

fisheries fact sheet



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The Grand Banks

Stretching for nearly 2,000 miles along the northeastern Atlantic seaboard from Nantucket Shoals off New England to Flemish Cap at the eastern-most fringe of the Grand Banks of Newfoundland is a chain of the world's richest fishing banks.

Covering 36,000 square miles, the Grand Banks embrace a series of smaller banks, the most important of which are Grand Bank (Great Bank of Newfoundland), Green and St. Pierre Banks. From the viewpoint of history, this area has been fished for the longest time and is the best known of

fishing grounds on the North American side of the Atlantic. From early times these grounds have been fished and sailed over by adventurers of western Europe. It was probably the Vikings in their horned helmets and high-prowed boats who first visited the area, later to be followed by Bretons, Portuguese, Spaniards, Frenchmen, Basques and Englishmen.

For centuries fish from the banks off Newfoundland have helped feed the nations bordering on the western ocean, and the exploitation of the

fishing resources contributed greatly to the exploration of the New World. The exploring era began with John Cabot and his son Sebastian. It was Cabot who first noted the richness of the fishing grounds off Newfoundland. His interest was more or less casual because he had other things in mind. He had been commanded by King Henry VII, the reigning Tudor monarch of England, to scour the western sea until he found a new gateway to Asia and its riches. Cabot failed in that objective, but his discovery of Newfoundland had more



Fisheries patrol vessel Chebucto on duty at the Grand Banks