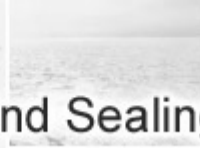




FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE MANAGEMENT



Seals and Sealing in Canada

Socio-economic impact of the Atlantic Coast seal hunt

General information on the seal hunt:

- Seals are a valuable natural resource that, when harvested sustainably, provides valuable income to many Canadian sealers and their families. In 2005, The average price per pelt received by sealers was approximately \$52, an 18% increase over the 2004 average value.
- Sealing and fishing are time-honored traditions that allow people to provide for their families through knowledge of the marine environment and hard work.

The seal hunt is profitable:

- Seal landings are relatively small in comparison with shellfish landing, but are a significant source of income for many individual fishers and their families.
- The 2005 seal hunt was one of the most profitable in memory. Given extremely favourable market conditions, the landed value of the harp seal hunt exceeded \$16.5 million. The average price per pelt received by sealers was approximately \$52, an 18% increase over the 2004 average value. In Newfoundland, harp seals ranked 5th in total landed value among all species harvested in 2004, after snow crab, shrimp, lobster, and cod.
- Most industries represent just a small portion of total provincial Gross Domestic Product (GDP), but still contribute significantly to jobs and the overall economy. Within Newfoundland and Labrador, agriculture, fisheries, forestry and hunting combined account for just 2.6% of total GDP.

The seal hunt is an important source of income:

- The value of the seal hunt may appear negligible to affluent Americans and Europeans, but it is tremendously valuable to those individuals who use it as their employment during a time when economic opportunities are limited in many remote, coastal communities.
- Some sealers have stated that their income from sealing can represent from 25-35 per cent of their total annual income.
- The top homeports for sealers have unemployment rates that are in excess of 30 per cent higher than the national average.
- Estimates from DFO and the province of Newfoundland find that between 5,000 and 6,000 individuals derive some income from sealing. This is approximately 1% of the total provincial population, and 2% of the labour force. This is, in fact, a substantial number of individuals.

- In 1983, the European Economic Community banned the importation of whitecoats and bluebacks. The demand for seal pelts declined resulting in a dramatic decrease in price. In Labrador alone, the lost sealing revenue reduced total Inuit income by one-third.

Seal products:

- All seal pelts undergo some processing within Canada, creating employment opportunities in plants. Pre-tanning procedures may include soaking, drying and shaving. Between six and eight facilities have participated in seal processing in recent years, four of which are in Newfoundland and the remainder in Quebec.
- Seal oil, once extracted, is marketed in capsule form which is rich in Omega-3 acids. The fatty acids are known to be helpful in preventing and treating hypertension, diabetes, arthritis and many other health problems.
- The Government of Canada encourages the fullest possible commercial use of seals with the emphasis on leather, oil, handicrafts, and in recent years, meat for human and animal consumption.

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