

Canada's Commercial Seal Slaughter

2009



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Table of Contents

04	Why Canada's Commercial Seal Hunt Must End	28	Unwanted
		29	Canadians are against the commercial seal hunt
06	Inherently Inhumane	29	Trade bans
07	What do the veterinary studies say about Canada's commercial seal hunt?	30	Conclusion
08	Struck and Lost	31	Annex I: Natural history of the harp seal
09	Why Canada's commercial seal hunt cannot be made acceptably humane	33	Annex II: Allowable Catches and reported kills of harp seals in Canada
16	Unnecessary and Wasteful	34	Annex III: Total kill of Northwest Atlantic harp seals
16	Products derived from sealing		
17	Economically unnecessary		
20	How important is Canada's commercial seal hunt to Inuit?	35	Annex IV: Landed value of seal pelts and seal product exports
21	Conservation Concerns	36	Notes and sources
22	Global warming is affecting harp seal breeding habitat		
25	The current level of hunting is biologically unsustainable		
26	Seals and fisheries		

Why Canada's Commercial Seal Hunt Must End

1 The commercial slaughter of seal pups for their fur is inherently inhumane and unethical.

2 This hunt is entirely unnecessary. The products derived from commercial sealing are non-essential and increasingly unwanted by consumers. This is a wasteful hunt for fur coats, trims and trinkets; most of the meat and blubber is abandoned or discarded. The little money generated by this hunt can be replaced by other means.

3 Harp seal populations are facing conservation issues. The effects of global warming are dramatically reducing the harp seals' critical breeding habitat and leading to high levels of pup mortality. In addition, the number of seals being killed is not biologically sustainable and is intended to cause the population to decline. The Canadian government's current management approach is not precautionary, and places the harp seal herd at unacceptable risk. Killing seals is not necessary to help depleted fish stocks recover, and may actually hurt fish stock recovery and cause further damage to marine ecosystems.

4 Canada's commercial seal slaughter is unwanted by the majority of Canadians, and millions of people around the world. There is no better time for this inhumane, unnecessary and unsustainable slaughter to end.





The Government of Canada considers seals to be fish, and insists on referring to commercial sealing as a “fishery”, that provides “landed catches”. Others prefer to call it a “harvest”, as though seals were a crop of cereal rather than sentient mammals. While we often use the term “hunt” in this document, commercial sealing contains no aspect of “fair chase” often associated with other types of hunting. The most appropriate term for the commercial killing of seal pups off Canada’s shores is: **“slaughter”**.



Inherently Inhumane

Canada's commercial seal slaughter is neither humane nor adequately regulated. This is confirmed by a number of veterinary reports, and by a growing collection of video evidence. There is increasing consensus that it may be impossible for this killing to ever be made acceptably humane.

Commercial sealing is a competitive activity, and haste – not humaneness – takes priority. Video evidence obtained in recent years clearly shows the unacceptable cruelty that occurs during this annual slaughter.

Frightened seals are beaten with spiked clubs - called hakapiks - on their muzzle, face and neck, crying out helplessly in attempt to defend themselves.

Live and conscious seal pups are impaled through the face or eyes with sharpened steel hooks, then dragged along the ice or hauled aboard boats.

Seals are shot from moving boats, but rarely killed immediately. Instead they crawl frantically on the ice, blood spurting from their wounds, as the sealer attempts to take a second shot. If he is unsuccessful, the seal will suffer prolonged agony as the boat slowly makes its way to the edge of the ice floe. There, the sealer may disembark and finally render the pup senseless with a hakapik. Or, he may hook it in the face with his gaff and increase its suffering.

Hooking a live and conscious seal is considered an 'acceptably humane' practice by the Canadian authorities.

Few sealers are observed confirming unconsciousness or death prior to skinning a seal, and many continue to use illegal weapons (including gaffs) to strike seals, or illegal ammunition to shoot them.

Humane killing is not their concern: getting as many seal skins as possible is the only order of business.



What do the veterinary studies say about Canada's commercial seal hunt?

The evidence is overwhelming: every recent veterinary report on Canada's commercial seal slaughter documents examples of the ongoing, unacceptable cruelty involved, and cites the need for improvements in humane killing practices, regulation, enforcement, and compliance.

A 2008 veterinary report¹ by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) on the animal welfare aspects of sealing confirmed that:

- effective killing does not always occur.
- during Canada's commercial seal hunt animals may suffer pain and distress.
- sealers often do not comply with the regulations.
- the claim made by the Canadian government that 98% of seals are killed humanely is "scientifically incorrect".

Another 2007 study on welfare aspects of Canada's commercial seal hunt² concluded that:

- 82% of shot seals were likely not killed with the first bullet.
- "It is most probably that, even with appropriate weapons and training, wounding rates would be unacceptably high as a result of trying to shoot from a moving boat. It is clear that hunting seals with rifles is inherently inhumane and any improvements would not lead to internationally acceptable standards of welfare."
- "There are still considerable welfare concerns when sealers are able to use clubbing...wounding rates were still high, seals were clubbed in a variety of places other than the head, [and] the timing of events was protracted, with sealers chasing and clubbing as many seals as possible before they escaped to the sea."

A 2005 veterinary panel³ organized by the World Wildlife Fund to look at Canada's commercial seal hunt noted that:

- "the competitive nature of the hunt... creates an environment in which speed is the rule, and hunters may be encouraged to take shortcuts."

- "DFO [the Department of Fisheries and Oceans] appears to lack sufficient dedicated capacity to monitor and enforce regulation of the hunt, especially at the Front."

Even a 2002 report⁴ frequently cited by DFO as evidence of the commercial hunt's "humaneness" noted that:

- "A large proportion (87%) of the sealers ... failed to [check for unconsciousness or death] before proceeding to hook or bleed the seal, or go to another seal."
- a number of seals were conscious after being shot, and that live seals were hooked with a boat hook or gaff and dragged across the ice while still conscious.
- up to 24% of seals observed on videotape were not killed humanely, nor in a manner consistent with Canada's Marine Mammal Regulations.
- the "proportion of animals that are not killed efficiently justifies continued attention to this industry's activities..."

A 2001 veterinary study⁵ found that:

- "... the present seal hunt fails to comply with basic animal welfare regulations."
- "There is undoubtedly an obvious need to reduce suffering and improve the welfare of these animals by alterations in the existing regulations and increasing their enforcement."
- "We conclude that the hunt is resulting in considerable and unacceptable suffering."

The continued inability – and unwillingness – of the Canadian authorities to enforce legislation, and of sealers to abide by it, has led many observers to conclude that Canada's commercial seal slaughter is inherently inhumane.

Struck and Lost

“Struck and lost” seals are those that are wounded by a sealer’s blow or gunshot, but either escape or sink before they are recovered. Some 26,000 seals⁶ die in this way each year during Canada’s commercial seal slaughter.

Occurrences of struck and lost seals are much higher when seals are shot in the water, or when near the water’s edge. These wounded seals likely experience severe pain and prolonged suffering. For this reason, most veterinary studies – including the Independent Veterinarians’ Working Group (IVWG)- recommend a ban on shooting seals in the water. There is no question that many struck and lost seals suffer avoidable pain and distress – suffering that could easily be reduced – but Canada refuses to act.





Why Canada's Commercial Seal Slaughter Cannot Be Made Acceptably Humane

For years, the Canadian government insisted that its commercial seal hunt was “the most humane hunt in the world”,⁷ with “98% of seals killed humanely” – a statement heard less frequently since EFSA experts pointed out that such a claim is “scientifically incorrect”.

