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THE NORTHWEST ATLANTIC MARINE ALLIANCE
announce the publication of

SHARING THE OCEAN

*Stories of Science, Politics, and Ownership
from America's Oldest Industry*

Mike Crocker

Photography by Rebecca Hale

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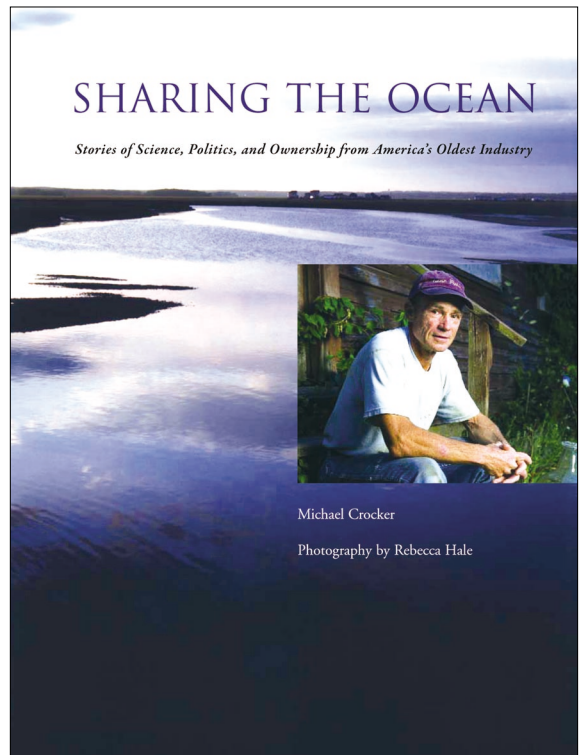
7.5 x 10, 160 pages, charts and color photographs

Environmental / New England

“Sharing the Ocean had to be written. For too long the story of the collapse of New England's groundfishery has been incomplete. What was missing was the fishermen's side. Mike Crocker draws on a variety of sources—science, history, and anthropology—to help connect the dots. But equally important is that during the hours Crocker spent on the water as a fisheries journalist and deckhand he was listening very closely to the stories fishermen had to tell about the management problem. So we shouldn't be surprised to discover that the solution he proposes is quite different from what we might expect—and one that might just work.” —Linda Greenlaw, author of *The Hungry Ocean*, *The Lobster Chronicles*, *All Fishermen are Liars*, and *Slipknot*

For decades, New England's historic groundfishery has been the scene of a highly charged debate about the future of one of the world's most productive resources and the coastal communities that have depended on it for hundreds of years. At times, the controversy has boiled over in protest on the streets of Portland, Gloucester, New Bedford, and other fishing centers when the interests of three very different groups of people collided on the waterfront: scientists, environmentalists, and of course the fishermen. It is up to scientists to determine how many fish can be caught, and by extension, the prosperity of the fleet. But several blunders have undermined the industry's confidence in the system. Environmentalists have played a part by filing lawsuits that forced fishermen to cut back, but the ensuing regulations have led to many unintended consequences, including severe economic hardship for the region's small-scale operators who have a relatively small impact on the ocean. Finally, there are the fishermen. The past fifteen years have seen many traditional owner-operators disappear as the government has promoted economic efficiency above all other considerations, driving a wedge between this once tightly knit community.

While most investigations have focused on the controversy between these three groups, *Sharing the Ocean* explores the possibility of finding a common management vision capable of building a fair and sustainable fishery. In 2004 the Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance, a multi-stakeholder group that works with fisheries problems, designed a project aimed at building consensus in groundfishery. Its



“Fleet Visioning Project” began by distributing surveys to 7,000 stakeholders in the fishery. It asked three questions: 1) If anything were possible, what is your vision for the future of the groundfish fleet? 2) Why is the future of the groundfish fleet important to you? 3) How can your vision of the fleet be most effectively implemented, and what can you do to help? The survey was followed by eleven workshops held near fishing communities across the Northeast.

Using a collaborative change approach, fishermen, environmentalists, and policymakers were able to build consensus around areas of serious disagreement. Their shared dialogue allowed them to see themselves as part of one community with shared expectations of the ocean and each other. And they were able to come up with a shared vision that managers can use as a guideline for shaping policy decisions in the future. *Sharing the Ocean* provides the context and the human stories of this fascinating and important project.

“Today, small-scale fishing communities are struggling to maintain some hold on their past and re-create a sustainable future. Many of these coastal communities now offer a pretty scene with boats tied in the harbor—relics of our fishing past—rather than the bustling fishing ports that once supported the local economy.... Michael Crocker writes from the perspective of a science journalist, but he also possesses an insider’s view of the crisis as a result of working for the Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance (NAMA) for five years. His book offers a frank assessment of the complex relationships that exist between the New England Management Council, inshore and offshore groundfish fleets, and environmental groups that are trying to restore the ecological integrity of the Gulf of Maine.” —Cheryl Perusse Daigle, *Orion*

Writer Michael Crocker wrote about commercial fisheries research for five years as the communications director at the Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance. He attended Bates College where he studied anthropology and the University of Montana Graduate School of Journalism. He is a frequent political consultant on fisheries issues. Rebecca Hale is an in-house studio photographer for *National Geographic*.

The Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance seeks to restore and enhance an enduring Northwest Atlantic marine system, one that supports a healthy diversity and abundance of marine life and human uses through a community-based, self-organizing, and self-governing institution. NAMA is working to facilitate the transition of today’s fisheries management process to one that is community-based and driven yet grounded in ecological and conservation principles. To that end, NAMA will work to promote the market for local seafood and establish Community Sustained Fisheries (CSFs).

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If you would like to schedule a booksigning or talk with Mike Crocker, a representative from NAMA, or some of the individuals featured in this book, please call us at 800-582-1899. If you publish a review, would you kindly send us a clipping or copy for our files?

**Tilbury House, Publishers • 8 Mechanic Street • Gardiner, Maine 04345
800-582-1899 • www.tilburyhouse.com**

**Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance • PO Box 360 • Windham, ME 04062
207-284-5374 • www.namanet.org**