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AMERICA'S OLDEST SEAPORT

a snapshot of a bygone industry









Located on the north shore of Massachusetts, Gloucester was settled before even Salem or Boston in 1623 by the Dorchester Company. The settlement was one of the first in what would become the Massachusetts Bay Colony. It underwent many settlements and re-settlements but since the mid-18th century it has been known for one thing. *Fishing.*

Today, that industry has reached a point of no return.



“My grandfather went fishing, my father went fishing, and I went fishing.”

VITO CALUMO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE GLOUCESTER FISHERIES COMMISSION

Ask just about anyone in Gloucester what can be done
to repair the fishing industry and the answer will be,

“IT’S TOO LATE.”

“Dismal is probably a pretty good word for it,”

says Sean Horgan, a staff writer for the Gloucester Times. “There used to be more than 200 boats on the water, now you’ve got maybe 30.”

Horgan has been covering the fishing industry in Gloucester for only four months but he says it’s easy to learn fast by just listening. “[I’ve learned that] if you go anywhere in the world and tell people you were a fisherman out of Gloucester they knew exactly where you were from and how hard you worked.”

There’s some good news, the lobster industry is doing well. “They’ve had a pretty good year between Gloucester and Rockport [lobstermen],” says Horgan. He says the boost in the lobster industry has dampened some the drastic effects of the failing fishing industry. Also, he’s seen reports that the herring industry is doing well but “it’s a couple of guys from Ireland and they won’t talk to me for some reason.”

Many of the fishermen have sold their boats, and mortgaged their homes in hopes of getting in front of a few poor years and hoping that when (if) the cod comes back they can get back on their feet.

“[The problem is that] they’re not allowed to catch in so many places, not allowed to catch very much, so it makes no sense to go out and just burn fuel,” says Horgan. He says there’s a few mitigating solutions such as looking at other types of unpopular fish. Fishermen and chefs are making somewhat successful attempts to market dogfish, redfish and whiting instead of the coveted cod. Horgan says there’s problems involved with that as well. “They aren’t really equipped to catch these fish,” he says, “no market, and the processing plants just aren’t set up for it, and people really just don’t eat it.”

Failure around every corner it seems. “And then bring in the climatic stuff,” adds Horgan. It’s a fact that the waters are warming, species are moving and just a degree difference makes a world of difference in the water.

“There’s political elements,” he says, “economical elements, and there is a history here. [Losing the history] more than anything, is what really gets them.”



Above: Calumo and several other men from the Northeast Seafood Coalition meet for coffee on a cold November morning. Their job is to try find solutions to the complex problems the fishing industry is facing. Opposite page: The city of Gloucester looks as worn as the fishermen fighting for the industry.

FISHING could be described as the industry that built New England. For centuries, fishermen have cast their nets into the Atlantic, hoping to haul home a good load and sell it for enough to feed their families.

“IT’S HEADED FOR TOTAL DESTRUCTION.”

VITO CALUMO

“My grandfather went fishing, my father went fishing and I went fishing,” sighed Vito Calumo, a man who has seen and worked in every angle of the fishing industry in Gloucester. He’s calling for reform and has done his fair share of leg work as well as member of

nearly every fishing recovery organization on the Atlantic. Here’s a few:

*Massachusetts Fisheries Recovery
Commission
New England Fishery
Management Council
Atlantic State Fisheries
Commission
Gloucester Fisheries Commission*

Calumo has worked extensively with all these commissions and with Senators John Kerry and Scott Brown to come up with ways to save the industry but despite it all he says, “It’s a sad state of affairs and it’s headed for total destruction.”

The question is: why? Calumo will quickly give a few reasons including climate change and fishing restrictions imposed by organizations like NOAA. But at

the end of the day he shakes his head and says, “I don’t understand totally what’s gone wrong here.”

Let’s start with the guys who are causing the biggest rifts in the system. It’s a he-said she-said battle between NOAA and the fishermen.