Now, many observers and veterinarians have concluded that Canada's commercial seal hunt can never be made acceptably humane. Here's why.

1. The competitive, commercial pressures of this slaughter means sealers cannot take the time to ensure humane killing practices.

“Years ago, we had lots of time to bleed seals and do the work but now everything is so fast that, I mean, there's no way that you can keep up with it and do the job that you want to do and to make sure that everything is carried out humanely...”

Mark Small, Veteran Sealer. Fisheries Broadcast, 19 March 2008.

“We all know that the race mentality is a problem for the sealing industry... It's a mad dash for the quota that's out

there... when we're into a competitive fishery, as the seal harvest is, it will exist I think no matter what we do.”

John Kearley, General Manager, Carino Company Limited.
Before the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans,
6 November 2006.

Commercial sealing is a competitive industry, with staggering numbers of seals killed in a very short period of time. Effectively it is a race between sealers to collect as many skins as possible before the quota is reached. On occasion, as many as 150,000 seals have been killed in two days. The hunt occurs so quickly that quota overruns are a regular occurrence, and humane killing techniques are rarely practiced.

2. The environment under which sealing occurs is not conducive to humane killing and leads to unacceptably high wounding rates.

Rifles are shot from moving boats, at moving seals on moving ice. Sealers chase animals across slippery ice pans, swinging their hakapiks clumsily at those that attempt to escape. Both methods are unlikely to stun a seal effectively with a single blow or shot, resulting in considerable pain, suffering and distress.



MYTH: 98% of harp seals are killed in what veterinarians describe as an acceptably humane manner.

Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Facts about Seals 2003.

REALITY: Such an interpretation does not represent what Daoust et al. 2002 actually wrote. It is scientifically incorrect to conclude that 98% of the seals ...(were) killed humanely.

Scientific Opinion of the European Food Safety Authority, 2007.



What is the “three-step process”?

The three-step process is the recommended process for ensuring humane killing of sentient mammals. The elements of this process are:

An animal is effectively stunned by a single blow to the head – in the case of sealing by a club, hakapik, or bullet. A blow that does not render an animal irreversibly unconscious is not “effective” and results in serious animal welfare issues.

A stunned animal is then checked for irreversible unconsciousness – in the case of sealing, palpation of the skull to ensure that the cranium and both cerebral hemispheres are crushed. Animals that do not meet this requirement should be immediately restunned.

An animal is then bled out to ensure “humane slaughter”.

These three-steps must be carried out in rapid succession.

This last point is absolutely critical in ensuring animal welfare, since any delay in completing the second or third steps results in a situation in which a seal may not be killed in a humane manner.⁸

Do Canadian regulations require the three-step process to be conducted?

No. While steps 1 through 3 of the three-step process are mentioned, they are not required to be completed in rapid succession. Consequently, when sealing is conducted with a rifle, it is permissible to continue shooting at other animals before conducting a test for irreversible unconsciousness. It is also legal to hook a seal, drag it across the ice, and haul it onto a boat before checking that it is unconscious. Bleeding out is not required immediately, only “as soon as possible” – wording that is likely unenforceable and not in keeping with sound animal welfare practice as recommended by veterinarians and other experts. Although it claims otherwise⁹, Canada has not implemented the three-step process.

“ The method of harvesting seals in the current Regulations are not in line with the recommendations of the International [sic] Veterinarians’ Working Group (IVWG) and would fail to meet the derogation criteria presented in the proposed European ban on seal products.”

Canada Gazette. Vol. 142, No. 52 — December 27, 2008.

3. The current Marine Mammal Regulations do not set out requirements for the humane killing of seals.

As long as it remains legal to impale live and conscious animals on steel hooks, seals will continue to experience avoidable pain, suffering, and distress.

As long as the shooting of seals in open water is permitted – a situation that veterinarians say makes it impossible to conduct the three-step process – seals will be killed inhumanely.

As long as multiple animals are allowed to be wounded by bullets before a test for irreversible unconsciousness is conducted, seals will continue to suffer unnecessarily for extended periods of time.

As long as it is allowable to shoot seals from a moving boat, the need for haste will take priority over humane killing practices.

As long as bleeding out is not required immediately after checking for unconsciousness, humane slaughter will not be guaranteed.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) is well aware of the numerous animal welfare concerns that have been raised by veterinarians and hunt observers over the past decade. Yet they refuse to act – and continue to ignore advice, even from a veterinary panel that they themselves endorse – claiming the recommendations are too impractical to implement.

Although the Government of Canada has recently admitted that the current Marine Mammal Regulations are not in line with veterinary recommendations and would fail to meet the derogation criteria in the proposed EU ban on seal products,¹⁰ the only changes proposed for 2009 are what DFO officials refer to as “tweaks”¹¹ and “very minimal”,¹² with the Minister of Fisheries saying the 2009 hunt would be “proceeding as usual”.

As long as the Government of Canada continues to allow convenience to take priority over animal welfare, the Marine Mammal Regulations will remain inadequate and Canada’s commercial seal hunt will remain unacceptably inhumane.



“Remember years ago it was only probably 10 or 15 large boats in the seal hunt when the seals didn’t have any value...now there’s 200 larger vessels [DFO says 500-600]... Right now to me, DFO cannot control it any longer. They don’t know how to control it because there’s too many of us.”

Mr. Rene Genge, Veteran Sealer. Testimony. Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, 6 November 2006.

“The most tightly regulated animal hunt in the world?”¹⁶

Sealers	DFO Enforcement
1800 boats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fishery Officer patrols = 3 helicopters (1 helicopter in Gulf, 3 on Front). Or, 600 boats per helicopter. 23 on-board Fishery Observers (covers 1.3% of all boats)
Active from March 28 – June 30 (94 days, or 752 h)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active enforcement for 60 hours total; majority occurring during first 3 days of the Gulf hunt, and first 8 days of the Front hunt.

4. The environment under which commercial sealing occurs makes effective monitoring and enforcement impossible; what is written in the Marine Mammal Regulations, and what actually occurs on the ice floes, are vastly different scenarios.

Even if the Government of Canada were willing to amend the Marine Mammal Regulations to meet veterinary recommendations, over 40 years of seal hunt observation indicate that, in practice, any regulations are virtually impossible to enforce.

Currently there are an estimated 1800 vessels¹³ taking part in Canada’s commercial seal hunt, and about 6,000¹⁴ active sealers, out of the 14,000 commercial sealing licences issued annually. The boats are widely dispersed, spread out over some 200,000 km², and the seals may be hunted for 3 months or more.

In comparison, DFO boasts that during the 2007 seal hunt it increased the number of Fishery Observers on sealing vessels to 23, which would cover only 1.3% of sealing vessels.¹⁵ During the entire Gulf hunt, only 21 hours (spread over 5 days) of enforcement activity were reported by DFO. And on the Front, 39 hours of enforcement by 3 helicopters was spread over 16 days, resulting in slightly more than 2.5 hours a day of enforcement, on average.

The DFO claims that the seal hunt is closely monitored and tightly regulated, and that satellite data, aerial surveillance, sealers’ daily hail reports, dockside / landing site inspections, and inspections at buying and processing facilities are used. Nonetheless, quota overruns are commonplace. Even more notably, none of these methods monitor animal welfare practices or are capable of identifying inhumane killing.

