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# Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

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Chair: Mr. Ken McDonald





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• (1530)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.)):** I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 60 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans. This meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the House order of June 23, 2022.

Before we proceed, I would like to make a few comments for the benefit of witnesses and members.

Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. For those participating by video conference, click on the microphone icon to activate your mike. Please mute yourself when you are not speaking. There is interpretation for those on Zoom. You have the choice, at the bottom of your screen, of floor, French or English. For those in the room, you can use the earpiece and select the desired channel. Please address all comments through the chair.

Screenshots or taking photos of your screen is not permitted. The proceedings will be made available via the House of Commons website.

Finally, I'll remind you all that the use of a House-approved headset is mandatory for remote participation in parliamentary proceedings. If a virtual participant is not wearing an appropriate headset, interpretation cannot be provided and therefore that person will not be able to participate in the debate.

In accordance with the committee's routine motion concerning connection tests for witnesses, I am informing the committee that all witnesses have completed the required connection tests in advance of the meeting.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted on January 18, 2022, the committee is resuming its study of the ecosystem impacts and the management of pinniped populations.

I would now like to welcome our first panel of witnesses.

Appearing as individuals, we have fish harvesters Trevor Jones and Eldred Woodford. Representing the Guysborough Country Inshore Fishermen's Association, we have executive director Ginny Boudreau.

I hope I pronounced those names correctly. I could easily slaughter them, being from Newfoundland.

Thank you for taking the time to appear today. You will each have up to five minutes for an opening statement.

I'll invite Mr. Jones to go first, please.

**Mr. Trevor Jones (Fish Harvester, As an Individual):** Thank you.

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, members of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans and fellow presenters.

Thank you for the invitation to speak today and to be a witness on the pinniped, its impacts on fish stocks, and how it affects fish harvesters and the communities in which we live.

I have been a professional fish harvester and sealer for over 30 years. In that time, I have seen the commercial salmon fishery close and just the recreational fishery remain, and yet this stock has continued to decline, with less and less fish every year returning to our rivers. I have seen a cod moratorium. It was put in place in 1992. Thirty years later, this stock has not rebounded to anywhere near its historic levels, according to science. Just last year, we watched our federal fisheries minister put a moratorium on mackerel. Now there are rumours of a potential closure on capelin and other species that we harvesters depend on for our livelihood.

Leadership within DFO, in its wisdom, seems to think that closing a commercial fishery to harvesters will save and help rebuild fish stocks, but the truth is that it does not. We now have the history to prove that.

In my lifetime, the only species that I have seen increase after a reduction in harvesting—through the loss of markets, that is—is the pinniped population. That's because it is at or near the top of the food chain. We are the ones, harvesters and government, who must be responsible for harvesting at the correct level in order to maintain a healthy ecosystem. It is our duty to manage our resources properly, because when we don't, the impacts will be felt for generations to come.

I have seen first-hand how much fish is being destroyed by pinnipeds. I have harvested thousands of them and have checked many of their stomachs. I've found a variety of fish species: Greenland halibut—or turbot, as we call it—capelin, northern cod, Arctic cod, herring, mackerel, shrimp, lumpfish, young wolffish, and yes, even snow crab.

I want to put into perspective just how huge an impact this species is having on our resources. Five out of the 10 provinces in Canada are affected by an overpopulation of pinnipeds, and two of the three territories. The population of Canada is near 39 million. We have somewhere between one-quarter and one-third of that number in pinnipeds in our waters off our coastlines. Can you imagine the volume of food that is required to feed these populations? I took out of the stomach of one old harp up to five turbot and two codfish, certainly a lot more than I could eat in one day—or any other person could, for that matter.

Our ecosystem is feeding these animals, but not without damage being done to it. We are seeing more and more fish stocks being depleted and fisheries closed. All of this is happening under the watch of the current leadership. I have to ask this question: Is this how we want our generation to be remembered, with fish stocks depleted because no action was taken to control the population of pinnipeds? If this population of pinnipeds were placed upon the land and everybody could see it, then we would more than likely deal with the issue and make efforts to reduce the populations. Because it's found in the ocean, and only those of us who are on the water can actually see it, it's easy for leadership to ignore.

