

SLIDE 1 Introduction

Thank Teachers and the School for giving us the opportunity to speak today.

Introduction yourself and Harpseals.org.

HSO is based in southern California and has a national presence and a network of people across the country who are working to end the seal hunt. As you'll see, American consumers have the power to end this slaughter and our goal is to bring awareness to this issue. We use a number of different methods including: our website, setting up information booths at street fairs and festivals, presentations, billboards, TV and radio spots and even rock concert benefits to raise money and awareness.

The subject we'll be discussing today can be disturbing and the images can be hard to look at but it's important to be aware of what's occurring in the world around us. The images we're going to show are not overly graphic but keep in mind that there's no shame in closing your eyes or looking away at any time.

Important: Our campaign is not about "bashing" Canadians! Most Canadian citizens are opposed to the hunt and we work with several large groups in Canada who are also working very hard to end the slaughter. The targets of our campaign are the Canadian government officials who authorize the hunt and the Canadian Fishing Industry that conducts it.

Some people have questioned why should we be concerned about this issue or even animal welfare issues in general when there's so many other horrible things going on today like genocides and wars?? Well, my answer to that is that there is also an on-going War on Nature.

This War on Nature doesn't make the headlines or national news everyday so you'll only see bits and pieces of it in "back page" news articles like the:

Aerial shooting of wolves in Alaska

Brutal killing of over a 1000 whales in a whale sanctuary in Antarctica

Slaughter of elephants in Africa for their ivory

Brutal fur industry in China to supply the fashion markets in the US and Europe

Slaughter of 20-30,000 dolphins and pilot whales in Japan

The estimated 100 million sharks that are killed annually worldwide primarily to supply the shark fin demand in Asia

Annual Canadian Seal Hunt—the largest slaughter of marine mammals in the world.

And the list goes on and on.....

People will argue that we shouldn't care about such things because we're superior to animals due to our intellect and power of reasoning and that may all be true when measured against OUR definition of intelligence.....but when it comes to feelings of pain, torment and suffering we and the animals are equals and we should NEVER forget that.

Ask audience:

How many have heard about the Canadian seal hunt before? (show of hands)

Ask students where they learned about it.

Not about "bashing" Canadians.

-most Canadians are opposed to the hunt.

-we work with several large organizations in Canada

-Target of campaign: Canadian gov't officials and the Canadian Fishing Industry.

SLIDE 2 What is a Harp Seal?

(Brief discussion of seals in general and where harp seals fit in)

3 families of pinnipeds (translation: "fin-footed")

Each family has different and unique physical characteristics.

Eared Seals: Some examples are; Sea Lions and Northern Fur Seals

Main physical characteristics: external ear flaps. Long fore flippers without fur. On land, walks on all 4 flippers. (has a "hip" joint at the base of spine and can pivot rear flippers under it's body)

True Seals: Some examples are; elephant seals, harbor seals and of course, Harp Seals.

Main physical characteristics: no external ear flaps. Short fore flippers with claws. On land, they lie on their belly and pull themselves forward with their fore flippers.

Walruses: Has some characteristics of both Eared and True seals. No external ear flaps. On land, walks on all 4 flippers. Has large tusks.

Note: The "harp" seal name comes from the dark "U" shaped marking on the back of the adult seals. A long time ago someone decided that this "U" shape mark looked like a musical harp.

SLIDE 3 Harp Seal Life Cycle

Thin Whitecoat: Birth weight: About 24 lbs No fat to insulate against cold air or water. Each hair is hollow to trap air. Air warmed by sun and body heat. Gains 4-5 lbs each day while nursing. Mother's milk has very high fat content (45%). (Also called "yellowcoat". Yellow coloring is stain from amniotic fluid. Will wash/fade away in 2-3 days)

Fat Whitecoat: (not shown but fat like raggedy jacket) 9-14 days old. 75-85 lbs. Mother weans pup at 12-14 days old.

Raggedy Jacket: molting of whitecoat starts at 14-18 days old.