DFO states that Fisheries Officers conduct about 3,000 inspections in a season – about 1% of the seals killed. Fishery Observers, who are randomly deployed on individual sealing vessels, do not have any enforcement powers.¹⁷

Although over 800 sealing violations were detected by Fishery Officers between 2003-2007, charges were laid in fewer than a quarter of them (180), with only 100 convictions.¹⁸ An analysis of convictions between 1996 and 2006 finds that of 115 convictions, 45% were related to the inhumane killing of seals.¹⁹

According to DFO, during the Front longliner hunt about 100 seals are killed every minute.²⁰ Quotas are reached very quickly, and quota overruns are a regular occurrence with no repercussions. During the 2006 hunt, which was claimed to be monitored “closer than ever”,²¹ the Gulf quota was exceeded by almost 20,000 animals, with one region taking over 350% of its allocation.



Fiction and Fact

Fiction: “In 2005, an Independent Veterinarians’ Working Group on the Canadian Harp Seal Hunt was formed to review and make recommendations on the Canadian seal hunt; Canada acted on these recommendations in 2008.”

From: “Canada’s Position on the EU Proposed Regulation on Trade in Seal Products,” a lobbying document being used by the Government of Canada in Europe.

Fact: Four years after the IVWG Report, only one minor recommendation – the replacement of the blink reflex test to determine irreversible unconsciousness with manual palpation to ensure the skull is crushed – was proposed in the amendments to the Marine Mammal Regulations for 2009. One of the most important IVWG suggestions, that seals **should not be shot in the water** (due to high potential for struck and lost, and because the three-step process cannot be conducted) **continues to be ignored** by the DFO, as do other recommendations such as reducing competition; improving supervision, monitoring, and compliance; mandatory training for sealers; and requiring the full utilization of seals.

In what can only be viewed as yet **another desperate lie**, a recent DFO statement to the EU Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection claimed that “the Animal Welfare Committee of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association has submitted comments on these amendments [to the Marine Mammal Regulations] indicating their full support”.

A clarification subsequently provided by the CVMA confirmed that “The statement that [DFO representative] Mr. Stenson made is not accurate... **The CVMA did not indicate their full support and will not consider doing so until** [certain elements of the proposed Regulations] have been clarified by the DFO and reviewed again by the CVMA’s Animal Welfare Committee...”



5. The continued disregard for the Regulations observed on the ice demonstrates that DFO is unwilling – and unable – to enforce any rules that might be in place.

There is a clear conflict of interest in having the Department of Fisheries and Oceans responsible for enforcing the Regulations and at the same time defending the “humaneness” of the seal hunt. Even sealers have been shocked by DFO’s willingness to turn a blind eye to certain sealing practices, with two recent examples involving allegations that DFO encouraged the killing of some 22,000 blueback hooded seal pups while knowing that it was illegal for sealers to sell their pelts, and admissions from DFO that they encouraged the hunting of grey seals in a provincially protected area in 2007.²²

So confident are many sealers about the lack of enforcement that they regularly break the rules, even when they know they are being observed and photographed. For example, the use of gaffs to stun seals - banned since 1967 – has been commonplace in recent hunts.²³

As one veterinary expert concluded, “the Canadian public cannot be assured that hunting is carried out in a humane fashion, regardless of what the regulations dictate”.²⁴

Fiction and Fact

Fiction: “Canada actively regulates on and enforces strict animal welfare principles, evidenced by its history of continuous improvement in methods and management of the seal hunt.”

From: “Canada’s Position on the EU Proposed Regulation on Trade in Seal Products”, a lobbying document being used by the Government of Canada in Europe.

Fact: On the contrary, Canada’s Marine Mammal Regulations have actually gone BACKWARDS when it comes to animal welfare practices. For example, the requirement for bleeding out seals, re-introduced by DFO with great fanfare in 2008, was previously included in the Regulations from 1980 – 1993. The cruel practice of hooking live and conscious seals through the face or eyesocket (a practice currently allowed) was prohibited under the Regulations in 1976, but dropped in 1993. It is simply dishonest to claim “continuous improvement” in the animal welfare aspects of this Canada’s commercial seal hunt.



Strange but True

The government of Canada is using a convicted sealer - one who testified in court that DFO did not enforce the regulations and encouraged illegal activity - to try and convince Europeans that Canada's commercial seal hunt is well-regulated.

In 1996 a number of sealers were charged with the illegal selling of blueback seal pelts (young hooded seal pups). Mark Small was one of the sealers found guilty in January 2009.

Mr Small admits that he knowingly broke the law. He testified that for a number of years, blueback seals were openly killed and sold with the full awareness of the DFO. He reports that DFO actually directed sealers to where blueback seals could be located and, through their lack of enforcement and regulation, led sealers to believe that the commercial hunting of these pups was acceptable. DFO also informed buyers that the illegal sales of bluebacks were “of no concern” to authorities. As Small stated **“everybody was fully aware that DFO turned a blind eye to the activities that were taking place”**.

Mark Small's testimony confirms what critics of Canada's commercial seal hunt have been saying all along: that the Canadian government does not enforce its own regulations. It seems quite astonishing, then, that Mark Small – the same man who claims that DFO encouraged him to break the law - was chosen to accompany at least three recent government delegations to Europe, paid for by the Canadian taxpayer, to promote Canada's “well-regulated” commercial seal hunt!



Is more training the answer?

New sealers currently are trained by apprenticing under other sealers, which can have the disadvantage of passing on poor practices. New sealers learn to shoot at sea.²⁵ No practical test of proficiency is required to hold either the sealing or firearms licences required to kill seals.

The effectiveness of current training programs is doubtful. For example, a Quebec Sealer's Training Program Manual devotes twice as many pages to a discussion of “Animal Activists Groups” – including a detailed analysis of their financial resources and salaries paid to their senior employees – than it does to discussing the Marine Mammal Regulations.²⁶ What this “training program” intends to accomplish is questionable.



“It’s a small industry of animal husbandry.”

Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada, in response to a question regarding Canada’s commercial seal hunt.
New York, 25 Sept. 2007.



Unnecessary and Wasteful

Products derived from sealing

Canada’s commercial seal hunt is not even close to the “full-utilization” industry the government often claims it to be. Instead, it is an unnecessary and extremely wasteful hunt for fur. Over 98% of the landed value²⁷ of this hunt is for the fur of harp seal pups aged 3 weeks to 3 months, which is used to make luxury fashion garments and trinkets such as keychains and toys. Despite the ongoing, taxpayer-subsidized efforts to develop products from seal meat and oil, markets for these products remain negligible.

Meat: Finding a market for seal meat continues to present a major challenge,²⁸ and the majority is left on the ice. This is not surprising, since very little meat can be recovered from pups under 3 months of age, which make up 98% of the seals killed in recent years.²⁹ The landed value of seal meat (flippers) in 2008 was about \$35,000. About \$80,000 of seal meat has been exported annually in recent years, primarily to South Korea.³⁰ Small amounts of prepared seal meat are exported to Japan and China (Hong Kong).

Oil: Despite large government subsidies during the past decade or more to develop products from seal oil, a recent report from Memorial University of Newfoundland states that about 80% of seal blubber is discarded.³¹ About 210

tonnes of seal blubber (attached to pelts) was landed in 2008, with a value of \$73,000. Exports of seal oil from Canada during 2002-2007 averaged \$1.8 million per year, with South Korea, China, Norway, the United States³² and Italy providing the main markets.

