

DON'T LET CANADA, NORWAY, AND THE WTO STOP THE EUROPEAN UNION'S SEAL PRODUCTS BAN!



Canada's Seal Hunt: A Tradition of Cruelty

With its annual seal hunt, Canada is responsible for the largest mass slaughter of marine mammals in the world. In 2009, 72,000 baby seals were killed. Beginning at 12 days of age, the seals are clubbed (often with illegal weapons), hooked in the eye, cheek, or mouth to avoid damaging the fur, and are at times skinned alive because of the carelessness of the hunter. In some areas, seals are shot. For every seal landed, another is shot and lost under the ice. Canada's annual,



government-subsidized slaughter seeks to profit from the misery of seals by exporting fur for fashion, seal oil, seal meat, and seal penis bones (sold as an aphrodisiac in China.)

An Ecological Disaster The seal hunt is not only cruel; it's also ecologically devastating, threatening the survival of the harp seal as a species. The hunt has reduced seal populations on the east coast of Canada from approximately 30 million down to just over 5 million. This number is expected to drop even further if the hunt continues. Annual kill quotas set by the Canadian government are condemned as unsustainable by scientists and environmentalists. Moreover, the quotas are ignored. In 2002 sealers killed 75,000 more seals than were allowed by the quota!

Global warming is also taking a heavy toll on seal populations, as the ice floes where seals give birth are disappearing. According to Sheryl Fink of the International Fund for Animal Welfare, "if the ice isn't there when the mother seals are ready to give birth, they are forced to abort the pups in the water. They drown instantly. If there is ice but not as solid as necessary, so that it doesn't hold out for the entire nursing period...(the pups) will fall into the water and drown." Seal populations cannot survive the combined impact of seal hunting and global warming – Eastern Canada's seals species will go extinct if the hunt is not ended.

As ocean predators, seals play a vital ecological role, regulating the population balance of the fish they eat. As seal populations decline, populations of the fish they eat increase, and those fish in turn over consume their own prey, destabilizing a delicate ecosystem. Further, recent evidence suggests that killing seals contributes to bacterial infestation on the ocean floor which leads to hypoxia, a condition in which patches of ocean lose all the dissolved oxygen and are unable to sustain cod or fish or marine life of any kind.

Norway's Seal Hunt: Torture as Tourism

While smaller in scale than the Canadian hunt, the Norwegian seal hunt, which runs from January to September, has taken to generating additional revenue by a particularly repugnant means – marketing seal hunting as a tourism attraction. In 2009, 8,035 harp seals were killed. Norway is also a major player in the Canadian hunt. A government-subsidized Norwegian company, purchases, processes, and reexports close to 80% of the skins taken in the Canadian hunt.

European Union: Taking Action for Compassion

The European Union placed an import ban on all Canadian seal products with the intention of finally ending the inhumane yearly hunt, which it considers "inherently inhumane." The ban will prohibit the sale of seal skin, meat, oil blubber, organs and seal oil. Canada exported roughly \$2.5 million worth of seal products to European countries in 2008. If Canada is unable to stop the ban it will take effect this year, and will eliminate roughly 15 percent of the average annual market for Canadian seal products.

After the European Parliament's decision, Canada quickly announced that it will challenge the ban at the WTO if Canada is not exempted. Trade Minister Stockwell Day states that "if one country wants to ban the products of another, it has to have clear scientific, medically acceptable reasons for doing so."

The WTO: Trading Away Animals' Lives

According to Our World is Not for Sale:

The World Trade Organization was established in 1995. It includes 153 countries and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. The WTO has been used to push an expansive array of policies on trade, investment and deregulation that exacerbate the inequality between the North and the South, and among the rich and poor within countries. The WTO enforces some twenty different trade agreements, including the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) and Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).

The WTO is inherently undemocratic. Its trade tribunals, working behind closed doors, have ruled against a stunning array of national health and safety, labor, human rights and environmental laws, which have been directly challenged as trade barriers by governments acting on behalf of their corporate clients. National policies and laws found to violate WTO rules must be eliminated or changed or else the violating country faces perpetual trade sanctions that can be in the millions of dollars. Since the WTO's inception in 1995, the vast majority of rulings in trade disputes between member nations have favored powerful industrialized countries. Consequently, many countries, particularly developing countries, feel enormous pressure to weaken their public interest policies whenever a WTO challenge is threatened in order to avoid costly sanction.

The WTO has consistently ruled on the side of animal exploiters, treating efforts to protect animals as merely barriers to trade in need of elimination. In the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean, some schools of yellowfin tuna associate with dolphins. Commercial fishing operations, including the Mexican fishing fleet, have consequently found that setting nets on dolphins to catch the tuna swimming underneath is a lucrative technique for tuna fishing, despite the fact the practice is extremely injurious to dolphins. In the past 40 years this practice led to the deaths of over 7 million dolphins. In 1984, the US banned dolphin-unsafe tuna under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, but in 1995 Mexico threatened a WTO if the US failed to water down the Marine Mammal Protection Act's protection of dolphins. At the request of President Clinton, Congress agreed to comply.