The impact that this overpopulation of pinnipeds is having on harvesters and communities is devastating, to say the least. I have had to watch our fishery enter a time of consolidation, where harvesters like me have had to keep reinvesting in this industry to make it viable. In order to make a reasonable living for ourselves and our crews who fish with us, we have had to buy up other fishing enterprises. Now we have one-third of the harvesting sector that we previously had. By doing so, we thought that we should end up with maybe three times the fish to catch, but that is not the case. We have less and less fish to catch each year, and yet we spend more and more trying to survive.

In closing, I would like to say that we—harvesters and our elected government—need to address the largest problem our fisheries have ever faced. An overpopulation of pinnipeds is decimating our fish stocks. Without industry and our elected officials together going to other countries and trying to open up markets for what is and what can be a very valuable resource, our future as an industry looks very bleak. We have a justifiable cause to reduce the pinniped population. It will protect our fish resources and those who make a living from them.

Thank you.

• (1535)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Jones.

We'll now go to Ms. Boudreau for five minutes or less.

Ms. Boudreau, I notice that your camera is still cutting in and out. If it continues to do that, just shut your camera off. We'll know it's you who's talking to us. That might allow your voice to come through much clearer.

When you're ready, you have five minutes or less, please.

**Ms. Ginny Boudreau (Executive Director, Guysborough County Inshore Fishermen's Association):** Thank you very much.

Good day and thank you so much for the invitation to speak. I'm very pleased that this committee wants to discuss the management of pinnipeds.

The committee has been presented sufficient documentation and discussion to emphatically state that the pinniped populations are at an extreme level, never before recorded. Who could argue there are no negative effects on an ecosystem that's out of balance to such an excessive degree?

One stock already showing consequences of not managing the pinniped biomass is Atlantic mackerel, and in Canada it was placed under moratorium in 2022. To date, the rebuilding plan model has been developed with recovery based on the absence of fishing effort only.

In March 2023, DFO science finally identified grey seal predation as having an effect, and it is listed as number two in the predator pyramid, under the northern gannet, due to the absence of seal diet data. I am of the opinion that the northern gannet would not hold this position if we had more accurate data on the grey seal diet, both spatially and temporally.

On management, DFO should be assigned new resources for seal diet studies. The director general for ecosystems science did not answer "yes" when asked by this committee if there was any new money for seal science. We do have excellent science on population dynamics, so why have we not taken these 50-year biomass datasets, fed them into a DFO peer-reviewed assessment model, and developed an aggressive conservation harvesting plan to begin harvesting one of the richest untapped resources in Canadian waters?

On management, we need to create a conservation harvesting plan that reflects the fishable biomass. I've heard many reasons why we can't do this. The MMPA is supposedly stopping us from harvesting seals.

Seal harvesting is a legitimate fishery in Canada, regulated by DFO for over 50 years. It is proven to be a humane, sustainable, viable fishery carried out by certified professional harvesters, as well as a cultural food and ceremonial fishery for many of our indigenous and coastal communities. Instead of being embarrassed, we should be celebrating and defending it within the MMPA regulations. Pinnipeds in Canada are not species of concern, endangered, threatened or at risk. Why should the MMPA scare us from this rich resource?

Many countries, including the U.S., have marine mammal takes for species that are in one or more of these risk categories. Pinnipeds are not. I see the MMPA as a tax on Canadian fisheries where we jump through hoops at all costs. I wonder what we'd be doing if this were beef, pork or even blueberries.

On management, we need to defend this fishery within the MM-PA as a legitimate fishery.

Another reason given is that we have no markets. Why? The Canadian governments have not invested in national or international markets, nor are they educating Canadians as to the benefits to our dietary health and economic well-being. We are embarrassed to promote an extremely iron-rich meat, the highest omega-3 oil in the world, pelts and skins that are durable, warm and yes, very fashionable. It's a resource that would add economic growth to harvesting, processing and marketing within our communities and alleviate economic loss from our recently reduced TACs and moratorium species.