Heart valves? In 2007 a story began circulating about a Greek cardiac surgeon, Dr. Andreas Agathos, interested in using seal heart valves for transplantation in humans. A kill of 200 harp seals was permitted by DFO specifically for this purpose. Despite the absence of any published research, Canadian officials quickly jumped on the bandwagon and began promoting the use of seal heart valves as justification for the commercial seal hunt. Claims were made that a demand existed for 300,000 seal hearts per year - perhaps not coincidentally the exact figure that sealers were then asking government to set as the total allowable catch – and that these would be worth a staggering \$5,000 each.³³

This seemingly miraculous cure for the dying sealing industry has yet to be realized. Dr. Agathos’ only previous research used a harbour – not harp - seal heart, but his original request to kill harbour seals in Canada was rightfully rejected. Oddly, his heart valve patent includes the use of cardiac tissue from a wide range of marine mammals, including some that are highly endangered or extinct.³⁴



Economically Unnecessary

How important is Canada's commercial seal slaughter to individual sealers?

No one makes a living from sealing. Canada's commercial seal hunt is a short-term activity, providing a few days' employment each year. The 2008 landed value of \$6.9 million, divided amongst the estimated 7,000 active sealers, means each sealer would receive on average about \$1,000. Of course, in any given year some sealers will make more money than average, while others may actually lose money. Some sealers say that sealing makes up 5-10% of their annual earnings,³⁵ not the 35% claimed by the Government of Canada.³⁶

The prices paid to sealers for pelts fluctuate from year to year. In 2006, processors paid sealers about double (see Annex IV) the amount received in the next-highest year. In 2007, buyers were forced to drastically reduce prices by about half, originally saying it was based on a drop in world prices for mink³⁷ but later admitting that they simply overpaid for poor-quality seal pelts in 2006.

World markets for seal products now appear to be saturated, with 2008 prices plummeting again by about half. Processors report that sales of seal pelts all but stopped at the end of 2007; in early 2009 they still do not appear to have recovered.³⁸ The international fur auction in Copenhagen did not sell a single seal skin in 2008, and Greenland (the second largest sealing country), now reports stockpiles of some 140,000 pelts.³⁹

IS IT WORTH IT?

2008 prices Beater pelt \$6 – \$33 Blubber (per kg.) \$0.07 /kg Flipper \$1 Penis (adult) \$20



How important is sealing to communities?

Even in 2006 - the year where processors paid about double the typical amount for a seal pelt and artificially inflated the value of the seal hunt – the vast majority (about 75%) of sealing communities in Newfoundland reported that less than 5% of their income was derived from sealing, while over half of sealing communities reported that less than 2% of their employment income was from sealing.⁴⁰

How important is it to the region?

The landed value of seal pelts in Newfoundland and Labrador ranked ninth in 2008, bringing in just over \$6.5 million, and accounting for 1.2% of the total landed value of Newfoundland fisheries.⁴¹

Many people mistakenly believe that there is a moratorium on fishing Atlantic cod, and that seals are hunted to supplement income lost by the collapse of the cod fishery in the early 1990s. But today the landed value of Atlantic cod is more than four times greater than the value of the commercial seal hunt.⁴² The landed value of the entire Newfoundland fishery today has increased by more than 40% since the collapse of the cod fishery,⁴³ with an estimated 2008 production value of over \$1 billion.⁴⁴

Further, the province of Newfoundland and Labrador has the fastest growing provincial economy in Canada, with a \$1.27 billion surplus forecast for 2009. Celebrations

are being planned to mark this occasion, despite the deteriorating global economy. In light of such economic bounty, it is astounding that the province would continue to promote a dangerous, unprofitable, and poorly-paying occupation such as sealing as the only employment alternative available for those living in remote rural communities.

Not surprisingly, the economic importance of sealing to Newfoundland and Labrador is extremely small, accounting for less than half of one percent of the provincial GDP.

How important is the commercial seal hunt to Canada?

The Canadian government continues to provide significant financial and other support to the sealing industry. Canadian tax payer dollars are spent on sending government delegations overseas to promote the seal hunt, providing sealers with icebreaking services and access to seal herds, and federal grants for seal product development and marketing, all in direct opposition to the will of the Canadian public.⁴⁵ A number of tourist and seafood boycotts against Canada are ongoing, and the worldwide negative publicity generated by Canada's commercial seal hunt results in unknown, but likely significant costs. Rather than providing any economic benefit, Canada's commercial seal slaughter arguably represents a drain on this country's resources.





INVOICE

TO: Canadian taxpayers
FROM: Government of Canada
FOR: Maintaining Canada's commercial seal hunt
PAYABLE: For as long as the slaughter continues

Provision of supplies and assistance to sealers during 2007 seal hunt.	\$3,410,000
Public relations stunt to deflect criticism of DFO over tragic sinking of sealing vessel Acadien II in 2008	\$487,000 + ongoing maintenance fee of \$20,000 / month related to the seizure of vessel Farley Mowat
Research and Development of Seal Products	\$2,500,000 and growing
Travel for Fisheries Ambassador Loyola Sullivan to 180 meetings on seals in 2007-08	\$100,000+
Sending large delegations of people to Europe in attempt to forestall seal product ban	Hundreds of thousands
Federal Advocacy Plan for Europe on Sealing	\$362,000
Funding for Seal Industry Development Council	\$506,000
Subsidies to sealing industry paid between 1995-2001	\$20,000,000
WTO Challenge against Belgium and Netherlands Trade Bans	"It will be lengthy and it will probably be costly". (Former Fisheries Minister Loyola Hearn)
Various seafood and tourism boycotts, costs to Canadians' reputation internationally.	Unknown, but significant



How important is Canada's commercial seal hunt to Inuit?

The Government of Canada claims that Canada's commercial seal hunt is important to Inuit and other aboriginal peoples.⁴⁶ But Canada's commercial seal hunt does not involve Inuit.

In fact, commercial sealing and Inuit sealing are two very different activities. They take place at different times of the year, in different places, involve different people, and different species and ages of seal.

Inuit hunt fewer than 1,000 harp seals in the eastern Canadian Arctic, mostly adult seals, during the summer months.⁴⁷ This is a hunt far removed from Canada's commercial seal hunt, which occurs months earlier, further south, and slaughters 300,000 or so harp seals, almost all of which are under 3 months of age. And whereas Inuit take pride in using all parts of the seal, the commercial seal hunt is almost exclusively for skins, which are sent overseas to be processed into novelty "fashion fur" products and trinkets.

Most trade bans on seal products, including the one proposed in 2008 by the European Union, provide exemption for Inuit sealskins. So why is the Canadian government sending Inuit delegations to Europe as representatives of Canada's commercial seal hunt?

The answer is revealed in an internal government memo, where officials with the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs are advised to "play the Nunavut Inuit card as leverage to open the doors to obtaining a waiver (on seal products)... and have the east coast sealers follow".⁴⁸

The reason for such cynical advice is obvious: few people and organizations – including IFAW – object to aboriginal subsistence hunting. Thus the Canadian government is deliberately blurring the distinction between two very different types of seal hunts in order to advance its political objectives.

As for non-Inuit peoples in Canada, DFO statistics show that only about 1% of the harp seals killed in the commercial seal hunt are taken for "aboriginal initiatives".

The attempt to capitalize on concern for the preservation of aboriginal cultures and traditions, and to use it as justification for the cruel, unnecessary and wasteful industry that is Canada's commercial seal hunt, is both dishonest and unethical.

A harp seal pup is resting on a small, irregular ice floe in the center of the frame. The surrounding sea is filled with numerous smaller, broken ice floes, creating a textured, greyish-blue surface. The seal pup is light-colored with a dark patch around its eye and a dark spot on its back. The overall scene conveys a sense of isolation and vulnerability.

