

SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF CANADIANS UNAWARE THAT COMMERCIAL SEAL HUNT CONTINUES

**WHEN INFORMED OF DETAILS, 85% WANT PROTECTION FOR ALL SEALS UNDER
ONE YEAR OF AGE AND 75% WANT GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES TO CEASE.**

Over One Half of Canadians Call for Commercial Seal Hunting Shut Down.

The largest public opinion poll ever undertaken concerning Canadians' views on the commercial seal hunt was released today.

Commissioned by the International Fund for Animal Welfare (Canada), the Angus Reid Group study finds that a sizeable minority (41%) of Canadians does not even realize that the commercial seal hunt continues to take place in Atlantic Canada.

When presented with several details regarding the continuance and various aspects of the hunt, a majority of Canadians (55%) support closing the commercial seal hunt - eleven percent support closing the seal hunt completely, with another 44% advocating closure but allowing an exemption for hunting by aboriginals and others for personal or subsistence use.

Most significantly, 85 percent of respondents feel that all seals less than one year old should be protected from hunting, and 75 percent do not want the federal government to subsidize the hunt.

Interestingly, a majority of Newfoundlanders (54%) are opposed to government subsidization of the hunt.

The nation-wide telephone survey of 2,715 randomly selected Canadian adults was conducted between July 25th and July 30th, 1997. A sample size of 2,715 is said to have a margin of error of plus or minus 1.9 percentage points.

Overview of Key Findings

A significant number of Canadians unaware that seal hunt actually continues.

- Four in ten (41%) Canadians do not even realize that the commercial seal hunt continues to take place in Atlantic Canada. This is in contrast with six in ten (59%) who are aware that seals are currently being hunted on a commercial basis off of Canada's East Coast. The proportion of respondents who are unaware that the hunt continues ranges from a surprisingly high 30% in Newfoundland to 48% in Quebec and 47% in New Brunswick/Nova Scotia/PEI.

The survey also found that most Canadians have only sketchy knowledge of the specific details of the hunt. As a result, respondents were presented with a series of statements and asked for their opinion.