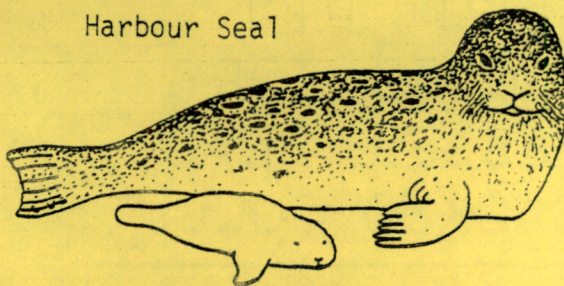


water, from mid-May to mid-June with only a single birth occurring and rarely twins. Unlike the Gray Seal, a Harbour Seal pup may lose its white coat just prior to or immediately following birth, revealing a darker spotted coat. Although weak and quite helpless at birth, the pups are precocious and grow rapidly on their mothers' milk. During this time the mother is protective and begins to wean her young only after one month.

Harbour Seal



Gray Seals occur throughout Northumberland Strait, with concentrations on Nova Scotia's Amet Island, a large breeding colony, and on Governor's Island in Hillsborough Bay. Harbour Seals, which forage up to 10 miles offshore, are often dominated by the larger Gray Seal. Notable concentrations of Harbour Seals occur in the Pownal Bay area and in Murray Harbour. Known whelping areas include Point Prim, Murray Harbour, and at various localities along Hillsborough Bay.

Both species feed on a wide variety of fish as well as molluscs and crustaceans. Gray Seals forage mostly for ground fish on shelf areas while Harbour Seals are not restricted to salt water and may follow salmon runs into freshwater systems. Unfortunately, the feeding habits of both the Gray and Harbour Seals have caused some conflicts with commercial fishermen.

Estimates of damage to fisheries by seals is variable and dependant on many factors. Harbour Seals interfere mostly with the netting of salmon and herring while Gray Seals are a particular hazard to gill and set nets for salmon. Both species are also carriers of the 'cod worm' (*Porrocaecum decipiens*) which renders the flesh of several fish less attractive to the human consumer. For these reasons, both species are considered to have a negative economic importance and attempts to control their numbers have included the imposition of a bounty system. It is hoped that future management will include the development of a policy ensuring the continued existence of these species at a tolerable level.

#### References:

- Banfield, A.W.F. 1974. The Mammals of Canada. University of Toronto Press, Toronto and Buffalo. 438 p.
- William, M.B. and R.P.Grossenheider. 1952. A Field Guide to the Mammals. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. 281 p.

## FEEDER REPORT

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Andrew feeder in Milltown Cross: (Dec. to mid Jan.) 1 Downy Woodpecker (Jan. 15), 12 Blue Jay, 6 Starling, 1 Common Grackle (Dec. 21 On), 10 Evening Grosbeak (LA).

Clark feeder in Indian River: (Dec. 30) 5 Mourning Dove, 4 Downy Woodpecker, 4 Common Crow, 12+ Black-capped Chickadee, 2 Boreal Chickadee, 50 House Sparrow, 10 Evening Grosbeak, 6-8 Dark-eyed Junco. On Dec. 24 a large mink came onto the verandah and ran around a bit before returning to the brook (TC).

Fichaud feeder on Crestwood Dr. in Charlottetown: (late fall) 12 Blue Jay, 1 White-breasted Nuthatch (stayed a week), a 'crowd' of Starling, a 'crowd' of House Sparrow, 20-30 Evening Grosbeak, 1 Purple Finch (stayed a month) (GF).

Willms feeder in East Royalty: (Dec. 16-18) 12 Rock Dove (nearby), 1 Downy Woodpecker, 3 Blue Jay, 3 Black-capped Chickadee, 11 Starling, 24 House Sparrow, 18 Evening Grosbeak, 1 Rufous-sided Towhee (MW,CW).