



Grey Seals of New England & Eastern Canada Wildlife Guide

Meet the Gentle Giants of the North Atlantic Coast



Larger than their harbor seal cousins and instantly recognizable by their long "horse-like" noses, **Grey Seals** are among the most impressive marine mammals found along the coasts of **New England** and **eastern Canada**. These powerful swimmers spend much of their lives in the cold waters of the North Atlantic but frequently come ashore to rest, molt, and raise their pups.

Once uncommon in many areas due to overhunting, grey seal populations have made a remarkable recovery over the past several decades. Today, they're commonly seen along the shores of **Cape Cod**, **Nova Scotia**, **New Brunswick**, **Québec**, and **Newfoundland**, making them one of the region's greatest wildlife conservation success stories.

Whether you're watching a colony resting on offshore rocks or seeing a curious seal surface near your cruise ship, grey seals are unforgettable ambassadors of the North Atlantic.



Meet the Grey Seal



Grey seals are significantly larger than harbor seals.

Adults typically measure:

- **6.5–10 feet (2–3 meters)** long
- **400–880 pounds (180–400 kg)**

Recognizable features include:

- Long "Roman" or horse-like nose
- Large head
- Powerful body
- Spotted gray, silver, or brown coat
- Large dark eyes

Males are much larger than females and often have darker coats.

Where to See Grey Seals



Excellent viewing locations include:

Massachusetts

- Cape Cod National Seashore
- Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge

Nova Scotia

- Sable Island
- Eastern Shore
- Cape Breton

New Brunswick

- Bay of Fundy
- Grand Manan Island

Québec

- Gulf of St. Lawrence
- Mingan Archipelago
- Bonaventure Island

Newfoundland

- Avalon Peninsula
- Gros Morne National Park
- Coastal islands

Grey seals favor isolated beaches, sandbars, rocky islands, and offshore ledges.



Best Time to See Grey Seals



Grey seals can be seen throughout the year.

Best viewing:

Late Spring through Fall

Special seasonal highlights:

- **Winter:** Pupping season in many colonies
- **Summer:** Large groups resting on rocks and beaches
- **Fall:** Excellent wildlife viewing along the coast

Many colonies are active year-round.



Life in the Ocean



Grey seals spend much of their lives:

- Hunting offshore
- Diving for food
- Resting on rocky islands
- Raising pups
- Traveling long distances between feeding areas

They're capable of diving hundreds of feet below the surface.



What Do Grey Seals Eat?



Grey seals feed on a variety of marine life, including:

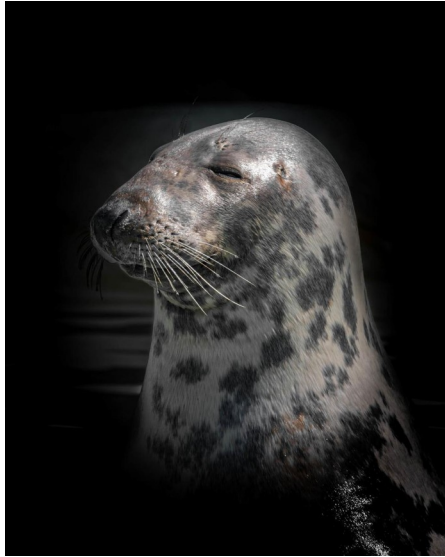
- Cod
- Herring
- Mackerel
- Haddock
- Squid

- Flatfish

They are opportunistic hunters and adapt their diet to whatever prey is most abundant.



Wildlife Photography Tips



For memorable photos:

- Use a telephoto lens.
- Visit during low tide when seals are hauled out.
- Look for playful interactions between pups and adults.
- Photograph seals against dramatic coastal scenery.
- Keep a respectful distance from all colonies.

Never attempt to approach or disturb resting seals.



Seeing Grey Seals During Your Cruise



Grey seals are occasionally spotted from cruise ships, particularly when sailing near:

- Cape Cod
- Bay of Fundy
- Gulf of St. Lawrence
- Nova Scotia
- Newfoundland

Wildlife excursions offer even better viewing opportunities.

⚠️ **Respect Wildlife**



If you encounter grey seals:

- Stay well back from resting animals.
- Never attempt to feed or touch them.
- Keep noise to a minimum.
- Observe quietly with binoculars.
- Follow instructions from park staff and wildlife guides.

Responsible viewing helps protect these recovering populations.

★ **Premium Travel Group Tip**

Grey seals are often found in larger groups than harbor seals. If you're exploring a coastal wildlife area and notice what looks like a collection of "driftwood" on distant rocks, take a closer look through binoculars—you may discover an entire seal colony resting between feeding trips.



Continue Exploring New England & Canada Wildlife

Continue your wildlife adventure with our related guides:

- Harbor Seals Guide
- Humpback Whales Guide
- Fin Whales Guide
- Minke Whales Guide
- Atlantic Puffins Guide
- Bald Eagles Guide
- Moose Wildlife Guide
- Wildlife Photography Guide (*coming soon*)
- Wildlife You Can See from Your Cruise Ship (*coming soon*)



Fun Facts

- Male grey seals can weigh **more than 800 pounds (360 kilograms)**, making them one of the largest seal species in the North Atlantic.
- Their long, curved noses have earned them the nickname "**horsehead seals**."
- Grey seals can dive to depths of **over 1,000 feet (300 meters)** while searching for food.
- Pups are born with a soft **white coat**, which they shed after only a few weeks.
- **Sable Island, Nova Scotia**, is home to one of the **largest grey seal breeding colonies in the world**, with hundreds of thousands of seals using the island each year.



Why You'll Love Seeing Grey Seals

Grey seals are one of the North Atlantic's most captivating marine mammals. Their impressive size, expressive faces, and social behavior make them fascinating to watch, whether they're lounging on a rocky island or gracefully swimming through the surf. Their remarkable recovery from near disappearance also stands as a powerful reminder of what successful wildlife conservation can achieve.



Joe's Logbook

At first glance, it's easy to mistake a grey seal for a harbor seal, but once you've seen them side by side, the differences become obvious.

Grey seals are noticeably larger, and those long, distinctive noses give them a unique look that's hard to forget. Watching an entire colony stretched across a rocky shoreline is an incredible sight, especially when a few curious seals lift their heads to see who's passing by.

One thing I always enjoy about seal watching is that there's no rush. Unlike whales that surface for only a few moments, seals often spend long periods resting on rocks or beaches. That gives you plenty of time to simply observe their behavior, take photos, and appreciate these remarkable marine mammals in their natural environment.

If your New England & Canada cruise takes you through the Bay of Fundy, Nova Scotia, or Newfoundland, keep your binoculars close. Spotting a colony of grey seals basking along the rugged coastline is one of those peaceful wildlife moments that perfectly captures the beauty of the North Atlantic. 🦭🌊