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Canada's Seal Hunt: Paying the Price 000



January 27, 2006

Since March 2005—when The HSUS witnessed the killing of thousands of baby seals in Canada's annual hunt—ProtectSeals has advocated for a **boycott** of

Canadian seafood until the seal hunt ends for good. More than two-thirds of Canadian seafood is exported to the United States, producing \$2.8 billion a year for the Canadian economy, and giving U.S. consumers powerful leverage for opposing the hunt.

According to recent analysis, the 11-month boycott is working: every day that the Canadian government supports the seal hunt adds to a growing economic burden on the Canadian people and the fisheries industry. That burden has recently been complicated by **Greenland's announcement** in January that it will no longer import Canadian seal products. The new policy, prompted by HSUS **footage** of the 2005 seal hunt, could cut into the international demand for seal products as much as 20%.

In addition, more than 400 **restaurants** and **companies** have joined our seafood boycott. Seal partisans include celebrity chefs, hot dining spots, nationally respected corporations. They are joined by nearly 280,000 individuals who have also **pledged** to reduce or end their Canadian seafood purchases.

According to the latest Canadian trade reports, **Canadian snow crab exports to the United States have plummeted by more than \$160 million—nearly 10 times the value that the seal hunt brings to the Canadian economy. The decline represents a 34% drop in the value of exports since the seafood boycott began.** Furthermore, the total export value of Canadian snow crabs to the United States has dropped by three times as much as the value of exports to the rest of the world, **reason to believe that the ProtectSeals boycott is having an impact on U.S. purchases.**

Though the Canadian government denies any direct impact on its fisheries industry, in the months since ProtectSeals announced the boycott, major seafood companies in Eastern Canada (the location of the seal hunt) have found themselves in serious financial trouble.

Nova Scotia's Glace Bay Fisheries shut down, reporting a disastrous year for its crab sales. Seafood.com, an industry trade publication, reported that major seafood marketer High Liner Foods Inc. is suffering from a trend of sinking profits while Clearwater, Canada's largest seafood company, has said it will need to "battle back from a 'perfect storm' of setbacks." Meanwhile, Fisheries Products International, Newfoundland's largest fishing company, is losing so much money that it is considering selling off almost all of its fishing rights.

The Canadian seafood industry is joined by another key Canadian industry reporting setbacks in 2005. According to the Tourism Industry Association of Canada, U.S. tourist visits to Canada are also in a steep slump. The HSUS has repeatedly asked Americans to think twice about traveling to Canada until the slaughter is ended for good.

While other factors have certainly joined the ProtectSeals boycott in putting the squeeze on at least two major sectors of the Canadian economy, ending the seal hunt may be the Canadian government's easiest way to navigate the economy out of dire straits.

"It is unfortunate that Canadian citizens, most of whom oppose the commercial seal hunt, must suffer the economic consequences of the government's refusal to end the hunt. We can only ask how much longer the Canadian government is willing to pay the price for an annual hunt that brings in so little money to so few fishermen, while causing the hideous suffering of so many innocent seals," said ProtectSeals Campaign Director Pat Ragan.



Watch the Video  

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2007 Seal Hunt



Sign the pledge to save seals! 