Beater: About 18 days -1 year old. This is when most are killed. "Beater" name comes from learning how to swim. They "beat" their flippers on the water when first learning to swim. This is a defenseless weaned baby seal living off its fat reserve until it can swim and hunt for food. After learning to swim they usually eat crabs at first.

Bedlamer: (not shown-looks like "Beater") 1-4 years.

Adult: age of sexually maturity: females 4-6 years, males 7-8 years. Females normally have 1 pup per year. After weaning pup, females will begin mating. Gestation is 11.5 months, including 3 months of delayed implantation. Birthing, nursing and mating all occur within a 3-4 week period.

Adult weight: about 185-290 lbs.

Life span: 30-35 years

SLIDE 4 Harp Seal Diet

Diet: 67 different varieties of fish. Mainly capelin, Arctic cod, polar cod and herring. (All have little commercial value) Also halibut, shrimp, small crabs, squid. (The stomach contents of over 12,000 seals have been studied in the past 40 years) pictured: top: Atlantic cod, middle: capelin, bottom: squid

I want to talk briefly about their diet because until recently, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) of the Canadian government was blaming the seals for the collapse of the valuable Atlantic cod fishery. For years, they said that the seals were one of the main reasons the Atlantic cod population crashed; once they stopped spreading this misinformation, they claimed that the seals were preventing the recovery of the fishery. They have since backed away from this position as well because the DFO scientists have said there is no scientific evidence to support this.

However, there is scientific evidence that Atlantic cod accounts for only about 3% of the seal's diet. It has also been documented that the seals eat many of the predators of

young cod, including squid. Some experts believe that a large seal population is essential to the maintenance of a large cod population. As the DFO scientists acknowledge, this is a very complex interdependent ecological system and we don't have all the answers.

What we do know is that DFO officials and Norwegian fishery officials allowed over-fishing of the North Atlantic cod to go on long enough to cause a population collapse in the 1990's. Starting in the 60's, the fishing industry began using destructive industrial fishing methods with new classes of ships called "draggers" and "trawlers" (which disrupt or destroy the flora and fauna of the ocean bottom, the nursing grounds of many species), with few government controls or regulations. In the late 1980's, scientists warned the government of this impending disaster but the government officials took a "wait and see" position because they didn't want to anger the powerful fishing industry.

Consider this.....It's been estimated that 500 hundred years ago, there were 25-30 million seals and at the same time, there was a thriving Atlantic cod population. There are written records of explorers making slow progress through this area of the ocean due to the abundance of cod. This supports the evidence that a large, healthy seal population is vital to the valuable Atlantic cod.

Some resources to learn more about Atlantic cod:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlantic_cod

SLIDE 5 Three Harp Seal Populations

3 distinct populations of harp seals:

Barents Sea population breeds in the White Sea. Population: 300,000 - 1 million (estimated)

East Greenland population breeds near Jan Mayen Island (West Ice). Population: 300,000 (estimated)

Northwest Atlantic population breeds in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and off the coast of Labrador. Population: 4.5--5.8 million (estimated)

The population numbers are only estimates. The exact number of seals in these populations is unknown. Counting the seals is done by aerial survey and this method is very inaccurate.

Today's discussion will concentrate on the Newfoundland and Labrador area where the massive commercial slaughter takes place each spring.

(Note: The other populations of harp seals are also hunted but on a smaller scale.)

(6 species of seals live in the arctic region. They're referred to as "ice seals" because they live on the ice floes. Ringed, Hooded, Bearded, Ribbon, Spotted and Harp)

SLIDE 6 Migration and Whelping Areas

Migration patterns of the Northwest Atlantic population.

In late spring the harp seals start traveling north following the receding ice pack. During the summer months, some travel far north to Baffin Bay and others travel to the southwest coast of Greenland. As winter approaches, they start moving south to their breeding grounds as the ice pack starts developing southward. The herd will then divide into 2 groups; one will go to the breeding grounds off the coast of Labrador and the other group will continue south to the breeding grounds in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence.

