

In 2017 I went feathering for mackerel - that's a style of commercial fishing that lobster fishermen were allowed to use in 2017.

They are still allowed (2021) just the licensing and rules have changed a little.

Lobster fishermen catch literal tons of mackerel as bait.

During lobster season, mackerel as bait, can cost as much as \$1 a pound. In the summer, as long as the cost of the boat, crew - freezing and storing mackerel - brings the price below that - it is worth it to the fishermen to catch their own bait.

My Uncles and I went - and were paid in Mackerel each day - as it was a favor for the family.

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| This is feathering for mackerel - a long line with lots of feathered hooks on it.  | We start before daylight - as the sun brings the mackerel to shallower water. My uncles believe the mackerel return to deeper water at noon - so we never fish past about 11 am. |



We are close to finished for the day - long before 11 am as well.

My Uncle only has the freezer space to freeze 500 or 600 lbs of mackerel each day.

We sort the mackerel as we catch them - returning the ones that are too small.

We sort them into fish boxes which when full - hold 120 - 150 lbs. My Uncles prefer about 100 lb per box.

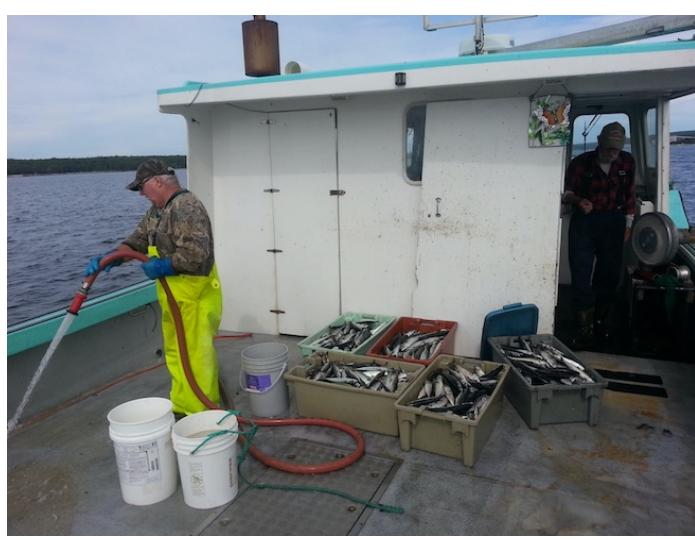
It is tedious, back breaking work to kneel in blood, sorting and measuring every fish.



Tedious and back breaking.

With 5 boxes - roughly 500 to 600 lbs - what my Uncle can freeze in a day - it's time to head home.

We wash the boat as we go.



## Smelt (it's a fish)

As a kid, I use to dip smelt with my Uncles. I remember it being March as there was ice on the brooks and it was before trout season in April.

Smelt, where I am from, are anadromous - they are born in freshwater - swim to and live in saltwater - returning to freshwater to spawn each spring. They are very similar to trout and salmon which often do the same thing.

In the fall / winter of 2017 I was living in a youth hostel in Halifax. The kitchen was communal and with most residents a fraction of my age and no idea about local / traditional cuisine, I had frequent spectators to my kitchen adventures.



This is me frying smelt in bacon fat in the winter of 2017.

I lived in Halifax at the time.