



Fur Traders Hear Call For Solidarity

Speaking at the 2006 Fur Harvesters Auction convention in Ontario, Canada in April, Eugene Lapointe, President of IWMC, called on the fur industry to work with other sustainable users of wildlife to protect their common interests.

Addressing over 400 trappers and fur industry representatives, Mr. Lapointe pointed out that modern societies now tend to regard certain animals with more affinity than humans. Urbanites “will care nothing for the exhausted women and children who work fourteen hours a day in foreign sweatshops to provide them with their luxury items... and worry much more about some tiny marsh-dwelling rodent than about our brothers and sisters in the human race.”

And he asked where this sudden obsession with people wearing fur came from. “Even in our modern, hi-tech world of microfibers, furs still afford their wearers an unprecedented degree of protection against the elements. Anyone who doubts the practicality of fur clothing today should make a quick visit to Vienna, Kiev or Moscow before this winter ends and witness cities where men and women view fur coats and hats not as luxuries but as dire necessities to deal with the brutal exigencies of nature.”

Mr. Lapointe drew a distinction between endangered and abundant species. “The industry is not trafficking in the pelts of endangered Bengal tigers, giant

pandas or snow leopards. We all recognize that some of these noble species are in a precarious position and we want to cultivate these species, not threaten them. But what of plentiful mink, nutria, beaver, muskrat, etc.? These species are plentiful to the point where segments of the agricultural and forestry communities regard them as pests for extermination. But with skill, the pelts of these same plentiful species can be manufactured into a high quality, comfortable – indeed beautiful – product. What is the problem? What does the anti-fur activist with his or her can of paint really want?”

The answer, he said, is that “such people are urbanites with little or no exposure to nature or to animals in nature. If they were true animal rights activists, they would be spending much less time looking at wild animals and a lot more focusing on the international poultry industry, where conditions truly are appalling. What the anti-fur activist truly seeks is the imposition of his or her ideology and life style on society at large. In particular, the anti-fur lobby wants to impose a radical separ-

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ration between man and wild nature. So far as these people are concerned, all human interaction with nature is inherently evil and all human exploitation of wildlife resources should be stopped immediately. This concept of nature is rooted in late 20th and early 21st century

urban culture where nature is not a primal force to which humans are exposed.”

Concluding, Mr. Lapointe said that the fur industry is under siege from an urbanizing world, as are other industries that are based on the sustainable use of wildlife resources. “You, the fur

trappers, fur farmers and fur manufacturers will have to stand shoulder to shoulder with the fishermen, the whalers, the loggers because if you do not stand together, you will fall separately. Reach out to the tuna fishermen, the ivory carvers and the caviar sellers. Their fight is your fight.” ■

Editorial : Ethical Journalism and Whaling By Eugene Lapointe



When one dodges, evades, averts, or turns aside, one is “parrying”. This term derives from the sport of fencing, which in turn, is derived from the art of ritualistic dueling with swords. In present day England, discussion of Japan’s scientific research whaling has been cynically “parried” in The Times by the aptly named Richard Lloyd Parry.

Parry reported on April 5 that, thanks to Greenpeace, Nissui, a Japanese owned fishing company, had divested itself of its shares in the company Kyodo Senpaku, the corporation that carries out Japan’s scientific research whaling. The

companies themselves deny that their commercial decision had anything to do with Greenpeace.

Ignoring this, and employing a tone congratulatory of the NGO, Parry reported that Greenpeace’s e-mail network had stimulated twenty thousand complaints to fish distributors owned by Nissui, together with threats to boycott their products because of the connection between Nissui and Japanese whaling. As a result of the campaign, Gorton’s, a U.S. firm, and Sealord, in New Zealand, both received e-mail and on-site harassment over placement of their fish products in supermarkets.

In addition to unquestioningly publishing Greenpeace’s account of events, Lloyd Parry conveniently ignored the fact that Japan strictly upholds the terms of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW). Japan’s research programs are openly submitted to the IWC Scientific Committee prior to being carried out, and results of each year’s research are submitted to the Scientific Committee for its annual review. This committee has praised Japan’s efforts at accomplishing better understanding of minke whale abundance, and of the roles of minke and other cetacean species in Antarctic and North Pacific ecosystems.

Both Greenpeace and Richard Lloyd Parry have done their best to create the impression that Japan’s research is not only of questionable value, but is actually commercial whaling. Lloyd Parry’s tactic is to take cynical jabs at Japan, twisting relevant facts or carefully



Canadian Seal Hunt Completed As Planned

A few days after the season was opened, a harvest of 91,000 harp seals in the Gulf of St. Lawrence in Canada was completed. A handful of protesters were removed from the hunting area and charged with violating the country's seal protection regulations. No fatal accidents or real damage to sealers' craft were reported.

