

Sustainable eNews

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Editorial: Out of Canada

by Eugene Lapointe

Diversity of opinion, in combination with the freedom to express it, is always a good thing. Canadians have a wide diversity of opinion on many issues, among them, the war in Iraq, and the annual East Coast harp seal harvest. Rick Zemanek is an Advocate editor for the CP (Canadian) publication. He objects to a recent Parliamentary debate in the UK, in which speakers appear to have used the Canadian harp seal hunt as a device to deflect attention away from Britain's willingness to join the United States in the aggressive war in Iraq. At least, that's the interpretation of Zemanek, who notes that while the British Parliamentarians are busy abhorring the seal hunt, they are ignoring the cruel effects of war on Iraqi children and other civilians. This is a military operation that Canadians are not contributing to, although they have offered humanitarian aid.



There is more than one point to be made here. First of all, both a British Parliamentarian and this Canadian writer refer to the "clubbing of innocent baby seals" as an on-going reality for which, says the British Parliamentarian, "Canada should be ashamed". The British Parliamentarian, in his speech to the UK Parliament, declared that the seal hunt continues to damage Canada's reputation with the rest of the world. Such statements made it obvious that he, (and perhaps the Canadian writer as well), is ignorant of several facts. First, they both referred to the "clubbing of baby seals". Whitecoats are no longer clubbed and are no longer harvested.

In This Issue

Editorial : Out of Canada by Eugene Lapointe	Page 1	When Activism becomes Terrorism	Page 5
Arctic Good News	Page 2	A hunting we will go	Page 6
Out of Africa	Page 3	If the fur fits, wear it	Page 7
Window on Watson	Page 4	Subscriptions / Submissions	Page 8

Older seals that have developed the dark hairseal coarse coat, that swim and fish for themselves, are targeted by today's hunters who take them with a single head shot with a center fire rifle. These animals may or may not all be young of the year. They are not "babies" in any sense of the word, being completely independent of their dams. The propaganda of animal rights and environmentalist web sites and literature, however, continues to portray the seal hunt in the same manner as was popular among them twenty years ago. The undeserved credibility of these messages may derive from the bloodily explicit pictures that are still being used by campaigners to continue to raise their millions of dollars. These lies bring in blood money, pure and simple. Those who believe this false information need to better inform themselves about reality.

The Canadian writer deplores the British decision to join the United States in pursuing a war which he believes is unjustified, because no weapons of mass destruction have been found. He deplores the British's gushy concern for baby seals while ignoring the war deaths, injuries, and terror of innocent Iraqis. Again, many facts are available for our consideration, and war is always hell. Not all the reports we receive from "news" sources are true, and truth is sometimes masked through lack of information released. No one

likes this war. Its justification shall probably always be debated.

Not all Canadians agree that the US and UK should ever have invaded Iraq. Most Canadians on the East Coast are more than annoyed at the UK Parliamentarians who signed a resolution condemning the seal hunt, something the fishermen depend upon in these days of fish scarcity. Seals are so over abundant that they are overflowing the marine ecosystem of eastern Canada. They are eating any fish that can fit down their throats. They have increased from 1.8 million to over 5 million animals since 1983.

The situation would not have developed without the "save the seals" campaigns that shut off the market for their pelts in Europe. Let Britain deplore the clubbing of baby seals all they wish. Lets hope the rest of the world shall soon recognize that the dishonest campaign to save the seals has caused pain and suffering, in the end, to the animals themselves and to the good people of Canada who have always depended upon them for food, fur, and cash.

We shall continue to remind all rational and humane people that we need to work together to find ways to make a living and to wisely use all our resources. Let us all work towards respect, understanding and better relations among men.

Arctic Good News

Bowhead whales, the 80 ton monsters that were nearly hunted to extinction in the last two centuries, are now estimated to have increased in Alaskan waters to around 10,000 animals, and the stock is growing even while Alaskan Native people harvest as many as 50 per year. This fantastic report was sent to us by the World Council of Whalers, who spotted an Associated Press piece, by Riley Woodford (October 26, 2003), in The Juneau Empire.

This stock of bowhead whales never leaves the cold waters of the north, but migrates seasonally, apparently in an east-west direction past the North Slope of Alaska. It is highly valued for food, and the present quota of approximately 5 whales for each of ten villages is a welcome staple that coastal Inuit people rely upon each spring and early summer.