The shrimp fishing industry catches sea turtles in purse seine nets, where they drown, and pushes their species to the brink of extinction. New nets were devised that allowed the turtles to escape if entangled, and the US refused to import shrimp from any country not using "turtle exclusion devices." But upon complaints from 4 nations in 1996, a WTO dispute panel found this policy to be in violation of free trade rules.

Canada, Norway +WTO: A Deadly Combination for Animals

In 1995, the EU passed legislation against the vicious steel jaw leghold trap and banned the importation of wild fur from nations where the legal trap was still legal - including the US, Russia, and Canada. In response, Canada, with US support, threatened a WTO challenge to the ban., Unfortunately, the EU backed down and leghold traps continue to be used in Canada and the US. Canada, backed by Norway, hopes for the same results with its challenge to the seal products ban. Shockingly, the Canadian government has refused to join the United States and Europe in banning dog and cat fur, out of concerns that this would weaken Canada's case in it's claim to the WTO that the seal product ban violates Canada's free trade rights.

Canada Attempts to Promote Cruelty at the 2010 Winter Games

On May 6th, 2009, one day after Europe passed its seal product ban, the Canadian Parliament's House of Commons unanimously passed a retaliatory resolution to promote seal products at the Vancouver Olympics by making sealskin part of the official uniform for Canada's Olympic team. The Canadian Olympic committee rejected the resolution on the grounds that the Olympic charter prevents athletes from making political statements at the Games.



People for the Ethical Treatment of
Animals parodies Canada's
attempts to promote the seal hunt
through the Vancouver Olympics.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:



Ask your Senators and your House Representative to introduce a privileged resolution in 2010 to force the full Senate or House to vote up or down on whether to get the US. out of the WTO. And ask them to vote to pull out. Without US participation, the WTO would collapse and would no longer be able to undermine animal and environmental laws. You can find your legislator's contact info at <http://snipurl.com/LegLookup> or by calling GJAE at (718) 880-7979.



Volunteer or intern with Global Justice for Animals and the Environment. We need your help to campaign against trade policies that harm animals and the planet! Learn more about volunteer opportunities at <http://freetradekillsanimals.org/?page=VolIntern> or by calling our office at (718) 880-7979.



Donate money or supplies to Global Justice for Animals. Mail to the address below, make checks out to "Wetlands" and write "GJAE" in the note You can also donate online at <http://www.freetradekillsanimals.org/?page=Donation>.



Contact the Canadian Prime Minister. Stephen Harper, Stockwell Day, Canada's International Trade Minister, and Gail Shea, Canada's Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, to let them know that you will boycott Canada tourism until the commercial seal hunt is ended for good. Also let them know that you will boycott Canadian maple syrup and seafood products. (Learn what to boycott at <http://snipurl.com/seafoodboycott>.)

- Prime Minister, The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Office of the Prime Minister, 80 Wellington Street, Ottawa K1A 0A2
Phone: (613) 992-4211 Fax: 613-941-6900 Email: pm@pm.gc.ca
- The Honourable Stockwell Day, House of Commons, Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6 Phone: 613.995.1702 Fax: 613.995.1154
Email: DayS@parl.gc.ca
- The Honorable Gail Shea, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6 Telephone: 613.992.9223, Fax: 613.992.1974
Email: SheaG@parl.gc.ca



Tell Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg that you will boycott Norwegian seafood and tourism until Norway bans seal hunting and drops its WTO challenge to the EU's seal product ban. Write to: Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg, Prime Ministers Office, Akersgt. 42, P.O. Box 8001 Dep, 0030 Oslo, Norway. Phone: 011 47 22 24 40 00 or 011 47 22 24 90 90
Fax: +47 22 24 95 00



Write to the Vancouver Olympic Organizing Committee and demand that it help end the seal slaughter. Use this webform: <http://snipurl.com/olympicsboycott>.



Use this webform to tell Canada's leaders you'll be boycotting their maple syrup: <http://snipurl.com/BoycottSyrup>, and ask restaurants to fill out this pledge form (<http://snipurl.com/pledgesyrup>) committing to not use it.



Red Lobster is believed to be the largest importer of Canadian seafood. Write to Red Lobster and tell them that you will boycott their restaurants until they stop selling Canadian seafood. Darden Group, 5900 Lake Ellenor Drive Orlando, FL 32809
Telephone: 1.800.562.7837 Web contact form: <http://www.redlobster.com/contactus.asp> (Global Justice for Animals and the Environment also encourages you to stop eating animals altogether, but even vegetarians should write this letter!)