The main seal harvest, off the northeast coast of Newfoundland, also came to an end, with the remaining 230,000 animals being harvested among ice floes in the open Atlantic.

The harvests were authorized by Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) for fisheries management purposes. Sealers say that the hunt is an important part of their seasonal round of marine harvest, with income from sealing being invested in readying fishing gear and vessels for the upcoming fishing seasons. Fish harvesting is the lifeblood of the coastal Newfoundland economy, and the seal fishery is an integral part of this traditional way of life.

Eugene Lapointe, President of IWMC World Conservation Trust, said that the fishermen should be commended for their dedication

omitting information that a more ethical reporter would have included. For example, he incorrectly states that "Japan is allowed a limited quota" for research when, in fact, IWC members cannot limit the number of whales that a member nation may take for research. The IWC also mandates that by-products are sold as food so that they are not be wasted.

Lloyd Parry attempts to convince his readers that world opinion is solidly opposed to any whaling. Yet, for the first time in twenty years, pro-whaling nations expect to have a majority at the forthcoming annual meeting of the IWC. Doubtless, such a victory for whalers would be presented as a disaster by anti-whaling forces in the western world, and journalists like Mr. Lloyd Parry. Forecasts of doom in the oceans will help sell newspapers.

Whale stock assessments are being expertly compiled in the world's oceans, and there has been no doubt, for many years, that certain species can be sustainably harvested. This will benefit people in whaling countries and the marine ecosystems, of which whales are a significant component. The former strength of anti-whaling nations has faded, as the majority of IWC members can now demonstrate that the power to manage ocean resources is greater than the power of their adversaries to deny societies that right. But don't expect to read this in the London Times. ■

A sealer drags his prize while off the Atlantic coast of Canada.



and role as stewards of their environment. He said, “Canadians have once again stood up to those who want to remove their right to manage their own resources. The local people and the environment are worthy of all the effort that has been expended to preserve and protect managed seal fishery and those who engage in it.”

In recent years, harp seals have over-run their environment, causing a fundamental shift in their

ecosystem. The seal herd had grown to 5.8 million animals, from 1.8 million in 1983 when the population continued to grow with a regulated annual harvest of some 180,000 animals. Still, HSUS protest leader Rebecca Aldworth claimed that the 2006 hunt quota is “not sustainable”.

Following campaigns by NGOs that included petition drives in Europe, the main harvest came to an end in 1987. The European

Community banned the import of all products of harp seals from animals under the age of one year, leading to the collapse of the European market for seal products.

The consequences were twofold: severe economic hardship among Canadian seal hunters and a herd that grew out of proportion to its environment. By the time new markets were found in Russia and the Far East, seals, fish, seabirds, whales, and coastal people were all suffering and the DFO therefore decided to bring the region back into environmental, economic and social balance through a multi-year seal harvest.

Mr. Lapointe added: “Although protest campaign leaders continue to try to impede this correction by professional wildlife management, they are failing. Harp seals will be used for food, for nutritional supplements, and for their pelts. Both fur garments and leather products are being produced for increasing global distribution, in a rational use of a renewable resource.” ■

Iran Can Export Caviar

The Islamic Republic of Iran is the only country that can export Caspian Sea caviar, but only from one species of sturgeon, the Persian sturgeon, which is not considered a shared species.

According to the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), all other nations surrounding the Caspian Sea failed to

submit adequate conservation plans for sturgeon so none will be able to legally export the fish or roe from shared stocks – particularly beluga, osetra and sevruga – in 2006.

Iran’s annual exports will be reduced dramatically to around 100,000 pounds, due to the diminished population estimates for the Persian sturgeon.

"CITES is not about banning things, it is about ensuring trade that is sustainable," David Morgan, head of the organization's science unit, told the New York Times. "It is regrettable that this is the way it is."

Before trade can resume, the other range states (Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan) will need to closely monitor their fishermen and domestic fish market operations as they proceed with plans to restore sturgeon stocks in the Caspian Sea.

