

Alternatives to hunting seals explored

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ers have stated that income derived from sealing can represent from 25-35 per cent of their total annual income. However, those opposed to the hunt tell us that sealing is an off-season pursuit accounting for a fraction of the sealer's income with the bulk made up from commercial fisheries, an opinion shared by Canada's Green Party.

A strong voice for the opposition has been US Senator Carl Levin. In 2003, Senator Levin introduced Senate Resolution 269 for which he commissioned an economic review of the hunt, completed by an economics professor at the University of Guelph. The results of this survey showed that the hunt provided only 100 to 150 full-time jobs per year at a cost of nearly \$30,000 each to Canadian tax payers.

Is The Seal Hunt Humane?

The DFO insists that its strict regulation and enforcement of the Marine Mammal Regulations results in a humane hunt. It also prohibits the hunting of whitecoats and blue-

backs.

The DFO supports its claims by referring to an independent veterinarians' report published in the Canadian Veterinary Journal. The report concluded that the large majority of seals taken during the seal hunt (98 per cent) were killed in an acceptably humane manner. However, it fails to address the concerns of a second independent veterinary report. This report stated that the commercial seal hunt resulted in considerable and unacceptable suffering. From its examination of seal skulls it found insufficient cranial damage at time of death, concluding that an estimated 40 per cent of seals were skinned while still conscious.

It should also be noted that a seal pup ceases to be a whitecoat as soon as it begins to molt. As this may begin as early as twelve days, animal welfare organisations point out that the majority of seals culled (95 per cent) are under three months of age.

Is There An Alternative?

Tourism already represents 2 per cent of Newfoundland and Labrador's Gross Domestic Product and

according to the regional government web site, the national economic forecasts show Newfoundland and Labrador leading the country in overall growth in 2006. (In comparison, the seal hunt represents less than 0.5 per cent) An obvious alternative to sealing is the growing area of ecotourism. Seal watching has already gained popularity in Nova Scotia and could provide an alternative means of utilising this resource. A comparison may be drawn between the sealing and whaling industries. In 1972, Canada outlawed whaling and introduced a license retirement programme to compensate whalers for any loss of income. Since then, the area of whale watching has grown in popularity and according to the HSUS, is currently worth more than the seal hunt.

The SSCS claims to have successfully found yet another economic alternative. Seal fur brushed off molting juveniles is highly-prized in Europe where it is used as filler for bed comforters and sleeping bags. SSCS was granted a permit from the Canadian government to brush as many as 8000 young seals. Brushing 30 seals produces a kilogram of fine fur, worth \$30.

Where Do We Go From Here?

The recent five year Atlantic Seal Management Plan announced by the Honourable Loyola Hearn, includes several points addressing the concerns of environmentalists and animal welfare organisations: Outside influences to be taken into consideration when deciding on management quotas; Efforts to decrease the numbers of 'struck and lost' seals; Stricter regulation and enforcement; An Independent Veterinarians' Working Group on the Canadian Harp Seal Hunt formed in 2005, with a view to reviewing the hunt and improving animal welfare.

However, these improvements are unlikely to satisfy those opposed to the hunt. In reality, observers report little evidence of regulation and can produce video evidence to support their claims that the hunt is inherently cruel and inhumane. This year's seal hunt commenced on the 25th March. Rebecca Aldworth, observer for the HSUS, is keeping a daily journal of her experiences (accessed on the HSUS web site).

In conclusion, the seal hunt argument leaves many questions unanswered.

Should Canada continue a practice that it considers part of its heritage, despite international disapproval?

Moreover, should it continue a practice that could ultimately cost the economy millions by seriously jeopardising one of its largest industries?

Why ignore the lucrative alternatives to the seal cull?

The war of words could continue indefinitely. Ultimately, the final word on the future of the seal hunt rests with the Canadian government and hence, indirectly with Canadian citizens. Perhaps it is time for us to decide according to our principals whether we should continue to condone the hunt.

Heal the world

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and saw pictures of them, and would say "that is too sad, there should be something we could do," without actually doing something. "Watching those starving children, I felt sad...but that's about all I did," says Wallace.

Wallace says the famine gives her a concrete way to actually help people in developing countries.

According to the World Vision website, an international aid organization, many African and Asian women walk up to six kilometers to collect water each day.

At least 36 per cent of children in the least-developed countries are underweight, while 33 per cent of children in Canada are overweight. North Americans spend \$18 billion on foreign aid each year, while they purchase fast food worth \$100 billion annually. North Americans even spend \$25 billion on pet food.

Wallace says, "we don't have to feel guilty for having all the things we have in our country, but the thing is we have to use what we have to help others."

Alan Lensink, the organizer of the famine, says there were two meaningful elements in his experience with the famine. He was overwhelmed by people's generosity; every participant was willing to contribute to a good cause.

"I wasn't overwhelmed with hunger, but it did make me really stop and think about how mindless I usually am when it comes to food," says Lensink, "[the famine] made me appreciate simple things like eating and cleanliness during the famine and after it was over."