The original population strength of these animals is estimated from ships' logs of the number of animals killed for their oil, and the thousands of barrels of that oil that were sold. Approximately 50,000 bowheads once lived in the world's arctic waters, with about 30,000 of those belonging to the Alaskan coast's Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort Sea stock. By the time commercial whalers gave up the quest because the animals were so difficult to find, there were only about 3,000 of them left in the world. Commercial oil whalers finally gave up around 1910.

Today, the Alaskan whale hunt is conducted under the rules of the ICRW's Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling plan. Scientists and

Alaskans working together have learned that the animals are extremely vocal as they move. Alaskans insisted that there were more animals than white scientists had imagined; when challenged, the scientists used underwater hydrophones, and sure enough, detected so many more voices than had been thought possible, that population estimates were revised upwards. Thus, traditional environmental knowledge, (TEK) has been invaluable in adding to the logic for modern management of these wonderful animals.

IWMC congratulates the Native People of Alaska and the scientists who work with them to keep tabs on this stock of bowheads. The beginning return to healthy numbers of this stock is something for which the entire world is grateful. The harvest benefits not only Alaskans and the maintenance of their cultural traditions, but also contributes in an on-going manner to the scientific examination of this species and to its future success in the cold North. Whale on, friends!

Out of Africa

There is a conservation problem in some African states that no one has been able to entirely understand, except to recognize that poaching and absence of legitimate authority are working together to decimate wildlife resources. An Associated Press writer in Burundi has described what may be a critical level of poaching of hippos that live in the marshes of the Ruzizi River, which flows out of northern Lake Tanganyika.



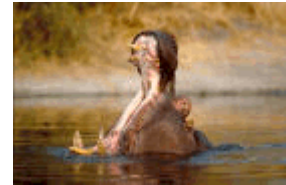
Aloys Niyoyita reports that hippo meat can be purchased anywhere in the area of Bujumbura, near the Ruzizi National Park. Patrice Faye, president of the Herpetological and Environmental Society of Burundi, claims that poachers have killed more than twenty hippos this year and sold them to local people near the lake. A hippo is alleged to bring approximately \$1000 to those who kill them for their meat and ivory. The animals are now seen in groups of only four, whereas they used to be seen in groups of twenty or so animals along the river and in the lake.

Faye and other conservation organization leaders in Burundi are concerned that both soldiers and rebel fighters in the area are operating in a lawless environment that shall soon leave the park and surrounding areas devoid of wildlife. WWF spokespersons attribute the illegal activity to local warfare, in which both soldiers and rebels are killing hippos. No government officials have been taking action to correct this sad situation.

Similar wildlife destruction for personal gain has been reported from Zimbabwe. Johnny Rodrigues, Chairman for Zimbabwe Conservation Task Force, alleges that national park officials, and Mugabe himself, all seem to be allowing and perhaps participating in, illegal hunting of elephants and rhinos, and allowing the illegal export of Sable, to countries such as the UAE.

Responsible conservation of wildlife and their habitats can not be realized anywhere unless

all members of the society decide that it is worth the effort to protect the resources. When there is no recognized legitimate authority, both people and wildlife suffer the consequences.



The above examples of crimes against nature are also crimes against all people who wish to see life in Africa valued and protected, now and in the future. These are not just cases of poverty and poaching. They are symptoms of widespread demoralization in which citizens have no faith in their government or in their future. Those who govern are apparently not doing so in good faith with a humanitarian vision for their people or their environment. IWMC wishes the best for the brave people of Africa and their treasured resources. May they soon find leaders of vision and integrity with the strength to preserve their land and their heritage.

Window on Watson Modern Don Quixote

Once again, the world's wannabe pirate has made a nuisance of himself in foreign lands. Although this time he sent his current wife to take the fall for him. Mrs. Paul Watson is reported to have been arrested in Taiji with another member of the Sea Shepherd crew, as they both attempted to disrupt a coastal pilot whale hunt. The two were claimed to have cut a net in the bay at

Taiji in order to allow trapped "dolphins" to escape from slaughter. Although Paul claimed that they had no knives on them, and merely moved the net aside, at the very least they made obvious nuisances of themselves.



Their main goal, which was apparently videotape of the escapade, may have been taken from them, as local authorities raided a trailer on shore where the crew had "headquartered" for the event.

Japanese authorities claimed that no animals were allowed to escape out of the bay.

In the meantime, the Captain Himself was busy being a hero at a Patagonia outdoor goods store in San Francisco, where for two days, he would meet his adoring public, sign books, and look pudgily resplendent in his sea-going uniform. Don Quixote could not have done any better.

