

Good day.

Bob Hardy a Fisheries Consultant quoted, and I believe him.

Canada's population of harbor, grey, bearded, hooded, ring, and harp seals eat between 1.5 to 6.4 kilograms of mixed fish per day, according to estimates by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). The grand total estimated by Hardy, when accounting for Canada's nearly 12 million seal population, is 13,887,974 metric tonnes of fish eaten per year. Dollars-wise, that racks up to around a \$26,901,002,270 loss to harvesters and \$53,802,004,540 to processors. End of Quote.

This is a great loss financially to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the biggest financially lost is to the fish harvesters in Newfoundland and Labrador and Atlantic Canada. This abundance of seals is responsible for keeping us in a cod, salmon, and groundfish moratorium and causing more moratoriums on fish stocks for 31 years.

In my opinion, some people and our Canadian Government should be held accountable for causing this loss by not managing the seal herds and keeping them to a minimum level, Fish harvesters and sealers should be compensated for "extreme emotional distress" in loss of income and sealers been called barbarians, protesters calling sealers and their families in the middle of the night going to skin their children alive. Saying things like, "I will come to your door and I will kill you." PERSONALLY, this has happened to my family. The police knew all about it yet they didn't stop the harassment until a family member went to them. The school was locked down after. This all happened because the Canadian Government gave permits to observe the hunt to animal rights people that sent pictures of the seal hunt all over the world.

Seals have caused an ecological and marine disaster, fish harvesters in NL. have been in a salmon and groundfish, cod moratorium for thirty-one years with no end in sight, fish species can't recover to a healthy level when this much pressure from seals is directed on them and their food supply.

In my opinion, the sealing industry in Canada will never be like it was in the past, with many parasite conservation and animal rights feeding off it. Too many people have been radicalized by propaganda from these groups. The word seal now is like a bad word. All the bad press all the bad names sealers got in Newfoundland and Labrador started from our own Canadian government by giving permits to view the seal hunt from just a few feet away from sealers. I know I was there. Was this intentional or was it just stupidity? Whatever it was it ended the seal hunt as we knew it. No Canada abattoir or meat processing plant would allow people to come and take videos or pictures unless they want to go out of business.

For the Canadian government to give out permits to view an open-air abattoir, white ice, red blood, and people with cameras sending these pictures of animals dying all over the world what were they thinking, not only that DFO put in a regulation in one of seven pages that a seal had to hit on the head three times with one of the most gruesome weapons on earth the hack a

pick to make sure the brain was crushed this made great pictures for animal rights. It didn't matter if the seal was dead a sealer still had to do this or end up in court. Usually from doctored videos sent to DFO. Now we have six species of seals eating millions of tons of commercial fish. We have anywhere from 10 to 12 million seals with a TAC of 400 thousand seals to harvest, we just as well make it a million because we will never harvest that many because of poor markets. Only 40 thousand are harvested these years for a few small markets and food.

Some people in DFO and the senate over-regulated the seal hunt from advice from animal rights groups.. DFO in my opinion harassed sealers by flying over their sealing boats driving seals off the ice. Ice breakers with DFO officers stopping your hunt by doing inspections during the best part of the day for hunting. If small boat sealers got in trouble hunting seals in the ice floes the Captains were ordered to take the sealers aboard the icebreakers but leave their boat and engines, the same boat they used for making a living fishing.

Canada doesn't want a seal hunt you can kiss a seal to death it makes no difference, the damage is done. If your playing the sealing game and the Canadian government and external affairs are not on your side. "Game Over."

If you really want to know what our Seal hunt was like and the truth about the seal hunt read my two books. They are on Amazon .ca "Leaving for the seal hunt" and "Newfoundland's sealing culture in Pictures and Stories" I didn't write these books to make money I make less than two dollars royalty per book. I wrote these books, to tell the truth about sealing and the hardships our people went through. Thanks to the seal many Newfoundlanders and Labradoreans did not starve to death. We have a very strong seal culture in this province of NL. and I love a meal of Harp and Hooded seal plus my warm seal hat and mitts.

I will make one recommendation to get our seal harvest back on track. South Korea is getting out of the dog trade or using dogs as food, we could supply them with seal meat. Other markets in Asia could be found for our seal meat which is a very healthy food. Also, seal meat could be made into a protean powered for the starving and the oil into omega three capsules for health reasons.

Also when an animal becomes a threat to human food and the environment most countries put a bounty on that animal. I am making a suggestion that the Canadian government put a bounty on a seal of 30 dollars to make it worthwhile to go hunt the seal commercially. Sealers would cut the tail off the seal, freeze it or brine it, and bring it into DFO offices for the rebate, DFO could then sell them to a tannery for processing and then used in the craft industries.

. This can only happen if the Canadian Government is on side.

I will tell you just ONE story of many encounters I had with DFO out in the ice flows. In my opinion, many decision-makers and policymakers within DFO are against the seal hunt.

In one of my published sealing books, I tell a story of the Icebreaker Edmundsen:

“Leaving for the seal hunt” by John Gillett, Flanker Press Publisher 2015

On April 15, we hunted all day and got 153 seals, and tied on an ice pan for the night. The next day it was blowing a gale and raining, very poor for hunting, so we tied on an ice pan for the day. Sometime in the afternoon, we were boarded by four fishery officers from the Coast Guard ship Amundsen. They clambered over the rail of my 34-foot boat like monkeys, with their nine-millimeter sidearms sticking off their sides, without asking permission to come aboard. They would have come aboard anyway, with or without permission, but at least they could have been courteous. I didn't mind them coming aboard, as it was their job, but it was a bit intimidating to see their sidearms. I guess that was the idea. The Amundsen

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I had a friend who, years earlier, was a fishery officer before they took to wearing guns. Then, suddenly, he was required to wear them. He didn't like that at all, but there were others who couldn't wait to get the big irons on their hips. One of the French officers asked me where my weapons were, and I thought to myself, Weapons aren't what guns are called in the seal hunt. “Our guns are up in the doghouse, on the top house,” I told him, and he ordered the officers to check them out. Then he wanted to see the ammunition we were using, and I showed that to him.

In our conversation, I learned his purpose for being out there. He told me that they were under contract from the The University of New Brunswick to clean up the Newfoundland seal fishery. I thought That shouldn't take long. There were approximately eighteen sealing boats that had hailed out. Before I signed the inspection slip, he asked the officers on deck if everything was okay, and they said that one of my hack-a-picks was too long by a quarter of an inch. The senior officer said, “Oh! We will have to confiscate that.”

I told him that, under the regulations, we were supposed to have a hack-a-pick for each sealer, and if they took it I would be in violation. “Okay,” he said, “you can cut it off.”

I thought he was talking about the handle, but it was the

spike that was too long. So Glenn and Chris got the small generator and grinder going and cut off the spike where they had marked it. The piece that fell on the deck was like a fingernail clipping. Satisfied with the inspection, off they went to the Amundsen and it got underway with a big puff of black smoke. One of the boys said they had burnt more fuel getting underway than we would all spring sealing. We all laughed at that.

Thank you for listening and reading my submission to the Standing Committee on Seals and Sealing. 2023

John Gillett, Twillingate, NL. Inshore Fisherman and Sealer.