
2) Lobster Total Counts Per Trap

In 2026, total landings counts (legal and sublegal, and male and female lobsters) were 27,807 lobsters (Table 3) or 15.80 lobster counts per trap (for 1,760 total traps in 2026). This represents an increase of +21% overall for the 2025 value of 13.06 lobster counts per trap (1,750 traps in 2025).

Lobster total counts (legals plus sublegals) in each location typically fall (2020, 2025) or are stable (2021, 2022) over the preseason period in Inside samples, and rise over the period of Outside samples (2020-2025). This is consistent with the expected Inside to Outside movement of lobsters to deeper waters in LFAs 33&34 as the commercial season and winter nears. In 2026, this pattern was repeated in the Inside areas with declining lobster counts in Lobster Bay exceeding other areas by a factor of 3 or more (35 average total lobster counts per trap versus 5-15 counts per trap in other areas). In the Outside areas, average total lobster counts per trap generally increased in all Outside areas with amounts rising by the end of the preseason period to levels of near 15 average total lobster counts (legals plus sublegals) per trap. Lobster Bay Outside total counts per trap exceeded all other areas. Yarmouth Bar (Outside) total counts per trap

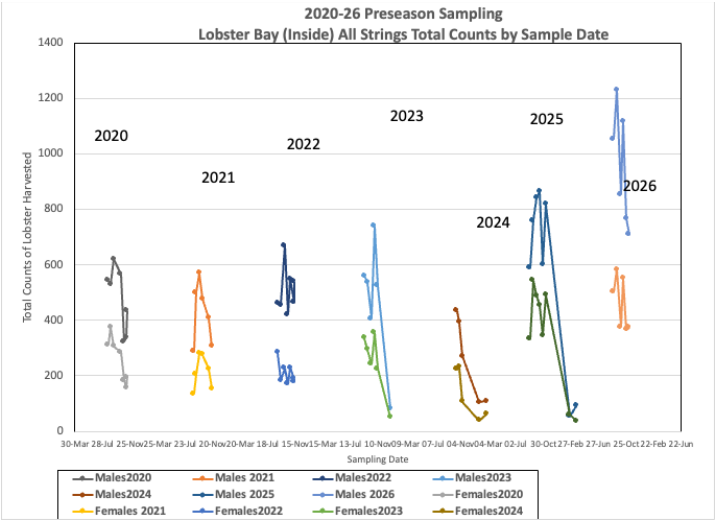
are slightly above the remaining areas and approach total counts per trap of Lobster Bay (Outside) by the end of the preseason sampling period. The figures below illustrate the Inside and Outside total average counts per trap by area for the 2026 preseason samples.

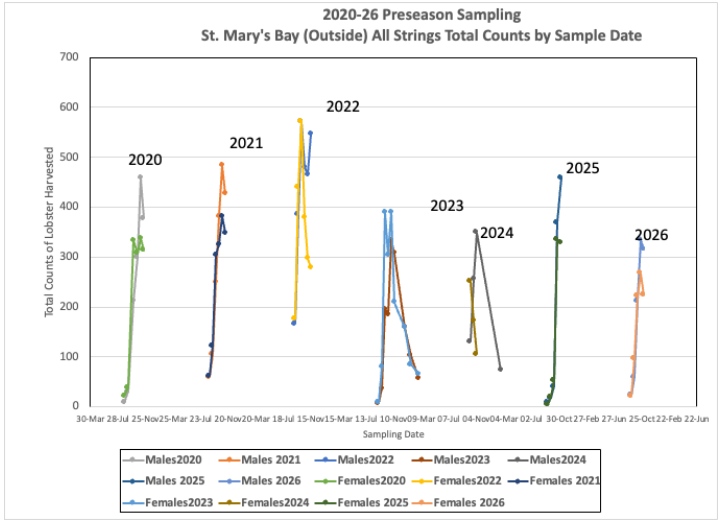




Lobster Bay Inside total (legal and sublegal) counts are illustrated in the figure below annually for each preseason sample over the years 2020 to 2026 and by sex: males and females counts. Total lobster counts per 40-trap (on 4 strings) samples in Lobster Bay counts for 2026 represent the overall highest counts of males plus females across all years 2020-2026. As is typical of Lobster Bay Inside catches in the past, 2026 catches of males exceed that of females.

The figure below for St. Mary's Bay Outside total counts per sample by sex (males and females) for 2020 to 2026 illustrate that this area has remained relatively stable over the reduced counts period from 2023 to 2026 when counts are approximately one-half those compared to 2020 to 2022 (as illustrated below).



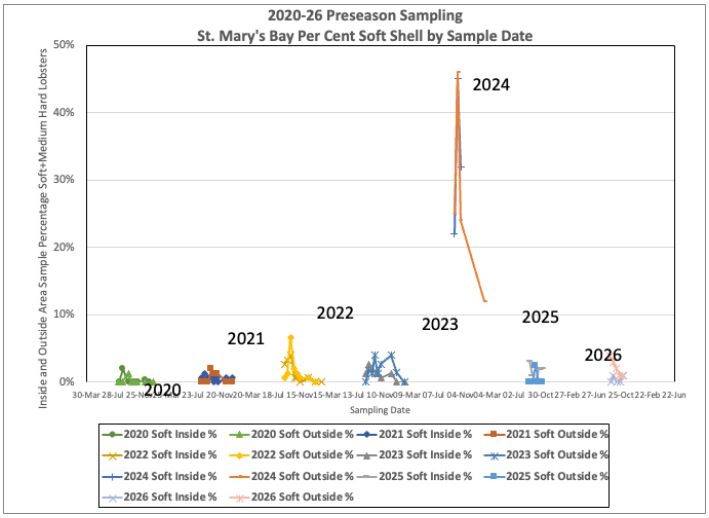


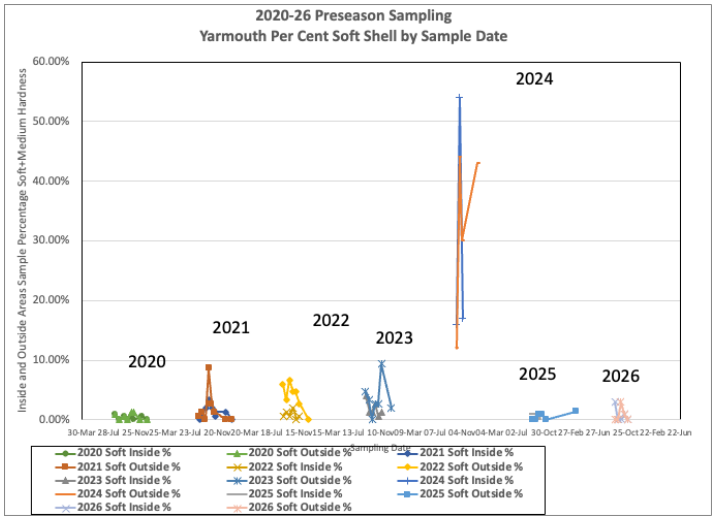
For the cases of Port La Tour and Yarmouth Bar areas in 2026, total counts per sample vary between 150 and 300 male and female lobsters each per sample. For the Inside areas, these amounts do not vary appreciably over past years 2020 to 2026. The exception is Yarmouth Outside where average total counts of males and females each were 50% higher in the pre-2023 period (2020-2022).

3) Lobster Shell Hardness in Samples

In the 2024 preseason, measures of the percentage of Soft lobster shells in samples shifted dramatically higher in comparison to the 2020 to 2023 past preseason survey results. In 2025 and 2026, these measures shifted once again to return to the lower pre-2024 values. These shifts are illustrated in the graphs below for St. Mary's Bay and Yarmouth Bar. These graphs illustrate the percentage of the samples of the counts for "Soft" for the preseason sampling dates over the 7-year reporting period, 2020 to 2026.

Counts of Soft lobster spiked from negligible amounts (less than 10%) in 2020 through 2023 to over 30% in St. Mary's Bay and Yarmouth Bar in their respective sampling dates for 2024. Since 2025, and including 2026 however, there has been a return to negligible levels of Soft lobsters in these two areas as illustrated. These dramatic shifts in 2026 (and 2025) are also evident in Port La Tour and Lobster Bay areas.





As noted in the past, it is understood that subjective measures of hardness are but one characteristic of determining lobster quality. While the 2024 elevated Soft measures were concerning, they could be associated with a change in the interpretation of "Soft" carapace by the technician taking the measurement. We reserve judgment on the overall significance of the 2024 shift until a wider and longer time frame of hardness sampling is completed. In the interim, we acknowledge that the interpretation of the 2026 data on carapace hardness is not likely to impact the quality of lobster for the 2026-27 commercial season as indicated by the preseason samples across all areas.

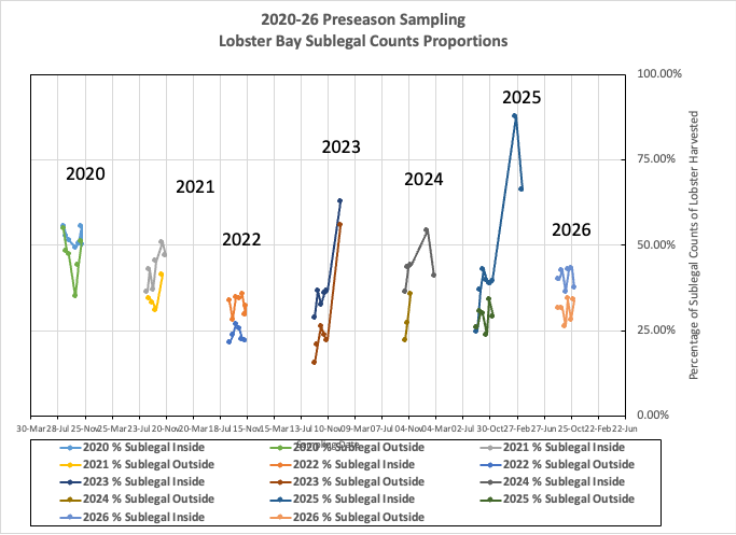
4) Lobster Legal-Sublegal Counts Proportions

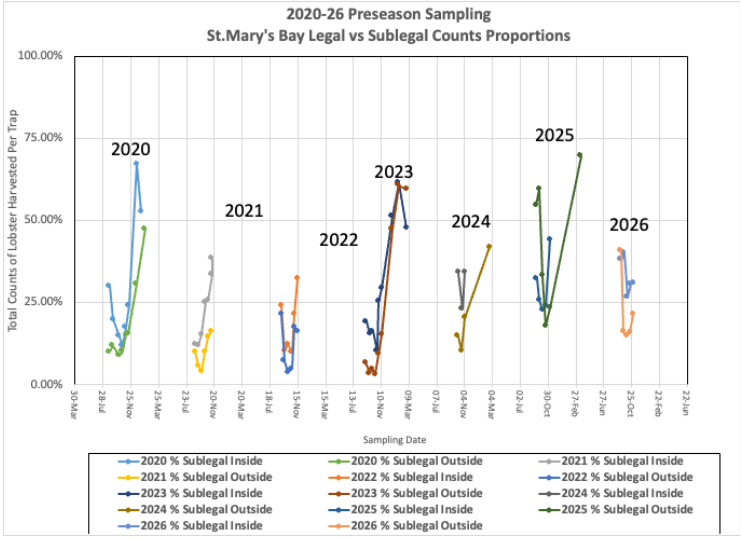
Legal-Sublegal Proportions Observations. Inspired by the recent concerns raised in the Gulf of Maine by our American lobster sector colleagues, preseason sampling data on the proportion of sublegals in sample catch counts was analysed for 2025 and again in 2026 in order to compare these recent data to the past data for 2020 to 2024. The analysis examines the occurrence of juvenile ("sublegal" or "shorts") lobsters in sample catches across the sampling locations.

The 2024 preseason survey was carried out under the assumption that the United States would be establishing new conditions for the allowable minimum size of lobster for importation to American markets. The proposed changes had been initiated due to a rule-based model that was triggered by observed U.S. catches of sublegal lobster that were below expectations. The changes were designed to protect perceived declining abundance of recruiting lobster to the commercial fisheries. Although the U.S. measures were ultimately not applied as expected, this report analyses the observed catches of sublegal lobsters in the preseason sampling program of LFAs33 & 34 to detect any potential trends in sublegal samples.

The graphs below illustrate the proportion of sublegal catches in the survey over the period from 2020 to 2026 for the Inside and Outside areas of Lobster Bay and St. Mary's Bay. The results for these areas are also indicative of similar results for Port La Tour and Yarmouth Bar.

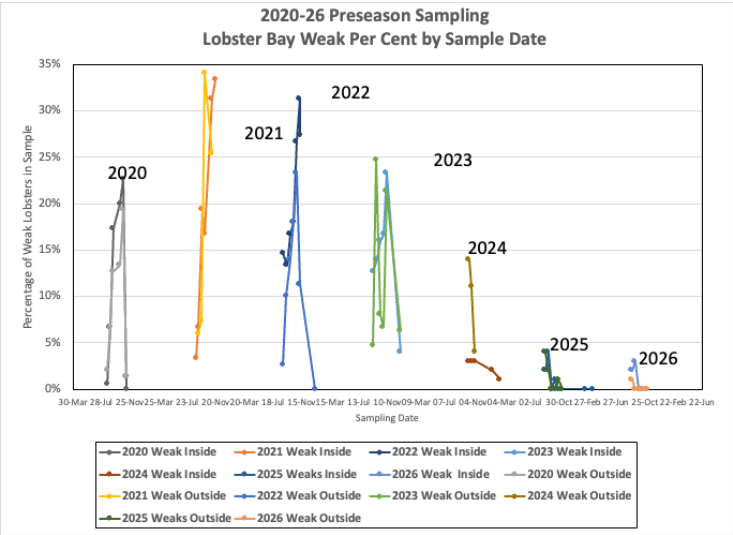
It is noted that the range of sublegal catch counts percentages varies over a wide range from near zero sublegal catches (St. Mary's Bay in 2022-23) to 75% and more (Lobster Bay in 2025) over the preseason period. Moreover, catch counts in Outside areas appear to catch a slightly lower percentage of sublegals than the comparable Inside areas. Finally, 2026 results are not significantly different from sublegal catch results for the prior years 2020 to 2025. Consequently, it is observed and concluded that the catch of sublegals as a proportion of total catch counts do not appear to be different over the observed time frame in LFAs33 and 34.

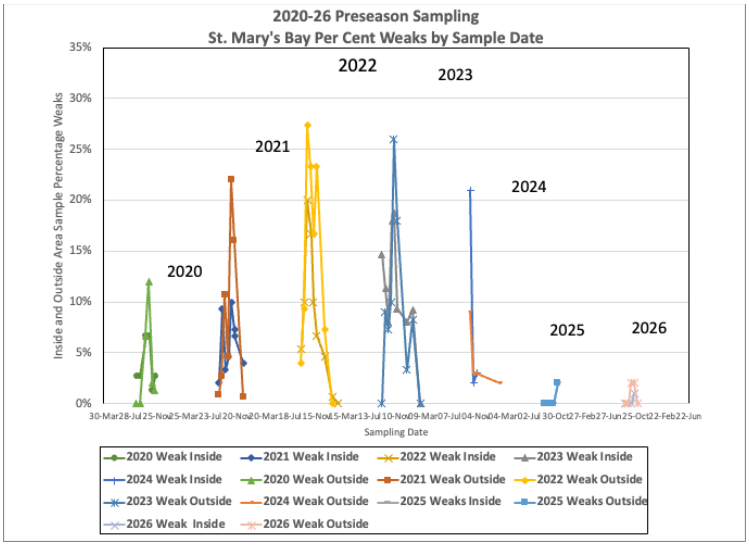




5) Percent Weak Lobsters in Samples

The percentage of "weak" lobsters observed in 2026 – as in 2025 – preseason sampling over all areas was estimated to be at historical low levels below 1% (Table 3). These observations represent an overall decline in the numbers of sampled weak lobsters compared to past years 2020 to 2024. The charts below provide the percent of weak lobsters recorded for the Inside and Outside areas of Lobster Bay and St. Mary's Bay. The evidence shows the decline in weak counts in these areas relative to past years. These results are indicative of reduced weak counts across all areas.





As for the case of subjective measures of hardness, it is understood that the determination of 'weak' lobsters is also a highly subjective estimate based on lobster vigour and reaction to handling out of water. Interpretation of weak is also plagued by the time that the assessment is made, such that status may be a function of time and conditions on deck or in a crate before an assessment is made. Weak data for 2020 to 2023 were determined by the same Data Collection technician. In 2024, a new technician interpreted 'weak' lobsters and the 2020-2023 versus 2024 differences may be attributed to this change. Again in 2025, a new technician applied a more restrictive interpretation than in the past leading to a markedly lower count of weak lobsters in the samples. It is acknowledged that the interpretation of the 2026 data on the status of lobster as either 'weak' or 'not weak' will not impact estimates of quality of lobster for the 2026-27 commercial season as indicated by the results of preseason samples across all areas.

Table 4 below summarizes the 2026 preseason samples quality indicators by area (Inside and Outside) results for:

(1) average BRIX level values;
(2) average total lobster counts (legal + sublegal) per trap;
(3) average lobster carapace 'Soft' percentage values;
(4) average lobster carapace 'Soft+Medium' percentage values;
(5) average percent weak lobsters;
(6) estimated overall lobster quality category by area – indicators apply separately to each area and are relative to the area's own historical performance (areas that have demonstrated good quality in the past are evaluated relative to those values);
(7) numbers of samples by location-area; and
(8) most closely comparable historical year(s) to the current year, 2026 from the full 2006-2026 database.

