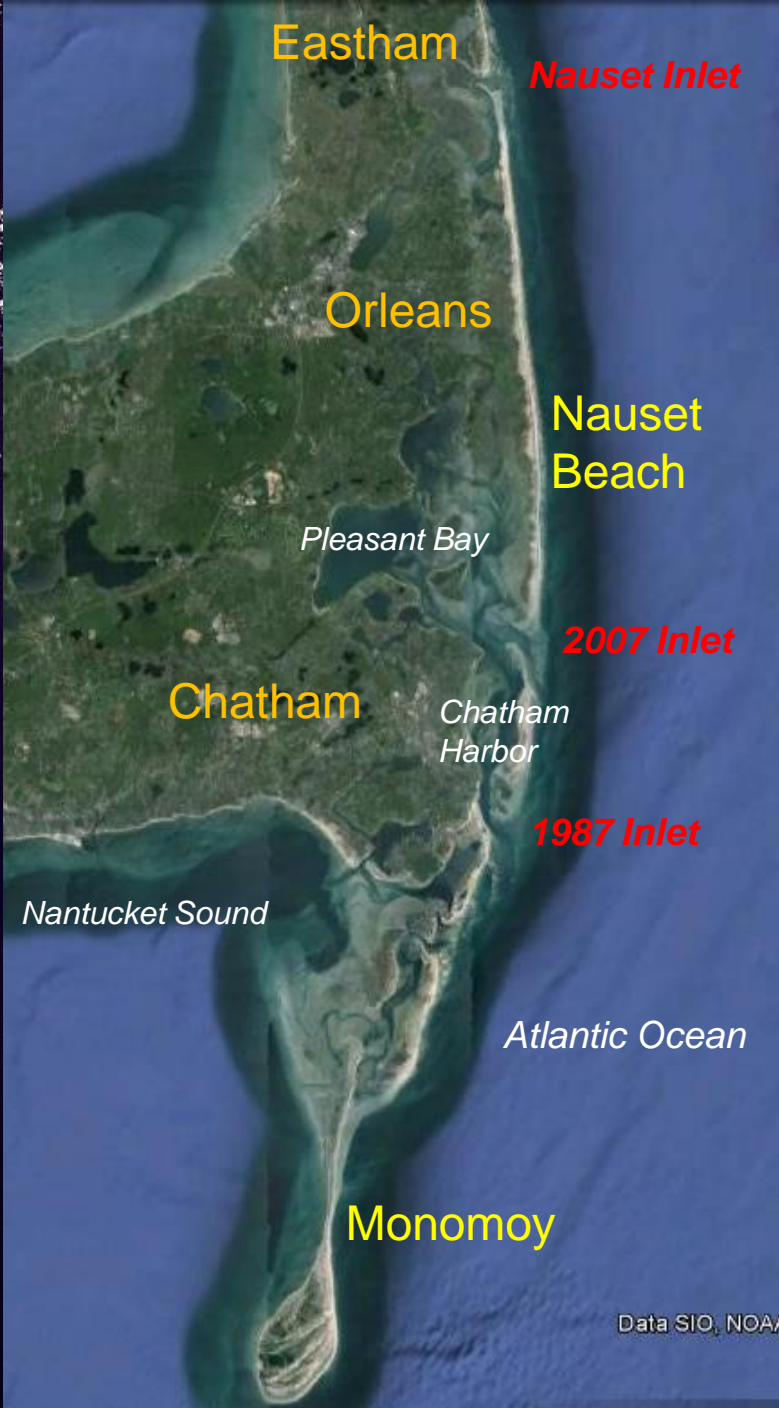
