



Northeast Book Club

The Secret Life of Lobsters by Trevor Corson

8:00-9:00 PM ET on Thursday, May 25th, 2023

Meeting Schedule

Date	Chapters	Number of Pages
6/8/23	<i>Brooding</i> Chapter 15: Gathering the Flock Chapter 16: Victory Dance Chapter 17: Fickle Seas Epilogue	62

Discussion Questions

Carol came up with these questions as she read Part Five: *Sensing*, and the Epilogue last week. Check them out to help you get the most out of these final chapters!

Chapter 15: Gathering the Flock

1. Bob Steneck had trouble gaining access to the government research that could have supported his theory that the decline in lobster population was not directly due to a drop in the number of female lobsters making eggs. **Should the R/V *Albatross* information regarding number of mature females being caught have been made available to everyone?**
2. Does using science to promote a policy or point of view seem fair? How should science be used in policy and regulation development and who should enforce these guidelines?
3. Why do you think the government did not want to share the R/V *Albatross* database?

Chapter 16: Victory Dance

1. In this chapter, scientists declare the lobster population was declining despite evidence they withheld from the public to the contrary. Before reading this book, would you have sided with the scientists or lobstermen? Who would you side with after reading the book?
2. What recommendations would you give for collaboration between scientists and fisheries in the future?

Chapter 17: Fickle Seas

1. After describing extensive research done by scientists in this chapter, Corson describes an experiment Jack Merrill helped his daughter perform for her classmates:

“For Jack Merrill the danger posed by pesticides was particularly worrying. To demonstrate how similar the nervous system of lobsters were to those of insects, he helped his daughter with a science project at school. While her classmates watched, she sprinkled a few drops of a household pesticide over a tank containing a lobster. Within seconds, the animal convulsed and was dead” (256).

What are your thoughts about the science experiment Jack Merrill’s daughter did with the pesticides?

2. Do you think pesticides affect ocean life more than we realize?

Epilogue

1. Throughout the book we learned how the lobstermen use their experience in the field and knowledge to enhance the lobster industry. How did this information affect your understanding of fisheries in general?
2. One observation made by lobstermen was how water temperature would increase or decrease their catch. What effects do you think climate change will have on the lobster industry? When do you predict these changes will come about?