Table 4. 2026 Preseason Sampling Summary Results

Locations: / 2026 Preseason Samples	Yarmouth Inside	Yarmouth Outside	Lobster Bay Inside	Lobster Bay Outside	Port La Tour Inside	Port La Tour Outside	St.Mary's Bay Inside	St.Mary's Bay Outside	Overall Locations
Average BRIX (units/ml)	9.11	7.96	8.15	8.18	7.88	6.60	7.79	7.93	7.94
Ave Total Counts* Per Trap	12.24	14.93	35.33	25.28	8.88	7.93	10.10	8.88	15.80
%Soft	0.80%	0.80%	3.00%	0.83%	3.00%	3.32%	0.40%	2.17%	1.73%
%Soft+Medium	34.00%	50.60%	55.50%	48.67%	45.33%	72.39%	31.00%	46.45%	50.00%
%Weaks	0.00%	0.60%	1.50%	0.17%	0.33%	0.33%	0.25%	0.80%	0.51%
Estimated Overall Lobster Quality Category	ML	L	L	L	ML	ML	L	ML	L to ML
No. of Location-dates	5	5	6	6	6	6	5	5	44
Comparable Years	2015, 2022	2014, 2024	2015, 2025	2015, 2022	2013	2015, 2022	2024, 2025	2018, 2019	2013, 2015, 2022,-2024

*Total Counts include Legal and Sublegal lobsters in samples.

6) Berried Females Observations

Berried (egg-bearing) females were examined in considerable detail again in the 2026 preseason surveys. Of the 44-sample location-dates in 2026 preseason sampling, 27 (61%) captured at least 1 berried female ("seed") lobster, and as many as 32 seeds in a single sample (maximum observation – Lobster Bay Inside, October 27 sample). The average observed was 4.41 berried females per sample location-date or 1.7% (194) of all legal and sublegal female lobsters captured (11,604) during the 2026 preseason sampling dates. In 2020 through 2025, those figures were 2.5% (270 berried females on 10,851 total female lobsters captured in 2020), 1.6% (165 on 10,435 in 2021), 2% (245 on 12,434 in 2022), 3.6% (350 on 9,711 in 2023), 7.3% (339 on 4,649 in 2024), and 2.5% (242 on 9,587 in 2025) respectively. Berried female data also recorded lobster carapace size, clutch fullness, egg stage and condition.

Analyses of these and other berried female data are provided in further detail in the full report of the 2026-2027 Preseason and In-season Lobster Quality Sampling Program scheduled to be released in the Spring of 2027.

Summary of 2026 Predictors

Predictors for the start of the commercial season (December 2026 through to January 2027) are provided for the following lobster quality indicators based on the 2026 preseason sampling program results:

(1) Expected average BRIX level values by location;
(2) Expected average legal-sized lobster counts per trap by location; and
(3) Expected average percent weak lobsters by location.

The logic for establishing the list of predictors is based on the extension of the observed 2026 preseason samples' results into the start of the commercial season for 2026-2027. From the expected start date of the commercial season (scheduled for Monday, November 30, 2026), lobsters are preparing to move from the post moult stage to the premoult stage over the winter of 2026-2027. The premoult stage is characterized by: (i) hardening of lobster shells; (ii) lower incidence of lobsters with soft and medium scale carapaces, and (iii) lower incidences of weak lobsters. Estimates of these predictors into the mid-December 2026 to mid-January 2027 period anticipate the rate of improvement of lobster quality status overall.

Estimates of legal-sized counts per trap take into account the increased catchability of recovering lobsters as well as the draw-down in catchable lobster abundance in each location following the initial start of the commercial season and the high initial fishing effort intensity. As evidenced from the data, the participation of the commercial fleet immediately after the season opens results in a precipitous decline in catch counts of lobster per trap in all locations into January 2027. Table 5 below presents the estimated predictor values based on the above assumptions through December 2026 and into January 2027.

Table 5. 2026 Preseason Sampling Predictors through December 2026 into January 2027

Locations: / Predictors	Yarmouth Inside	Yarmouth Outside	Lobster Bay Inside	Lobster Bay Outside	Port La Tour Inside	Port La Tour Outside	St. Mary's Bay Inside	St. Mary's Bay Outside
Average BRIX (mg/mL)	10	8	9	9	9	7.5	8	9
Average Legal Counts* Per Trap	3	7	14	10	3	7	5	7
Average % Weaks	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%

*Average Legal Counts exclude sublegal ("shorts") catches.

The predictor values in Table 5 are presented here to test the ability of this report in mirroring the results at the start of the commercial fishery. Feedback from industry about the viability of these predictors assist in improving these predictor results based on the preseason sampling program observations. The results of indicator predictability will be reported in the Spring 2027 report release.

Overall in 2026, average BRIX levels across all locations are expected to remain at the margin of "Good" (8 mg/mL) or slightly above, with the exception of Port La Tour (Outside) where BRIX values have been low in the 2026 sample (Table 4). Average expected BRIX for Yarmouth Bar (Inside) at the start of the season (10 mg/mL) is highest across areas. As lobster proceed from post-moult to premoult status into the Winter of 2026-27 and the Spring of 2027, lobster BRIX values are expected to improve. However, BRIX predictions also take account of the 2026 preseason overall average BRIX of 7.94 mg/mL, being the lowest value in the 2020 to 2026 full time series.

In 2026, with the clear exception of Lobster Bay Inside and Outside, legal catch counts per trap have fallen compared to past years in all other areas. It is therefore expected that legal catch counts per trap in all areas except Lobster Bay at the start of the commercial fishery will decrease relative to past years. This is especially the cases for Inside areas of Yarmouth Bar and Port La Tour where commercial catches may be expected to be low relative to previous years. Coincidentally, in 2026, BRIX levels are expected to be relatively higher in these same Inside areas of Yarmouth Bar and Port La Tour. At the same time, the relatively lower BRIX in Lobster Bay in 2026 (compared to past years' BRIX in Lobster Bay) also has the highest expectation of legal catches per trap. This apparent negative correlation between catches and BRIX (i.e., lower BRIX results in higher catches, and vice versa) are not necessarily statistically evident across all areas in lobster preseason sampling.

The percent of weak lobster is expected to fall over all locations into December 2026 through January 2027 and remain at low rates near or below 1%.

2026 Preseason Survey Results by Subarea

Information on the 2026 survey program by each of the 8 subareas follows. Preseason sample results by BRIX category are shown for each of the 8 sampling locations and include:

(A) **Blood Protein (BRIX) Categories**. Results are provided for the BRIX indicator values ("Good", "Moderate", "Poor") for each location and subarea samples of 2026 preseason sampling dates.

(B) Annual graphics compare past years (2012 to 2025) to the current year (2026) for the sample mean BRIX, and BRIX distribution by category at the end of the **preseason survey 3 to 4 weeks prior to the start of the commercial season in each year**. Knowledge of BRIX values and lobster moult dynamics at the end of the preseason sampling period are useful in providing a prediction of expected average BRIX values provided for each of the 8 sampling locations at the start of the commercial season scheduled for November 30, 2026.

(C) In 2026, the accumulated (male and female lobsters) results of **legal-sized total counts per trap** that occurred in the survey dates are highlighted and compared to past year's preseason sampling data, 2020-2025. These survey values provide an indication of the potential catch counts per trap at the start of the commercial season and are also used in this report as an approximate predictor of commercial catch rates for each of the 8 sampling areas as noted in the summaries by location (Table 5 above).

The trends for A, B, and C are described and summary predictions for the 2026 start-of-season are presented for each of the 8 sampling locations.

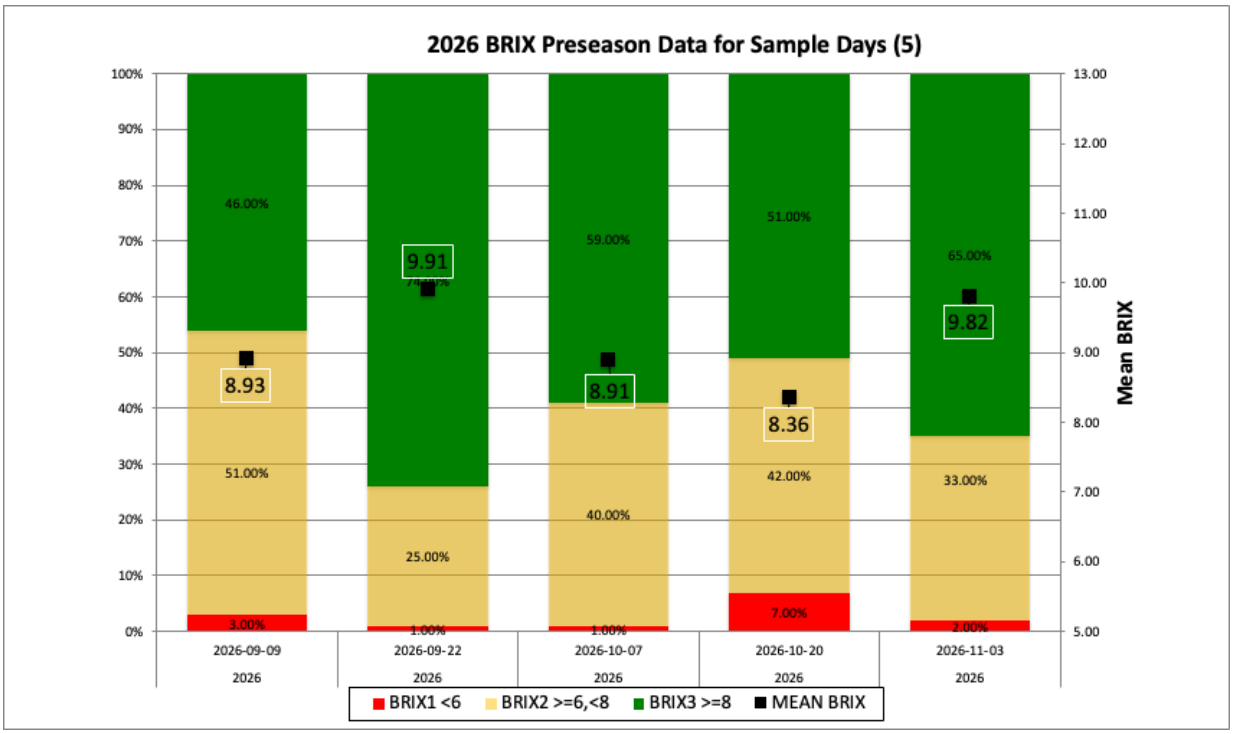
YARMOUTH INSIDE

2026 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

(A) Blood Protein (BRIX) Categories–2026 Samples

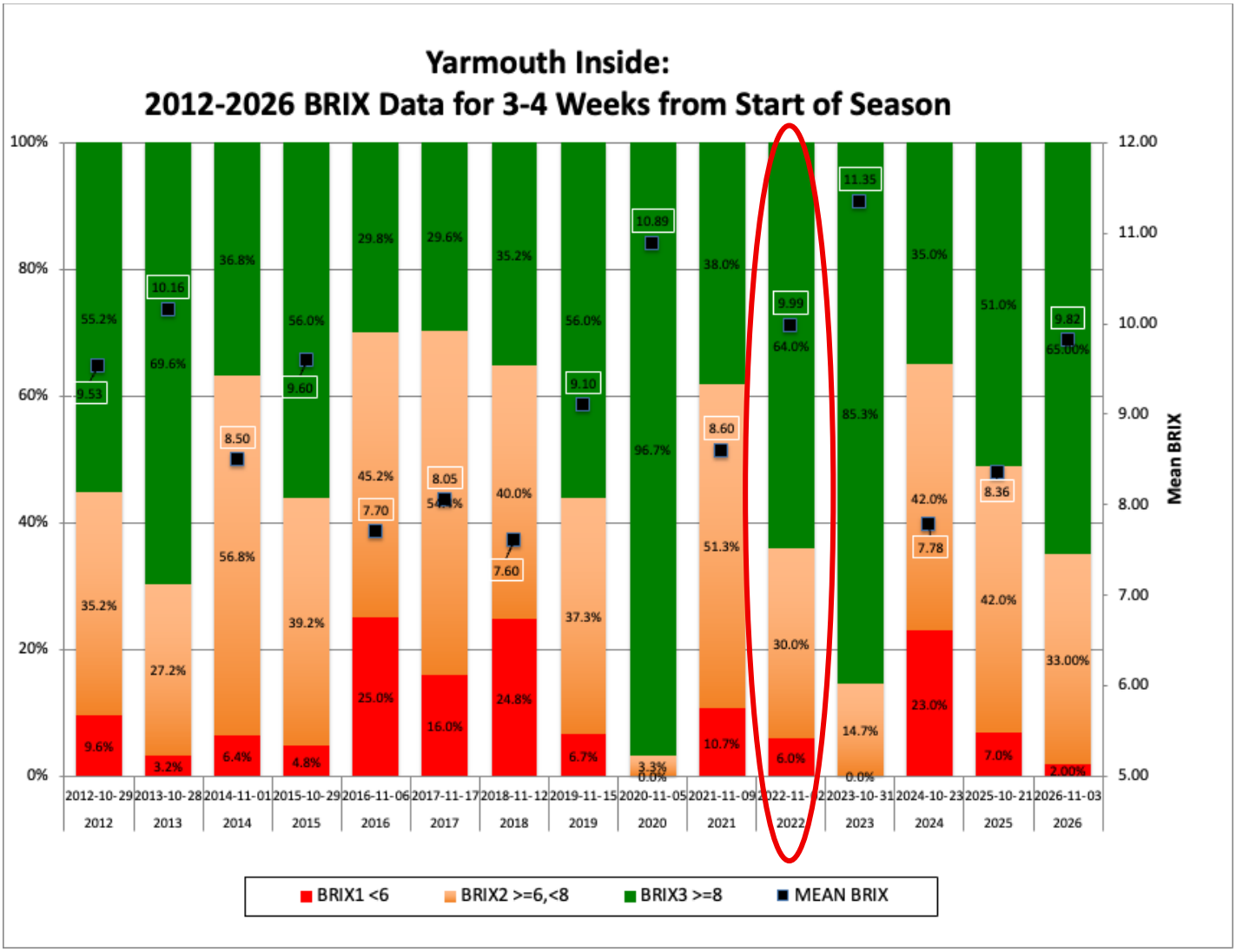
In the figure below, 2026 preseason results for 5 sample sites in Yarmouth Inside show relatively stable average BRIX from early-September to early-November samples. More than 45% of each sample attained "Good" levels of BRIX (≥8 mg/mL). The proportion of "Poor" lobsters (BRIX<6 mg/mL) sampled in Yarmouth Inside is minimal and well below 10% for all 5 samples in 2026.

Average BRIX level values for samples in 2026 vary from a low of 8.36 mg/mL in October to highs of 9.91 and 9.82 mg/mL at end September and early November (the last preseason sample), respectively. The overall average BRIX for 2026 (7.94 mg/mL) is 11% below the average BRIX in 2026 samples for Yarmouth Inside (8.82 mg/mL), the highest average BRIX among all areas. The average BRIX trend from end October is observed to be a increasing average BRIX into the start of the commercial season.



