

As numbers of gray seals rise, so do conflicts

July 20 2014, by Patrick Whittle

(AP)—Decades after gray seals were all but wiped out in New England waters, the population has rebounded so much that some frustrated residents are calling for a controlled hunt.

The once-thriving New England gray seal population was decimated by the mid-20th century because of hunting. But scientists say conservation efforts, an abundance of food and migration from Canada combined to revive the population.

But not everyone is celebrating the [gray seals'](#) return.

Many fishermen complain that the seals interfere with fishing charters and steal catch. Beachgoers bemoan the 600-plus-pound [seals](#) taking over large stretches of shore and say they attract sharks, which feed on them.

Some in Nantucket are so fed up they are calling for a culling of the herd, similar to the way states manage deer.

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