

CAPE COD COMMERCIAL  
**FISHERMEN'S  
ALLIANCE**

Small Boats. Big Ideas.

## Cape Seal Symposium Summary

(April 4, 2013 – Chatham, Mass.) More than 200 people spent Saturday, March 23, talking about seals. The first ever Outer Cape Seal Symposium successfully brought together fishermen, scientists, managers, town officials, seal tour operators and concerned Cape Cod residents to learn about the exploding gray seal populations in our waters and how this could affect the future of Cape Cod.

### One-day seal counts on Monomoy and Muskeget islands and tidal bars.

**5,611 (1999)**

**15,756 (2011)**

Source: National Marine Fisheries Service via Cape Cod Times, March 24, 2013

Scientific experts and fishing industry representatives shared information about gray seals. Three common themes appeared right off the bat – there are more seals now than in recent history, their numbers are rapidly increasing, and that's likely increasing great white shark sightings off our beaches. While many questions were addressed, a number remained unanswered. This led to an educated conversation among diverse interests about what some have identified as a critical problem.

**"If you open up the cafe, the predators will come," said shark expert Greg Skomal, from the Massachusetts Shark Research Program. "These sharks are here to stay as long as the seal population is robust."**

CapeCodToday.com, March 24, 2013.

Local fishermen have been saying for years how important it is to manage the ocean by taking into consideration how species interact. Now fisheries management conversations around the country are discussing this same idea, and calling it ecosystem based management. We agree that a healthy marine ecosystem is greater than the sum of its parts.

**"I just think that it's completely out of whack right now; I think most people can understand that we've gone beyond any semblance of balance in that environment."**

Bill Amaru, Orleans, Mass. fisherman on 95WXTK NewsRadio, March 25, 2013.



The Marine Mammal Protection Act has been successful in rebuilding depleted marine mammal populations, including gray seals, and this is an incredible accomplishment. Yet, as marine mammal populations rebuild, the effects of these growing populations should be quantified and analyzed with the

best available science and in a timely manner. We need to continue to improve our understanding of this species, and at the same time, we should take steps to manage it, just like we manage haddock or pollock or even deer.

**"This is a long-term conversation," Pappalardo said at the close of the first Outer Cape Seal Symposium Saturday. "I feel we're 10 years away from having a legitimate conversation about marine mammals in the United States. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't push for it if we believe in it."**

John Pappalardo, CEO, CCCHFA, Cape Cod Chronicle, March 28, 2013.

This isn't an easy conversation, but we need to have it if we're going to strengthen our small fishing businesses and better manage our oceans.

We would like to thank Betty Lentell, Friends of Pleasant Bay, Pleasant Bay Alliance, Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies, Rob O'Leary, and many others for making the Symposium such a success.

Together we have taken the first step in a long and comprehensive dialogue that we will continue to make a top priority.

**"We can't just resolve ourselves to the idea that nothing will be done about it and we're going to have to go out of business."**

Ernie Eldredge, traditional weir fisherman from Chatham, Mass. The Boston Globe, March 24, 2013.