(B) Blood Protein (BRIX) Categories – Annual Samples 3-4 weeks before season start

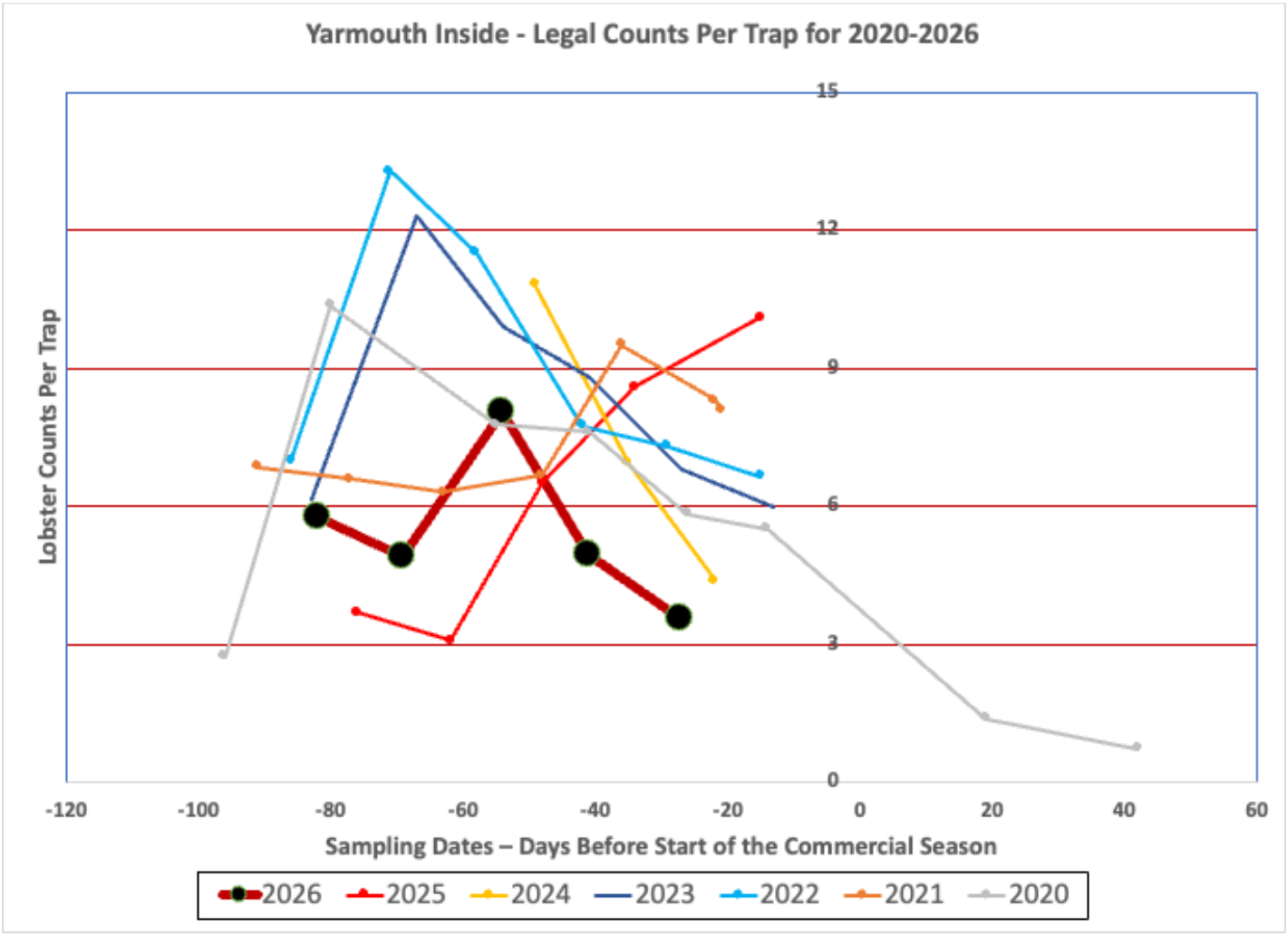
From the figure below, annual samples 3-4 weeks from the start of each commercial harvest season opening are variable across the series from 2012 to 2026 for Yarmouth Inside. The 2026 sample (November 3) has a high BRIX average (9.82 mg/mL) in the series. The November 3, 2026 sample is comparable to the November 2, 2022 sample, with similar BRIX category (red, orange and green) values and average of 9.99 mg/mL.



(C) Counts (legal-sized) per trap for 2026 samples

In the figure below, the counts per trap of lobsters (male and female) of legal-sized (82.5 mm or greater) lobsters that occurred in the preseason samples dates in 2026 (thick red line) are compared to past years' samples (2020-2025). The counts for Yarmouth Inside are generally below past years' counts/trap for all preseason samples with the exception of the October 7, 2026 sample (54 days prior to the start of the 2026-27 commercial season start on November 30). Subsequently, total counts/trap are the lowest in the time series for Yarmouth Bar (Inside).

The trend is low and declining counts heading into the commercial season and expectation is for poor catches (approximating 3 legal counts per trap) in Yarmouth Inside through December 2026 and into January 2027. As evidenced by the 2020 in-season sampling in the figure below, commercial catch rates in 2026 are expected to fall precipitously after the beginning of the commercial season through to January 2027 as legal-sized lobster abundance is extracted from Yarmouth Inside.



YARMOUTH INSIDE – Summary

1) Yarmouth Inside average BRIX values are relatively high for all preseason samples and appear to be increasing into mid-November toward 10 mg/mL. More than 45% of each sample attained "Good" levels of BRIX (≥8 mg/mL) in 2026 preseason sampling.

2) Yarmouth Inside Lobster Quality Category for 2026 samples are classified as "Moderate-Low" (ML). It is expected that "Good" BRIX levels (8 mg/mL) will be maintained into December 2026 and January 2027 as lobster move from post moult to premoult status over the winter. The 2026 sample is most comparable to 2022 during the period of relatively higher quality lobster in the commercial fisheries.

3) Yarmouth Inside legal counts per trap exhibit a decreasing trend toward the end of preseason sampling. It is anticipated that Yarmouth Inside initial commercial catch rates in 2026-2027 will be among the lowest observed in 2026 compared to the recent past.

4) Yarmouth Inside Weaks samples are near negligible in 2026 preseason sampling.

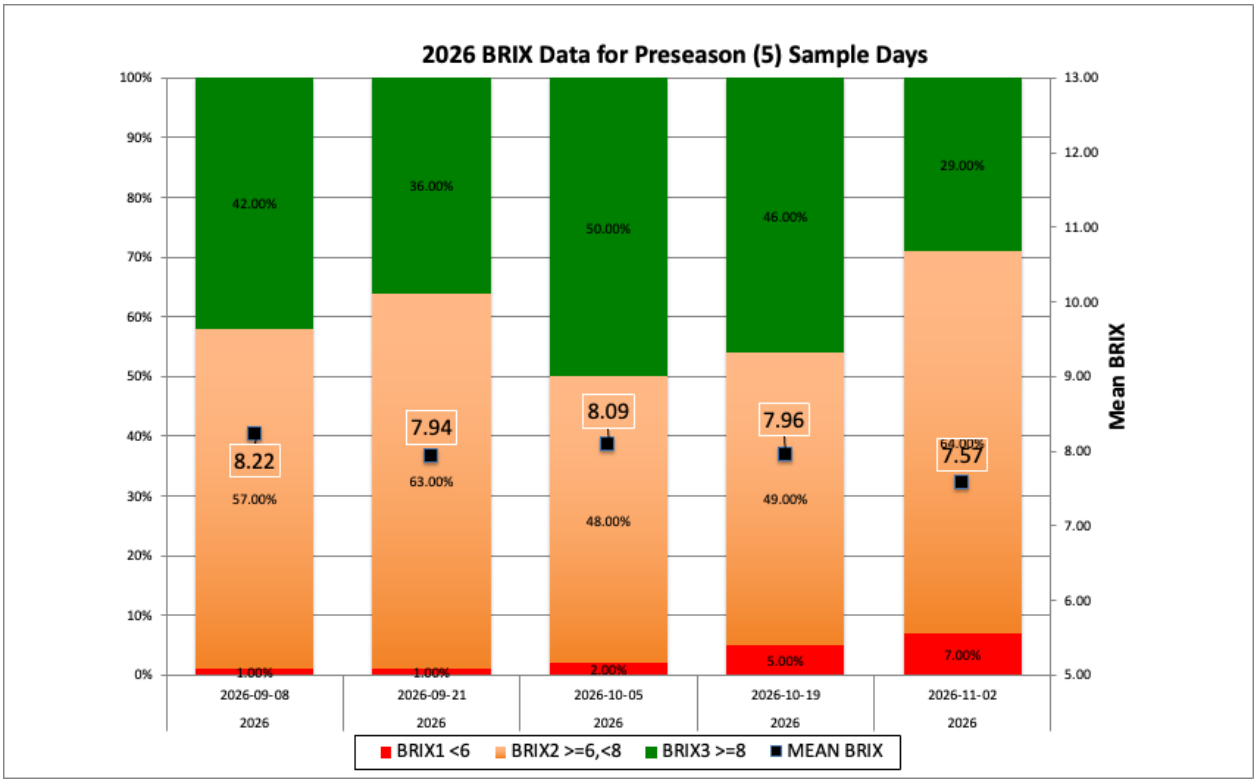
YARMOUTH OUTSIDE

2026 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

(A) Blood Protein (BRIX) Categories–2026 Samples

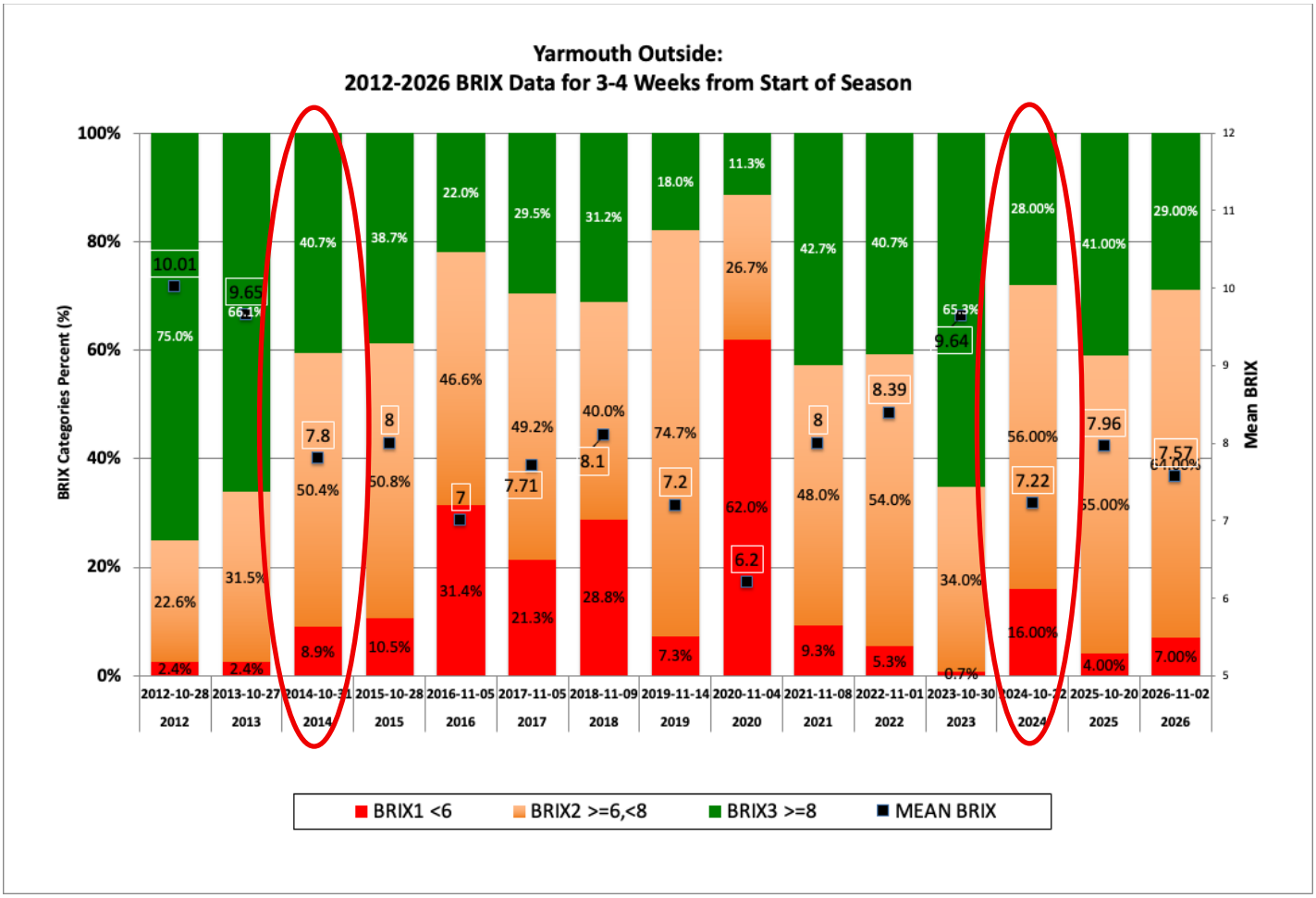
In the figure below, 2026 preseason results for 5 sample sites in Yarmouth Outside show a steady average BRIX from early-September to early-November samples. Similarly, the proportion of "Good" levels of BRIX (≥8 mg/mL) is significant across preseason samples ranging between 29% (November 2 sample) and 50% (October 5 sample). The proportion of "Poor" lobsters (BRIX<6 mg/mL) sampled in Yarmouth Outside remains low in the preseason samples peaking at only 7% in the November sample.

Average BRIX level values for samples in 2026 ranged around the "Good" level of 8 and in a narrow band between the high of 8.22 mg/mL in the first preseason sample in early September, to a low of 7.57 mg/mL at the ending sample in November. Overall average BRIX values for 2026 (7.94 mg/mL) are near the average BRIX in 2026 samples for Yarmouth Outside of 7.96 mg/mL. The trend over the preseason is observed to be a stable average BRIX of near 8 mg/mL into the start of the commercial season.



(B) Blood Protein (BRIX) Categories – Annual Samples 3-4 weeks before season start

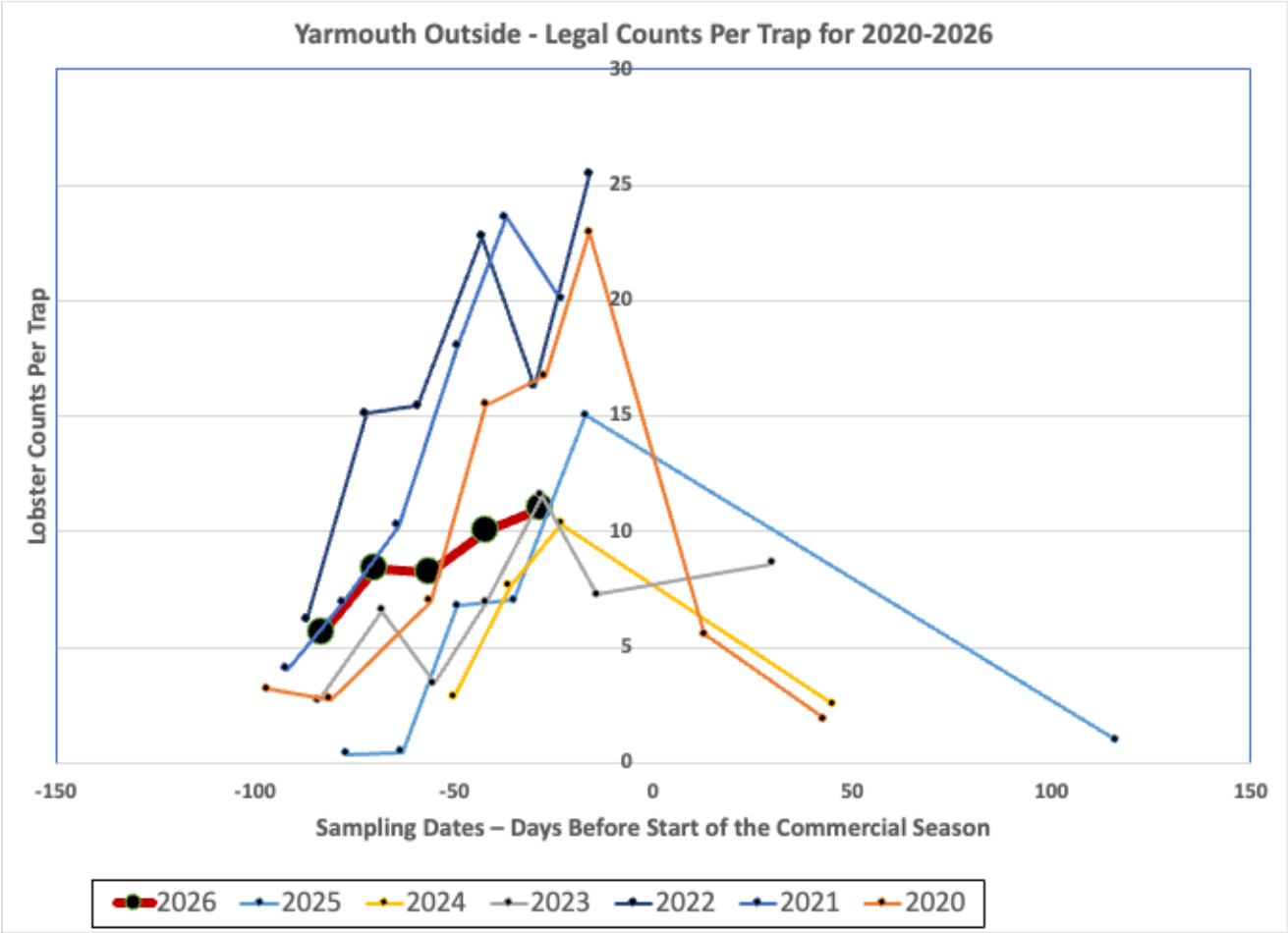
From the figure below, annual samples 3-4 weeks from the start of each commercial season opening are variable across the series from 2012 to 2026 for Yarmouth Outside. The average BRIX for the 2026 preseason sample of November 2 (28 days or 4 weeks before the start of the commercial season) has moderate value among average BRIX values in the series of 7.57 mg/mL. It is also noted that average BRIX has been declining since early October sampling. BRIX categories are directly comparable to years 2014 and 2022 – years of known overall lower quality relative to BRIX.



(C) Counts (legal-sized) per trap for 2026 samples

In the figure below, the counts per trap of lobsters (male and female) of legal-sized (82.5 mm or greater) that occurred in the survey samples dates in 2026 are compared to past years' samples (2020-2025). The 2026 legal counts for Yarmouth Outside (thick red line) are intermediate to past years' legal-sized counts per trap. 2026 values exceed the lower count years of 2023 to 2025 but are well below the higher counts values of 2020 to 2022. However, and as typical of past years, the time series of counts per trap over the preseason in Yarmouth Outside exhibit a rise from the beginning of sampling in September samples through to the last preseason early November sample.

