HSUS OPPOSES CRUEL CLUBBING OF HARP SEAL PUPS

World opinion, including that of many Canadians, has long been against the annual so-called “seal harvest” on the ice floes off the coast of Newfoundland. Yet the Canadian bureaucrats refuse to budge.

As spring approaches, protests are being raised throughout the world to end this barbaric practice. At the same time the Canadian government is attempting to convince the world that the clubbing is both “humane” and necessary.

THE U.S. MARINE MAMMAL PROTECTION ACT

It is unlawful to import into the United States any marine mammal if such mammal was —
(1) pregnant at the time of taking;
(2) nursing at the time of taking, or less than eight months old, whichever occurs later;
(3) taken from a species or population stock which the Secretary has, by regulation published in the Federal Register, designated as a depleted species or stock or which has been listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Conservation Act of 1969; or
(4) taken in a manner deemed inhumane by the Secretary.
The Canadians have long insisted that the annual seal hunt is "good resource management." Most of the oil and meat produced is translated into clothing, fishing gear, and other luxuries that can be exported to the U.S. The HSUS and other animal welfare groups have called for the cancellation of the annual seal hunt. They believe the number of births will be around 250,000--nearly 100,000 below the Canadian estimate of births. Some scientists believe this vast difference in expected births is evidence enough to halt the killings! These same scientists believe the Harp herds may be in danger of eventual extinction because of the high mortality rate due to weather conditions, habitat contamination, predators, and hunters. A study done by Dr. D. M. Lavinge of the University of Giolofa, Canada found "the status of the Harp seal in the western Atlantic may be severely threatened in the future if the seals continue to be managed on the basis of the more optimistic population assessments."

More Than A Numbers Game

The Canadian government admits to spending nearly $1 million to supervise the hunt, makes aerial surveys and the like. Nowhere in their official figures do they mention what the cost of sailing a large icebreaker into the region costs. In 1978, Canada sailed the world's largest icebreaker, the Louis St. Lawrence, into the region costs. The Canada government is making estimates for the hunt, then one wonders what the cost of sailing a large icebreaker into the region costs. In 1978, Canada sailed the world's largest icebreaker, the Louis St. Lawrence, into the area to break channels for the sealers. In addition, the government prints and distributes pamphlets defending the hunt. These kinds of expenditures don't find their way onto the balance sheets for the hunt. The profits for the Newfoundland region keep profits for the Newfoundland region keep getting smaller and smaller when you start to subtract the non-budget items!

Help The HSUS

You can help The HSUS continue to oppose the cruel clubbing of baby seals as well as our other anti-cruelty activities by sending a contribution to The HSUS. Your gift will greatly assist us in furthering our determination to create a society in which all animals are protected from cruelty and abuse.
False Claim

In one of the many Canadian promotion handouts, it has been suggested that The HSUS approves of the “clubbing” of seals as the most “humane method” possible. The Canadians derived this idea from HSUS reports to the U.S. Government regarding the adult seal kills on the Pribilof Islands in Alaska. A hunt which in no way is comparable to that in Canada.

In an official release dated January 19, 1979, Brian Peckford, Newfoundland’s Minister of Mines and Energy said, “It was found after extensive research that the most humane way to kill seals is by using the club, quickly followed by exsanguination . . . Observers from your own Department of Agriculture, The American Academy of Sciences, The Humane Society of the United States, The Bureau of Sports Fisheries and Wildlife, and the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries conducted the tests.”

The HSUS has never said it thinks that clubbing is humane! The late Frank McMahon, long-time investigator for The HSUS responded to this false claim in 1971. He said, “I have been on the islands investigating all aspects of the seal hunt for the last four years . . . Studies have indeed been conducted over a period of years but not with the emphasis on discovering a new or humane method of slaughter. The studies have been conducted with the ultimate attempt on the part of the U.S. government to justify the present method of clubbing seals to death . . . In conclusion, I would like to state that The Humane Society of the United States is totally opposed to the clubbing of these seals whose deaths result in only a very expensive luxury product.”

The shaded areas are where the annual Harp seal clubbing takes place. Pressman observed the hunt in the lower area off the Magdalen Islands.

What You Can Do

If you agree with The HSUS position that killing animals for unnecessary products is morally and ethically wrong, then we ask your cooperation in our efforts to end this cruelty.

Write to Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, Office of the Prime Minister, Ottawa, Canada, KIA 0A2. Tell the Prime Minister you abhor the clubbing. Ask him to respect the majority opinion of his own citizens as well as that of the rest of the world by stopping the slaughter now!

Because the Norwegians also participate in the hunt and process many of the pelts into fur trimmings you should also write the Norwegian ambassador: Knut Hedemann, Norwegian Embassy, 3401 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20007.

Since West Germany is the world’s largest importer of baby seal products, you should write to Mr. Helmut Schmidt, Chancellor, Federal Republic of Germany, 5300 Bonn 12, Germany, and ask that the importation of all harp seal products be banned.

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