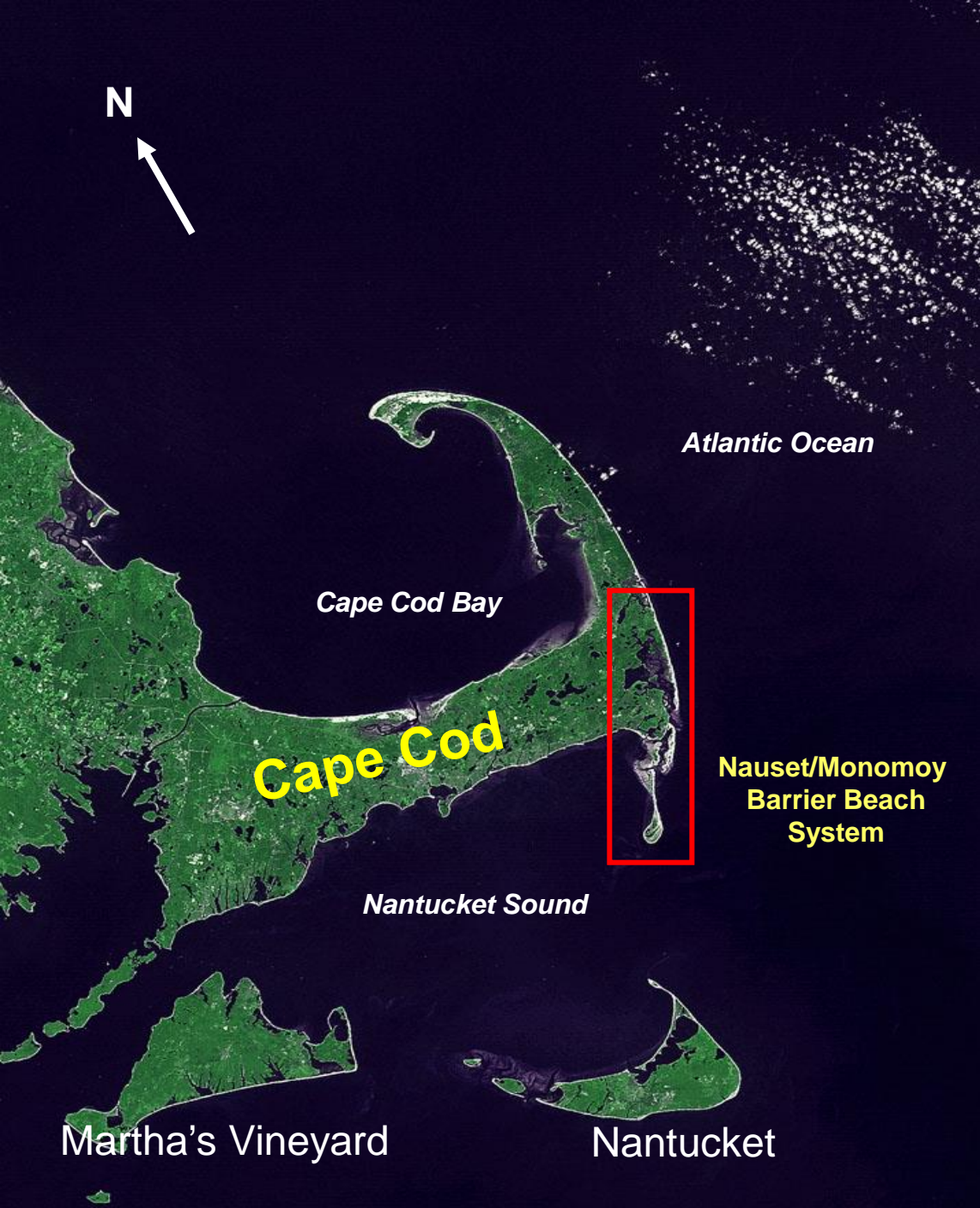