WBZ reporter Jonathan Elias puts it simply: “Ten years ago federal regulations told fishermen to catch less cod. They did. They were told to buy permits that were hundreds of thousands of dollars. They did.

Feds installed black boxes to track every boat. Fishermen even had to ask permission to go fishing. They did that too. All because they were told by 2014 the fish would be back and all would be well.

Not true.

Because federal scientists now say the cod is gone.”



*“It was good for a long time,
but it’s not as easy now
as it was before.”*

CHRIS DUFFEY, CAPE ANN SEAFOOD EXCHANGE
DECEMBER 6, 2013





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Above: Chris Duffey of Cape Ann Seafood Exchange, one of the two seafood auction houses in Gloucester. Opposite: In the pre-dawn hours, crew relieves the Caption Joe of her catch after a week at sea.

There are two Auction houses left in Gloucester where fish are brought, graded, and sold to distributors. Chris Duffey works at Cape Ann Seafood Exchange, Inc., where he monitors the auctions and makes sure things are running smoothly. He says things have drastically changed for them.

*“Today we had
6 or 7 boats come in
and one big boat.
We used to have
50 or 60 small boats
that would come
everyday.”*

He says a lot of small boats with a lot of fish meant good business. This isn't the case today though because of fishing catch restrictions imposed by government programs like the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Catch limits have been cut by 78 percent. Federal scientists are now saying that the fish the industry runs on, cod, is all gone.



Above: Billy Jones, left, works with a distributor to find the fish he bought at the Cape Ann Seafood Exchange. Left: After a week on the Atlantic, the Caption Joe's crew relieves her of her haul.

THE LAST OF THE GLOUCESTER MEN

They're known worldwide as the hardworking, fearless fisherman of coastal New England. However, due to (excuse the pun) the perfect storm of calamities, fishing as it once was in Gloucester, and all over the coast, has reached a point of irreversibility.



A distributor gathers the fish he bought at the Cape Ann



Seafood Exchange Auction. This room used to be filled with roughly 100,000 fish daily. Now, it brings in only from 50,000-20,000.



*The fog's just lifting.
Throw off your bow line;
throw off your stern.
You head out to South channel,
past Rocky Neck, Ten Pound Island.*