(Note: lower right photo: very pregnant seal)

SLIDE 7 Canada's Killing Fields

The "Gulf" of St Lawrence

The Labrador "Front"

Phase 1 Southern Gulf (starts around March 20th)

Phase 2 Northern Gulf

Phase 3 Labrador Front (70% of total)

Note: Point out Canadian Coast Guard ice breaker leading a group of sealers through the ice. This will come up later in the discussion about Canadian government subsidies.

Note: Only a very small number of indigenous people are involved in the commercial slaughter of baby seals. The vast majority of the sealers are the descendants of the European settlers who arrived in the early to mid 1800's.

The Canadian Government authorizes a smaller hunt for the Inuit's in the Northern Territory of Nunavut. Inuit population is approx 30,000.

The kill quota for Canada's indigenous people is usually around 10,000. Generally, they kill older seals and use the entire animal. Harpseals.org is working to stop the massive commercial hunt.

SLIDE 8 Canada's Harp Seal Slaughter

Harp seals have been hunted commercially since the early 18th century. The number of seals killed over the past 300 years were as follows:

early 1700's	early 1900's (WWI-WWII)	WWII	Post-WWI - 1951	1952-1971
~250,000/year 288,000/year	~150,000/year	almost no hunt	increased to 450,000	

In 1971, a quota (Total Allowable Catch – TAC) was finally set after scientists and environmentalists sounded the alarm of an impending population collapse due to the high level of hunting. The first quota was 245,000 seals. The number varied in this range, and the actual kill rate averaged 165,000 between 1971 and 1982.

In 1983, the European Economic Community banned the importation of whitecoat pelts. This severely reduced the incentive for sealers to kill seals, resulting in average kill rates of 52,000 per year. During this time, the Canadian government actively worked to develop new markets for seal pelts. This led to the exploitation of a loophole in the European ban. The Canadian government stopped the killing of whitecoats and promoted the killing of beaters instead. Then in 1996, the kill quota was increased to 250,000. It was increased again to 275,000 in 1997-1999. Actual kill rates during these years ranged from 242,000 to 282,000 seals (higher than the quota). Note: The DFO does not assess a penalty when sealers exceed the quota. The only response is to sometimes reduce the quota in subsequent years (in the case of multi-year quota announcements).

In 2003, the DFO announced a 3 year plan in which almost 1 million seals would be killed. In 2006, the kill quota was 325,000. The 2006 TAC was set at 335,000 - 85,000 higher than the 'sustainable yield' estimated by the DFO scientists.

In 2007, the quota was reduced to 270,000 in response to the extremely high pup mortality (see subsequent slide).

Note: these numbers do not tell the whole story. These numbers do not account for the seals that are "Struck and Lost". "Struck and Lost" means that after being clubbed or shot, the animal fell or escaped into the water and the sealers couldn't retrieve it. Most of these animals die under the ice and are never accounted for. This occurs most frequently in the "Front" where most seals are shot from a boat. Sealers try to shoot them only once so the pelt is not devalued and this increases the number of "struck and lost". Many people who have observed the hunt believe that the "struck and lost" seals could conservatively add another 15-20% to the number of dead seals counted.

Reference for more information: ref: www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/CSAS/csas/status/2000/E1-01e.pdf

SLIDE 9 Newfoundland and Labrador Timeline (Optional – for mature audiences interested in history)

History of Sealing and the Seal-Cod Controversy

In 1497 explorer John Cabot, sailing under the British flag, sailed west from England to find a sea route to Asia. Instead he discovered Newfoundland and the abundant off-shore fishing grounds, including the Grand Banks. After he returned to Europe, the word quickly spread about the “cod that were so thick they could be scooped up in baskets.” For the next 3 centuries, fishing fleets from Spain, Portugal, France and England constantly made the voyage across the Atlantic to fish the waters off Newfoundland.