Initial commercial catches are predicted to follow the rising legal counts per trap trend in Yarmouth Outside (near 10 counts/trap) at the start of the season after which counts per trap begin the characteristic decline at the start of the commercial fishery. Commercial catch rates are expected to fall off even more at the beginning of the commercial season as legal-sized lobster abundance is extracted and as was observed in the 2020, 2023, and 2025 in-season samples. Expectations are for a moderate level of legal-sized counts per trap into December 2026 and January 2027 near 7 lobsters per trap.



YARMOUTH OUTSIDE – Summary

1) Yarmouth Outside samples show a steady average BRIX to near or below the acceptable measures of 8 mg/mL over the preseason period. The trend at the start of the commercial season is for the percentage of "Good" category lobsters (BRIX≥8) to decline while the percentage of "Poor" category lobsters (BRIX<8) increases.

2) Yarmouth Outside Lobster Quality Category for 2026 samples are classified as "Low" (L). It is anticipated that "Good" BRIX levels may be attained into December 2026 as lobster move from post moult to premoult status over the winter. The 2026 sample is directly comparable to the 2014 and 2024 samples, years of actual lower quality lobster in the commercial fisheries.

3) Yarmouth Outside sampling legal counts per trap exhibit an increasing trend from low counts (close to 5 lobsters per trap) in early samples to over 10 lobsters per trap by the end of preseason sampling. It is anticipated that Yarmouth Outside initial commercial catch rates will be similar to recent years 2024 and 2025.

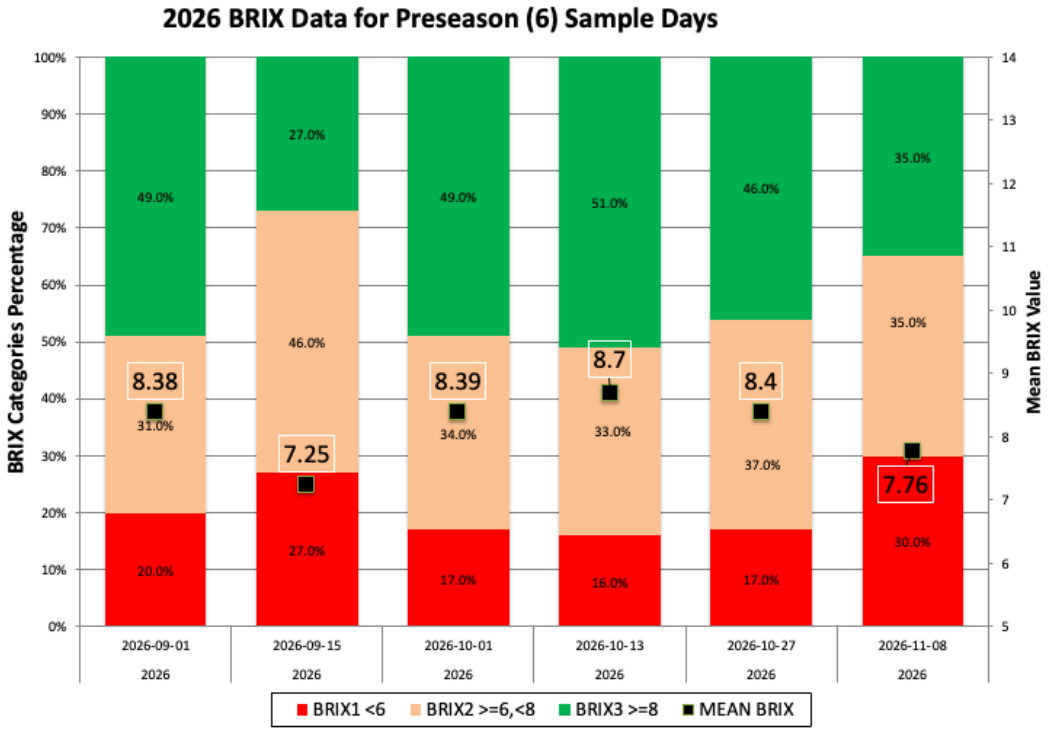
4) Yarmouth Outside Weaks samples are near negligible in 2026 preseason sampling.

LOBSTER BAY INSIDE

2026 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

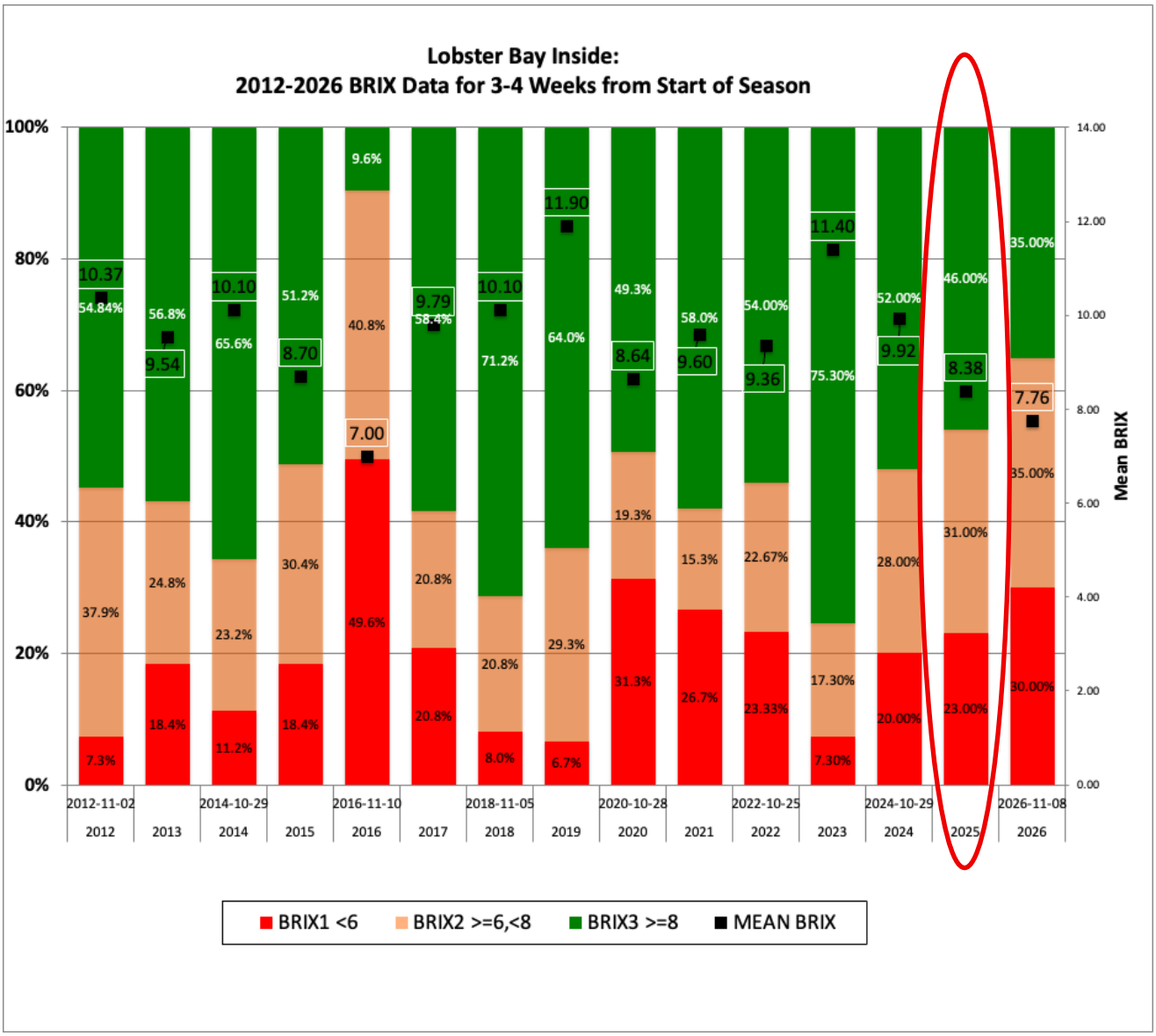
(A)Blood Protein (BRIX) Categories–2026 Samples

In the figure below, 2026 preseason survey results for 6 sample sites in Lobster Bay Inside show general stability over the preseason with average BRIX exceeding 8 and indications of a slight decline in average BRIX trending toward the end preseason sampling in November. The last November 8 sample has a moderate level BRIX (greater than 6 but less than 8) of only 7.76 mg/mL from an earlier high of 8.7 mg/mL in the mid-October sample after which average BRIX declines. Samples in 2026 attained "Good" levels of BRIX (≥8 mg/mL) of near 50% in early sampling, dropping below 50% in late preseason samples. Similarly, "Poor" levels of BRIX (<6 mg/mL) were at appreciable levels 20% in early sampling, rising to 30% in the last preseason November 8 sample. Overall average BRIX level values for samples in 2026 (7.94 mg/mL) were 3% below average BRIX values for the slightly higher Lobster Bay Inside average BRIX in 2026 (8.15 mg/mL).



(B) Blood Protein (BRIX) Categories – Annual Samples 3-4 weeks before season start

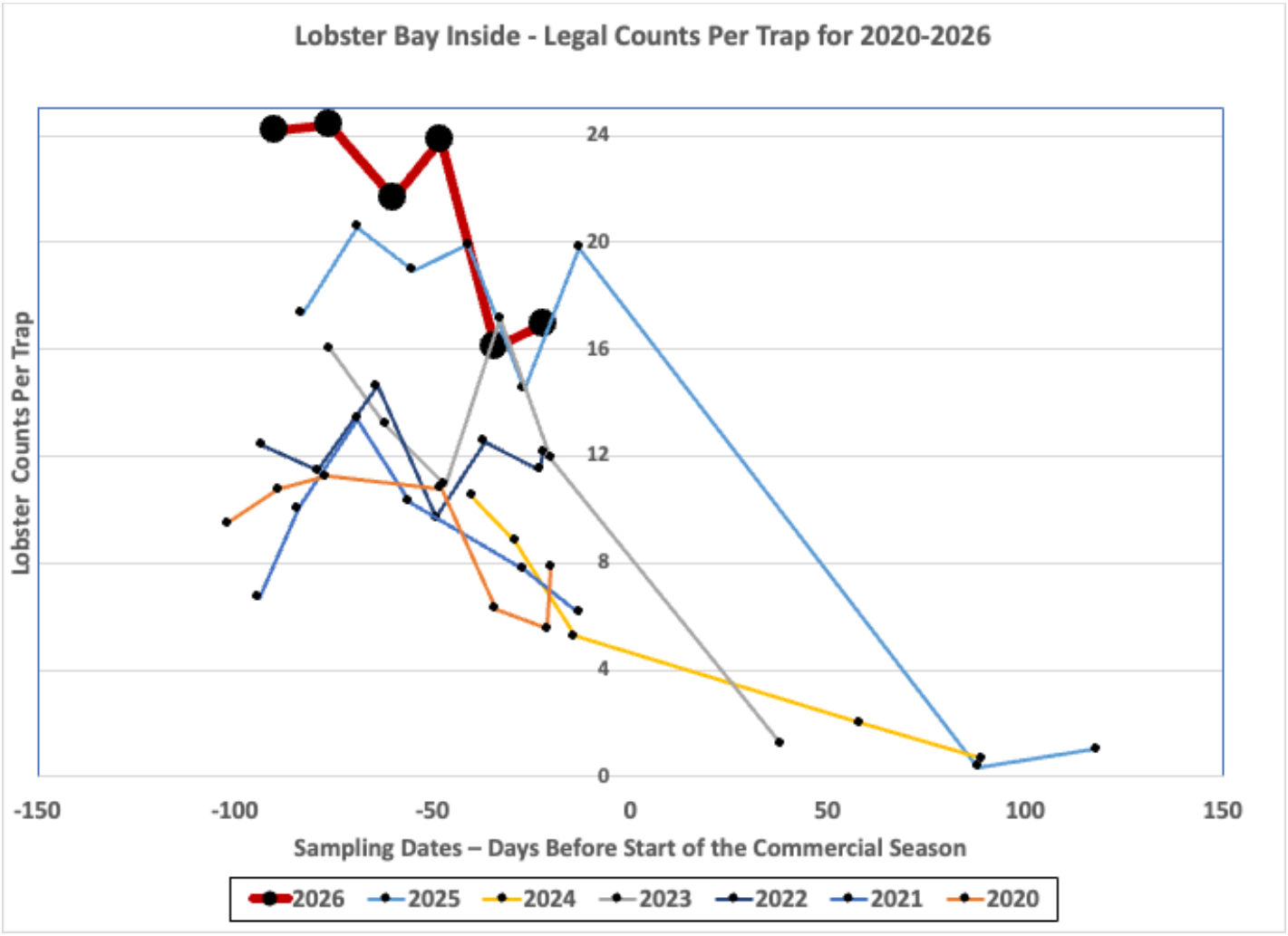
From the figure below, annual samples 3-4 weeks from the start of each commercial harvest season opening are variable across the series from 2012 to 2026 for Lobster Bay Inside. Overall, Lobster Bay Inside average BRIX tend to exceed that of the other areas but that is not the case in 2026. As such, the 2026 average BRIX of 7.76 mg/mL for the November 8, 2026 sample (22 days prior to the start of the 2026-27 commercial season start on November 30) is the second lowest in the series (eclipsed only by the 7 mg/mL average BRIX in the November 10, 2016 sample). This 2026 sample is directly comparable to the 2025 sample, a period of low quality lobster in the commercial fishery.



(C) Counts (legal-sized) per trap for 2026 samples

In the figure below, the counts per trap of lobsters (male and female) of legal-sized (82.5 mm or greater) that occurred in the survey samples dates in 2026 (thick red line) are compared to past years' samples (2020-2025). The legal counts per trap for Lobster Bay Inside sampling are generally highest among the 4 Inside locations surveyed in LFAs33 and 34.

In 2026, Lobster Bay Inside counts are among the highest observed in the series 2020-2026 for similar sample dates. Consequently, the evidence suggests that legal catch counts in Lobster Bay Inside at the start of the commercial season in 2026 should be between 12 and 16 legal lobsters per trap. It is noted that commercial catch rates are expected to fall precipitously in Lobster Bay Inside after the beginning of the commercial season as legal sized lobster abundance is extracted (as per the in-season sampled catch counts of 2023 and 2025 in the figure below).



LOBSTER BAY INSIDE– Summary

1) Lobster Bay Inside shows a stable level of average BRIX of near 8 over preseason sampling. Average BRIX also show a declining trend to the end of preseason sampling after the highest average BRIX of the mid-October sample. Near 50% of samples attained "Good" levels of BRIX (≥8 mg/mL) while "Poor" levels of BRIX (<6 mg/mL) reached 30% by the end of preseason sampling.

2) Lobster Bay Inside Lobster Quality Category for 2026 samples are classified as "Low" (L). It is expected BRIX levels will be maintained as "Good" (approaching 9 mg/mL) into December 2026 as lobster move from post moult to premoult status over the winter. The 2026 sample is most comparable to years 2025, a year of known low quality lobster catches.

3) Lobster Bay Inside sampling legal counts per trap in 2026 exceed those of past years and are among the highest observed in the time series 2020 to 2026. It is therefore anticipated that Lobster Bay Inside initial commercial catch rates will be a comparable to the higher catch rates similar to 2025.

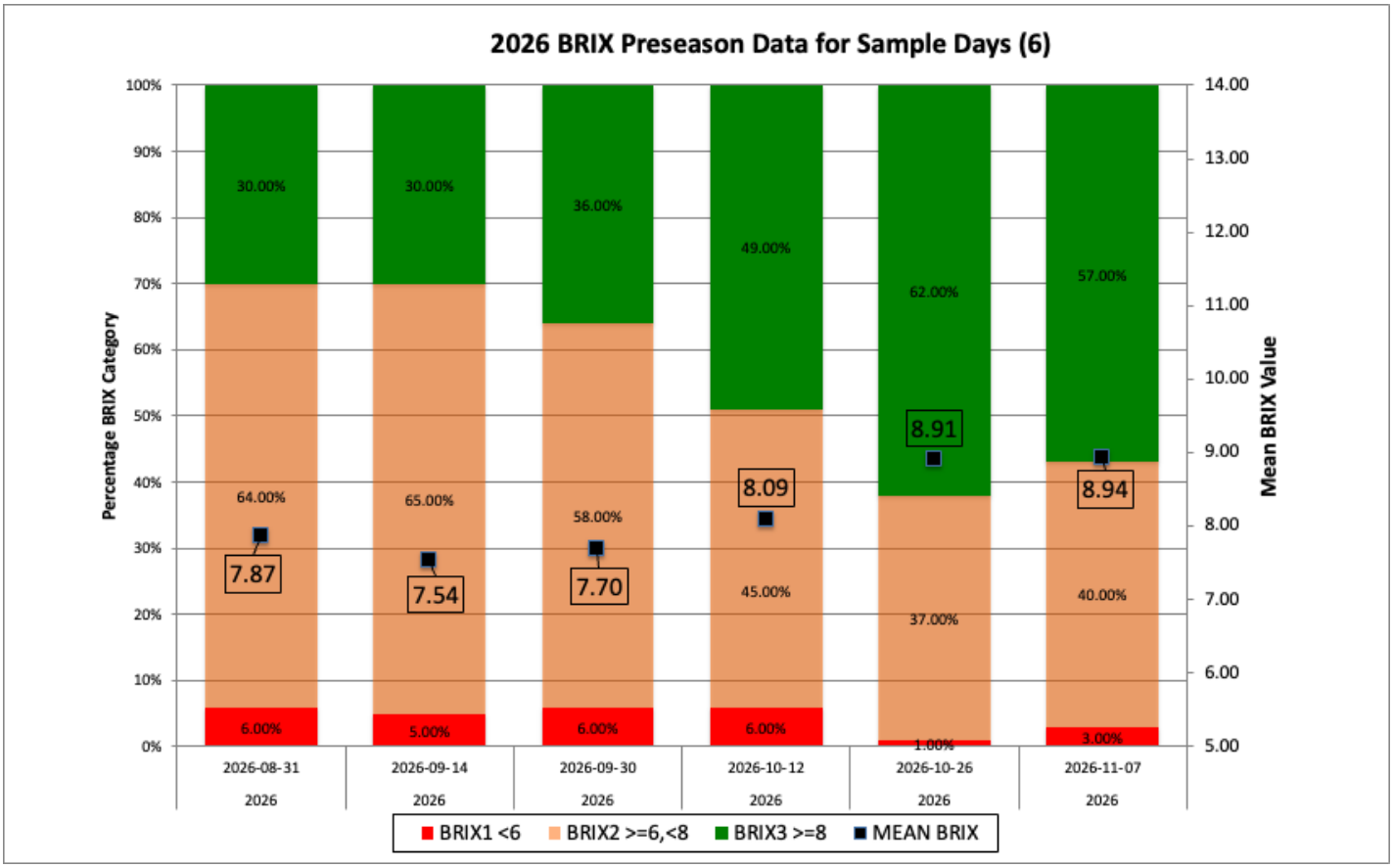
4) Lobster Bay Inside Weaks samples are near negligible in 2026 preseason sampling.

