



## Fur Sales Reflect Culture Change: Cool Fashion In Cold Weather

Twenty years ago the fur industry was struggling to maintain the market for natural fur products, at a time when young people were reacting to animal rights and environmentalist claims that fur was not a desirable or moral choice for a fashion item. At the time, and through the 1980s and early 1990s, there were few role models in the public eye who promoted fur as a personal choice for both fashion and warmth.

The protest industry’s negative messages about the product, however, have not stood the test of time, and today the Fur Council of Canada reports that fur sales to young people are sky rocketing with no limits in sight. “Fur Prices Hit Record Levels...Cool New ‘Eco-Fashion’ Image Driving Demand for Furs” is the lead in a press release from the Fur Council of Canada (Montreal, November 16).

Reports from the jubilant world wide fur industry are that sales of real fur garments “topped US\$12.8 billion in 2005, an increase of 9% over the previous year – the fifth straight gain – with the 2006 season expected to extend the industry’s strong resurgence.”

The reasons for this trend are numerous. A wholly different attitude about fur has come into prevalence, coinciding with

the rising popularity of certain celebrities in the music and movie industries who perform while wearing new fur fashions. These new role models

claim to be promoting themselves as “eco-conscious” by wearing natural fur garments instead of the previously common “faux” furs –products produced from chemicals and petroleum based products.

Unlike the negative and dour messages formerly given by PETA, HSUS and other nay-sayers, the new messages promoting the use of fur are upbeat and positive, enhancing the image of fur wearers as supporters of the natural environment, and showcasing their economic ability to adorn themselves in style and with “eco-consciousness”. Both men and women now seek to adorn themselves in this manner, expanding the market through expanding demand from both genders.

The new furs are produced by young designers for young adults, and are a far cry from the straight-laced “old lady” image of an elderly person in a full-length mink coat. The new looks in furs are flexible and diverse design modes that complement young bodies clad in blue jeans, leather boots and accessories, and include vibrant colors and textures that never saw the light of day in the last generation. Not only farmed fox and mink, but wild furs, all from abundant species, now adorn the new generation of fur wearers.



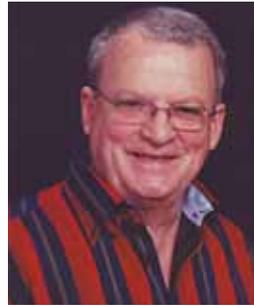
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# Thanksgiving is a Global Phenomenon

Editorial by Eugene Lapointe



**A**lthough Americans may believe that theirs is the “real” Thanksgiving holiday, the sentiment and the celebration are actually a universal human behavior. Many societies recognize their good fortune at the end of each growing season, and commemorate their harvest bounty with thanks to the All Mighty or to the earth for providing sustenance and plenty. In Europe, various celebrations are held in thanks for the bounty of the grape, and the wine is presented to everyone as a symbol of the earth’s riches. In many nations, the fall is the time to hunt the deer, the wild boar, the bear, hares, and game birds, because it is at this time of the year that all creatures are at their population height. A harvest of them by people will do no harm, and will add to food security during the coming months. In Japan, coastal peoples go to their temples and give thanks in prayer for the whales, a traditional food in coastal towns and villages. Similarly, northern communities give thanks for their fish harvests, and also for the fall take of whales to see them through the coming winter. In those places where fur bearing animals are hunted for their pelts, the meat is also used for food, because to waste it would be foolish. Canada’s native people know that some of the best food comes wrapped in the furs that will keep them warm for years to come. When nothing is wasted, that in itself is a form of respect and thanksgiving.

