
Global warming is changing marine migratory patterns

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Fishing continues to be up and down with little change occurring. Striped bass are spread out now, with the bulk of the fish at Race Point, down the ocean backside towards Head of the Meadow Beach, and now along the bay side of Truro and Wellfleet down to Billingsgate Shoal. Their feeding habits seem to be erratic and limited while this hot and humid weather has a grip on us, which is what they normally do. Some bigger fish have been taken of late, but the vast majority are between 25 and 32 inches.

Bluefish are thick down off Monomoy and we're really hoping they swim just a little north into Cape Cod Bay to give us all another option when striped bass do what they do in summer and not bite much during the day. It's been quiet on the bluefin tuna scene here and the first giant, as far as I know, has not been brought in to P'town yet.

Mackerel, however, are back in big numbers in our harbor after a week or so of disappearing, and huge schools of very big pogies (menhaden) can be seen throughout the harbor as well. Look for big dark moving patches on the surface and that will most likely be a dense school of pogies. You have to use a snag hook to catch them as they won't bite on cut bait, but they are excellent bait for both striped bass and bluefish.

Global warming is a real issue now, dramatically affecting the migratory patterns of many saltwater fish. There were reliable reports of both mahi-mahi and king mackerel caught in our area of Cape Cod Bay this past week. Such catches were unheard of a few years ago, but now it seems no one bats an eyelash when one of these fish that normally occupy tropical waters is taken here in southern New England. We also have been catching bonito here in the bay in late summer for the past few years, and fishermen south of the Cape tell me triggerfish are moving further north each year in places where they normally catch scup, black sea bass and tautog.

Great white shark activity has ramped up along the beaches from Truro to Eastham, with a few beach closures occurring as the sharks get too close to swimming areas. It's the new norm. I have also seen and heard of more dead seals on the beaches with huge bite marks in them.

No whales to report close to shore, as the fin whales and minke whales, which were just off the Race, seem to have left. But with the tremendous amount of herring, mackerel and sand eels in the waters around the Race it wouldn't surprise me to see them back and feeding.

Recent closures of our town beaches due to high bacteria levels in the water are a reminder to please clean up after your dog when walking along the beach — or anywhere else in town, for that matter. Think about this: when we get heavy rains, as we have lately, the rainwater picks up everything from the streets and carries it right into the harbor. That includes plastic, pet excrement, gas and oil from cars and cigarette butts. One look at the drainage pipe that sits between the two wharves pouring thousands of gallons of rain water into the harbor after a big storm will tell you all you need to know about the cause and effect of what's on the street and the harbor water quality. We've come a long way with holding tanks on boats, pump-out stations for boaters and the town sewerage system, but we still have to be mindful of our pets and street trash anywhere near the waterfront.