

[View as Webpage](#)



# CAPE COD COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN'S ALLIANCE

Small Boats. Big Ideas.

*An e-magazine about our fishing community –  
who we are, how we fish and our connection to the sea*

Nov. 29, 2018

## Fish Tales

Standing on the shoulders of the past, Sam Linnell looks to the future

When Tim Linnell bought his first fishing boat he brought his six-year-old son Sam up to Maine to pick it up.

“He was climbing all over it,” Tim remembers, “throwing lines overboard.”



Less than 20 years later, Sam brought his dad and another captain, Mark Liska, up to Gloucester to see the commercial vessel he was buying.

“This is what I love to do. This is how I was always going to make a living,” said Sam at the Chatham Fish Pier on a recent sunny day, working on his new boat Fair Wind.

Sam is at least the fourth generation of Linnells to build a life around fishing. That heritage shapes him, and helps him succeed. He is also one of the few who has seen how the Cape's fleets were battered by regulations, managed to stay fishing through enormous cuts, and hopefully are coming out on the other side with a brighter future.

“I think he is going to be the first to really benefit from what we have done,” says Tim Linnell. “He has me and his uncle to help.”

*The story continues here ...*

Photo by Christine Walsh Sanders

**Plumbing the Depths**

## On the Horizon

We have lots of exciting stuff happening.

 With your help, the Fishermen's Alliance has the opportunity to receive a \$150,000 gift! *The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation* is challenging our supporters to increase their giving by matching 100 percent of donations up to \$150,000. We are currently \$50,000 away from completing this challenge! Your generosity will support Cape Cod's blue economy by sustaining fishing access for future generations, advocating for Cape Cod's small-boat fishermen and ensuring ocean ecosystem health. *Donate today.* To learn more or find out if your gift qualifies, please contact Christa Danilowicz at [christa@capecodfishermen.org](mailto:christa@capecodfishermen.org) or 508-945-2432 x109.

 In October, National Seafood Month, we teamed up with *Eating with the Ecosystem* to challenge New Englanders to share their local seafood on social media. Congratulations to our  
#LocalSeafoodChallenge

## Outsmarting ocean acidification

Although it was years ago, Dan Martino well remembers how hatcheries in the Pacific Northwest watched their shellfish seed die, ravaged by ocean acidification.

“The shellfish basically dissolved in front of their eyes,” Martino says. “The ocean water had grown too acidic.”



When Dan and his brother Greg got their oyster grant on Martha's Vineyard in 2014, and became the first oyster farm in Oak Bluffs history, that memory became even more sinister.

The hatcheries in Washington State, which were using seawater to grow, changed their model and began buffering the water, adding something similar to lime, to bring up the pH.

The Martinos, who own Cottage City Oysters, figure it is only a matter of time before the same phenomenon hits the East Coast. They are trying to get in front of a problem that could crush an increasingly important industry to the economy of the Cape and Islands.

“This is something our industry is going to face in the next decade. It's inevitable and it's a threat,” he says.

*The story continues here ...*

Photo Courtesy of Dan Martino

## Aids to Navigation

### Commercial fishermen from across the country share concerns, strategies

Commercial fishermen have lamented the lack of cod, an iconic fish challenged by everything from climate change to seals. Lately there is another concern: hobbyists.

“Look at our cod fish, the recreational fishery was close to 300 percent over quota and there was no accountability,” says Tim Linnell, a long-time captain.



The problem is not particular to the Cape.

In Alaska there is ongoing conflict between recreational and commercial fishermen over salmon. In California there have been arguments over Dungeness crab. And in the Gulf of Mexico, commercial fishermen are in a

winner from Cape Cod, Richard Banks, for submitting his little necks dish! Richard won a *Simmering with the Sea* cookbook and t-shirt courtesy of Eating with the Ecosystem plus a Fishermen's Alliance long sleeve shirt, baseball cap, and cooler bag. Richard has been a longtime supporter of the Fishermen's Alliance and a trusty advocate for eating local seafood.