LOBSTER BAY OUTSIDE

2026 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

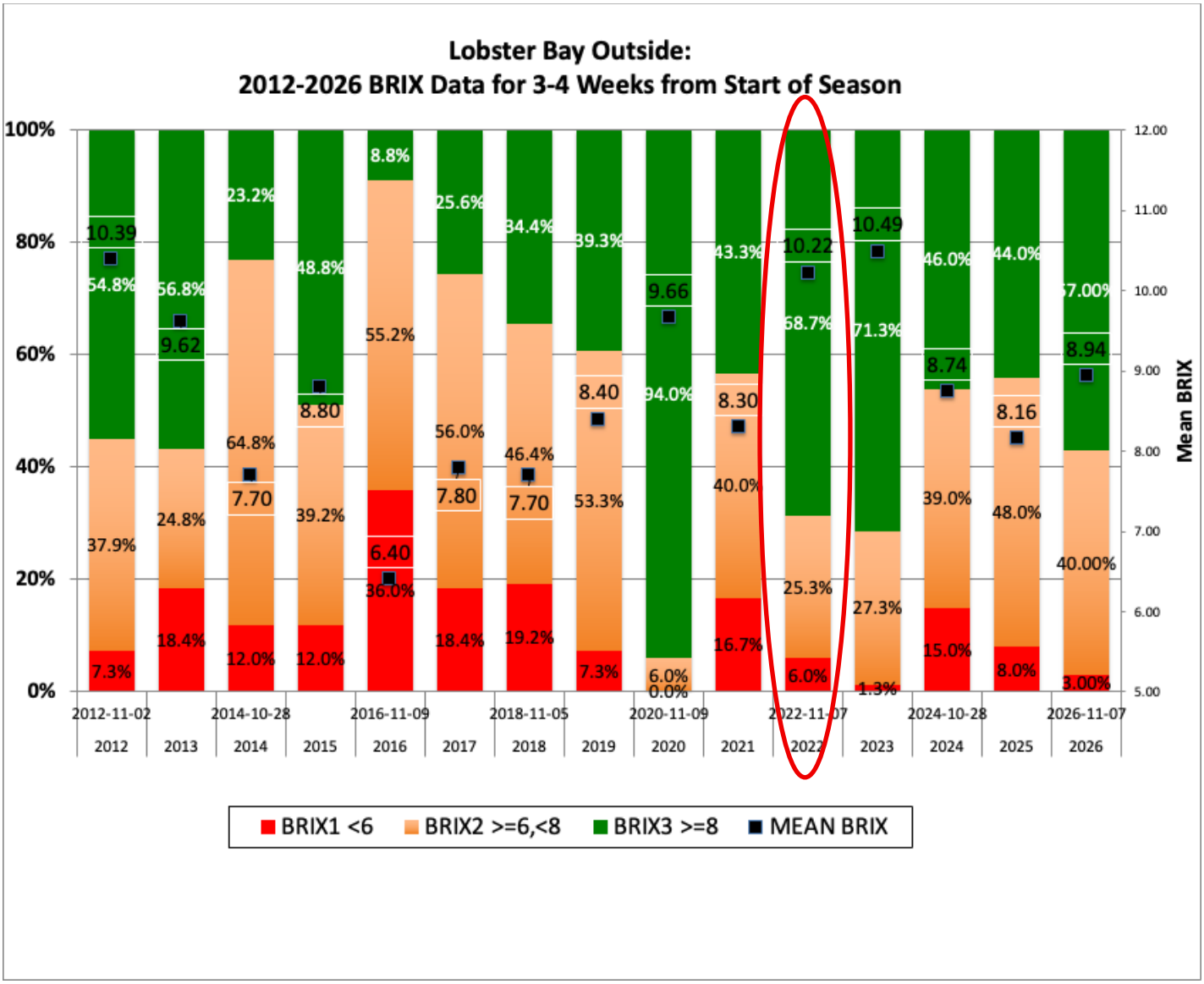
(A)Blood Protein (BRIX) Categories–2026 Samples

In the figure below, 2026 preseason sampling results are provided for 6 sample sites in Lobster Bay Outside. These results show a relatively steady rise of average BRIX between the mid-September sample and the early-November sample with average BRIX varying between a low of 7.54 mg/mL in mid-September to a gradual increasing average BRIX to the high of 8.94 mg/mL by mid-November. Samples attained "Good" levels of BRIX (≥8 mg/mL) that increased from 30% in the mid-September sample to near 60% in the last preseason samples of end-October and early-November. Incidences of "Poor" lobsters in samples were steady at 6% in early preseason sampling falling to half that (3%) by the end of preseason sampling in November.



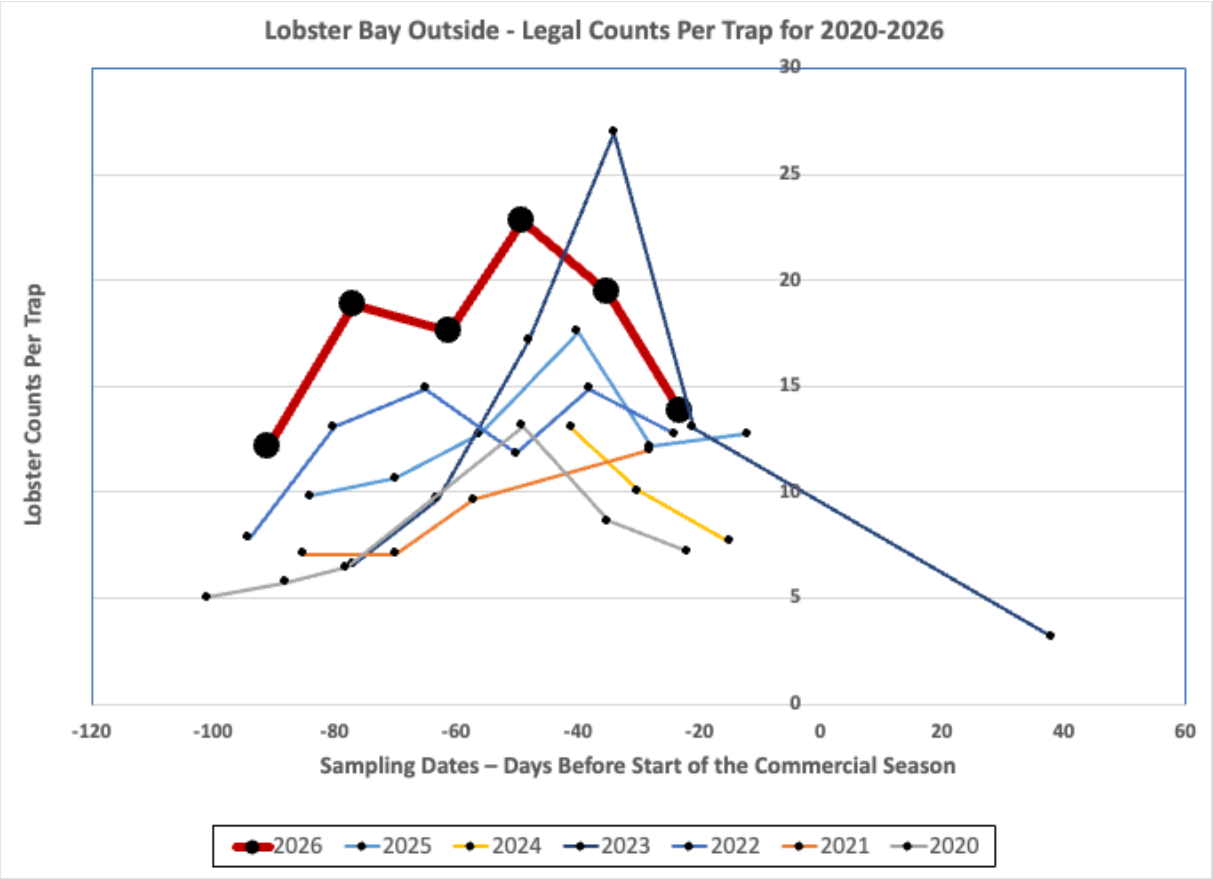
(B) Blood Protein (BRIX) Categories – Annual Samples 3-4 weeks before season start

From the figure below, annual samples 3-4 weeks from the start of each commercial harvest season opening are variable across the series from 2012 to 2026 for Lobster Bay Outside. The 2026 sample (November 7, 23 days or 3+ weeks before the scheduled start of the 2026-27 commercial season on November 30, 2026) has BRIX average of 8.94 mg/mL, in highest average BRIX the preseason series. The November 7, 2026 sample is comparable to the 2022 samples with similar BRIX category levels.



(C) Counts (legal-sized) per trap for 2026 samples

In the figure below, the counts per trap of lobsters (male and female) of legal-sized (82.5 mm or greater) that occurred in the survey samples dates in 2026 (thick red line) are compared to past years' samples (2020-2025). The counts per trap for Lobster Bay Outside sampling in 2026 are initially above the range of values for other years 2020-2025 but falling after the mid-October sample relative to the peak of the 2023 preseason legal-size counts per trap in the October 24, 2023 sample. In 2026, Lobster Bay Outside preseason counts are comparable to past years' counts at similar sampling dates which makes these among the highest legal counts per trap (approximately 15 counts per trap) across all outside areas. Commercial catch rates are expected to fall precipitously in Lobster Bay Outside after the beginning of the commercial season to near 10 legal-sized lobster per trap as lobster abundance is extracted (as per the 2023 in-season sample illustrated below).



LOBSTER BAY OUTSIDE– Summary

1) Lobster Bay Outside shows a slight rising trend in average BRIX over the sampling period with overall average BRIX of 8.18 mg/mL. Samples also improved the percentages of "Good" levels of BRIX (≥8 mg/mL) from 30% to 60% over the preseason period. Percentages of "Poor" lobsters in samples were low initially (6%) in early preseason samples and declined to 3% in the last early-November preseason sample.

2) Lobster Bay Outside Lobster Quality Category for 2026 samples are classified as "Low" (L). It is expected that BRIX levels will rise slightly to 9 mg/mL into December 2026 and January 2027 as lobster move from post moult to premoult status over the winter. The 2026 sample is most comparable to samples in 2022.

3) Lobster Bay Outside counts are among the highest across all sampling areas (near 15 legal counts per trap in the November sample). These results are comparable to the 2025 counts at similar sampling dates in this area. It is anticipated that Lobster Bay Outside initial commercial catch rates in 2026 will be similar to catches in 2025.

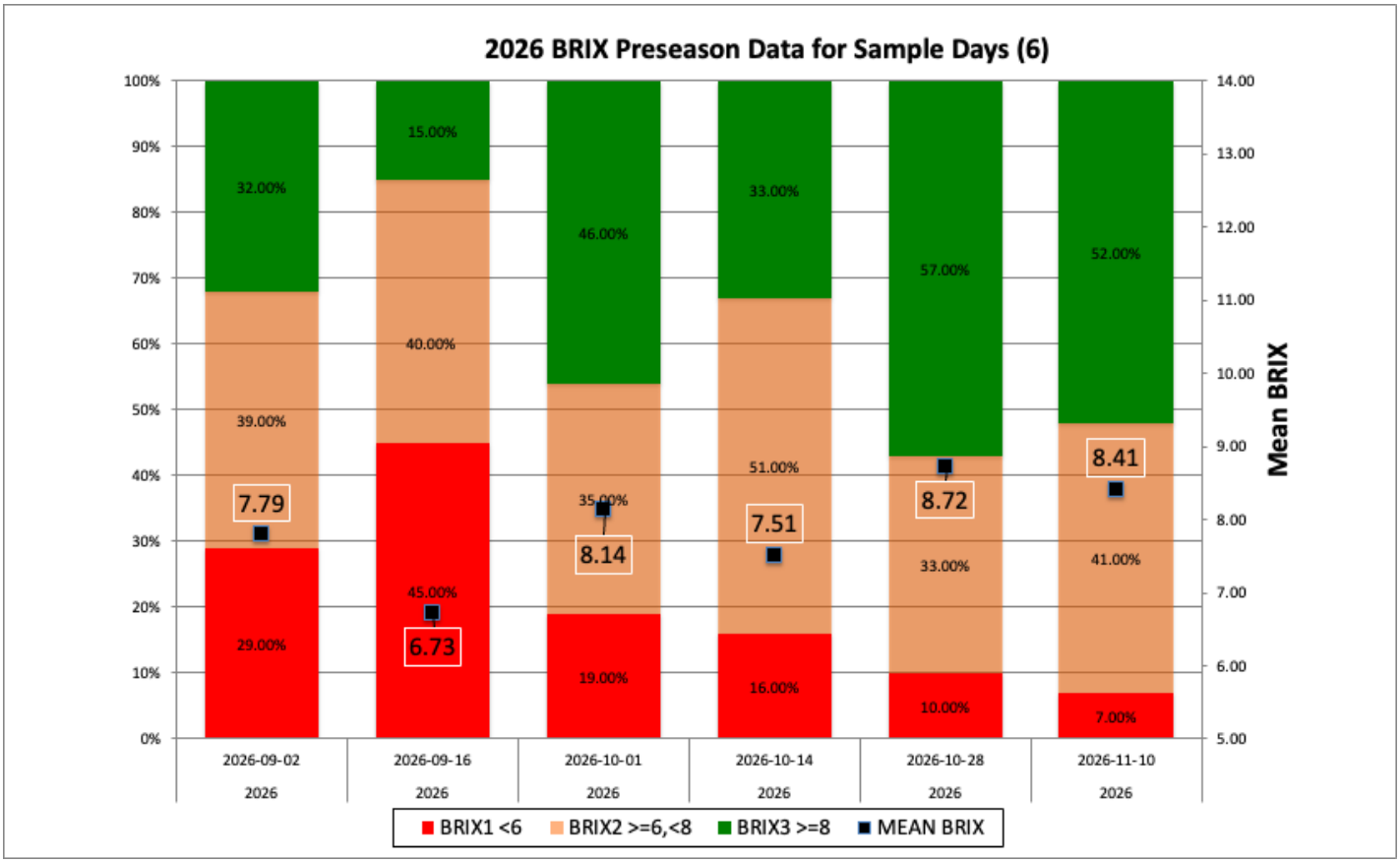
4) Lobster Bay Inside Weaks samples are near negligible in 2026 preseason sampling.