In other unpleasant news; the Sea Shepherd has been elected to a term on the Sierra Club board of directors, and shall hold that seat through 2006. He has announced that his ambitions are to recruit three more radical persons to the board of that (700,000 supporters) organization, and then change the board's position to one that opposes all hunting and trapping.

These fantasies of immense power and influence over the world's wildlife managers

and hunters are apparently a part of the dream world in which this man lives out his days. Perhaps he was too strictly disciplined as a child, and has been rebelling against rational authority ever since. We are never surprised at the lengths to which he goes for attention, or the antics he pulls while offending anyone who supports law and order, and science based, modern wildlife management. Sail on, Paul. Perhaps someday you'll find a cause that's worthwhile.

When Activism becomes Terrorism - where to draw the Line

All terrorism is activism of a particularly violent kind, and it has many faces with many vicious motives. Car bombs, airplanes used as engines of death, and deadly arson fires, are all the unconscionable acts of terrorists. People in southern California have recently experienced both documented and suspected arson in fires that killed twenty and ruined over three thousand homes and businesses. Some witnesses reported that two men in a van were seen throwing an incendiary device into vegetation that subsequently started one of the major fires near San Diego. Although police sketches of one of the suspects have been widely circulated on television, no one has yet been arrested for that crime.

There is no reason to suspect that (formerly convicted) arsonist Rodney Coronado had anything to do with any of the recent fires in California, but for some twisted reason, he claims to be glad that they happened. In one instance, Earth Liberation Front banners were left at the scene of the burned out remnants of luxury homes under construction. Coronado says he had nothing to do with it, but is glad that the arson was accomplished. He is often approached by media, who label him a spokesperson for the ELF. TV 4 in the San

Diego area interviewed him about recent apartment complex fires and the above arson of houses under construction, and reported that he applauds the criminals who carried out those crimes.

Perhaps this felon, who himself caused one million dollars in damage to the university laboratory he personally torched, has had nothing to do with the recent disaster in southern California. Surely, he would say anything to keep his distance from that suspicion. However, anyone who would want himself to be known as a supporter of such acts, should be kept under surveillance. This is an antisocial and psychopathic kind of behavior that has no place in a free society. His ambitions are not free speech and the advancement of lofty principles. They are destruction of the achievements and security of others. We urge that all such acts be labeled terrorism, because "activism" is a term both inadequate and inappropriate to the intent and the scale of destruction that has been wrought in southern California. We wish state and federal law enforcement authorities all the best in their efforts to successfully capture and prosecute those responsible for the arson crimes that were committed there.

A hunting we will go University professor Lee Foote finds spirituality - and healthy food - on his annual hunts

Lee Foote is a biologist and associate professor in renewable resources at the University of Alberta, Canada.
(Source: Calgary Herald, Canada, 4 November 2003)

If you like the sound of gunfire in the mountains, Saturday morning was your symphony. Throughout the southern half of Alberta, that was the day hunters headed for the hills and forests to secure their winter meat supply from wild game sources. The obvious question is: why not just go to the grocery store? That question is the jumping-off point for a philosophical divide between hunters and non-hunters.

For most hunters, the motivation is strong to go out and try to kill their own animal for consumption. It has to be, because of its costs: wildlife identification card (Cad \$8), basic wildlife certificate (\$22.85), white-tailed deer license (\$31.75), economy deer rifle (\$300), firearms licensing (\$18), cartridges for practice and hunting (approximately \$50). Our hunter's outlay is \$421 for a month of hunting. That is about the cost of a two-day weekend of skiing or golfing in Banff, if you pinch pennies.

What are the benefits to the successful hunter? A mature whitetail buck will provide about 50 kilograms of succulent lean meat worth about \$300 at supermarket prices. Wild-killed venison, however, is priceless because it is illegal to sell it in Alberta. For one deer, our hunter has paid \$3.80 per pound. Many hunters legally harvest four deer per year on various draws and permits and can bring the cost down to under a dollar per pound. The occasional moose or elk is an additional jackpot. Alberta is one of the few

places where even urbanites can make a reasonable economic argument for subsistence harvesting.

But hunting is much more than economics. Venison meals also bring a sense of satisfaction found in harvesting from nature.