We are happy to be involved in **WaterWORKS**

career day, organized by the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce's Blue Economy initiative. The event, held at **Cape Cod Community College**, is designed to inspire high school students to pursue careers connected to the oceans. The hope is by showcasing possibilities in science, technology, engineering, fisheries, research, and technology, future stewards will realize they don't have to leave the sandbar to find meaningful, well-paying jobs. There is room for exhibitors so if your business, organization, or institution is helping shape the Blue Economy, why not showcase your good work? The event takes place Tuesday, Jan. 8. For more information [doreen@capecodfishermen.org](mailto:doreen@capecodfishermen.org)

## On the Water

Ever wonder how a boat, or a fish, got its name? Want the word on what people are catching --- or how to cook it?

constant struggle to keep their allocation of red snapper. Sport fishermen are trying to take more and more commercial quota, which is already being cut when recreational fishermen overfish.

Commercial fishermen have no intrinsic problem with recreational fishermen – many fish for fun themselves. The issue is recreational fishermen don't operate under the same standards as their commercial brethren. And when overfishing from the recreational side occurs, it's the commercial guys who take the hit.

*The story continues here ...*

## Charting the Past

### The Three Harbors of Harwich

From a dusty racing track around a pond, a mill by a small river, and a marshy natural inlet, over the course of a century the town of Harwich



crafted three important harbors opening to Nantucket Sound's rich fishing grounds and sea routes.

Allen, Wychmere and Saquatucket Harbors are strung along several miles of coastline in Harwich Port, and none of them originally offered full access to the Sound.

"Allen was a trickle, Wychmere was a salt pond with limited inflow and outflow, and Saquatucket was really just the Andrews River meandering from cranberry bogs down to a marsh," says Tom Leach, who was Harwich's harbormaster from 1973 to 2012.

Prior to the twentieth century, the center of commercial fishing in Harwich was the Herring River, its shoreline dotted with myriad boat shops, mills and related industries.

"Harwich Port had piers jutting out into the Sound," says Leach, "where fishing vessels launched, headed for the Grand Banks." These wharves facilitated a shipping trade for a village that had no deepwater harbor until 1905.

*The story continues here ...*

Photo courtesy of Tom Leach

## A Day in Photos

Dog days at the fish pier

Chatham's identity is wrapped up in its fish pier, the most visited spot



In the 1970s, Captain Bob Ryder received a grant to work with a type of gear called the Scottish seine. The story goes that a fellow from Scotland came over to advise for a month and arrived at the height of bay scallop season. Chatham inhabitants being hospitable, he was invited to dinner often – and wound up eating bay scallops every night for weeks. Although very appreciative, he was more than glad to see some red meat when he showed up at the Our family house. Scottish seining is considered one of the most difficult and environmentally friendly fisheries and several fishermen in Chatham became interested in following Ryder's lead. One of those interested fishermen was Steve Fitz and now his nephew, also Steve Fitz, runs the only Scottish seining boat left in the country, F/V Mr. Morgan. Fitz grew up fishing with his father and uncle and first learned about the Scottish seine method in the 1970s. He later moved to Colorado, earned a business degree at the University of Denver, and in 1993 moved to Half Moon Bay in California to fish with his uncle. Now he owns the business, Mr. Morgan Fisheries Inc.

The gear is similar to purse seining, except it uses weighted lines that sink to the bottom instead of floating on the surface. When set, the gear looks like a tear drop, or a triangle, and as the net is pulled atop mud it pushes fish into the net. Its minimal impact on ocean bottom

in town, among the most popular vantages on the entire Cape.

The pier on Shore Road exemplifies the term “working waterfront” and figures prominently in the town’s economy, history and culture.



Many artists have tried to capture its essence. In the pictures that follow, Christine Walsh Sanders gets right into the thick of it, offering her sense of a day in the life of the real work at hand, up close with people offloading one of the port’s current staples, dogfish.

[See gallery here ...](#)

Photo by Christine Walsh Sanders

## Over the Bar Cameras on deck

By John Pappalardo

Cameras monitoring every fishing move – isn’t that the very antithesis of what it means to be free and independent offshore?



Believe me, I get it when people rail against what’s called EM, electronic monitoring, as some kind of Big Brother invasion of the fishery and its historic way of life. But I’ve become convinced that using cameras rather than humans to monitor our fleet not only is better and safer; it’s a crucial way to bring that celebrated way of life back to full health.

To begin to understand why is to understand the importance of a single word at the core of everything we are trying to do, and believe in:

Accountability.

The biggest systemic problem our fishery faces is that what actually shows up on deck can be so different from what shows up in the government reports. This discrepancy is caused in good part because of how we regulate fishing as we try to rebuild stocks. Fishermen are not allowed to catch more than a set amount of each kind of fish, and that amount is not always an accurate reflection of what they observe. So when fishermen catch more of a certain fish (think cod) than is allowed, they have two choices: Report it honestly, and face heavy financial consequences, or heave it overboard and hide the fact that they caught it in the first place.

habitat convinced regulators to exempt it from trawl closure areas off the California coast.