PORT LA TOUR INSIDE

2026 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

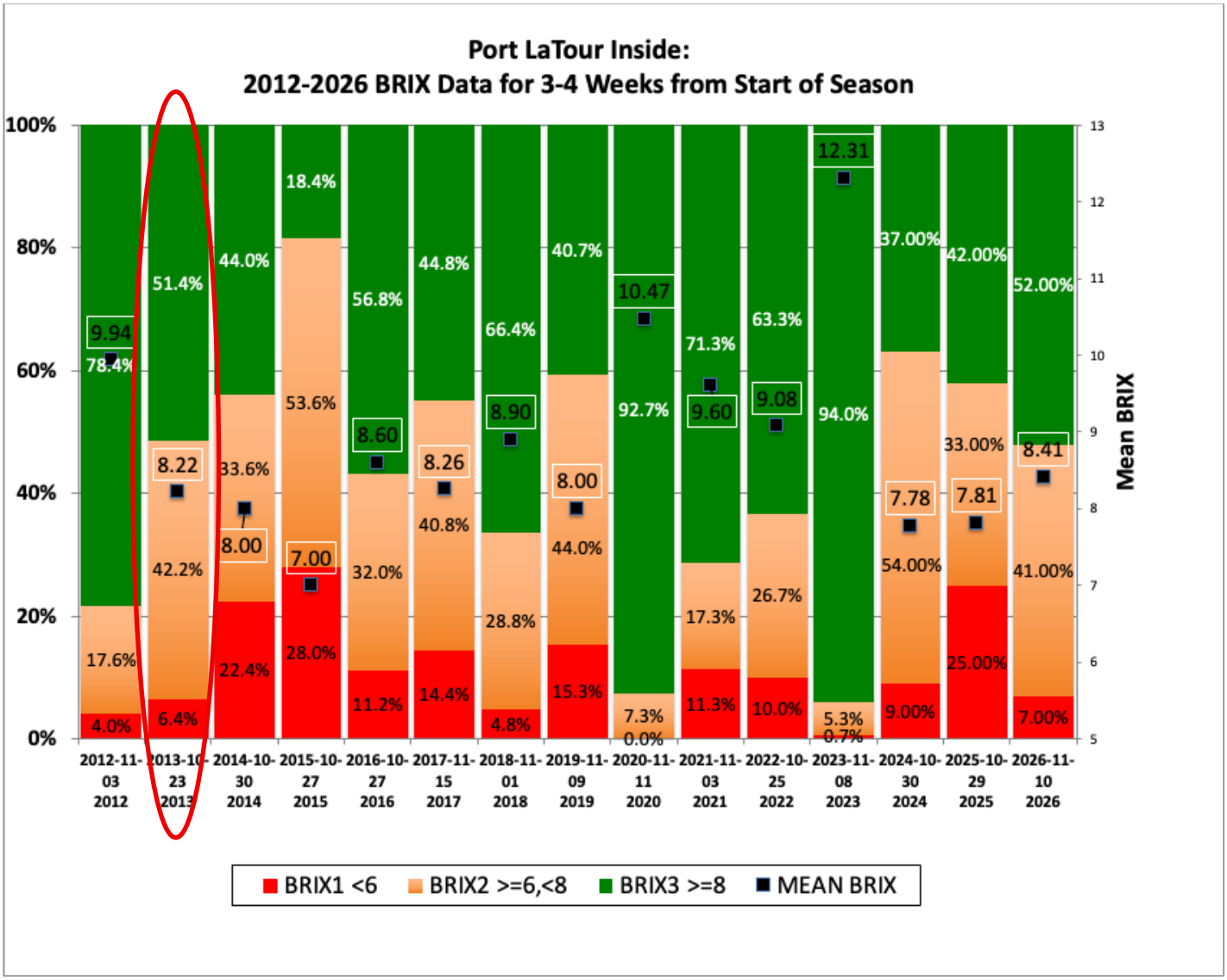
(A)Blood Protein (BRIX) Categories–2026 Samples

In the figure below, 2026 preseason survey results for 6 sample sites in Port La Tour Inside show a relatively increasing series trend in average BRIX over the preseason period from the early-September (7.79 mg/mL) to the maximum of the November 7, 2026 sample (8.41 mg/mL). "Good" levels of BRIX (≥8 mg/mL) were below 50% in early preseason sampling, moving to over 50% in the last samples of October 28 and November 10. "Poor" levels of BRIX (<6 mg/mL) declined steadily between 45% (September 16 sample) to only 7% in the November 7 sample.



(B) Blood Protein (BRIX) Categories – Annual Samples 3-4 weeks before season start

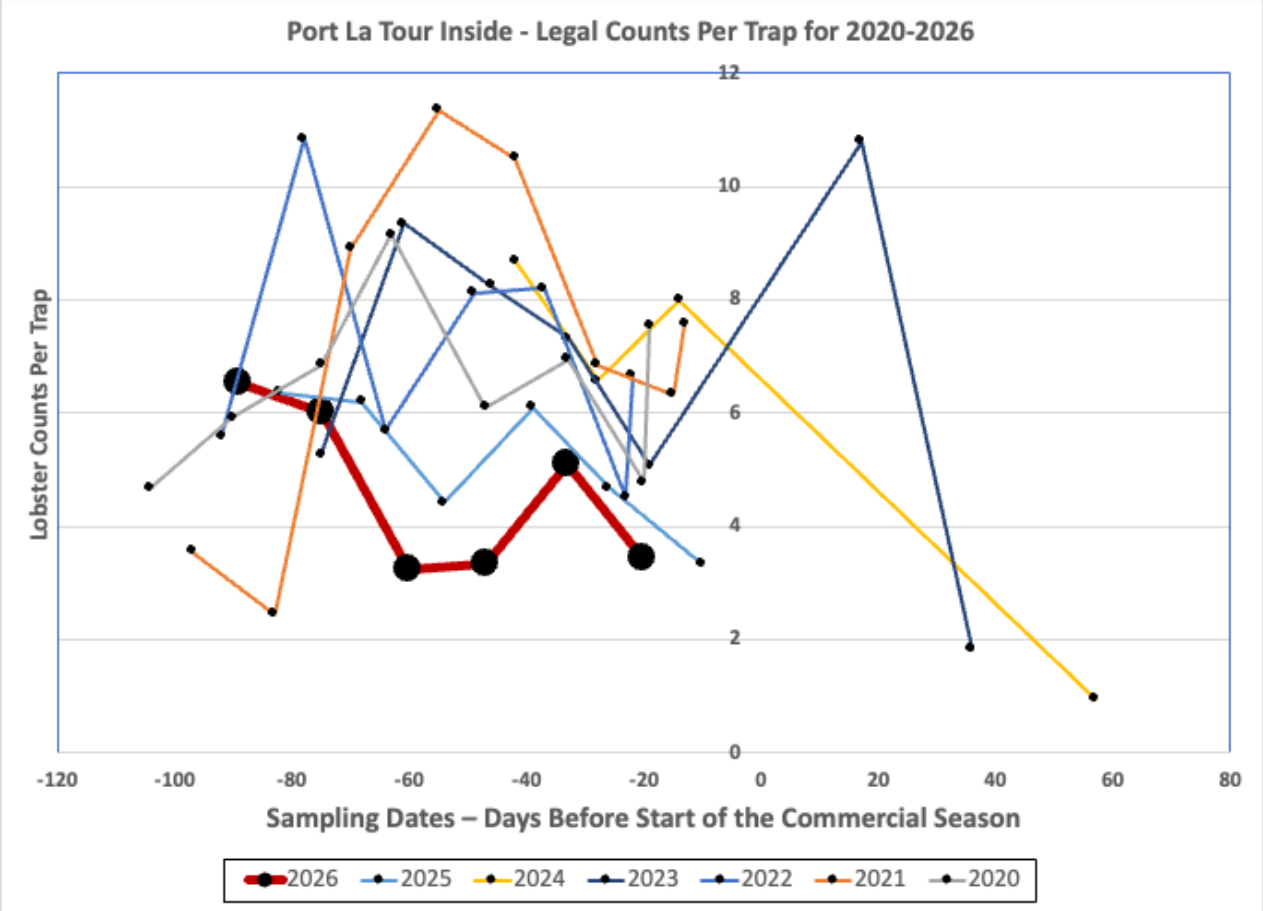
From the figure below, annual samples 3-4 weeks from the start of each commercial harvest season opening are variable across the series from 2012 to 2026 for Port La Tour Inside. The November 10, 2026 sample is directly comparable to the October 23, 2013 sample.



(C) Counts (legal-sized) per trap for 2026 samples

In the figure below, the counts per trap of lobsters (male and female) of legal-sized (82.5 mm or greater) that occurred in the survey samples dates in 2026 (thick red line) are compared to past years' samples (2020-2022) for Port La Tour Inside. In 2026, Port La Tour Inside counts from samples past September 2026 are among the lowest legal-sized counts per trap in the time series and below past years' counts at similar sampling dates. Legal-sized counts per trap are below 4 counts per trap in the last preseason sample (November 10) in Port La Tour Inside.

Consequently, it is anticipated that catches in Port La Tour Inside will be reduced compared to past years with commercial catches estimated to average near 3 legal-size lobsters per trap into December 2026 and January 2027. As evidenced in the figure below, commercial catch rates are expected to fall precipitously after the beginning of the commercial season as legal-sized lobster abundance is extracted (as per 2024 in-season samples illustrated below).



PORT LA TOUR INSIDE– Summary

1) Port La Tour Inside samples show a gradual and steady increase in average BRIX from mid-September (6.73 mg/mL) to early-November samples (8.41 mg/mL). By the end of the preseason sampling period "Good" levels of BRIX (≥8 mg/mL) are over 50% while "Poor" levels of BRIX (<6 mg/mL) are under 10%.

2) Port La Tour Inside Lobster Quality Category for 2026 samples are classified as "Moderate-Low" (ML). It is expected that BRIX levels will be maintained near 9 mg/mL into December 2026 and January 2027 as lobster move from post moult to premoult status over the winter. The 2026 sample is directly comparable to the 2013 sample prior to the start of the commercial season.

3) Port La Tour Inside sampling counts show a declining trend at levels below those of past years' sample legal catch counts per trap. It is anticipated that Yarmouth Inside initial commercial catch rates will be below catches of recent years.

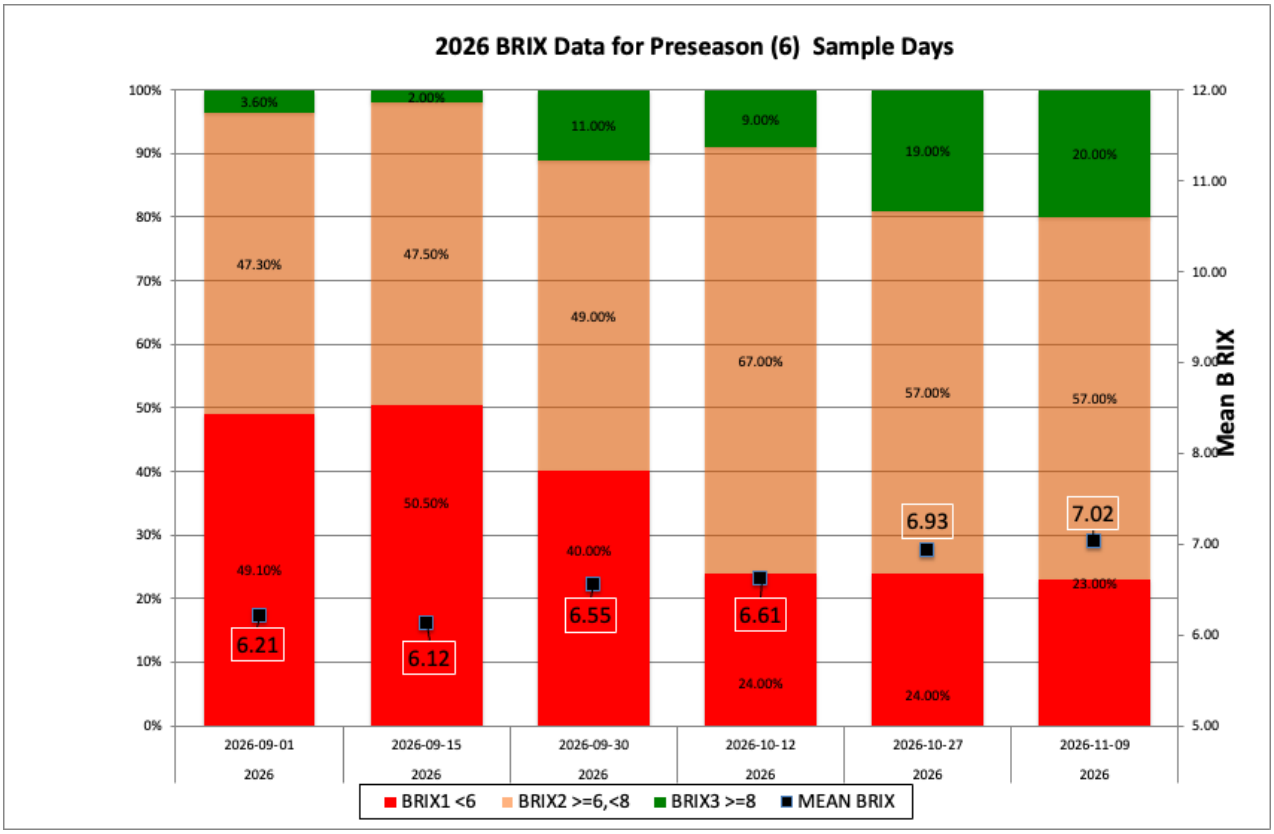
4) Port La Tour Inside Weaks samples are near negligible in 2026 preseason sampling.

PORT LA TOUR OUTSIDE

2026 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

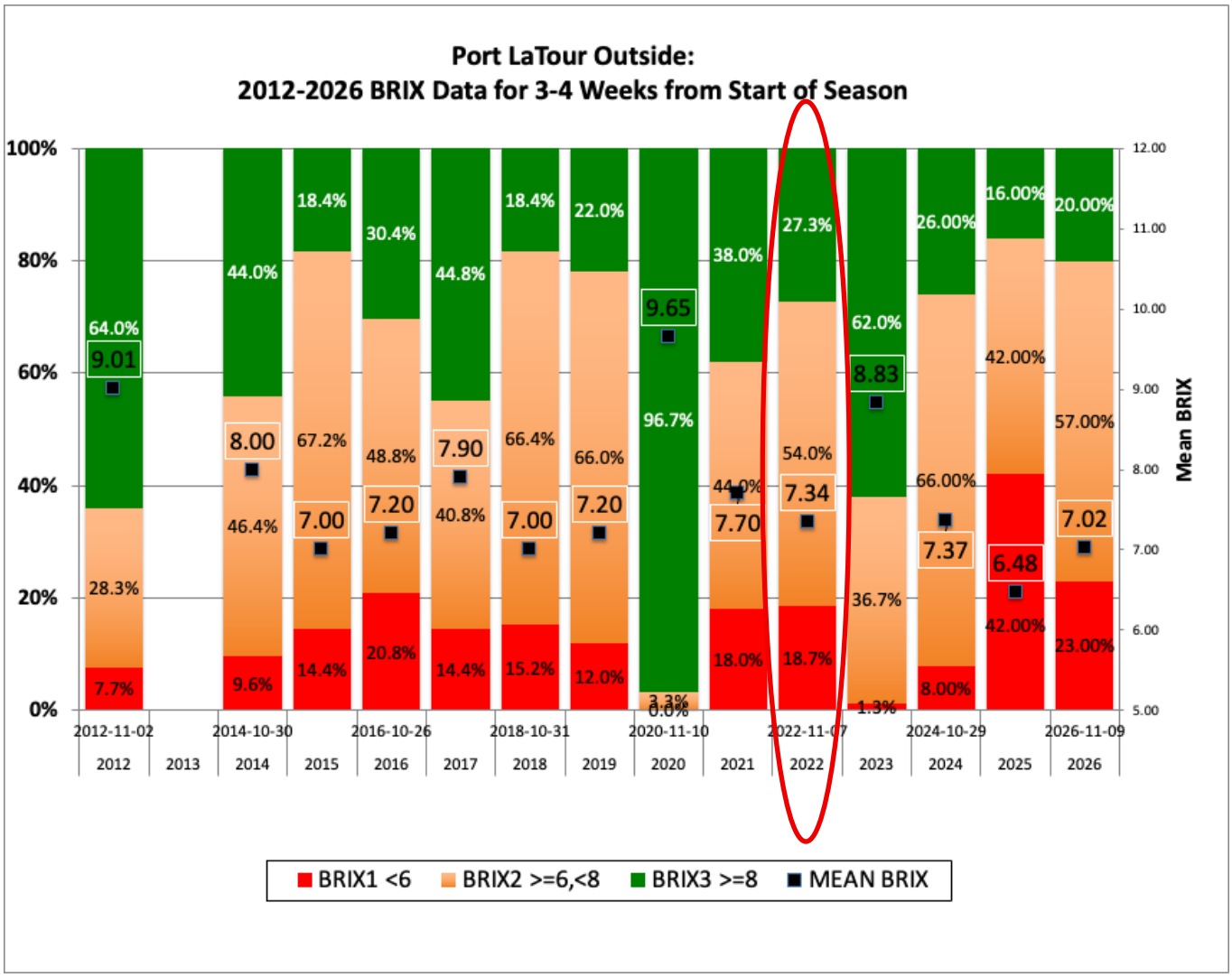
(A)Blood Protein (BRIX) Categories–2026 Samples

In the figure below, 2026 preseason survey results are presented for 6 sample sites in Port La Tour Outside. Throughout the preseason sampling in Port La Tour Outside, average BRIX per sample values are all at moderate levels of BRIX, well below 8, and in the range of 6.12 to 7.02 mg/mL. As for the case of Port La Tour Inside, per sample indicators increase after from the September 15 sample low of 6.12 mg/mL to a maximum average BRIX in the series of 7.02 mg/mL in the last preseason sample of November 9, 2026. Beyond the mid-September sample, average BRIX values per sample gradually trend upwards to a maximum of only 7.02 mg/mL by the end of the preseason. BRIX level categories also show a general increase in "Good" levels of BRIX (≥8 mg/mL) moving from lows of less than 4% to a high at the end of preseason sampling of 20%. Similarly, percentages of "Poor" lobsters in samples fall from a high of 50% to a low of 23% by the end of the sampling period in early November.



