

# Scientists

unshell *CC Times*

cause of *4/5/05*

# blue lobster

## THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BRUNSWICK, Maine — Researchers may have cracked the underwater secret of what makes some lobster shells blue.

Ronald Christensen, a chemistry professor at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, and Harry Frank of the University of Connecticut have discovered a genetic defect that causes some lobsters to produce excessive protein that forms a blue color complex in the shells of roughly one in a million lobsters.

"I suspect more blue lobsters than we realize are born but don't survive because they become major targets for predators," said Christensen. "The reason you don't want to be a blue lobster is you stick out like a sore thumb."

The research was conducted at the University of Connecticut and will be published in the April issue of the *Journal of Chemistry*.

Donald Ulrickson, who caught the lobster, has been lobstering for about 50 years. During that time, he has caught eight blue lobsters, he said.

Carl Wilson, a lobster biologist with the Maine Department of Marine Resources, said his department receives 15 to 20 calls each summer from fishermen who have caught blue lobsters.

Many bring the lobsters to the department's marine resources aquarium in Boothbay Harbor, where they are placed on display.

Wilson said yellow, bright red and orange polka dot-colored lobsters have been on display. All lobsters turn a bright red when they're cooked.