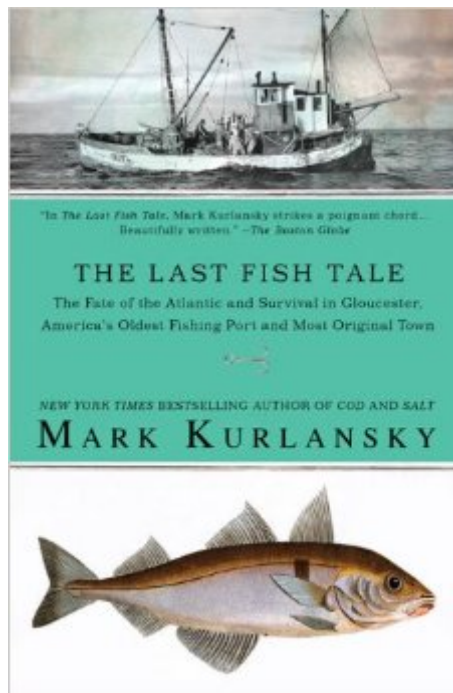


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The Last Fish Tale: The Fate Of The Atlantic And Survival In Gloucester, America's Oldest Fishing Port And Most Original Town



Synopsis

"A marvelous, compelling tale"(Rocky Mountain News) from the New York Times bestselling author of Salt and Cod. Gloucester, Massachusetts, America's oldest fishing port, is defined by the culture of commercial fishing. But the threat of over-fishing, combined with climate change and pollution, is endangering a way of life, not only in Gloucester but in coastal cities all over the world. And yet, according to Kurlansky, it doesn't have to be this way. Engagingly written and filled with rich history, delicious anecdotes, colorful characters, and local recipes, The Last Fish Tale is Kurlansky's most urgent story, "an engrossing multi-layered portrait of a fishing community that can be read for pure pleasure as well as being a campaigning plea for the environment" (Financial Times).

Book Information

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Ecology > Oceans & Seas

Customer Reviews

As I read the book, and as I sit here writing this review, my windows are open to the sea air and the shouts and cheers of crowds on Pavillion Beach as they watch the Greasy Pole Competition here in Gloucester, the competition that Mark Kurlansky writes about in the opening chapter of "The Last Fish Tale". "Viva San Pietro!" The cry goes up over and over. "Hooray for Saint Peter!" But these days the local fishermen here need more help from St. Peter to keep their way of life alive than to save them from dangers of the sea. With his usual wit, elegance, and deep intelligence, Kurlansky has crafted a book that is fascinating on many levels. He begins his tale with an early history of Gloucester, including how the town got its name, and moves gracefully through the centuries salting his story with anecdotes about people that may seem like colorful characters to most readers but

are friends and neighbors to me. Kurlansky talks about "Gloucester Stories". Those stories abound and flourish --- stories about fishermen and artists and writers and inventors --- each with their own particular perspective on America's Oldest Seaport. I came to Gloucester some 15 years ago because I was writing a book steeped in the maritime history of the Great Lakes (The Old Mermaid's Tale). I fell in love with a Gloucester fisherman and am still here. That is my Gloucester Story. It could be the same for many of the people Kurlansky tells of, the fishermen who came from Sicily in search of a better life, the artists who came because of the beautiful light, the writers who came because of the peace of the sea.

Walking the fine line between those who want to preserve the renowned fishing industry of Gloucester, Massachusetts, long into the future and those who see that industry as already nearly dead, NY Times reporter Mark Kurlansky examines the history of the community, its ties to the sea, and its very uncertain economic future. At the same time, he also worries about the future of the Atlantic Ocean itself as a resource, one now so endangered that unless the federal government institutes "overall eco-system management," and not just quotas on specific catches, it will soon die. The government has wasted too much time on short-term "remedies," he believes, and has done no comprehensive long-term planning for the eco-system on which the industry depends. Ultimately, the "scientists" responsible for the health of our ocean have made too many mistakes, and fishermen in Gloucester and elsewhere are paying the price. Kurlansky describes Gloucester (pronounced "GLOSS-ter") from its earliest discoveries by the Vikings to its first settlements, emphasizing its colonial fishing industry, a time in which people would routinely catch cod that were four or five feet long and halibut weighing 200 - 400 pounds. Between colonial times and 1991, when the unexpected Perfect Storm struck, the city has lost six thousand Gloucester fishermen and many hundreds of vessels at sea, yet the fishing industry persists.

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