To make this real to non-hunters, consider how home-canned raspberry preserves not only taste better than store-bought, but they bring a pride and satisfaction to our tables that makes them quite different from anything Smuckers can deliver. Many people find it easier to give thanks over a venison roast than a pork loin, for

example. Hunting for one's meat protein also becomes an act of community and shared experience. The organized pursuit, kill, processing and packaging, predispose us to share this bounty. Offering parts of one's kill to landowners, hunting party members, family and friends is the norm. In contrast, when was the last time any of us bought beef or poultry to distribute to our friends?

What about the meat? Venison is to beef what homegrown tomatoes are to those tasteless hydroponic things at the supermarket. Venison has an identity and a character; there are thousands of ways it can be enjoyed. The same deer may provide peppery oven-dried jerky, butter-broiled loin medallions, slow-cooked cubed stew meat, smoked hams, garlic sausage and . . . well, you get the idea. Sure, we cook it differently but, then again, we cook bacon and chicken differently, too.

Cattle have been bred to store fat, called marbling, between their muscle fibres. Deer store their fat between skin and muscle, much like chickens, so it is easily trimmed to provide a very healthy, low-fat meat. Venison also contains approximately twice as much iron as beef, and iron is one of the most common nutrient deficiencies in North America. This is all natural, organic meat that was born, raised and killed quickly in its own unfenced living space -- the ultimate free-range production system.

Despite all the rational, logical, social, health-related and culinary reasons to hunt, most hunters go out because it is so meaningful, personally rewarding, and fun. Our modern world consists of contrivances and conveniences, synthetics and climate control; many people deeply crave the elemental and basic process of re-connecting to the earth.

We hunters find it gratifying in a spiritual realm to take responsibility for our food. Approaching the steaming carcass of a freshly

killed white-tailed deer on a snowy hillside reinforces the profound realization that other things must die for us to live. Hunters do not live in a state of denial or belief that our bacon, broccoli and bullion just come from IGA.

A deer's death at our hand provides a lesson in reality, mortality, and validates that we are vividly alive and connected to the earth again. This is a rare and precious gift that can fundamentally change the way we see our world.



This gift contains the seeds of an environmental ethic. Hunters carry some of the strongest commitments toward protecting the land that produces the deer and associated creatures so that deer descendants may thrive and bring life and meaning to future generations of hunters in wild native habitats.

If the fur fits, wear it

(Source: Yellowknifer, 7 November 2003, by Mike W. Bryant)

Hardly a day goes by when I read a story, whether it be in our own pages or elsewhere, where I don't roll my eyes and wonder aloud how such a stupid idea made it into the news. News that the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) are considering moving from the traditional muskrat hat to something else led to just one of those days.

They claim that they are not bowing to pressure from anti-fur groups, merely just testing the waters, so to speak. Of course this is pure nonsense, because as far as I can tell there are two certainties in this world:

a) muskrat stocks are doing just fine (there's a family of six living in my backyard alone), and b) the fur is superbly warm.

So what gives?

The true irony in all this is that most Canadian anti-fur groups are based out of large urban centres like Vancouver and Toronto, with nary an RCMP officer in sight. The RCMP mainly work in remote and rural communities. All the policing in the NWT (North West Territory) is conducted by the RCMP.

I have a hard time picturing RCMP officers coming into places like Tulita, Wha Ti, or Fort Resolution wearing winter hats made out of some synthetic crap, while people in the community are busting their butts trying to make a living harvesting fur that should be atop these officers' heads. The fur harvesters in these communities are the true caretakers of the land, not a bunch of hemp munching puritans from Toronto.



Our Northern fur harvesters are the people who have everything to gain and everything to lose in ensuring that the environment stays healthy and clean, and a sustainable fur market continues. We're not talking about a return to the idiotic practices of the 18th century fur trade here. We're talking about a sustainable resource in a land blessed with a multitude of wildlife; an industry that doesn't pollute our lakes and rivers with formaldehyde in the process of making synthetic clothing; an

industry that doesn't leach pesticides into the soil to grow cotton.

Perhaps if parents stopped indoctrinating their children with moronic Disney movies with cute, cuddly talking animals in them, we can finally get past the ignorance and stupidity espoused by these southern agitators. If you've spent time in the bush you'd quickly realize that none of these creatures exist; that a quick death by Conibear trap is no crueller than being ripped apart by claws and teeth, which inevitably happens to every animal in the wild.

Then again, maybe the world would be a better place if Mother Nature made us furry again. Until then, however, write Solicitor General Wayne Easter, your MP (Member of Parliament) and MLA (Member of Legislative Assembly). Tell them that you don't want RCMP officers working in the North wearing synthetic hats. It's just plain dumb.

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