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To members of the FRCC

I am sixty three years old and have lived and worked on or near the ocean all my life. I have seen towns and municipalities bring sewer processing into play which certainly cleaned up near shore waters. Marine life however didn't increase as much as I thought it would, so there are other things going on in the environment. The fishing practices of the past are now over corrected. The dragger fleet is now a shadow of its former self. The long line and gill net fleets are regulated

## II

and monitored to the point where it practically impossible to fish and expect to make a profit. The handliners are almost nonexistent. The fish as of yet haven't shown a marked increase in size or numbers. I've been around long enough to have witnessed that nothing stays the same and populations like rabbits are cyclic. Every so many years bait fish such as herring, squid, mackrel etc. increase or decrease along with their predator the cod. I am always hopeful. One thing however has changed and has continued to increase in numbers with no visible cycle only continued growth and that is the seal herd.

In my time we always had the smaller harbour seal which might take a herring or mackerel from a net but it was hardly a consideration. For about the last ten years or so the grey seals have been on a steady increase. It is no longer possible to set herring or mackerel nets other than set and haul method. The seals even will go at smelt nets. I have hauled seals to the side of the boat hanging onto codfish d'ive caught on a jig or handline and have moved only to have the seals follow or have found a new bunch as they seem to be all over the ocean.

#### IV

The few codfish you do catch are loaded with worms, worse closer to shore but they are all over. I've read some report that the chemical released by the parasite actually slows the fish down. The other seals appear to be increasing which may be the only way they can compete. The bottom line is that unless something is done with the grey seal herd there will be no codfish to worry about. When the last fisherman is finally forced out due mostly to over regulation and monitoring, the codfish will be endangered and the seals will have moved on to seagulls or whatever is available. I have lived from no grey seals to grey seals to the end of tidal waters.

Sincerely,  
George Walker