(Note: John Cabot’s real name was Giovanni Caboto. He was born in Italy around 1455)

(Note: there’s evidence that the first explorers from Europe were the Vikings who came 500 years earlier but they didn’t stay)

In the early 1800’s, England decided to establish settlements in Newfoundland so there would be a local labor force to work the cod fishery. From 1820-1840 there was a large influx of immigrants from England and Ireland. From this point forward, the cod fishery became the mainstay for jobs and income for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. In fact, the cod fishery was the only reason they came.

In 1949, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador voted to become a part of the Canadian Confederation. It was won by a very slim margin (52% to 48%). Prior to this, it was the “Dominion of Newfoundland” under British rule.

The beginning of the end.....

In the 1950’s, 60’s and 70’s world wide fishing fleets were modernized with new ship designs and technologies and many new “druggers” and “trawlers” were built. These are huge ships and the trawlers were specifically designed to have cold storage to freeze the fish so they could stay at sea for months. Cod fish are bottom dwellers and these ships used heavy machinery to drag huge nets along the bottom of the ocean scooping up everything in it’s path and destroying the habitat. The heavy nets are as long as a football field and they can haul up as much as 200 tons of fish in one hour. By the 1970’s there were hundreds of these ships from all over the world “strip-mining” the seas including the waters off Newfoundland. It’s a very destructive and indiscriminate method of fishing and huge amounts of fish were caught. In the years before these industrialized ships were built, the average annual Newfoundland catch is estimated at 250,000 metric tons. In 1968, it was reported that it peaked at 800,000 mt. In addition to taking huge amounts of fish, the heavy nets dragging along the bottom destroyed the habitat and this eliminated future generations of fish. (note: 1 metric ton = 2205 lbs)

In 1977, Canada, and well as many other countries, established an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) which extends 200 miles from shore. This territorial zone was created by a UN

international treaty to ban foreign fishing fleets (and oil exploration) from a country's coastal waters. Before this, foreign fleets could come as close as 12 miles from shore. In theory, the EEZ was to ensure that each country would have more control to carefully manage their ocean resources. The reality in Canada was very different. After competing with foreign fleets for decades, the Canadian fishing industry saw this as windfall to be fully exploited. Instead of putting sound conservation management policies in place, the government allowed the Canadian fishing industry to expand its own industrialized fishing fleet and build numerous fish processing plants using government approved loans and tax exemptions. The foreign fleets had shattered the ecology of the cod fishery and now the Canadian government proceeded to finish it off. Even after being warned by their scientists in the late 80's, the politicians wouldn't take a stand against the powerful fishing industry. The cod fishery was doomed.

Because of world wide protests and public outcry, in 1983 the EU placed a temporary ban the import of whitecoat products. In 1985, the ban was extended for 2 years and again in 1987. In 1989 the ban was made permanent.

In 1992 the Atlantic cod fishery collapsed. It became commercially extinct.

Due to the European ban and low demand for seal pelts, from 1983-1996 the number of seals killed each year was significantly reduced to an annual average of about 50,000. In 1995, because the Newfoundland economy was devastated by the fishery collapse, the government decided to revive the seal hunt. From 1995-2000, the government paid \$20 million in direct and indirect subsidies to promote the seal hunt and develop new markets for seal products. In 1996, the number of seals killed was 240,000 and its been steadily increasing ever since.

Current N & L industries in order of ranking are: Oil, Fish Products, Newsprint, Iron Ore, Electricity

For many people in N&L, the fishery is considered to be a dying industry with very little chance for recovery. Oil has now taken the place of the fishery as N & L's leading industry and many people see this as their economic future. In the past decade, people have been leaving N&L to find jobs in other parts of Canada.

Note:

52% of all goods produced in N&L are exported to the US.

Current population of N&L: about 520,000

SLIDE 10 Cruel Killing Methods

Despite the Canadian government's claim that baby seals are no longer killed, the fact is that 95% of the seals killed are 3-12 weeks old. The Canadian government claims that once seals are weaned (at about 2 weeks of age), they are no longer pups. (Using this definition with dogs, at age 4 weeks, a dog becomes an adult).

The quota system makes the slaughter especially cruel. Sealers are competing with each other to kill or stun as many as they can as quickly as they can. The ones that are stunned and injured are left for long periods of time before they are finally put out of their misery.