## On the Shore

This community thrives in large part because of a constellation of non-profit organizations and engaged businesses.



Suzanne Nickerson

spends a lot of time combing beaches. Nickerson, of Chatham, has been dismayed by the amount of plastic and other debris along local shores so has been collecting it and turning it into art. Her artwork comes in various sizes and she gifts creations to various groups to help spread the message about keeping oceans clean.



One of our friends in Wellfleet,

Gordon Peabody, not only runs an environmental consulting company but also produces an e-mag: *OCEAN*. The e-mag is a compilation of stories from that highlight ocean-atmosphere systems and issues. In the most recent suite of stories; how increasing plastic in the ocean is leading to starvation of seabirds and how water temperatures in the Gulf of Maine this August were as much as nine degrees warmer than normal.



The *Eldredge Library's*

learning series is always full of interesting courses, often offered by neighbors. This year is no different with this fall and winter series, sponsored by

Not only does this put good fishermen in a really bad dilemma, it also is a big reason why the science that defines our catch limits can be inaccurate. Stock assessments are only as good as the data they use, which comes from two sources – government survey work and fishermen catch reports. If a lot of catch disappears, unreported, then of course stock assessments will be way off. A vicious cycle is created.

Human observers have been put on boats to try to correct this. But we all know that when we are watched, we act differently. Unless there is an observer on every boat every trip, we won't get the results we're after. That not only is a very expensive way to go, it also creates conflict on smaller boats; another body in the way, another possibility for an accident. Plus, human observers are not infallible; they miss things, they get seasick, they fall asleep, their paperwork can be sloppy.

Cameras are a way out. Already, two dozen captains in the Northeast have installed them. They're focused where fish come up, on the rails or in the nets, not the wheelhouse. The data they record goes to a company that reviews it, and compares it against trip reports fishermen file. The images belong to the fishermen, not the government, and are used only to confirm catch and locations. The technology is improving all the time, getting cheaper too.

This practice already is standard on the West Coast. It's no coincidence that stocks out there are in better shape even as the industry continues to struggle, and the track record is strong enough so that now, every East Coast boat that uses pelagic long lines to hunt for swordfish and tuna is being required to carry cameras.

Here's another great incentive and potential for EM: For a long time now, fishermen have railed that what they see on the water is dramatically different from what the scientific assessments say. But what fishermen report often gets dismissed as "anecdotal," unscientific, self-serving.

The hard evidence cameras collect could help end that condescending dismissal of what people who know the most about fishing have to say.

So yes, cameras can be intrusive. But in certain situations they also serve a great function. From airplane pilots to police officers, blackjack dealers to convenience store clerks, they offer proof that almost all of us are honest and responsible. And when a few of us are not, they offer proof of that too.

Because after all, the oceans are not someone's private home or business. They are part of the great public commons. Whether we like to think about it this way or not, those who fish for a living harvest a public resource. Managing that resource is a public responsibility, and it could be done a helluva lot better. Electronic monitoring should play a big role in that.

the Friends of the Eldredge Library, boasting everything from Garden Pleasures to American Opera. We were invited to participate and Seth Rolbein, director of the Cape Cod Fisheries Trust (part of the Fishermen's Alliance), will examine the life and times of today's independent commercial fishermen. Attendees will explore everything from a typical day in the life of a local fisherman to the changing status of fishing stocks, economic challenges and regulatory hurdles. Walk-ins welcome.

## On the Hook

We do a lot of reading, searching through the wide world of fisheries, and often find intriguing pieces to share. In the old days, you might call this your clipping service.



The other day a fisherman said something we often hear, but don't often repeat: "I don't have to be a commercial fisherman. I can make money other ways. I do it because I love it and believe in it. Fishing is not a just a job or career - it is way of life." *This piece* touches on why that matters worldwide.



With growing concern on the Cape, and moves afoot to get ahead of the problem, we thought we'd share this piece on *ocean acidification* from the West Coast.



Our "The Fishing Life" appears monthly in *The Cape Codder newspaper* and we are grateful for the opportunity



*(John Pappalardo is the CEO of the Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance)*

to show that fisheries news is really community news. This recent article is about a decades-old solution devised by Chatham to help fishermen that may be in jeopardy.