(B) Blood Protein (BRIX) Categories – Annual Samples 3-4 weeks before season start

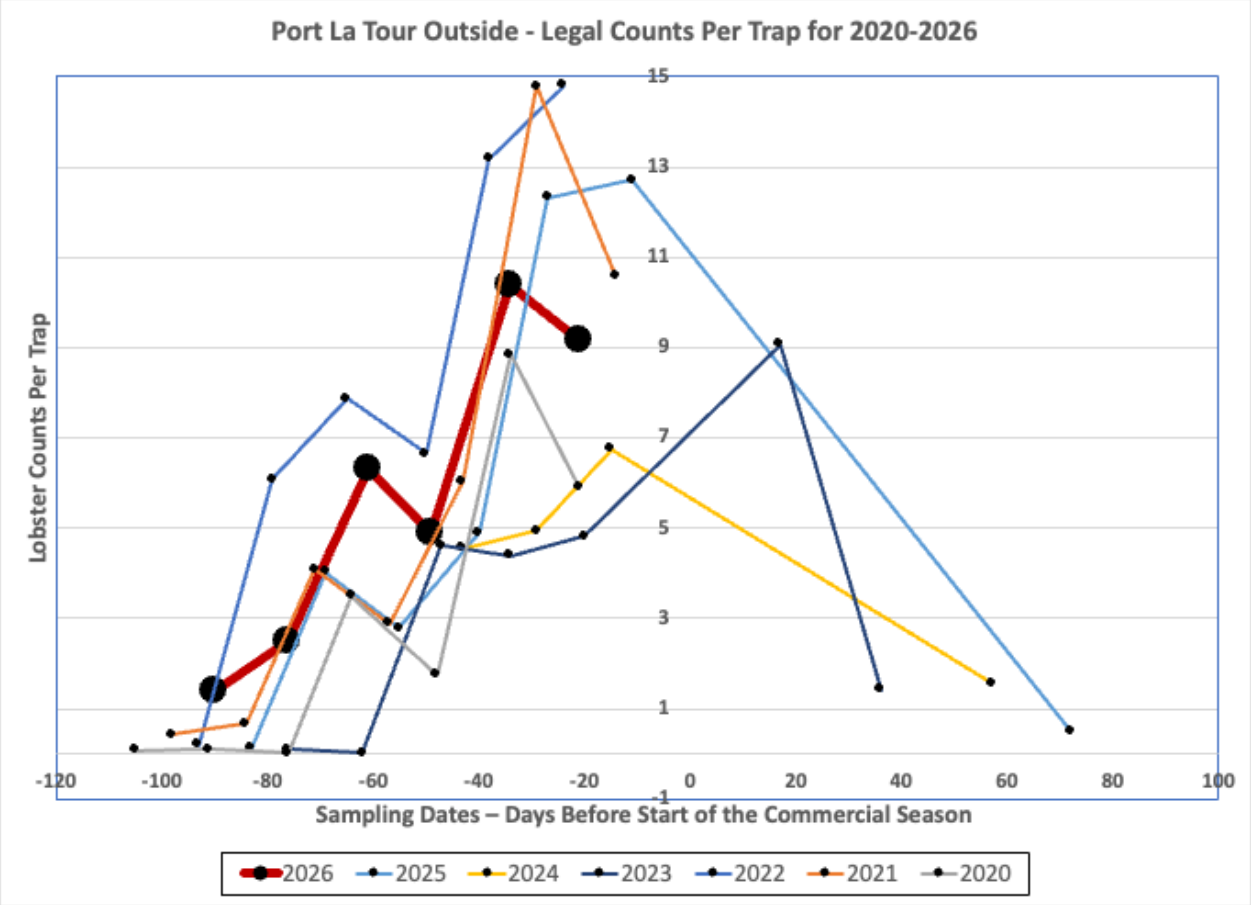
From the figure below, annual samples 3-4 weeks from the start of each commercial harvest season opening are highly variable across the series from 2012 to 2026 for Port La Tour Outside. The November 9, 2026 (3 weeks before the expected start of the 2026-27 commercial season on November 30, 2026) sample is comparable to the November 7, 2022 sample with similar average BRIX values and comparable BRIX category levels.



(C) Counts (legal-sized) per trap for 2026 samples

In the figure below, the counts per trap of lobsters (male and female) of legal-sized (82.5 mm or greater) that occurred in the survey samples dates in 2026 (thick red line) are compared to past years' samples (2020-2025) for Port La Tour Outside. In 2026, Port La Tour Outside counts are intermediate-to-high among legal-sized counts in comparison to past years' counts at similar sampling dates. The 2026 time series of counts over the preseason in Port La Tour Outside exhibit a general rise to the end of the sampling period (mid-November) similar to the 2021 and 2022 counts series in this location.

It is therefore expected that commercial catches in Port La Tour Outside in 2026 will be similar but below those of 2021 and 2022. Predicted legal counts per trap are between 5 and 8 lobsters pre trap. As evidenced in the figure below, commercial catch rates (as observed in the 2023 to 2025 in-season samples) are expected to fall precipitously to low levels (1-2 legal-sized lobsters per trap) after the beginning of the commercial season as legal-sized lobster abundance is extracted.



PORT LA TOUR OUTSIDE– Summary

1) Port La Tour Outside samples show a gradual and steady increase in average BRIX from mid-September low (6.12 mg/mL) to early-November samples high (7.02 mg/mL). By the end of the preseason sampling period "Good" levels of BRIX (≥8 mg/mL) increase to only 20% while "Poor" levels of BRIX (<6 mg/mL) decline to 23%.

2) Port La Tour Outside Lobster Quality Category for 2026 samples are classified as "Moderate-Low" (ML). It is expected that moderate BRIX (about 7.5 mg/mL) will be attained into December 2026 as lobster move from post moult to premoult status over the winter. The 2026 sample is comparable to the 2022 sample.

3) Port La Tour Outside counts for 2026 are intermediate-to-high among past years' counts in the time series and comparable to the higher counts of 2021 and 2022. Counts per trap are expected to average between 5 and 8 legal lobsters per trap into the start of the 2026-26 commercial season.

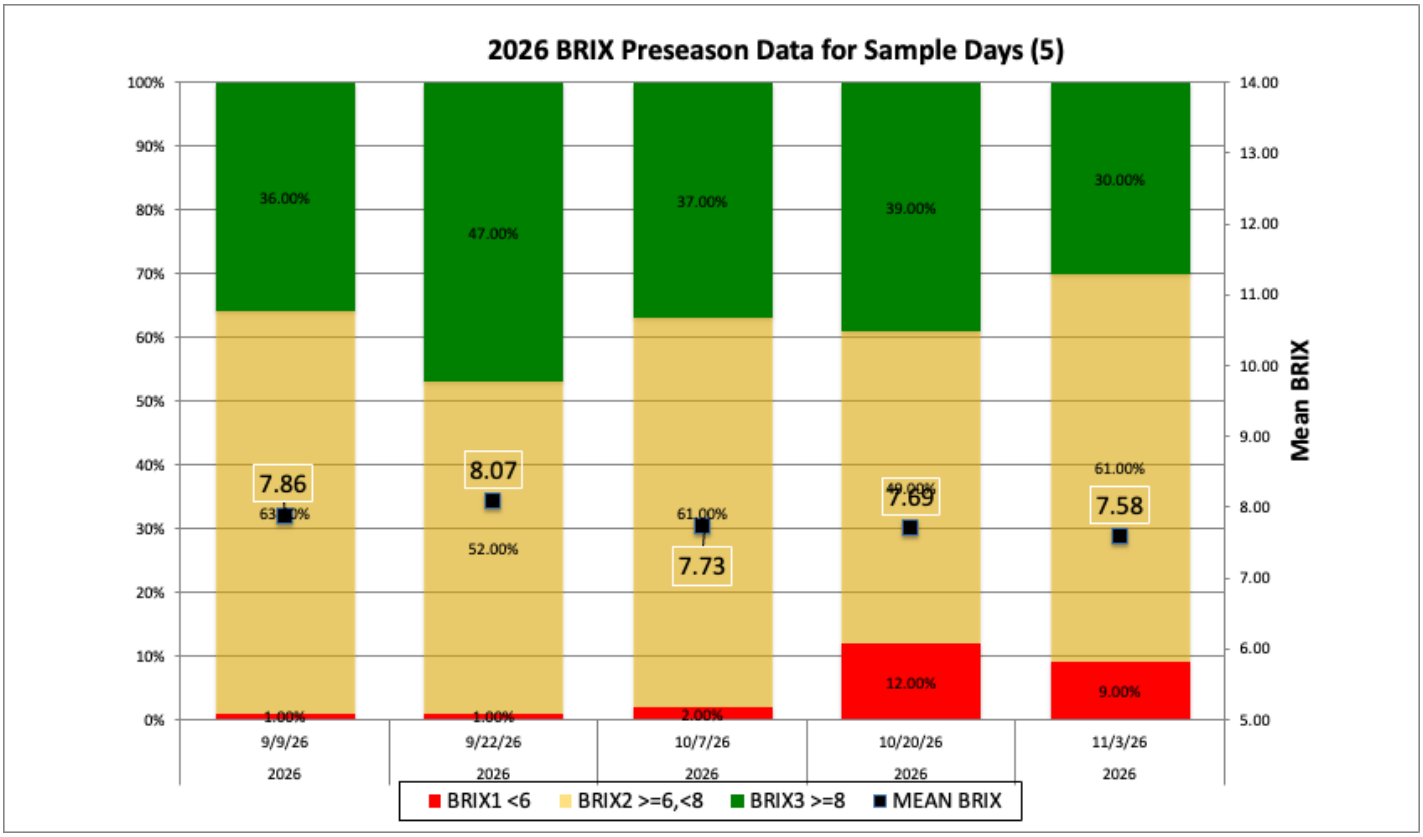
4) Port La Tour Outside Weaks samples are near negligible in 2026 preseason sampling.

ST. MARY'S BAY INSIDE

2026 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

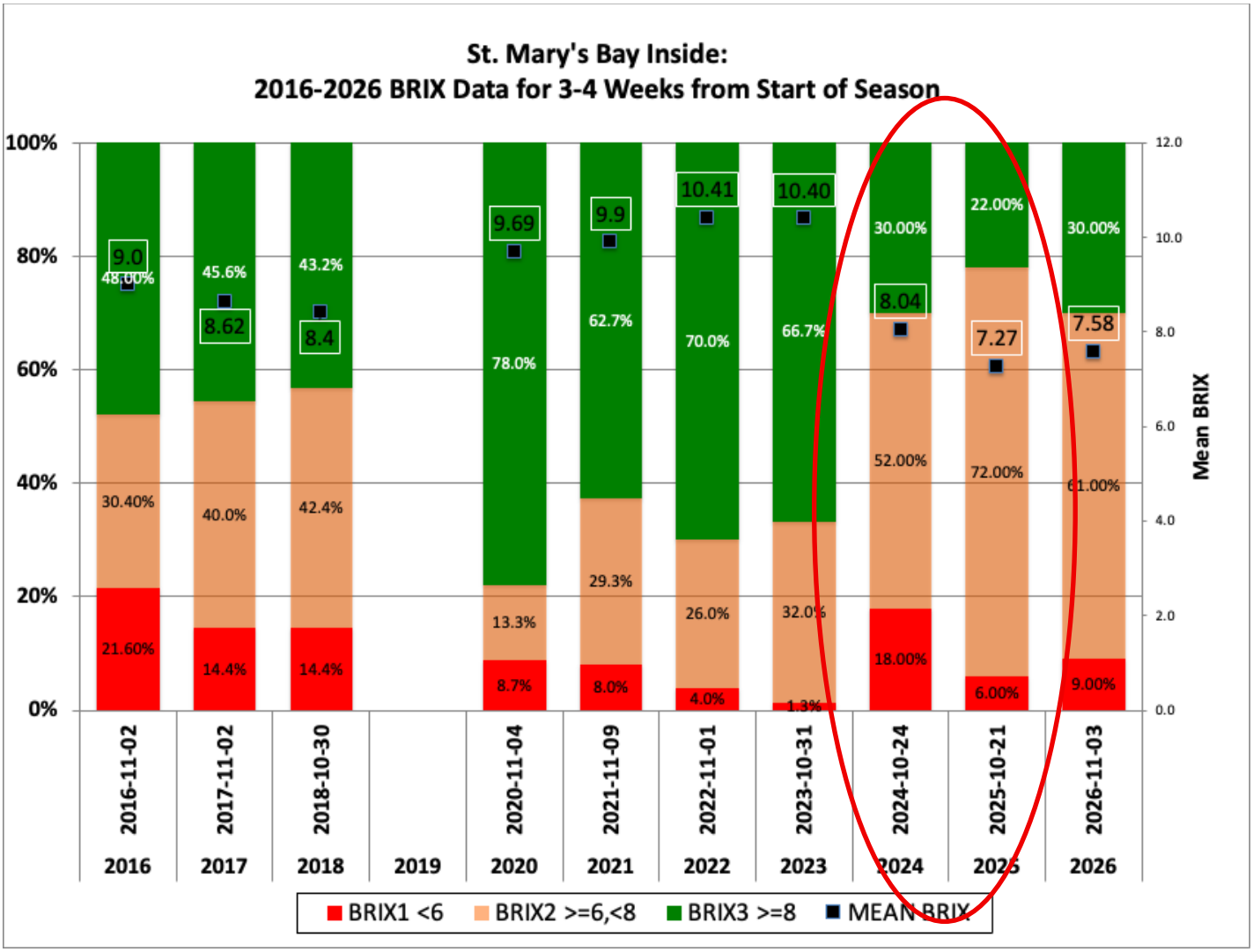
(A)Blood Protein (BRIX) Categories–2026 Samples

In the figure below, 2026 preseason survey results for 5 sample sites in St. Mary's Bay Inside are provided. Average BRIX values per sample are relatively constant from the early-September sample (7.86 mg/mL) to the final early-November sample (7.58 mg/mL). "Good" levels for BRIX (≥8 mg/mL) are also steady across the preseason samples varying between a low of 30% (November 3) to a high of 47% (September 22). At the same time, the proportion of "Poor" lobsters (BRIX<6 mg/mL) sampled in St. Mary's Bay Inside is negligible in early samples but increases to near 10% in the last preseason samples.



(B) Blood Protein (BRIX) Categories – Annual Samples 3-4 weeks before season start

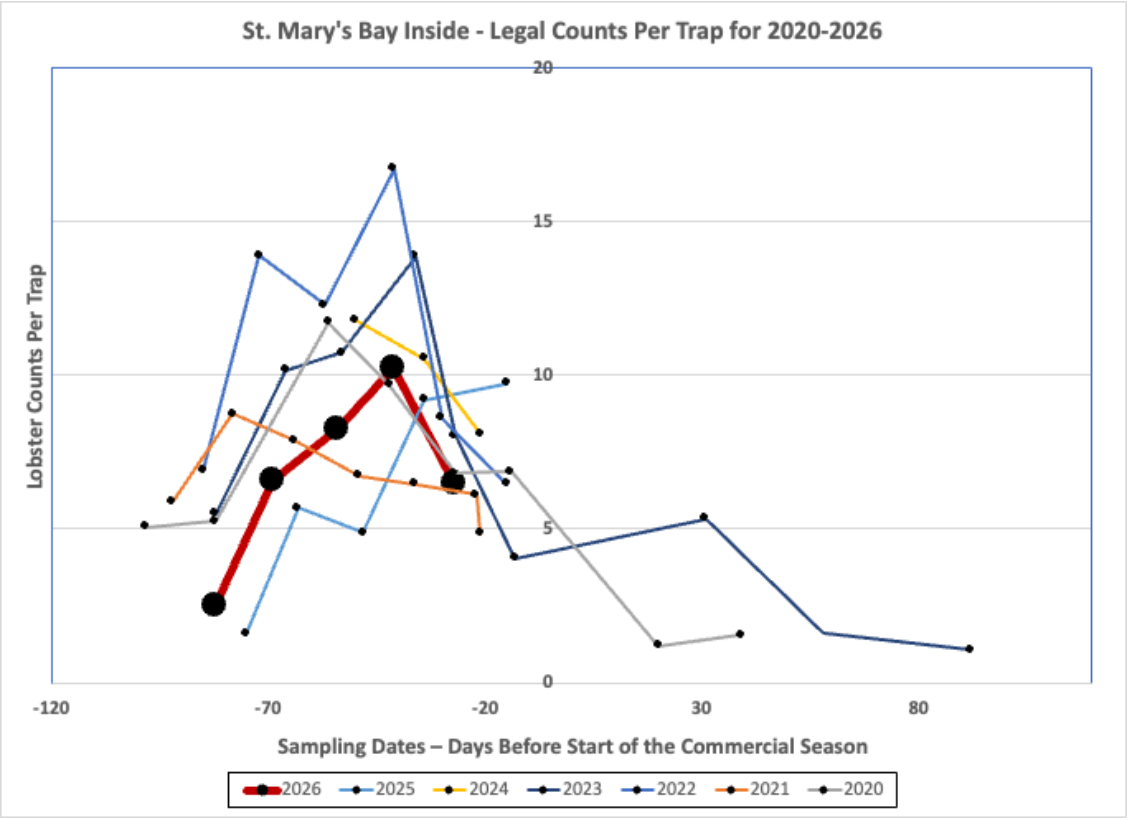
From the figure below, annual samples 3-4 weeks from the start of each commercial harvest season opening are somewhat variable across the series from 2016 to 2026 for St. Mary's Bay Inside. The last 2026 preseason sample (November 3, 2026) has the second lowest BRIX average (7.58 mg/mL) in the 2016-2026 series. (The lowest average BRIX at the end of preseason sampling was 7.27 mg/mL from the 2025 preseason sample of October 21, 2025.) The November 3, 2026 sample is most closely comparable to the late October samples of 2024 and 2025 that have the three lowest average BRIX values in the 2016-2026 times series.