By law, they are supposed to perform a "blink-reflex" test to insure the seal is dead before moving on to the next animal. It's well documented that this is rarely performed. The hunt takes place over a large area and there is only minimal monitoring to ensure that the regulations are being followed. There is a long history of minimal enforcement and very few penalties for the numerous violations.

How do the sealers kill the seal? In the Gulf: Gaff (long stick with hooked blade at end, known in eastern Canada as a "hakupik") is used. Goal: to crush the skull, causing less damage to fur than shooting. However, according to a veterinary study, 17% of the carcasses examined had no skull fractures and another 25% had minimal to moderate fractures, indicating that the seals were conscious when skinned. (See http://www.ifaw.org/ifaw/dimages/custom/2_Publications/Seals/seals_vet_report_review.pdf for a review of the study.) The Front: Rifles are used due to harsh conditions, seals being older and more mobile, and less ice at this time. (This segment of the slaughter occurs 2-3 weeks after the killing in the Gulf.) On the Front, the boat will get close to seals, and then they're shot from the boat. Seals are retrieved with hooks plunged into their bodies. They are not always dead when this is done.

Since 1998, animal protection groups have submitted video evidence of more than 700 apparent violations of the Canada's Marine Mammal Regulations—including seals being skinned alive. To date, not a single charge has been laid in response.

Public opinion polls show that:

Majority of Canadians are against the hunt (62%-79% depending on the poll)

80% of Americans are opposed to the hunt

Show HSUS DVD: "Bearing Witness" 2005 Seal Hunt featuring Rebecca Aldworth

(11 minutes long) Give very brief "background" of video and Rebecca.

Note: Tell audience there is one scene (approx 3-4 seconds) that is hard to watch and you will give them a few seconds warning before it comes on. (It's a close-up of the face of a dying seal choking on its blood)

SLIDE 11 Spring 2007: Another Year of Unusual Weather

Global Climate Change and the Harp Seals

Harp seal mothers give birth to their pups on sea ice. The seal pups require thick, sturdy ice to hold them for the first few weeks of their life, before they learn to swim. Thin ice is dangerous since winter storms and windy weather cause this ice to break up, dropping seal pups in the water, where they drown. In the past few years, the sea ice has been forming late and less and less has formed in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Scientists have recorded below average ice conditions in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and off Newfoundland for the past nine out of 11 years. In 2002, 75% of harp seal pups born in the Gulf died due to lack of ice before the hunt even began. In 2007, the sea ice pans were so poor that almost all of the seals born in the Gulf of St. Lawrence drowned. Aerial surveillance showed only a few seals, whereas normally, over a hundred thousand seals would be born in the Gulf. Many seals may have fallen off the ice floes and drowned and others may have been born in the water if the mothers could not find suitable ice. These seals would drown immediately.

Although sea ice formation since 1969 has been cyclical, the period of below average ice formation has lasted significantly longer than previously seen during the period 1969 – today. This extended period of poor sea ice formation also coincides with increasing global near surface temperatures and the reduction of ice over the entire Arctic region, suggesting that global climate change is affecting the situation in the Gulf. Since the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere continues to rise and global warming is expected to worsen in the coming years, the population of harp seals can be expected to decrease, regardless of the Canadian kill quota. The quota would be expected to accelerate the population decline.

Another weather anomaly occurred in April 2007, on the 'Front'. There, thick ice formed late in the whelping season, causing sealing boats to get stuck in the ice. About 100 long-liner sealing vessels were stuck in the ice, some of them destroyed by the force of the heavy ice against the ships. This was labeled a 'freak build-up of pack ice' and 'the worst anyone there could remember.'