Gray Seals Chatham, MA – A Local Perspective

Marine Mammal Commission Annual Meeting
April 6, 2017

Robert A. Duncanson, Ph.D.
Director of Health & Natural Resources
Town of Chatham





Monomoy



Mainland
Chatham



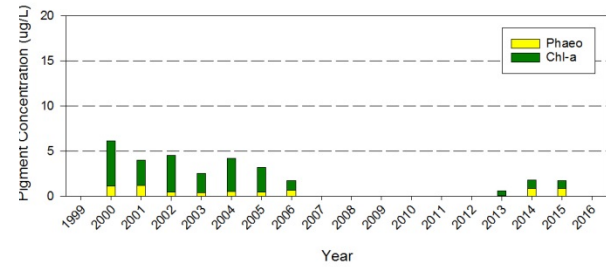
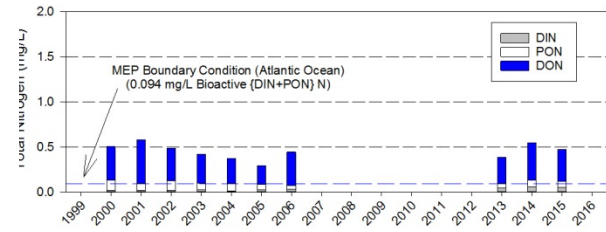
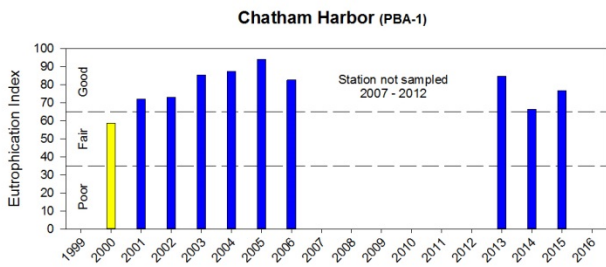
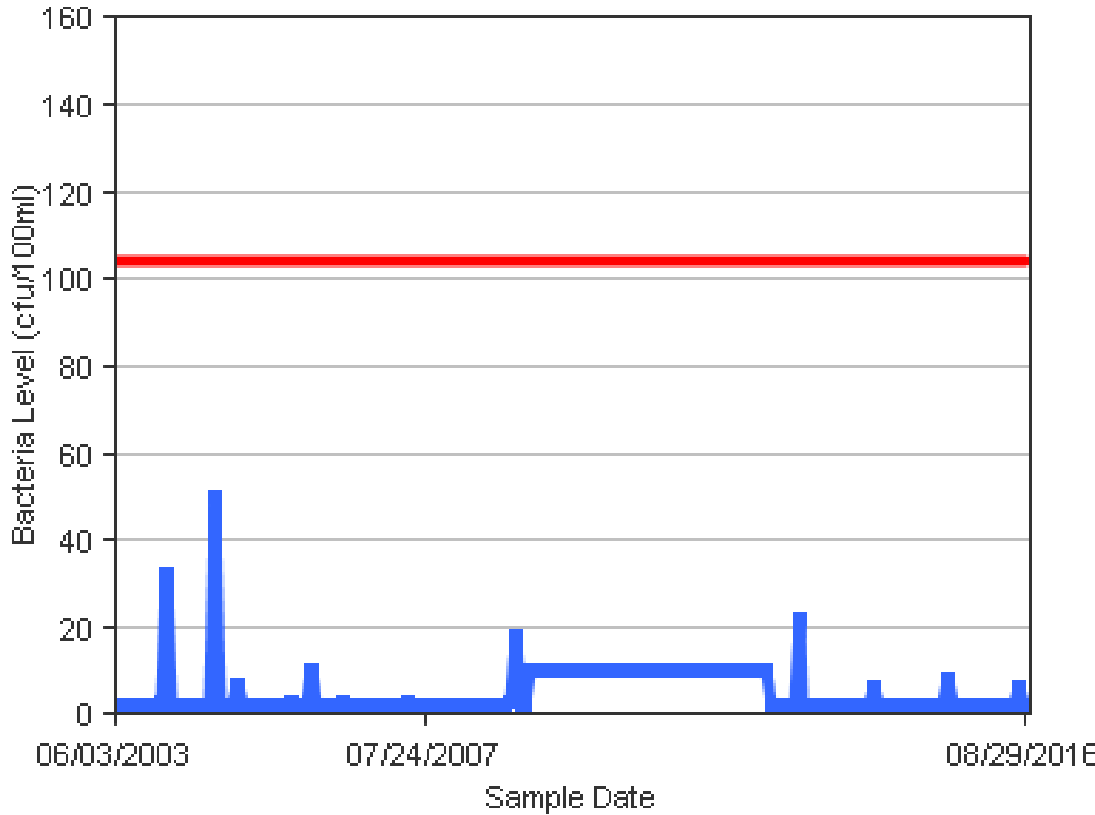
Bathing Beach



Water Quality



Health & Ecological Impacts



Tourism



www.mass.gov | CWNY-TV



Chatham Municipal Fish Pier

The Best Places To See Seals On Cape Cod

Visit one of these beautiful beaches and see seals in their natural habitat!

