

Key Messages and Facts on Canada's Sealing Industry

The Seal Harvest is Humane and Well-Managed

1. Research on the sealing industry by independent veterinary experts has concluded that seals are harvested in a humane manner.
2. The seal harvest is closely monitored and regulated by the Government of Canada. Fisheries officers conduct surveillance using aircraft, boats, and inspections on wharves and in the plants.
3. Seals are harvested humanely according to a strict three-step process, developed by veterinarians. Sealers have been trained in this process.



Anti-sealing Groups Present Misinformation

4. Anti-sealing campaigns are filled with misinformation on the industry harvest. They display a lack of understanding about good ecosystem management, the industry's economic importance, and the cultural realities of the industry. For example, they still show whitecoat seals in their distribution materials. In fact, whitecoats haven't been harvested in decades.

Seal Population is Healthy and Growing

5. The seal population is very healthy and growing. It is not in danger of extinction. The harp seal population has increased dramatically in the last two decades. Scientists estimate it to be approximately eight million animals. Based on this population size, the Canadian sealing industry is sustainable and very conservation-minded.
6. Scientists, such as those who worked with the Fisheries Resource Conservation Council of Canada, have stated that the seal population has been a major contributor to the lack of recovery of groundfish stocks. Harp seals alone consume more than 12 million tonnes of fish, equivalent to more than 10 percent of the world's wild harvest.

The Sealing Industry is Important to Coastal Canadians

7. Seals are a significant source of income for thousands of families in coastal communities in eastern and northern Canada. For example, sealers have stated that their income from sealing can represent from 25-35 percent of their total income.
8. While it varies from year to year, the sealing industry has been worth over \$55 million per year to the Newfoundland and Labrador economy.
9. Seal oil is a new commercial product. Rich in Omega-3 acids, it is helpful in preventing and treating high blood pressure, diabetes, arthritis and many other health problems. Recent scientific research has shown success in the use of seal heart valves as replacements for defective human heart valves.
10. Canada, with the support of provinces and territories, Inuit organizations, and the sealing industry, has taken action against the European Union (EU) through the World Trade Organization process to have the EU seal product ban declared an illegal trade barrier. The EU's own legal analysis supports this position.