Reference for more information:

http://www.ifaw.org/ifaw/dimages/custom/2_Publications/Seals/Global_Warming_seals.pdf

SLIDE 12 Canadian Government Position

The Canadian government says the seal hunt is: "Sustainable, Viable and Humane"

Response to "Sustainable" (recent statements from the DFO are in quotes)

"Almost triple what it was in the 70's..." What they're not telling you is that in the 1950's and 60's the number of seals killed each year was about the same as it is now and in the 1970's the seal population crashed to about 1.7 million. Considering the environmental variables we face today such as global warming, many leading scientists and biologists are very concerned that the current level of killing is not sustainable and could cause the seal population to rapidly collapse again. In recent years, according to DFO scientists, the population has declined.

"Managed on socio-economic considerations....." The Canadian government has allowed the seal population to be decimated in the past. Now they say the 'hunt' will be "Managed on socio-economic considerations until 70% population level is reached." The term "socio-economic" is just another way of saying "politics and money". The politicians, not the scientists, determine the sealing policy.

The former Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, John Efford, said in 1998, " I would like to see the 6 million seals, or whatever number is out there, killed or sold, or destroyed or burned. I do not care what happens to them.....the more they kill the better I will love it."

"Managed with a precautionary approach..." The Canadian government claims that it manages the oceans and the seals with a "precautionary approach". However, in 2006, when the poor sea ice caused thousands of seals to drown, the DFO increased the kill quota to 325,000, 5000 more than in 2005. In 2007, the quota was still near historic levels, at 270,000. In fact, so many seals died prior to the 'hunt', that the quota could not even be reached.

Response to "Viable"

The Canadian government claims the hunt is economically viable and able to stand on its own. From 1995-2000, the government spent \$20 million dollars in taxpayer money to promote the hunt and develop new markets. The government currently is funding efforts to counter the Canadian seafood boycott and the European pelt import bans (at taxpayer expense). They also continue to provide federally funded support services including Coast Guard ships, ice breakers, planes and helicopters--all at taxpayer's expense. In 2007, Coast Guard services to free sealing boats stuck in the ice, bring food to the sealers on those boats, and transport sealers in helicopters cost over CAN\$3 million.

Response to "Humane"

There are two veterinarian reports that are most often cited:

1) a report of an international veterinary panel, based on observations of the 2001 seal hunt, and a review of video footage of sealing activities recorded by the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) from 1998-2000 (hereafter referred to as Burdon et al.)

2) a report published by five Canadian veterinarians, also based on observations of the 2001 seal hunt, and a review of video footage obtained by IFAW for the 2001 hunt (hereafter referred to as Daoust et al.).

The “results” of these two studies are typically presented as follows:

- Opponents of the hunt claim that up to 42% of seal carcasses examined by Burdon et al. were likely conscious when skinned and conclude that the hunt is unacceptably inhumane
- In contrast, supporters of the hunt, particularly the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), cite Daoust et al. and claim that 98% of the seals “are killed in an acceptably humane manner”

The truth:

The Burdon et al. study addresses the question of whether seals were likely conscious or unconscious at the time they were skinned, using post-mortem examination of skulls. On the other hand, the '98% humane' figure cited from Daoust et al.'s report represents the number of seals clubbed or shot that were brought on board sealing vessels while still conscious. That number ignores any and all animal suffering that occurs between the time animals are clubbed or shot until they eventually reach a sealing vessel, usually on the end of a hook or gaff. It does not begin to measure whether or not seals were killed in an “acceptably humane” manner. The frequently cited figures from both

reports ignore the number of seals that escape into the sea as wounded (struck and lost) animals. In addition, a variety of other data presented in the Daoust et al. report actually provide support for Burdon et al.'s conclusion that Canada's commercial seal hunt results in “considerable and unacceptable suffering.” The available evidence suggests that tens of thousands of harp seals – mostly pups under the age of three months – die in a manner that is inconsistent with contemporary animal welfare standards.

For more information on the two studies:

http://www.ifaw.org/ifaw/dimages/custom/2_Publications/Seals/seals_vet_report_review.pdf

SLIDE 13 Why Does the Killing Continue?