According to Lensink, when people are living in a wealthy nation, such as Canada, it's easy to forget about what they are consuming and what poor countries are undergoing.

After doing the famine, Lensink says he doesn't feel much differently about poor children, but more motivated to connect with the community and other people in order to help them.

"I feel I should do a famine once a month just to keep reminding myself continuously that there are many people who always have to think about how they are going to get the next meal... For us, there is always food," Lensink says. "Doing a famine is a good way to take some time to stop and think about what I am needing and what I am consuming."

He also says one important thing that every individual can do to help poor nations, is to "think globally and act locally."

"The premise of that is to think how large the world is and how deep the problems are throughout the world, but to recognize that you are one person in a community...so when you start working for change, you have to start working in your own community," says Lensink.

He says most people are aware of the issue in the world, but they get blown away by how bad the problems are.

"A person might say 'I'm just one person, I am giving up' or 'I'll maybe help out when I know what will make a difference,'" says Lensink, "but when you commit to thinking locally, there is really no excuse not helping out because you are only committed to doing something within your own community."

Neville expulsions

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If the houses in question can show Res Life that they can be responsible for the next year, everything will be back to normal.

Sean Perry is the incoming President of Neville House, and had this to say:

"I respect the old house committee, but I also want to dispel the

myth that Neville house is dead. Next year will be a fresh start, with an energized house committee eager to restore the image that is Neville."

John Craighead also has faith in Neville house and doesn't appear to be dismayed at any individual – after all, everyone makes mistakes. "They seem to be starting on a positive note. I had a chance to sit down and chat with some of the guys, and they were very hospitable."

A prof worth a profile: Ted McDonald

by Lauren Kennedy

Ted McDonald, an associate professor of Economics at the University of New Brunswick Fredericton, feels that being a part of helping students to learn is very important.

"As long as they are trying I am trying too. When they do well I do well," he said.

Originally from Nova Scotia, he has been a part of UNBF for five years now and before that taught for five years at the University of Tasmania in Australia while doing graduate research there as well.

Originally from Nova Scotia, McDonald, his wife and two children decided that it was time to move back closer to family so they moved back to the Maritimes to be closer with them.

"We wanted to be close to them,

but not too close so we decided that Fredericton was a good compromise. It took a bit of getting used to but we really like the place now," he said.

Teaching here has taught him a lot. He realized that there is no specific style to teaching and that it just comes to a person.

"I really enjoy when students show that they are understanding what's happening and that makes me feel like I'm doing my job right," he said. "Whether it takes extra office hours or numerous examples, I'm always willing to help a student in need."

McDonald has heard good things and positive feedback from one course he teaches titled Strategic thinking where the course is made up of half lectures and half games to play with a goal of helping students learn and challenging them to use their brains.

"This is the first time this course has been offered and I heard from

a lot of students that they absolutely loved game day," he said.

Despite his enormous passion for teaching and helping students, McDonald says if someone were to walk by his office they would hear some pretty hard mental music blaring.

"I must admit, I was told that I listen to terrible music by students and faculty," he laughs. "Really hard alternative, trashy music that I'm not allowed listening to

in the car, because of the children. But when I'm in my office I don't bother to use headphones."

In spite of his self-proclaimed horrible taste in music, McDonald sees methods of teaching heading into a new light.

"We are moving toward an innovative teaching way of life. The pressure is on us (as professors) to become more innovative and give students a reason to come to out to our courses."

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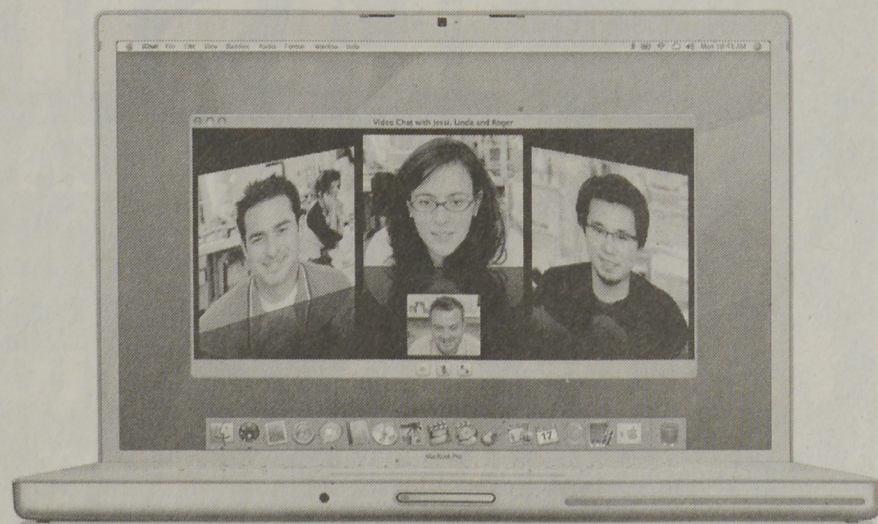
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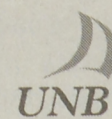
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