



INSPIRING AMERICANS TO PROTECT WILDLIFE FOR OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE.

Fact Sheet

A Maine Without Winter

With less than six inches of snow at the end of this February, warming winters mean trouble for New England, where winter recreation has long been an integral part of our culture and economy.

The seasons that Mainers knew and built their lives around are gone, leaving our local businesses, industry, and native wildlife without winter resources.

“Our whole economy is being impacted by the mild temperatures this winter.”

Well-known Maine guide and longtime outdoor writer, Stu Bristol, has never seen anything like it. Stu notes that, “many of the better-known winter ice fishing derbies have been canceled.”

The ice fishermen aren’t the only ones feeling the impact this winter.



“Take a look at the Maine Pike. There aren’t any snow machines on trailers headed north these Friday afternoons. Our whole economy is being impacted by the mild temperatures this winter.”

“This has had a real impact on the economy.”

Sebago Lake Rotary’s annual mid-winter fishing derby brings up to 10,000 fisherman to the lake. Rotarian Tom Nooman, reflects that this is the fourth winter since 2002 that the derby had to be canceled due to quickly deteriorating ice conditions.

Maine businesses depend on winter weather.

The recent snow and ice drought has led to canceled outdoor events, shortened hunting and fishing seasons, and devastating consequences on the local way of life.



Along the Kennebec River, the economic pinch is felt by the smelt camp owners and local businesses.

Sonny, owner of Sonny’s Smelt Camps in Richmond, says some good ice comes by mid-February, “but the ice came two weeks late. The first two weeks are generally the best ice fishing for smelt. That really hurt me and I’m just breaking even now.”



“We’re all hurting up here this winter.”

Roger Knight of Knight’s Bait Shop agrees, “We just didn’t have the ice we normally do. It’s really hurting all the businesses up here.”

Another smelt camp owner, Steve Leighton of Bowdoinham, summed up his situation:

“There’s no snow or ice down south and this is where my customers are from. Ninety percent of my customers are from out of state. Usually I’m booked solid seven days a week by now. But I’m down forty percent. I got ice now, but the problem is people down there just don’t know we got ice up here now.”

A mild winter means no ice and a devastated industry.

Our local businesses are suffering along with the fish and wildlife they depend on. Ice-fishing, once a staple of Maine winters, is now a crippled industry, putting our economy and culture at risk with the rapidly changing environment.



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