(C) Counts (legal-sized) per trap for 2026 samples

In the figure below, the counts per trap of lobsters (male and female) of legal-sized (82.5 mm or greater) that occurred in the survey samples dates in 2026 (thick red line) are compared to past years' samples (2020-2025). The counts for St. Mary's Bay Inside are intermediate to the previous years' comparable counts with an increasing trend over the preseason sampling period followed by a decline in counts per trap into the last preseason sample of November 3, 2026. This 'last sample decline' in legal-sized counts per trap also appeared in every year (2020 to 2024) with the exception of 2025. By the end of sampling, legal counts per trap in this area were the lowest compared to past years counts (6-7 legal counts per trap).

As evidenced by the 2020 and 2023 in-season sampling in the figure below, commercial catch rates are expected to fall precipitously after the beginning of the commercial season as legal-sized lobster abundance is extracted (as for the in-season samples of 2020 and 2023 illustrated). Consequently, it is anticipated that St. Mary's Bay catches at the start of the commercial season will decrease to levels of 5 legal-sized counts per trap relative to past years.



ST. MARY'S BAY INSIDE– Summary

1) Average BRIX values per sample are relatively constant throughout the preseason sampling period with averages values per sample slightly below 8 (7.72 mg/mL). "Good" levels for BRIX (≥8 mg/mL) are also steady across the preseason samples varying between a low of 30% (November 3) to a high of 47% (September 22). The proportion of "Poor" lobsters (BRIX<6 mg/mL) sampled in St. Mary's Bay Inside is negligible in early samples but increases to near 10% in the last preseason samples.

2) St. Mary's Bay Inside Lobster Quality Category for 2026 samples are classified as "Low" (L). It is expected that average BRIX levels of 8 mg/mL will be maintained into December 2026 through to January 2027 as lobster move from post moult to premoult status over the winter. The 2026 sample is directly comparable to the 2024 and the 2025 preseason samples.

3) St. Mary's Bay Inside sampling counts per trap increase over the sampling period and then decline in the last preseason sample of November 2026. It is anticipated that St. Mary's Bay Inside initial commercial catch rates will be comparable commercial catches of the 2025-26 season with average catch counts near 5 lobsters per trap into December 2026 and January 2027.

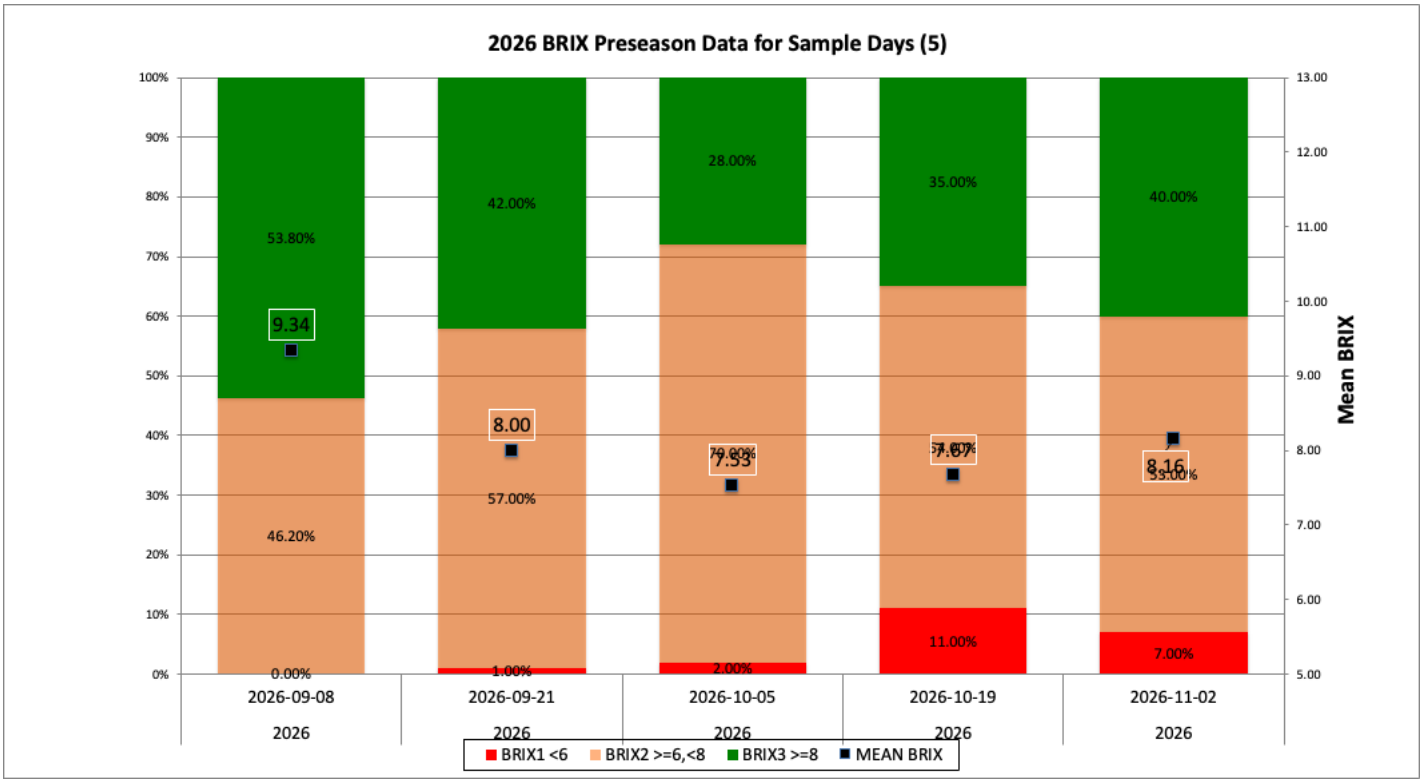
4) St. Mary's Bay Inside Weaks samples are near negligible in 2026 preseason sampling.

ST. MARY'S BAY OUTSIDE

2026 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

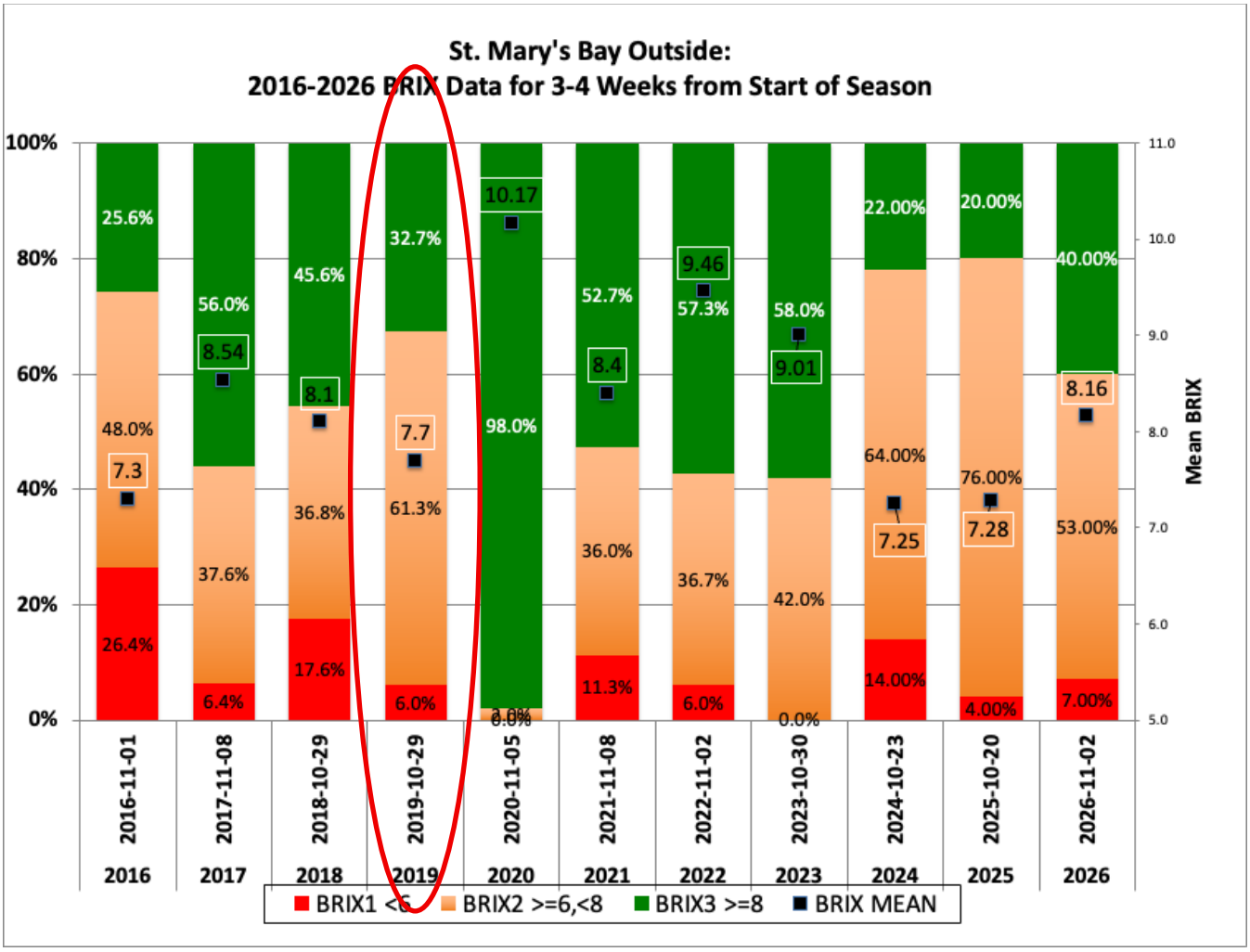
(A)Blood Protein (BRIX) Categories–2026 Samples

In the figure below, 2026 preseason survey results for 5 sample sites in St. Mary's Bay Outside are presented. Beyond the early September sample (which had limited availability of lobster), average BRIX per sample are stable ranging from a high of 8.16 mg/mL (November 2 sample) to the low of 7.67 mg/mL (October 19 sample). Average BRIX level over the preseason samples (7.93 mg/mL) approaches the acceptable category level (≥8 mg/mL). From end September, BRIX category levels are also relatively constant with "Good" levels for BRIX (≥8 mg/mL) varying from a low of 28% (October 5 sample) to a high of 42% (September 21 sample) and no evident time trend over the period. The percentage of "Poor" lobsters (BRIX<6 mg/mL) sampled in St. Mary's Bay Outside was negligible in early preseason samples and rose to about 10% for samples at the end of the preseason period.



(B) Blood Protein (BRIX) Categories – Annual Samples 3-4 weeks before season start

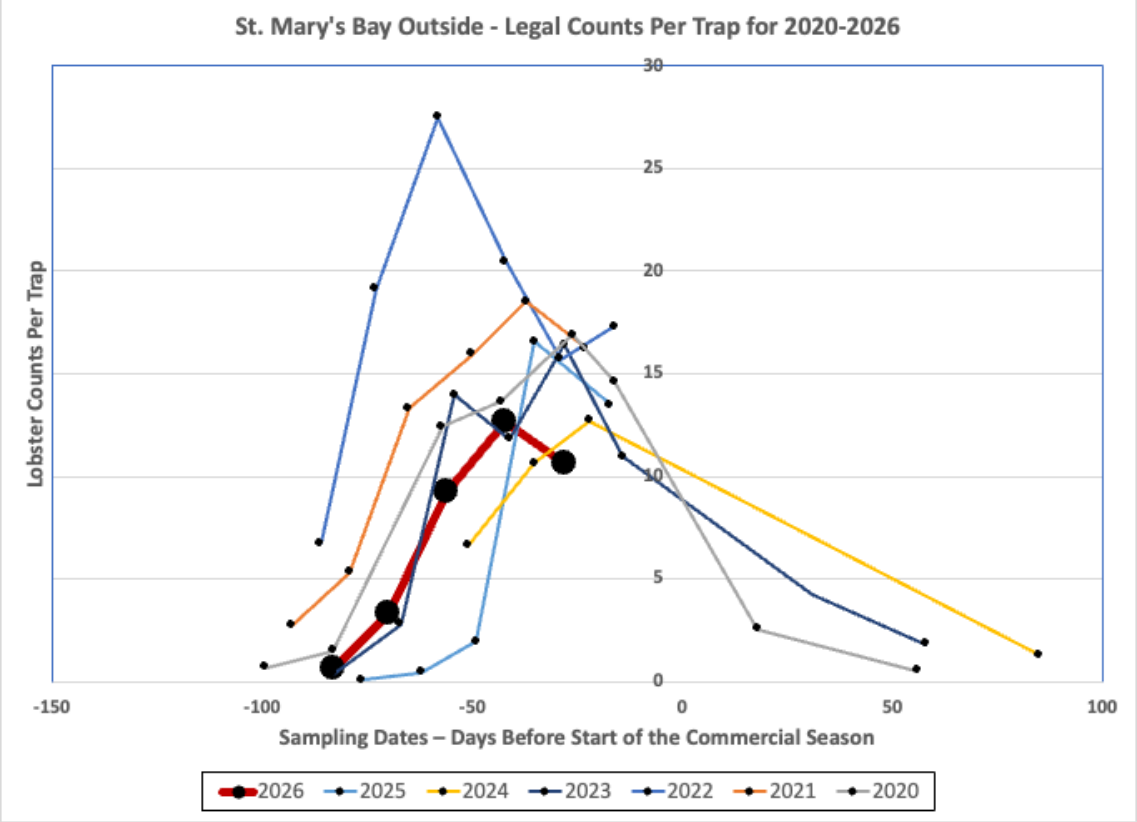
From the figure below, annual samples 3-4 weeks from the start of each commercial harvest season opening are variable across the series from 2016 to 2026 for St. Mary's Bay Outside. The 2026 sample (November 2, 2026) is directly comparable to the October 29, 2019 sample with similar BRIX categories.



(C) Counts (legal-sized) per trap for 2026 samples

In the figure below, the counts per trap of lobsters (male and female) of legal-sized (82.5 mm or greater) that occurred in the survey samples dates in 2026 (thick red line) are compared to past years' samples (2020-2025). As for St. Mary's Bay Inside, the legal-sized counts for St. Mary's Bay Outside are intermediate to the previous years' comparable counts with an increasing trend over the preseason sampling period followed by a slight decline in counts per trap into the last preseason sample of November 2, 2026. This 'last sample decline' in legal-sized counts per trap also appeared in every past year with the exception of 2020 and 2024. By the end of sampling in 2026, legal counts per trap in this area were the lowest compared to past years counts at a level near 10 legal counts per trap 28 days before the expected start of the 2026-27 commercial season on November 30, 2026.

For the early samples of 2026 (early-September through early-October), the counts for St. Mary's Bay Outside are the near the lowest in the time series for comparable dates prior to season opening. However, the October samples show a recovery of legal counts per trap followed by the early November sample decline. As evidenced by the 2020, 2023, and 2025 in-season sampling for St. Mary's Bay Outside in the figure below, commercial catch rates are expected to fall precipitously to near 7 legal-sized lobster per trap after the beginning of the commercial season as legal sized lobster abundance is extracted.



ST. MARY'S BAY OUTSIDE– Summary

1) St. Mary's Bay Outside samples are stable ranging from a high of 8.16 mg/mL to the low of 7.67 mg/mL. Average BRIX level over the preseason samples (7.93 mg/mL) approaches the acceptable category level (≥8 mg/mL). From end September, BRIX category levels are also relatively constant with "Good" levels for BRIX (≥8 mg/mL) varying between 28% and 42% with no evident time trend. The percentage of "Poor" lobsters (BRIX<6 mg/mL) was negligible in early preseason samples and rose to about 10% for samples at the end of the preseason period.

2) St. Mary's Bay Outside Lobster Quality Category for 2026 samples are classified as "Moderate-Low" (ML). It is expected that favorable BRIX near 9 mg/mL will be maintained into December 2026 and January 2027 as lobster move from post moult to premoult status over the winter. The 2026 sample is directly comparable to the 2019 preseason samples.

3) In 2026 samples in September and October legal counts per trap for St. Mary's Bay Outside (3-5 counts/trap) were among the lowest in the time series for comparable dates prior to season opening. These counts recovered in later 2026 samples peaking at approximately 13 counts/trap before declining in the early November sample to near 10 counts/trap. It is thus anticipated that St. Mary's Bay Outside initial commercial catch rates will be near 7 counts/trap, comparable to recent years.

4) St. Mary's Bay Outside Weaks samples are near negligible in 2026 preseason sampling.

Acknowledgements

Coldwater Lobster Association and Université Sainte-Anne wish to thank all participants in, and contributors to the 2026 Preseason Lobster Moult & Quality Sampling Program. Your commitment to this scientific task and the provision of preseason information to the Nova Scotia lobster industry is commendable. We appreciate and thank all for your continued support and improvement of this important scientific study for the benefit of the lobster sector in southwest Nova Scotia.

To those about to embark on another lobster season in LFAs 33 and 34, here's to calm waters, a prosperous season, and stable international and domestic markets. Stay safe and watch out for one another.



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