Conservation Concerns

Those who defend Canada's commercial seal hunt claim that since harp seals are not classified as endangered, the annual slaughter is not a conservation issue. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Animal welfare concerns aside, the fact that Canada's commercial seal hunt is the largest remaining hunt of a marine mammal anywhere in the world makes it a very important conservation issue. The increasingly evident effects of global warming on the species' breeding habitat, the continued practice of allowing unsustainable catches, and the Canadian government's refusal to take a precautionary management approach (despite its claims to the contrary), all present serious conservation concerns.

“Climate change impacts are almost certainly going to be negative for Harp Seals in the future.”
IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, 2008.



Global warming is affecting harp seal breeding habitat.

Today, the most serious conservation threat to harp seals – and other ice-dependent species – is global warming. Harp seals require a stable ice platform in late February and early March to give birth and nurse their pups. If suitable ice cannot be found, the mothers are forced to give birth in the water where the pups will die. If ice is found, but does not remain solid through the two-week nursing period, pups are unable to receive the milk they need to build up the thick blubber required for survival. Thin ice may break up in wind or waves before the pups are fully fed and able to swim, or pups may be crushed in the ice or succumb to exhaustion as they struggle to find solid ice.

A lack of suitable ice means increased deaths of young harp seal pups. Below-average ice conditions during their birthing and nursing period have become more prevalent in recent years and, in some years, the toll on newborn seal pups is

significant. For example, in 2002 DFO scientists estimated that 75% of the pups born in the Gulf of St. Lawrence died due to poor ice, and that in 2007 mortality in the Southern Gulf was “extremely high” and “possibly approaching 100%”.⁴⁹ According to Environment Canada data, ice conditions have been below-average in 10 of the past 12 years, and DFO acknowledges increased pup mortality in 6 of these years.

One thing governments can do immediately to counteract the threats posed by global warming and changing ice conditions is to reduce other, non-climate related threats, such as overhunting. A responsible government, incorporating a precautionary approach, would take steps to reduce the threats to the harp seal population posed by the environmental uncertainty arising from global warming. Instead, Canada continues to set total allowable catches (TACs) at levels their own scientists say will not only cause the population to decline, but which will also require drastic reductions in TACs in the near future.

The DFO claims that “Seal hunt quotas are reduced if additional stressors such as adverse climatic conditions, reduction of food supply, unusual pup mortality or disease occur.”

In practice, this does not appear to be the case.

In 2002, Canadian government scientists estimated that 75% of the pups born in the Gulf of St. Lawrence died due to poor ice conditions, before the hunt even began.⁵⁵ This equated to approximately 195,000 pups.⁵⁶ Nonetheless, the hunt proceeded as usual, and the TAC of 275,000 was eventually exceeded by over 37,000 animals.

Were the TACs reduced in subsequent years as claimed by the Canadian Government? No! On the contrary, the TAC was increased for the next 5 years, and these quotas were again exceeded in 4 out of 5 years without penalty.⁵⁷

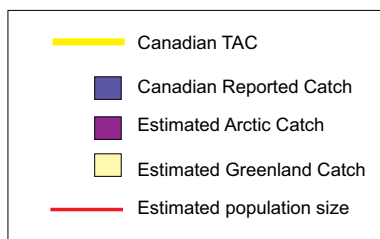
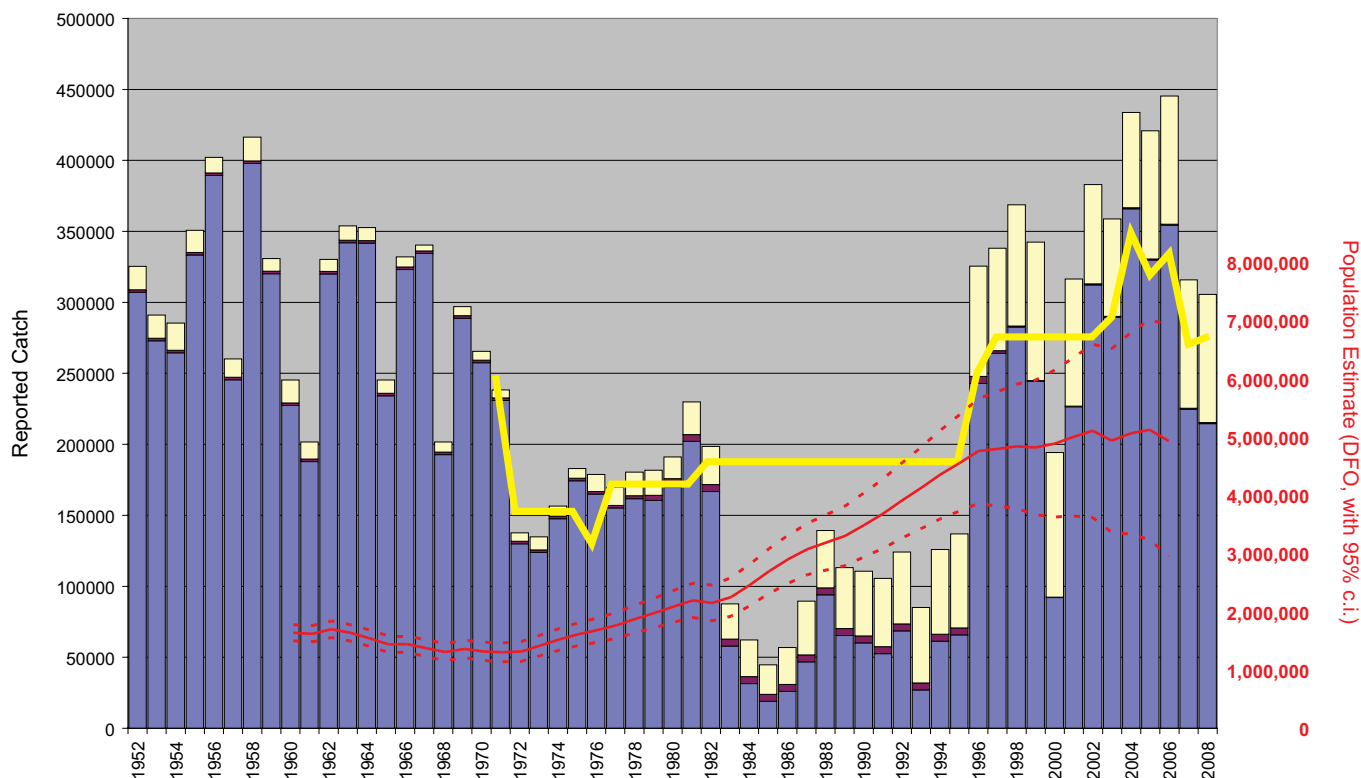
The following years – 2004, 2005, and 2006 – continued to be years of below-average ice cover,⁵⁸ which is associated with increased pup mortality.

In 2007, extremely poor ice conditions led Canadian government scientists to conclude that nearly all pups born in the Southern Gulf of St Lawrence (about 261,000) likely perished due to ice conditions.⁵⁹ The TAC was lowered by 65,000 animals, and the hunt proceeded as usual. Although government officials claimed publicly that the reduction was a response to the poor ice conditions, internal DFO documents show that the many years of high seal kills necessitated a TAC reduction regardless of ice conditions.

DFO does incorporate some estimate of mortality into their models. The latest assessment assumes increased pup mortality in 6 of the past 11 years.⁶⁰ However, this is almost certainly an underestimate, given that the same document notes that poor ice conditions were present in not 6, but 9, of the past 11 years.