"Conservation, indeed, is not about banning the use of species", said Jaques Berney, Executive Vice-President

of IWMC World Conservation Trust. "It is all about ensuring that the human use of natural resources is truly sustainable, conducted with integrity and transparency. We may doubt that what may be considered as an actual ban decided unilaterally by the Secretariat is the proper way to conserve sturgeons from the Caspian Sea." ■



Japan Refutes Whale Meat Allegations

The Institute of Cetacean Research (ICR) has denied accusations from a group of environmentalist organizations concerning the end use of whale meat in Japan. Greenpeace and other groups claimed that by-products from Japan's scientific whaling program are used in dog food.

Dr. Hiroshi Hatanaka, Director General of ICR, said that only by-products of the scientific research program that are inappropriate for human consumption have been used as pet food ingredients. Nothing from the whale is wasted, not even those tissues that have never been traditionally consumed by humans.

"To suggest, as these groups have done, that fine cuts of whale meat from Japan's research programs are being turned into pet food because Japan has a glut of it is not true," Dr. Hatanaka said.

An ICR press release stated that "a miniscule amount" of intestinal tissue from a species of whale that is not part of the scientific research program, and which is not a species under the jurisdiction of the International Whaling Commission, has been used in a dog food product. Market gluts do not arise because the Fisheries Agency of Japan strictly regulates the timing of release of whale meat products from the scientific research program. Demand for whale products is always greater than the available supply.

"The particular sale of whale meat for pet food referred by the journalists was carried out by a company near one of the traditional small-type whaling bases on the Boso Peninsula, south east of Tokyo. This was sold as a jerky-type product and was made from less than 100kg of a batch of Baird's Beaked whale, which the processor received from a local whaling company. Baird's Beaked whale is not one of the species regulated by the International Whaling Commission and is not included in the ICR's research programs. The sustainable management of this particular species of whale is regulated by the Government of Japan's Fisheries Agency."

The International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW) mandates that all products of scientific research should be used as completely as is practicable. ■



Sustainable Use News Briefs

Bequian Catch

The World Council of Whalers announced the first catch of the year by Bequian whalers. A 46.4-foot long humpback whale was pursued and cooperatively taken by two boats on April 9. Distribution of the meat to the community was accomplished by the end of the next day.

This harvest is authorized by the Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling regime of the International Whaling Commission (IWC), which has allocated a small fixed quota of Atlantic humpback whales to St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The Atlantic humpback has been declared back to pre-exploitation strength.

Seal Hunt Pay-off Declined

Canadian Fisheries Minister Loyola Hearn refused an offer of \$C16 million from a U.S. businesswoman and animal rights supporter who made the money available in return for stopping the country's seal hunt. Canada's seal hunt earns around C\$16 million in direct sales each year. A spokesman for the Minister, Steven Outhouse, said they would prefer her to put the money into another worthwhile cause because her offer did not make sense from a conservation point of view. He said, "It's just another example of people with money trying to tell other people how to live their lives and most people don't respond positively to that." The potential donor, Cathy Kangas, founded cosmetics firm Prai Beauty in 1999 and has ties with various animal



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rights groups, including the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and Sea Shepherd. Prai manufactures anti-aging skin products for women that “thwart the effects of environmental and personal stress.”

NGO launches U.S. Ad Campaign

The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) announced a multi million dollar advertising campaign in the United States to “re-engage the general public on the plight of whales.”

At an April 18th press conference in Washington, DC, IFAW announced that it will run TV ads attacking Japan in Washington, New York, Miami, Boston, San Francisco, Chicago, Los Angeles and Charleston, South Carolina. These will be supplemented by billboards in New York’s Times Square and Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles, together with subway ads in Washington.

The only American media representative to attend the press conference was Chris Matthews, host of MSNBC’s Hardball program who, as a member of IFAW’s board of directors, also participated in the NGO’s presentation.

IFAW’s president and chief executive officer Fred O’Regan announced that the program will “educate” the American people about the evils of Japan’s research program and possible plans to resume commercial whaling.

The campaign is timed to put pressure on the U.S. administration between now and the start of the annual meeting of the International Whaling Commission in St. Kitts, set for mid-June. Environmentalist organizations are predicting that whaling countries may have enough votes to overturn a 1982 moratorium on commercial whaling – although the same forecast is made prior to every plenary meeting in order to stimulate media interest.

The U.S. is opposed to lethal scientific research and to any resumption of commercial whaling but has steadfastly resisted responding with any trade restrictions on Japan, Norway or Iceland because each country’s program is legal under the terms of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW).

Noteworthy

The Southern African Wildlife Management Association is organising a symposium on " The role of Wildlife Management in Biodiversity Conservation" in Mpumalanga, South Africa, from 17 - 19 September 2006. Please visit the following website for more information: www.sawma.co.za ■

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