IWMC World Conservation Trust gives thanks for all the support we receive from our friends who know and practice the art of truly sustainable use of the world’s renewable resources. May we always remember that our harvests are a gift in return for our responsible stewardship and respect for the bounty that we receive from Nature. ■

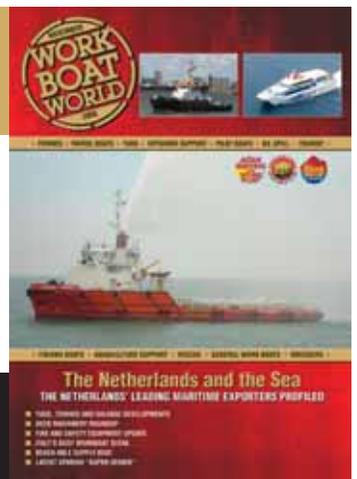
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The markets are not just the western world, but include Russia and China, whose people are more recently able and anxious to adorn themselves with the best garments for both cold weather and for cool fashion. This is culture change of a basic kind. It involves a change in the value system of a generation that has grown weary of being preached to by negative groups whose apparent motive is

control of everyday life decisions about personal comfort and style.

Fur is “in” and fur is “on” literally thousands of new wearers every year. The ultimate result is a healthier climate for the conservation of wildlife and a cool new world for the newest fur customers in the global community. ■

## California's Experiment Ignores Alternatives to Fishing Bans

The State of California has instituted a plan to place huge areas of coastal fishery off limits to all commercial fishing, starting in 2007. This plan is another “sanctuary” scheme that was devised from the top, rather than with consideration of serious input from coastal fishermen and their organizations, which appear to be at the bottom of the priority list of interested parties.

According to the Associated Press this is “the nation's most extensive network of ‘marine protected areas’ — stretches of ocean where fishing will be banned or severely restricted. The first chain of refuges, covering about 520 square kilometers and stretching from Santa Barbara to Half Moon Bay just south of San Francisco, is due to take effect early in 2007. The state plans similar protected zones along the more intensely fished coasts of northern and southern California.”

Fishermen and “environmentalists” are bitterly divided over such an arrangement. Fishermen claim their input was never taken seriously and that fishing on any level has been unnecessarily regulated out of existence.

Both commercial and recreational fishermen question the necessity of the move, because both state and federal regulations are already so restrictive that conservation is currently well served. In their opinion, this move is unjustified, because the areas affected are extremely productive fishing grounds, and show no signs of significant depletion. One of their arguments is that banning take in these areas will put undue pressure on fishing grounds outside the reserve, thus causing an effect detrimental to overall conservation of the resource.

IWMC President Eugene Lapointe said: “Sanctuaries may

be politically expedient at times but they are not proven regulatory techniques

that result in ecosystem benefit. Expanded efforts by state fisheries law enforcement and biological experts to oversee and expedite conformity with existing law and quotas would be more beneficial to conservation than a general ban on harvest in a very large area.”

Mr. Lapointe points out that such bans may lead to specific, unforeseen problems in the environment, because a sudden halt to harvest of certain species may quickly lead to an imbalance in the existing ecosystem. This in turn, may actually harm the ecosystem due to the fact that it has adapted to the presence of an already controlled harvest. In addition, the existing Marine Mammal Protection Act, in conjunction with a ban on fishing by people, may well encourage a sudden increase in sea otters and sea lions, voracious species that are already known for their own impact on the balance of life in fished areas.

Mr. Lapointe added: “We are reminded of the ecosystem havoc caused by the EU decision to ban the import of harp seal products, thus causing a drastic temporary decrease in the take of harp seals from the western Atlantic. This resulted in a five-fold harp seal population increase that is still wreaking havoc on the Atlantic fishery, causing distress for people, seals, fish, sea birds and whales ■



## Whalers Continue Despite Critics' Complaints

Norway announced that it has taken 546 minke whales so far this year from a population estimated at 143,000 in its commercial harvest of north Atlantic minke whales. The government set a limit of up to 1,052 animals but extremely rough seas prevented the hunters from filling that quota. The meat is consumed domestically, where it is a traditional food item. In past years, the blubber has been exported to the Faroes and to Iceland.

Iceland has so far taken seven of the nine fin whales it announced it will hunt between 2006 and fall 2007, out of a north Atlantic population of about 25,000. Iceland will also take a quota of 30 minke whales in that time period.

The IWC Scientific Committee agrees that fin and minke whales are safely abundant in the north Atlantic and the harvests by these two countries are expected to have no discernible impact on overall stocks. Both countries filed objections to the commercial moratorium and can legally hunt whales.

