HSUS Presses U.S. to Uphold Ban on Importation of Sealskins

HSUS wildlife expert Sue Pressman has been the key witness opposing the importation of 70,000 South African seal pelts into the United States on the grounds that the seals were killed inhumanely.

Mrs. Pressman flew to the coast of South Africa in August to observe the clubbing to death of seals by the South African government for possible importation into the United States. She concluded that “fully 50% of the seals selected to be killed were not clubbed properly the first time, requiring a second or third blow” and that, therefore, the killing could not be considered humane.

The Fouke Fur Co. has applied to the U.S. government to waive the ban on importing seal pelts established by the U.S. Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, which bars the importation of 70,000 South African seal pelts into the United States on the grounds that the seals were killed inhumanely.

The Dept. of Commerce upheld the ban on importing seal pelts last year by turning down a Fouke request. But Fouke has had the contract for processing Pribilof Island seal pelts since 1910, and the Dept. of Commerce seems more hesitant to deny their request this year.

Mrs. Pressman testified in behalf of HSUS and Monitor, a consortium of environmental and animal welfare groups.

Washington Merry-Go-Round

‘Humane’ Seal Hunt Is Bloody Business

Washington — The question of whether mildy can purchase a genuine sealskin coat next season may depend upon a grisly scene in faraway Kleine, South Africa.

Trapped from returning to the sea, this herd of seals has no choice but to proceed toward the clubbers waiting to kill them during this year’s annual South African seal harvest. Mrs. Pressman concluded that 50% of the animals were not killed or knocked unconscious by the first blow and were, therefore, killed inhumanely.

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Half the animals, in other words, were “still wiggling, flipping.” Not one of the young seals, whose pelts were sought, escaped. When one fell in terror across the piles of dead seals, the clubbers ran “onto the pile of seals, which is poor footing, (to) club a seal.”

The older seals, whose pelts weren’t wanted, left their dead babies behind and fled into the sea or climbed back... still sitting on top of the dead bodies.

The final verdict will be up to the Commerce Department which plans hearings.