A new study has found that grey seals do eat a lot of cod, and are largely responsible for the fish's decline. The finding, published in the journal Fisheries Research, is generating controversy over the need for a large cull of grey seals for the benefit of cod. Robert O'Boyle and Michael Sinclair, former DFO scientists, conclude that "increases in natural mortality of cod on the Eastern Scotian Shelf since the late 1980s have been due in large part to the exponential growth of the grey seal population." It appears that a huge grey seal population is preventing cod stocks from rebounding off Nova Scotia. The Sable Island seal population has spiked since the 1970s, climbing from about 3,000 to 300,000, a doubling of the population every seven years. "We conclude that indeed the seals are responsible for the lack of recovery of the cod," Sinclair told CBC News. More here http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/story/2012/01/16/ns-seal-cod-research.html

A friend drew to my attention an article in La Presse quoting Boris Worms as follows: Boris Worm, biologiste marin de l'Université Dalhousie, est sceptique devant les conclusions de M. O'Boyle: «À mon avis, ce sont deux anciens hauts fonctionnaires qui publient des conclusions conformes à leurs convictions. " Obviously Worms, whose ego is as big as Mount Everest, does not know Sinclair or O'Boyle very well to suggest that these retired scientists are spouting the DFO party line in their retirement.

TAGS: sustainable, fisheries, grey seals, cod, cull, Mike Sinclair

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