Population Estimates, Allowable Catches, and Reported Catches of Northwest Atlantic Harp Seals



Between 1950 and 1970, unregulated overexploitation caused the harp seal population to be dangerously reduced by an estimated 50% to 66%. In response to growing scientific concerns over the harp seal herd, the use of TACs was introduced in 1971 in attempt to control the numbers of seals killed. In 1983, a European import ban on whitecoat harp seal products caused the number of seals killed in Canada to drop dramatically, although the government never lowered the TAC during this period. The number of harp seals killed by Greenland increased during this period, and has remained high. In 1996, Fisheries Minister Brian Tobin increased the TAC, and introduced direct subsidies to encourage sealing. Between 1995 and 2001, over \$20 million in subsidies were provided to the sealing industry in a bid to revive it. In recent years, the kill levels have been on the same order as those that caused the precipitous population decline some fifty years ago.



The current level of hunting is biologically unsustainable.

Since 2000, the Canadian government has been deliberately setting Total Allowable Catches (TACs) at levels that will cause the harp seal population to decline. Because of the lack of monitoring and inadequate regulation of the hunt, these TACs are regularly exceeded (by almost 100,000 animals in the past decade) without penalty.

In order to keep within the current management plan, the 2009 TAC must not be greater than 270,000.⁵⁰ At this catch level, the 2010 TAC would have to be set below 175,000. Even if catches dropped to 200,000 seals for the next two years, further TAC reductions would likely still be required.

No responsible Fisheries Minister should set the TAC at levels they know will need to be reduced in the future. This approach not only threatens the seal population, it passes the “burden” of making management decisions – ones that will likely be unpopular with the sealers and fishermen – to future politicians.

This “overexploit now / let someone else worry about it later” approach is highly political and extremely risky, given the amount of scientific and environmental uncertainty involved.

Even DFO scientists warn that there is “considerable uncertainty” associated with the current population estimate of 5.6 million harp seals.⁵¹ In addition, the unregulated and highly-subsidized Greenland hunt is thought to result in the deaths of an additional 164,000 animals each year from this same population.⁵² Government scientists caution that the population impacts of high mortality due to overhunting and / or poor ice are undetectable within a 5-10 year time frame. However, significant impacts may be felt in the longer term (20 years or more).⁵³ As the scientists note, the decision-making cycle of politicians and fisheries managers is significantly less than this. A recent analysis of the Canadian government’s management approach found it likely to maintain high TACs despite a declining population,⁵⁴ with a “substantial risk” of reducing the population by 70% or more over the next few years.



Seals and Fisheries

Some sealers (who are also fishermen), and politicians (who should know better) argue that Canada's commercial seal hunt is needed to protect fish stocks. However, there is no scientific evidence that culling harp seals will benefit commercial fisheries in Atlantic Canada, or anywhere else for that matter.

Harp seals eat a wide variety of fish and marine invertebrates, most of which have no commercial value. And even though seals may consume substantial amounts of fish, scientists note that "consumption" alone does not provide a measure of "impact" on a fish stock or fishery.

Interactions between competitors, predators, and prey in the Northwest Atlantic ecosystem are extremely complex, as shown in the diagram on the next page. When a species like Atlantic cod has been severely depleted through overfishing and mismanagement, we cannot simply 'fix' the situation by overexploiting and mismanaging another species, such as harp seals.

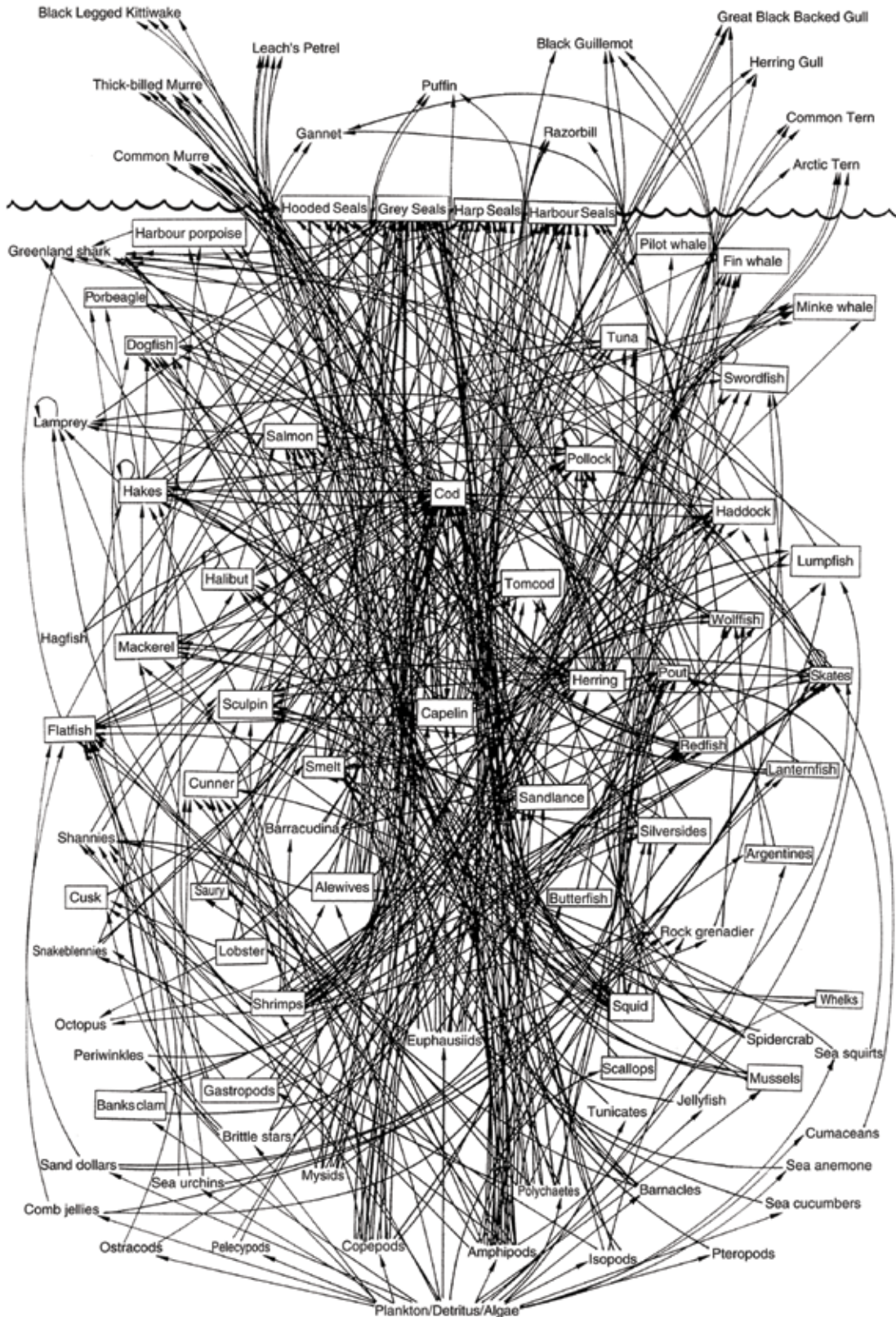
Seals are biologically significant species that have a beneficial effect and an important stabilizing role in their ecosystems.⁶¹ Rather than maintaining some imaginary "balance" between seals and fish, overexploitation of marine mammals is likely to further weaken the overall structure and functioning of the marine ecosystem.

There is no evidence that culling harp seals will benefit any fish stock, and culling will almost certainly not produce any detectable recovery of cod stocks.