Although many Newfoundlanders still believe that killing the seals will help the cod population recover (as a result of prior government propaganda and the failure of the Canadian government to actively correct prior misinformation), the Canadian government no longer lists this as a motivation for sealing. Nevertheless, the fishing industry (of which the sealers are a part) is the main proponent of the slaughter. Not only do fishermen participate in the sealing, but one of the largest Canadian fishing corporations

(the Barry Group) owns the second largest seal skin processing plant (Atlantic Marine Products). In addition, some fishing corporations that are not involved in sealing also support sealing as a result of the belief that killing predators of the sea (i.e., seals) will help increase their fish catches.

The Canadian government says that the harp seal population is 'healthy and abundant' but does not claim that it is too large even though the goal of the 3 year 'management plan' and subsequent 'management plans' has been to reduce the size of the population. The Canadian government asserts that, since 1970, the harp seal population has nearly tripled in size. It is important to remember that between 1950 and 1970, excessive killing had reduced the population by as much as 66%, putting harp seals in danger of extinction.

The Canadian government says this 'hunt' is market-driven (intended to help fishermen earn more money and improve their standard of living). In reality, fishermen only earn about 5% of their income from sealing. Captains of sealing boats can earn over CAN\$10,000 in a season (even tens of thousands of Canadian dollars), but sealers earn only several hundred to a couple thousand dollars on average.

The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, who represents the DFO in Parliament traditionally hails from Newfoundland. Thus the interests of the Newfoundlanders (where most sealers are from) determine the policies of the DFO. This is one reason why the seal 'hunt' can continue despite disapproval by the majority of Canadians.

Another reason the killing continues is that sealers do not like to be told (mostly by foreigners) that they must stop this practice and that what they are doing is barbaric. In addition, some sealers have gone on record saying that they do this for amusement - that the income is not a significant motivator anymore.

SLIDE 14 Strategy to Stop the Slaughter: Canadian Seafood Boycott

Boycott launched in 2004 by Harpseals.org (in 2005 by HSUS)

The DFO has said that when the Canadian fishing industry demands that the seal 'hunt' end, and only then, the seal 'hunt' will stop.

The Canadian seafood boycott is the most direct way to target the sealers. They cannot sell the seal products in the U.S. (due to the U.S. Marine Mammal Protection Act*), but they do sell the seafood they catch here.

Since the boycott began, there has been a \$400 million decline in Canadian seafood sales to the U.S. (This is due to several factors, including normal price fluctuations, supply increases from other countries, the weak U.S. dollar, etc. in addition to the boycott.)

To put it into perspective:

Canadian population: 33 million

United States population: 295 million

(California: 36 million)

The U.S. is Canada's largest export market by far! As energy and transportation costs increase, we will become even more important to their economy. As the U.S. dollar continues to weaken, the boycott becomes a more annoying thorn in the side of the Canadian fishing industry – at a time when they are already having trouble exporting to the U.S. because of the decline of the U.S. dollar.

Seal pelts: \$16 million = less than ½ of 1% of the total seafood industry.

Additional boycotts that Harpseals.org and Sea Shepherd are promoting:

Canadian Tourism Boycott. 80% of the tourists visiting Canada come from the US.

2010 Winter Olympics (hosted by Canada)

*This is a good time to get the audience involved and ask them if they know why we can't buy seal fur or other marine mammal products in the United States. Answer: In 1972, Congress passed the Marine Mammal Protection Act. (However, there are some exceptions that allow indigenous tribal hunting of seals, walruses and whales in Alaska) . This may also be a good time to mention that the Canadian government has been looking into using free trade agreements to force the U.S. and other countries that have recently banned seal product imports to repeal these laws.

SLIDE 15 Europe Takes Action

Recent Good news from Europe.

Sept 2006- European Parliament (legislative branch of EU) passed a resolution to ban all harp & hooded seal products in the EU (27 countries).

Approved by 425 members of Parliament which was the largest number of members to ever approve a written declaration in the history of the European Parliament.

The next step was to have the European Commission (executive branch) implement and enforce the ban. However, the European Commission said they needed to study the before taking any further action. In the Spring of 2007, the Commission sent representatives to observe the seal 'hunt'. Further action is pending.