<p>Chatham</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chatham Fish Pier 	<p>Eastham</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coast Guard Beach
<p>Chatham</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lighthouse Beach 	<p>Orleans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nauvoo Beach
<p>Monomoy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ballston Beach 	<p>Truro</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ballston Beach

Things You Should Know About Seals

- The two types of seals seen off and on the coast of Cape Cod are known as Harbor and Gray seals.
- The breeding season for both Harbor and Gray seals runs from September until March.
- Many seals can be seen between September and October, especially Gray seals as they arrive in large numbers during this period.
- Harbor seals can be as large as 6 ft. in length and 750 lbs, where Gray seals can range from 7'-10 ft. in length and 500-700 lbs in weight.
- Seals are hunted legally outside of U.S. waters.
- When a seal pulls itself out of the water onto solid ground, it is known as a "haul-out".
- Off of South Monomoy Island in Chatham is where the largest number of seals can be seen. This area is only accessible by boat, with many seal tours offering trips to this location.
- Seals are protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act, which states that individuals must keep a distance of 150 ft. or more or face fines and or jail time.
- Dogs must be kept on leashes and kept away from seals. Boaters and kayakers must refrain from approaching too close as well.
- Swimming with seals is not advised, as the seals could possibly injure swimmers and seals also attract sharks. Great White Sharks feed primarily off of seals for sustenance.

According to the National Marine Fisheries Service, a survey conducted in 1986 found 17,032 seals in Cape Cod waters. Another survey in 2013 found over 15,700 seals in Cape Cod waters.

Source: <http://www.whiteside.com>
<http://www.mass.gov>
<http://www.capecod.com>

CapeCod.com



Seal Tours

2016 Headlines

Great White Shark Eats Seal Near Chatham Beach



Great white shark rescued on Chatham beach last year returns to the Cape



Family Has Close Encounter With 14-foot Shark In Pleasant Bay

Great White Shark Nursery Found South of Cape Cod

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Notice of Beach Closure

Date: September 5, 2009

Time: 1330

In response to updated information on recent shark sightings in Chatham's East Side Waters, town officials have closed all East Side Facing Beaches to swimming effective immediately. Swimming is prohibited at North Beach, Lighthouse Beach, South Beach, and Andrew Harding's Lane. For further information regarding these sightings please contact Kate Plourd at Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, 617-626-1809 or 617-851-5636. The above beaches are closed to swimming until further notice.

For more information on beaches contact:

Dan Tobin, Park and Recreation Director – 508-945-5185

For shark sightings call – Harbormaster's Office – 508-945-5185

NOTICE OF PUBLIC INTEREST

3:00 p.m. E.S.T. September 3, 2009

Chatham is fortunate to be surrounded by beautiful and clean ocean and estuarine waters that support a wealth of sea creatures. The diversity of marine life can be seen by even the casual observer and one of the most observable local examples is the large herds of grey and harbor seals. The seal population in the vicinity of Chatham has grown substantially in the past decade and Chatham is now a year-round home to a few thousand seals. These seals come in close proximity to the shore and can be easily seen sunning themselves while hauled out on the sand bars and beaches as well as while swimming and surfacing in the water.

Please note however, that the ocean waters near Chatham also are home to large sharks, and seals are a staple part of their diet. Therefore, it is not surprising that there have been recent confirmed reports of sharks feeding on seals in the vicinity of Chatham's ocean beaches. As recently as Friday, August 28, 2009, the carcass of a seal was confirmed to have been partially eaten by a large shark. Today, additional information concerning these shark sightings has come to our attention prompting this notice.

While it is rare for a shark to strike and attack a human in the water, it can happen and given the recent local shark sightings, swimmers should exercise caution while swimming in Chatham's ocean waters. In particular, people should avoid swimming in waters in the direct proximity of seals where sharks may be in search of prey.

At this time, Chatham is not recommending that the beaches be closed, but simply that beach goers and swimmers pay close attention to their surroundings while in the water and to not venture too far from shore.