Japan has not yet resumed commercial hunting of any large cetaceans, although scientists have determined that stocks of a number of species around Japan and in the Antarctic

are abundant enough to sustain moderate levels of harvest. Japanese research on such stocks continues despite criticism from anti-use nations and NGOs.

Japanese scientists say such criticism is unwarranted and unjustifiably biased against their research, the goals of which are to assess whale stocks in each area studied and to determine the roles that cetaceans play in their diverse environments.

Japan announced that its research fleet will take 850 minke and 10 fin whales in the Antarctic during the coming research season, which is the Antarctic summer. There is also speculation that Japan may allow imports of fin whale products from Iceland in the near future. Both Iceland and Japan filed reservations under CITES when decisions were made against international trade in fin whale products so both countries may therefore do so legally ■



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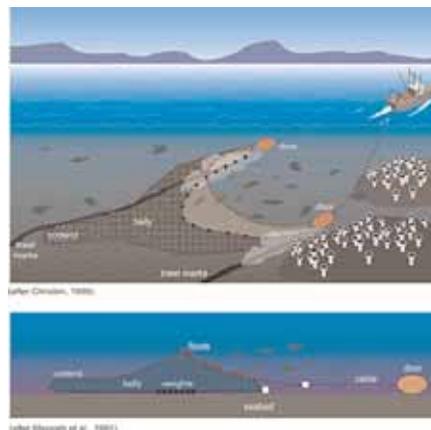
## Fisheries At Risk From Bottom Trawling Issue

The world's media has been busy reporting about the future of ocean life and the rate at which human beings appear to be causing stock depletions through unsustainable fishing. Much recent attention has been directed at the practice of bottom trawling, which is claimed to be causing irreversible damage to ocean floor habitats in some areas. Some trawling practices are said to destroy coral reefs, and to damage other bottom structures, both on coastal shelves and in international waters where no nation has sovereign jurisdiction. In addition to the bottom trawling concern, a major argument against fishing practices is the level of by-catch.

Both issues are portrayed as being unsustainable and negotiations about each range from attempts at total bans on equipment and practices, to the development of specific operational modifications.

The United Nations has devised a plan that would attempt to manage trawling activities in order to enhance the conservation of sea life. Greenpeace claims that the resulting UN resolution, due to be voted upon in early December, is so lax that it is not an effective conservation measure.

Nevertheless, it seems that science-based modifications of specific kinds of trawling technology may cause less damage to the ecosystem by reducing bottom habitat alteration and unsustainable by-catch. Unfortunately, there is at present no global oversight system that is capable of collecting sufficient data on high seas fishing activities.



Some have suggested that ports of entry for fish products could be the points at which control over technology may be exerted, so that fishing vessels with unacceptable gear could be denied dockage and market access. However, this is

also fraught with problems, as acceptable gear modifications may consist more of deployment techniques than of changes in the physical hardware.

Eugene Lapointe, President of IWMC World Conservation Trust, said: "The world's marine environments must be protected through a coordinated effort to develop, deploy and certify fishing technology that is compatible with the highest degree of conservation of our fisheries. This effort is crucial both for the world's food security and for the future health of our oceans."

Mr. Lapointe also suggested that it is in the economic interests of each fishing nation to cut down on habitat destruction and unsustainable by-catch, since these practices will cause any fishing enterprise to be less profitable, both now and in the future ■

## Do As I Say, Ignore What I Do

Two of the countries that have done the most to delay the introduction of the Revised Management Scheme (RMS) at the International Whaling Commission for nearly twenty years have criticized Iceland for undertaking commercial whaling... before a management system has been agreed.

Dr. Bill Hogarth, United States Commissioner, said: "We're extremely disappointed that Iceland has decided to resume commercial whaling in spite of the international ban and absent any agreed upon management system. Its actions undermine the proper functioning of the International

Whaling Commission."

Ben Bradshaw, United Kingdom Fisheries Minister said: "We believe that commercial whaling quotas determined and prosecuted in the absence of any agreed management system undermines the proper functioning of the International Whaling Commission."

Hypocrisy, it seems, knows no shame. ■