Negative social opinions exist because we have allowed the media and extreme environmental groups to educate Canadians on social conscience based on sensationalized inaccuracies with respect to pinniped harvesting.

On management, we need to invest resources into a major education and promotion plan for pinniped harvesting and marketing, and be proud of it.

DFO stated to this committee that pinniped harvesting would fall under the new emerging fisheries policy. This policy will surely set us back 10 to 15 years. Pinniped fisheries have been developed for many decades with professional certified harvesters in community hunts, cultural rights and a DFO-regulated commercial sealing industry. How is this now all of a sudden an emerging fishery? What will happen to the predator species in 10 to 15 years?

On management, DFO should certify professional apprentices once they have completed their humane and animal husbandry courses. DFO should not be permitted to place the pinniped fishery as an emerging fishery and set back the seal industry.

On infrastructure, the federal government should commit real resources to the territories and, with the territories and provinces, invest in the harvesting and processing, as well as a national and international marketing plan for pinnipeds.

• (1540)

Doing nothing is no longer an option. In 10 to 15 years, what will we be feeding these pinnipeds? They won't be eating mackerel.

I thank you so very much for the opportunity to speak today. I look forward to the question period.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll now go to Mr. Woodford for five minutes or less, please.

**Mr. Eldred Woodford (Fish Harvester, As an Individual):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman and fellow committee members, for the opportunity to speak to you here today.

I don't have a formal presentation done. I'm going to speak off the cuff.

Generally, I would be reiterating exactly what the previous two speakers have said. Trevor and I are the same age. We started fishing in the late 1980s. We witnessed some drastic changes in our fishery in general.

I speak to you today on dealing with pinnipeds. I am not only a professional commercial fish harvester; I'm also a professional commercial seal harvester—a sealer. I'm also the president of the Canadian Sealers Association. I've had the opportunity to speak to you previously in committees like this.

The time has come. We don't need any more studies on seals. We don't need any more science on seals. We need actions on seals.

There was a commission back in the 1980s, with Justice Malouf at the time, with recommendations. There have been Senate standing committee recommendations to harvest seals. There have been recommendations and report after report that have been done and packed on the shelf. The time has come. We need action.

Here in Newfoundland, in those rural communities we have here, you have to drive it to see the devastation. There are communities that are no longer filled with fish harvesters and fishing families. It's mostly tourists now. Mainlanders come to buy up the properties because our locals have left. It's because of our doomed fishery.

Trevor and I were fortunate. We survived the cod moratorium of the 1990s because of crab. That is a fact. One resource survived this. The devastation we've seen in the last decade to all the other species is because of the predation of seals.

There were years when I was definitely against a cull of seals, because I was concerned and wanted to be responsible as a sealer to maintain the population that was providing me with my second-largest source of income for my enterprise, which was seals.

I can remember when I was a boy growing up hearing that the sealers in the community would go out. They would hunt and harvest tens of thousands of seals in the 1980s to rebuild markets and to rebuild an industry that we did see prosper from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s—2005 or 2006. We were harvesting from a quarter of a million to 350,000 or 400,000 animals. The market was demanding products. We had products to sell.

What happened? The politicians did not do their jobs. The Government of Canada did not do its job. We had products getting banned in country after country. We don't need work to develop new products. We don't need more science. If you have a mind to look at all the science on all the fisheries, the seal industry has been studied more than any other fishery.

I don't need to reiterate what Trevor said earlier or what Ginny was saying. I support them 100%. I'm here. I'll just tell you that I'm a fish harvester. I'm a sealer. I have grave concerns about the future of our industry and our rural coastal communities.

I welcome any questions in your question period.

Thank you.

• (1545)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Woodford.

We'll start now with our first round of questioning, for six minutes or less. We'll go to Mr. Small.

I will say to all the participants, please try to identify who you want to answer the question, instead of leaving them hanging and wondering who should answer it. You'll make better use of your time.

When you're ready, Mr. Small, you have six minutes or less.

**Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll try my best.

My first question is for Mr. Woodford, president of the Canadian Sealers Association.

Mr. Woodford, you mentioned markets. Would you say that markets or a lack thereof is the main stumbling block to the harvesting of the current quota of seals?

**Mr. Eldred Woodford:** Yes, most definitely the markets have all to do with it. You have to watch this industry and grow in this industry to see what happened. We had markets where the doors were open, full access. We had four processing companies in Newfoundland. They were fully tasked with the 350,000 animals that we were providing them. A lot of people were getting work. Products were not left on the shelves; they were going through the system.

Bans were put in place in the European Union and in Russia, and doors did not open to Chinese markets. We had one of the former ministers of fisheries here in St. John's at the Delta Hotel rejoice that we had the biggest market in the world, the Chinese market that opened up. Yet, for all that, nothing ever materialized.

Something behind the scenes has to be done. We as participants, harvesters or processors, our hands are tied.

With regard to the bans and the access to markets, it's not the markets, Mr. Small; it's the access to the markets that is the problem. We have products that are banned. Transshipment companies don't want to touch the products because of the controversy, because we have not dealt with it and educated the world as to the facts.

Thank you.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** Do you think the government should be more committed to gaining market access with a marketing campaign or some kind of investment to ensure that there's a steady access and a growth versus what you saw around 2009?

• (1550)

**Mr. Eldred Woodford:** Exactly. We knew that those bans were coming into place. We tried a few defence ways to try to offset them, but it didn't work. It didn't materialize. It had too much of a foundation built at the time to stop it.

It was only a few years later, and we were into dealings and negotiations with the European Union with the CETA deal. Neither our provincial government nor our federal government had the foresight to use that opportunity to regain our market access for our legitimate, natural, renewable products. That's what they are. Noth-

ing could be any greener to the economy or to the environment than our seal products, yet, for all that, they were discarded as if they didn't mean anything, because, generally speaking, they only pertained to a small population of Canadians. I guess that's why they stepped away from it, but it was not logical.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** I have a question for Mr. Jones.

Minister Murray recently accused Conservatives of wanting a cull. That's certainly not the case on our side.

I think you're the representative for the FFAW for your area as well. Would you be looking for a full utilization harvest, or would you prefer to see a cull? What would be the best thing, in your opinion?

**Mr. Trevor Jones:** Absolutely, full utilization would be the answer from anybody at our table. Any fish harvester wants to see whatever you're harvesting used to the best ability for mankind as a whole. A lot of nutrients and beneficial products can come from seal harvesting.

I believe, as Eldred already said, that access to markets so we can utilize the product.... In a world this size, with a population such as we have, certainly 400,000 or 500,000 animals harvested should not be hard to move. It's just that we need to get into the governments. The governments have to go there and have discussions with other governments.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** Again I'll go to Mr. Jones.

We often hear that if Canada harvests pinnipeds in a meaningful way, we'll be faced with trade sanctions against our seafood products. Given that Norway, Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Japan currently hunt whales, how realistic are the threats of these sanctions against our seafood industry in our international markets? Do you believe that?

**Mr. Trevor Jones:** When we look at the rest of the world and then Norway and those countries, obviously they harvest a lot more fish than we do because they keep their seal population down naturally. However, no, I don't believe it. I believe that's a myth. I think that's an excuse that's used by animal rights activists, and it's certainly far from the truth.

We have a responsibility to protect fish stocks, and if harvesting seals is part of that and of giving us a balanced ecosystem, then how can anybody argue with that? We're not going to be wasteful. We're just trying to do what's right in our ecosystem.

If we don't, then we're going to go the other way and have our stock decimated, and for what, because somebody just doesn't like the fact that we're harvesting a mammal out of the ocean? It's our God-given right and ability to do this and to manage the stock in this manner.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Small. Your time has gone a little bit over.

We'll now go to Mr. Kelloway, please, for six minutes or less.

**Mr. Mike Kelloway (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses who are here today.

My questions will be directed to Ginny Boudreau.

Ginny, it's great to see you.