Scientific examinations of food webs in other ecosystems have led to similar conclusions. An analysis of the Cape fur seal cull in South Africa, for example, concluded that culling was not only unlikely to benefit fisheries, but also that culling seals was more likely to be detrimental to commercial fisheries. The cull was called off.⁶² And although Norwegian officials make the unsubstantiated (and unscientific) claim that it is necessary to cull harp seals in the Barents Sea, a recent study notes that "the best available scientific evidence provides no justification for marine mammal culls as a primary component of an ecosystem-based approach to managing the fisheries of the Barents Sea".⁶³

Simplified Food Web for the Northwest Atlantic

This is a partial food web for the Northwest Atlantic. The species enclosed in rectangles are also exploited by humans. This food web is incomplete because the feeding habits of all components have not been fully described. Further, all species – including some of the marine mammals – do not spend the entire year in the area.





Unwanted



Canadians are against the commercial seal hunt

Public opinion polling consistently shows that the majority of Canadians (6 in 10) oppose the commercial hunting of seals off Canada's east coast.⁶⁴ Even in the Atlantic provinces, one in four say they "strongly oppose" Canada's commercial seal hunt.

In nation-wide polling conducted by Environics Research, 71% of Canadians said they would support new regulations banning the killing of seal pups under three months of age. Pups of this age represent 98% of the seals killed in Canada's commercial seal hunt.⁶⁵

Over two-thirds of Canadians oppose the use of their taxes to support the seal hunt including sending delegations abroad to lobby foreign governments and promote the seal hunt, using icebreakers to provide sealers with access to seal herds, and developing and marketing new products made from seals. Three-quarters (75%) of Canadians are specifically opposed to the federal government's use of their tax dollars to send delegations to Europe to promote the commercial seal hunt.

Sixty-one percent of respondents said Canada's commercial seal hunt should either be stopped completely (16%), or stopped with the exception of aboriginal sealing (45%); and 84% said they would not be upset if Canada's commercial seal hunt were ended.

Almost two-thirds (65%) of Canadians agreed that the commercial hunting of seals for their fur is an outdated industry that should be phased out, and 72% would like to see the Canadian government end the commercial seal hunt and instead invest in alternative employment opportunities for any individuals affected.

Trade Bans

In response to pressure from their citizens, a growing number of countries have closed their doors to seal products. Belgium, Croatia, Slovenia and the Netherlands currently have national-level bans on seal products in place, as does the United States and Mexico. Hungary, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Czech Republic and Italy have also taken steps towards implementing national bans. In response to the bans in Belgium and the Netherlands, Canada requested formal consultations at the World Trade Organization in September 2007. This is yet another move by the Canadian government to protect a sealing industry that is opposed by the majority European and Canadian citizens.

In September 2006, the European Parliament called for an end to the trade in harp and hooded seal products. An unprecedented 425 (out of 732) MEPs signed a Written Declaration asking the European Commission to produce a legislative proposal for a ban in the import, export, and sale of seal products. In response to this Written Declaration, the European Commission undertook an in-depth analysis of the existing information relating to the animal welfare aspects of sealing.

In July 2008, the European Commission adopted a proposal for a regulation banning the trade of seal products within, into, and from the European Union. The proposal does not apply to seal products from Inuit communities.

The proposal sets forth criteria for a derogation to the ban, which would allow seal products to enter the EU if it can be shown that the seals were killed and skinned in a country that had adequate legislative provisions to ensure that seals are killed and skinned without causing avoidable pain suffering or distress; that these provisions are effectively

Why does government support for the seal hunt continue, contrary to public opinion?

The structure of the Canadian political system is such that regional interests, including sealing, take on disproportionate significance at a national level. The seven seats in the House of Commons representing Newfoundland and Labrador, and a few others in Atlantic Canada, may be won or lost based on a party's stance on the commercial seal hunt. In order that they may have a chance of winning these seats, all major political parties in Canada currently support Canada's commercial seal hunt.

An overwhelming 86% of Canadians said that the European Union should be allowed to restrict trade in seal products if it chooses to do so. The European Union is currently considering a proposal to do just that.



“ I would like to see the 6 million seals, or whatever number is out there, killed and sold, or destroyed or burned. I do not care what happens to them...the more they kill the better I will love it.”

John Efford, Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Newfoundland and Labrador.

4 May 1998.

enforced by authorities; and that a labeling or certificate scheme is in place to certify that the products come from seals that were killed in a manner that meets these conditions.

Shortly after the EU announcement, Fisheries Minister Loyola Hearn boasted that the Canadian government had “successfully secured exemptions from the proposed ban” and that “any ban on a humanely conducted hunt, such as Canada’s, is without cause”.⁶⁶ However, a few months later the DFO admitted that “the method of harvesting seals in the current Regulations... would fail to meet the derogation criteria presented in the proposed European ban on seal products”.⁶⁷

The European Parliament is currently considering amendments to the proposed ban and is scheduled to vote in May 2009.

Whether or not the ban is passed, there is clearly growing opposition to commercial sealing. This opposition is solidly based on decades of veterinary studies, observer reports, and documentation, and will not be dissuaded by the Canadian government’s on-going propaganda campaign, which denies the serious animal welfare and conservation problems associated Canada’s commercial seal slaughter.

Conclusion

IFAW’s 40 years of experience with Canada’s commercial seal hunt leads to one conclusion: That this slaughter is inherently inhumane, unnecessary, and unsustainable. It is a dying and anachronistic industry, one that is barely kept alive by infusions of government funding and support.

For far too long, politicians have been allowed to promote their own agendas at the expense of biodiversity, animal welfare, and even Canada’s reputation on the world stage. There is no better time than now to bring an end to Canada’s commercial seal slaughter, and provide sealers with alternative, long-term, and sustainable employment opportunities.

The Harp Seal



The harp seal is a widely distributed and highly migratory species. Three distinct populations are recognized, based on their breeding areas: the Northwest Atlantic, the Greenland Sea, and the White Sea.

The Northwest Atlantic herd is the largest of the three. Each winter, adult seals travel thousands of kilometres from the Canadian Arctic and west Greenland, to their birthing and mating grounds in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and on the “Front” off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador. Here, pregnant females congregate by the hundreds of thousands on newly formed sea ice to give birth to their pups at the end of February and early March.

Each mother gives birth to a single pup, transforming the once barren ice floes into a huge white nursery. The newborn pups are thin, scraggly and yellow at birth, but become fat, fluffy “whitecoats” in about a week, thanks to the high fat content of their mothers’ milk. After about 12 days, the mothers leave their fully fed pups and join adult males to mate.

The newly-weaned pups remain alone on the ice, first crying for their mothers, then becoming extremely quiet and sedentary. Still unable to swim effectively or feed themselves, they survive on the thick layer of blubber accumulated during nursing. Shortly after weaning, they begin to moult their white coats, revealing the sleek, silvery, spotted pelt of the young harp seal pup known as a “beater”. It is this new, pristine pelt that is now the target of Canada’s commercial seal hunt.

As the pups are slaughtered, the adult seals and many immature, non-breeding seals (called “bedlamers”) begin the migration northward, hauling out on ice once again to undergo the annual moult. They then continue their migration back to the subarctic waters between eastern Canada and west Greenland, where they will remain until they make their way south again the following October.

The 2009 estimate for the Northwest Atlantic harp seal population is 5.61 million (plus or minus 2.12 million), lower than the 2006 estimate of 5.8 million. However, this figure is based on assumptions that may not be accurate, and DFO scientists warn there is “considerable uncertainty” associated with this estimate.