If a shark is sighted, please get out of the water and contact the proper authorities:

Chatham Coast Guard- (508) 945-3830
Harbormaster- (508) 945-5185
Police Department- (508) 945-1213

Thank you for your attention,

Chatham Harbormaster
Director of Parks & Recreation



Cape Cod Great White Shark Safety



Cape Cod's waters are part of a natural and wild marine ecosystem with a rich diversity of sea life, including sharks. Seals are the major prey species for the great white shark, and as the seal population increases, the great white shark has become more numerous. In recent years there have been confirmed reports of great white sharks feeding on seals close to shore as well as great white shark sightings from spotter planes flying along the Outer Cape near swimming beaches. While it is rare for a great white shark to bite a human, it did occur in Truro in 2012.

Be shark smart.

To stay safe and to protect wildlife:

- Follow instructions of lifeguards and national seashore staff. Become familiar with the beach flag warning system. Take time to read signage at the beaches.
- Do not swim near seals.
- Swim close to shore, where your feet can touch the bottom.
- Swim, paddle, kayak, and surf in groups.
- Do not swim alone in the ocean at dawn and dusk.
- Avoid isolation.
- Limit splashing and do not wear shiny jewelry.
- Keep your distance (at least 150 feet) from seals, whether they are resting on land or are in the water. It is against the law to disturb them. (over)

LOCAL NOTICE TO MARINERS & SWIMMERS

3:30 p.m. E.S.T. July 27, 2010

Today, the MA State Division of Marine Fisheries successfully tagged a Great White Shark off of South Beach in Chatham and identified several others in the area. During the last several weeks there have been numerous reports of sharks throughout southern Massachusetts waters and now again along Chatham's eastern shoreline. With this report, we may expect further reports of such activities along Chatham's barrier beach waters.

Again, swimmers should exercise caution while swimming in Chatham's ocean waters, particularly the waters off of South Beach and North Beach Island. In addition, people should avoid swimming in waters in the direct proximity of seals where sharks may be in search of prey. Specifically, by order of the Chatham Harbormaster all beach goers are hereby prohibited from swimming within 300 feet of observed seals in the water along Chatham's ocean side waters.

At this time, the Town of Chatham is not closing our east facing beaches to swimming, but is strongly suggesting that beach goers and swimmers pay close attention to their surroundings while in the water and to not venture too far from shore.

If a shark is sighted, please get out of the water and contact the proper authorities:

Dept. of Energy & Environmental Affairs – (617) 626-1809 - Catherine Williams
Harbormaster- (508) 945-5185
Police Department- (508) 945-1213

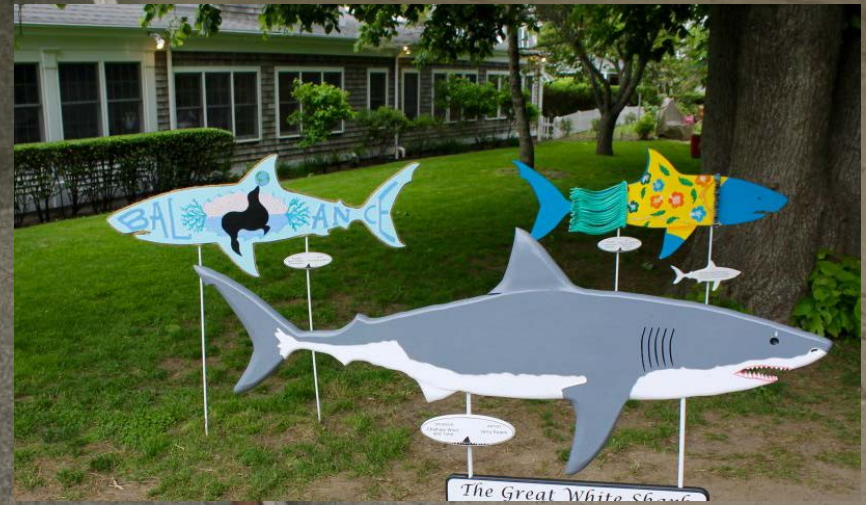
Thank you for your attention,

Chatham Harbormaster
Director of Parks & Recreation





Sharks in the Park



Questions?