However, individual nations in Europe and elsewhere have taken unilateral steps towards banning seal imports. Belgium passed their own law banning imports of seal products, and the British government is applying heavy pressure on the European Commission to implement the ban. (opinion poll: 73% of British people support the ban) .

Besides Belgium---Italy, the Netherlands and the UK are also in the process of implementing their own bans.

More good news. The Council of Europe (46 member countries) also passed a resolution urging European nations to ban seal products in November, 2006.

SLIDE 16 Main Opposition Groups

Harpseals.org: The only organization focused entirely on this issue. Programs include direct outreach (distributing leaflets nationwide via volunteer network, tabling at festivals, farmers' markets, hosting benefit concerts, etc.), promoting the boycott via mass media (TV, radio, print, billboard advertising; publicity), organizing protests, giving presentations, bringing all opposition groups together, coordinating volunteer efforts including recruiting restaurants to the Canadian seafood boycott, developing programs to get kids involved in helping the seals.

Sea Shepherd: (www.seashepherd.org) : Direct action focus. Brings ships to the ice floes during the seal slaughter, to the open ocean to disrupt the Japanese whaling, to the Galapagos to protect wildlife from poachers, etc. Also promoting the Canadian seafood boycott via restaurant recruitment and the Seal of Approval Campaign.

HSUS (www.protectseals.org) : Promoting the Canadian seafood boycott via restaurant and store recruitment. Send observers to the ice floes during the slaughter to document/video tape it. European wing working with local European organizations to ban imports of all seal products.

Animal Alliance Canada (www.animalalliance.ca) : Promoting the Canadian seafood boycott via protests, web site, and restaurant recruitment. Campaigning in Canada to influence Canadians to actively seek an end to the slaughter.

IFAW (www.stopthesealhunt.ca): Authoring or sponsoring scientific papers on the seals and the seal slaughter. Sends observers to document the killing. Campaigning in Canada to influence Canadians to actively seek an end to the slaughter.

SLIDE 17 How You Can Help

Ask audience to sign up on the web site to receive Harpseals.org email newsletters .

For letter writing info/addresses and many ideas on how to help, advise people to go to the Harpseals.org website.

A few suggestions:

- Raise funds for ads for the seals by making and selling "seal rocks", organizing a benefit concert or talent show, organizing a tournament or carnival, etc... (We have an instructions on the kids4seals.org web site for making seal rocks.)
- Distribute leaflets at restaurants and stores
- Set up information tables at school and at events, farmers' markets, etc.
- Drive around in a Sealmobile
- Write an article for the school paper
- Do a show or get our PSA on the campus radio station (download the PSA's on the web site)
- Organize a demonstration
- Get the dining halls or cafeterias and neighborhood stores and restaurants to join the Canadian seafood boycott.
- Hang a banner outside your apartment or dorm.
- Talk to your friends and relatives about the seals, and encourage them to join the boycott.
- Wear Harpseals.org t-shirts, carry Harpseals.org bags, etc. – be your own billboard.
- Put info on Myspace, Facebook, etc. (including links to Harpseals.org).
- Spend some time reviewing the Harpseals.org website. All the information you'll need is there.

SLIDE 18 Take Action – Join Us! Conclusion, Q & A

Q & A Session

Note: A good question that is frequently asked: If we stop buying their seafood, won't the fishermen just kill more seals to make up for the loss?

No. The Newfoundland fishing industry is worth about CAN\$1 billion. If they killed one million seals, they would get between CAN\$50 and CAN\$100 million. They can't make up the difference. Moreover, we are boycotting the ENTIRE Canadian seafood industry, so the fishermen in other areas of Canada don't have the option of killing more seals. These fishermen are part of the problem since they either explicitly support the seal slaughter or remain silent, tacitly approving it. When the fishing unions and the fishing industry lose more income than they can bear, they will be forced to vigorously push for an end to the slaughter, for which most Canadian fishermen receive no benefit.

(note: in the recent past, Canadian government officials have said they will stop the seal hunt only when the fishing industry tells them to do so) Thank audience and hosts.