Adult weight.....	130 kg (290 lbs)
Adult length	1.7 m (5.5 ft)
Age at sexual maturity	5-6 years
Age at first reproduction	about 6-7 years
Life span (max.).....	about 30 years
Number of pups per year	1
Pup birth weight.....	11 kg (24 lbs)
Duration of nursing	about 12 days
Growth rate of pup per day.....	2.2 kg (5 lbs)
Weaning weight.....	36 kg (80 lbs)

The Greenland Sea population breeds and lives off the east coast of Greenland, and breeds near the island of Jan Mayen, in an area known as the “West Ice”. Russia has not hunted this population since 1994, but Norwegian sealing continues. The 2006-2008 TACs for Greenland Sea harp seals were set at 31,200 1+ animals, (or an equivalent number of pups where one 1+ animal = 2 pups). Total catches were 3,304 in 2006, 7,828 in 2007 and 1,263 in 2008. Four boats participated in the 2006-2007 hunts, and one in 2008. This population is considered “data poor”, with an estimated 2007 population size of 756,200 (plus or minus about 200,000 animals).

The White Sea and Barents Sea population gives birth to their pups in the White Sea off the coast of Russia (known as the “East Ice”). TACs in 2006 and 2007 were set at 78,200 1+ animals (or an equivalent number of pups, where one 1+ animal = 2.5 pups). The 2008 TAC was set at 55,000 1+ animals.⁶⁸



Norway openly subsidizes the Russian seal hunt in the White Sea. In 2007, the traditional Russian helicopter catches of harp seals were supplemented by boat-based hunting, and in 2008 the entire Russian hunt was boat based (3 vessels). Combined Norwegian and Russian catches from this population were 17,193 in 2006, 11,629 in 2007, and 13,331 in 2008.

This stock is also considered “data poor”, with an estimated population size of less than a million animals. Scientists have raised serious concerns about this population, with recent surveys suggesting that pup production may be three times smaller than that estimated a decade ago. This decline may be linked with poor ice conditions in the White Sea during the breeding period, increased ship traffic through seal whelping areas, commercial exploitation, and possible changes in the availability of prey species.

Other seal species commercially hunted in Canada

Canada also has a commercial hunt for grey seals (2008 TAC = 12,000 animals) and hooded seals (2008 TAC = 8,200 animals; excluding blueback pups, which are currently protected). These seal quotas are rarely taken, since the markets for the skins of these animals are very limited. Between 2000 and 2008, 533 hooded seals and 4,472 grey seals have been reported killed. Between 2002 and 2005, 632 harbour seals were also reported killed.⁶⁹



ANNEX II: ALLOWABLE CATCHES AND REPORTED KILLS OF HARP SEALS IN CANADA

Year	Pups < 1 year	Seals > 1 year	Total	TAC	Year	Pups < 1 year	Seals > 1 year	Total	TAC
1952	198,063	109,045	307,108		1981	178,394	23,775	202,169	170,000
1953	197,975	74,911	272,886		1982	145,274	21,465	166,739	186,000
1954	175,034	89,382	264,416		1983	50,058	7,831	57,889	186,000
1955	252,297	81,072	333,369		1984	23,922	7,622	31,544	186,000
1956	341,397	48,013	389,410		1985	13,334	5,701	19,035	186,000
1957	165,438	80,042	245,480		1986	21,888	4,046	25,934	186,000
1958	140,996	156,790	297,786		1987	36,350	10,446	46,796	186,000
1959	238,832	81,302	320,134		1988	66,972	27,074	94,046	186,000
1960	156,168	121,182	277,350		1989	56,346	8,958	65,304	186,000
1961	168,819	19,047	187,866		1990	34,402	25,760	60,162	186,000
1962	207,088	112,901	319,989		1991	42,382	10,206	52,588	186,000
1963	270,419	71,623	342,042		1992	43,866	24,802	68,668	186,000
1964	266,382	75,281	341,663		1993	16,401	10,602	27,003	186,000
1965	182,758	51,495	234,253		1994	25,223	36,156	61,379	186,000
1966	251,135	72,004	323,139		1995	34,106	31,661	65,767	186,000
1967	277,750	56,606	334,356		1996	184,856	58,050	242,906	250,000
1968	156,458	36,238	192,696		1997	220,476	43,734	264,210	275,000
1969	233,340	55,472	288,812		1998	251,403	31,221	282,624	275,000
1970	217,431	40,064	257,495		1999	221,027	6,794	244,603	275,000
1971	210,579	20,387	230,966	245,000*	2000	85,485	6,583	92,068	275,000
1972	116,810	13,073	129,883	150,000	2001	214,754	11,739	226,493	275,000
1973	98,335	25,497	123,832	150,000	2002	297,764	14,603	312,367	275,000
1974	114,825	32,810	147,635	150,000	2003	280,174	9,338	289,512	289,512**
1975	140,638	33,725	174,363	150,000	2004	353,553	12,418	365,971	350,000
1976	132,085	32,917	165,002	127,000	2005	319,517	11,119	329,829	319,500
1977	126,982	28,161	155,143	170,000	2006	346,426	811	354,867	335,000
1978	116,190	45,533	161,723	170,000	2007	221,488	3,257	224,745	270,000
1979	132,458	28,083	160,541	170,000	2008	217,351	285	217,636	275,000
1980	132,421	37,105	169,526	170,000					

* Quota management was implemented in 1971.

** 2003-2005 TAC was for 975,000 seals, with a maximum of 350,000 in 2 of the 3 years.

Estimates of Total Removals of Northwest Atlantic Harp Seals

	Canada including Struck and Lost	Arctic including Struck and Lost	Greenland including Struck and Lost	Bycatch	Total Removals Northwest Atlantic
1995	99,223	9,762	62,263	28,201	261,712
1996	310,685	9,762	74,676	18,869	488,668
1997	319,548	3,608	69,591	4,641	466,979
1998	298,017	1,438	82,217	16,111	480,000
1999	246,248	736	95,017	11,347	448,365
2000	103,150	560	99,801	19,475	322,787
2001	249,535	810	86,763	9,329	433,200
2002	342,642	1,430	67,725	5,367	484,889
2003	313,596	1,430	67,607	12,330	462,570
2004	396,997	1,430	72,245	12,330	555,247
2005	352,900	1,430	93,494	12,330	553,648
2006	380,990	1,430	95,953	12,330	586,656
2007	239,659	1,430	95,953	12,330	445,325
2008	229,361	1,430	95,953	12,330	435,027

Data sources: Stenson, G. 2005. Estimates of human induced mortality in Northwest Atlantic Harp Seals, 1952-2004; Report of the Working Group on Harp and Hooded Seals (WGHP) ICES CM 2008/ACOM:17; Greenland Home Rule Department of Fisheries, Hunting and Agriculture. 2009. Management and Utilization of Seals in Greenland. Greenland figures for 2007-2008 are estimates.

Average landed value per seal pelt, 1998-2008.



Source: Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Report of the Eminent Persons Panel on Sealing. Prices in 2008 CDN dollars

Value of Seal Product Exports, 2003-2007.

Seal Fur Exports to:	Export Value 2003-2007 (million \$CDN)
Norway	29.7
Greenland	6.1
Finland	5.4
Germany	3.4
China	2.4
Denmark	0.9

“Marine Animal Oil” Exports to:	Export Value 2003-2007 (million \$CDN)
South Korea	3.3
China	2.1
Norway	1.1
USA	0.7
Italy	0.66

* Imports of seal oil to the USA have been prohibited since 1972. However, it is well documented that shipments of seal oil enter the USA deliberately mislabelled as “marine oil”.

Seal Meat Exports to:	Export Value 2003-2007 (million \$CDN)
South Korea	1.7
China (Taiwan)	0.14
China	0.08

Source: Statistics Canada



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“The greatness of a nation and its moral progress
can be judged by the way its animals are treated.”

Mahatma Gandhi.





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