THE PERFECT STORM



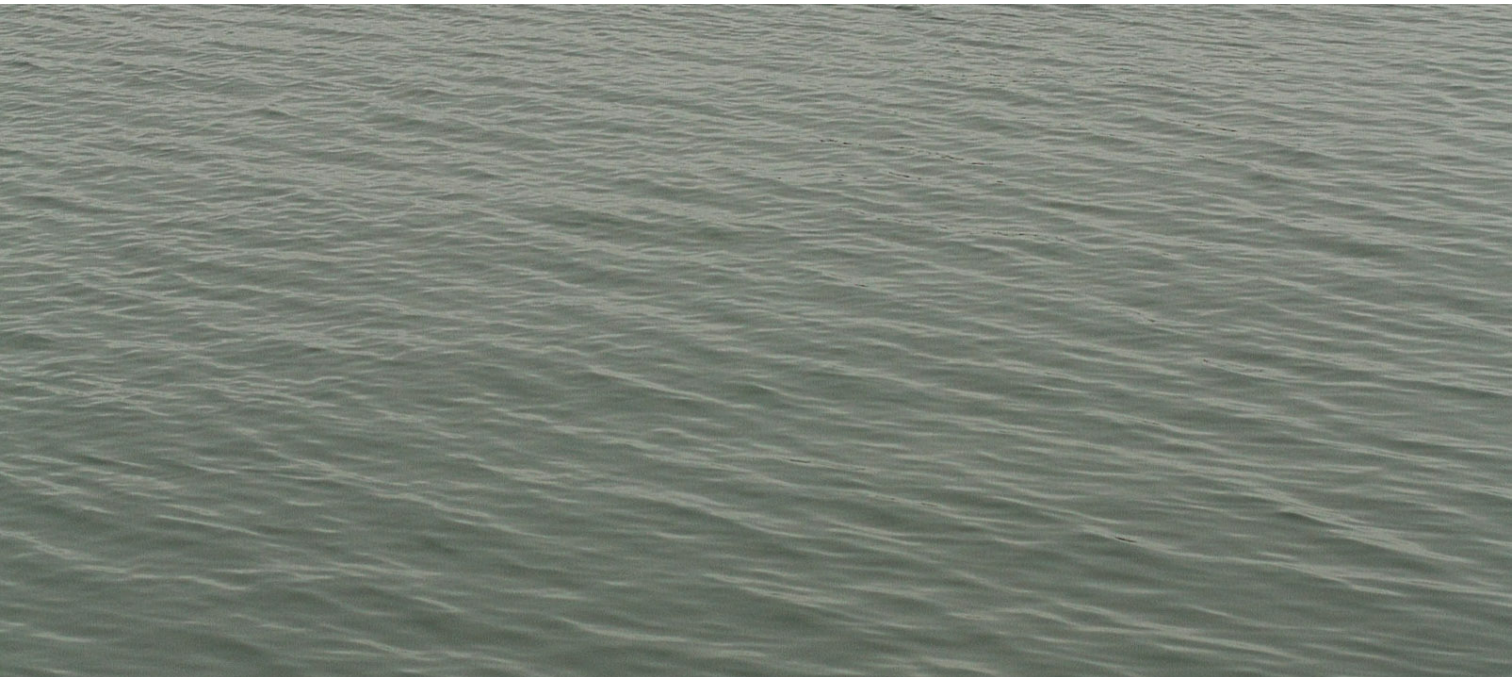
The Padre Pio heads past Cape Pond Ice for last trip to sea under Joe Orlando's ownership.



The Gloucester House is popular local restaurant. Many of the meals served are caught by local fishermen that morning. They are also feeling the devastating blow the fishing economy has been dealt.



Joe Orlando's recently sold boat, the Padre Pio, is portrayed in a painting (bottom left) displayed among others at the Gloucester House Restaurant.



LOST AT SEA

In it's more than 350-year history, Gloucester has lost more than 10,000 men (there are no women on the original list) to the Atlantic Ocean. They are honored at the Fisherman's Memorial, built in 1925.



PSALM 107: 23-24

*"They that go down to the sea in ships,
That do business in great waters;
These see the works of the Lord,
And his wonders in the deep."*







“THERE’S NO COD OUT THERE.”

JOHN BRULLARD, NOAA



THERE'S NO MORE COD

A deep driven rift has been built between the fishermen of Gloucester, and beyond for that matter, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. John Brullard, spokesperson for NOAA, says, "You base all the management on best available science, now does that mean perfect science, of course not there is no such thing as perfect science."

According to Bullard, the science says there is no cod. As a result they have cut the catch limit for fisherman by 78 percent. According to WBZ, fisherman Al Cottone says he recently caught his annual quota offive thousand pounds of cod. Not in a year, or even a month, but in five hours.

But Brullard sticks to his guns and says, "There's no cod out there. It's not about science being right or wrong."

Joe Orlando recently sold his fishing boat, the Padre Pio. He says it's killing him. "I come down to the dock every day and look at my boat rusting away." Orlando is part of the Northeast Seafood Coalition which represents commercial fishermen in the northeast and tries to find solutions to the complex problems facing the industry.

Even though the fishing industry was declared a disaster last year, fishermen says they have not seen one penny of aid. Instead, there is a new NOAA regualtion that requires observers to go on every fishing boat. This costs fishermen up to \$800 a day, per observer. Orlando says he makes \$300 on a good



THANK YOU

VITO CALUMO

CHRIS DUFFEY

JOE ORLANDO

WBZ NEWS

SEAN HORGAN + THE GLOUCESTER

TIMES

THE CITY OF GLOUCESTER