I first want to thank the Guysborough County Inshore Fishermen's Association for all that it does—all of you and the work you do.

You previously wrote, Ginny, that any new grey seal management procedure must be financially supported by commercial industry, the ecological preservation groups and the federal fisheries department. I'm curious about your insight as to the position you envision for industry groups such as yours and for ecological preservation groups moving forward.

• (1555)

**Ms. Ginny Boudreau:** As harvesters, our role is to harvest the resource. We are fishermen. Well, I'm not a fisherman; I represent fishermen. I work with fishermen, and I represent the fishing industry.

It is our responsibility to harvest whatever marine resources are commercially viable in the ocean to support our communities, to support our families. It's our role to do that responsibly. We look to science for a biomass that says, "This is the level that you can harvest safely, based on scientific datasets." We have them in tenfold. Then, it's the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' responsibility to develop the policy, to develop the IFMPs, to develop the management scheme around this biomass. Then the federal and provincial governments' responsibility is to market...and to ensure that these fisheries are completed safely and humanely—in relation to seals or any animal that you're harvesting.

The role of the environmental groups is to ensure that what we are harvesting is not putting any one species, or the food web that's attached to that species, at risk. I don't really see any risk for pin-nipeds.

**Mr. Mike Kelloway:** Thanks, Ginny.

I'm going to stay with you. In my interactions with you and the association, you and your group always come with ideas and strong recommendations. I'm going to ask you to put some thought into this, but I'm pretty sure you have a really good answer.

We've heard throughout the seal summit, and so far in our conversations here on this study, that one of the most important things is access to markets and the utilization of the full seal. However, I'm curious as to what steps we can take to move this ball forward in a substantial way, in the short term and the long term, in terms of the industry itself and how we market it, how we access markets. I know your organization is on the cutting edge of how best we can do that.

**Ms. Ginny Boudreau:** Thank you for the question.

For any species that we harvest, there has to be a market for it or we wouldn't be harvesting it. If we're not going to be paid for our work, and we're going to take a resource from the marine environment, then the return on that has to be greater than the effort and the cost put into that. That will dictate the level of involvement for harvesters.

If the market is not there, then how do we develop that? That's not rocket science, and we shouldn't have to reinvent the wheel for this. How do we develop markets for any species that we harvest? In fact, how do we develop markets in Canada for blueberries, for beef or for pork and all the challenges that come along with those?

We have a policy in place. We show our proven track record. We show the chain of custody to show that the food product is safe and that it's harvested sustainably. It's promotion, it's pride and it's the Canadian government standing up for the seal industry and saying that this is a sustainable harvest and this is a humane harvest. The biomass is unbelievable. The resource is there for Canadians.

It just boggles my mind how we can't get around this, because there are customers out there. There are customers who want to utilize every part of the seal. We were even talking about using the offal and the waste for bait as an alternative to some of our other forage species that have very low biomass currently.

It's putting that whole picture together. I see the role of the provincial government, as well as the federal government, in assisting the industry to get those processing plants, the facilities, up and running then into the markets. China is a huge market, and the U.K. is a huge market. The whole world is starving for the high protein, the omega-3 and the pelts. I don't know why we're challenged with this. We are not challenged with anything else that we're trying to promote and market.

I hope that answers your question.

• (1600)

**Mr. Mike Kelloway:** It certainly does, and I really appreciate the thoughtful answers.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Kelloway.

We'll now go to Madame Michaud for six minutes or less, please.

[Translation]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank the witnesses for being here.

To be honest with you, I'm not as knowledgeable about fisheries as the colleague I'm replacing, Caroline Desbiens. That said—

[English]

**The Chair:** We'll wait for a second, as there's no translation coming through.

Could we get that checked, please?

[Translation]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Mr. Chair, do you want me to keep talking to see if—

[English]

**The Chair:** As the Speaker would say, "start from the top."

[Translation]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Okay.

I want to thank the witnesses for agreeing to share their expertise with the committee.

Speaking of expertise, I just want to say that I don't have as much of it as the colleague I'm replacing today, Caroline Desbiens. That being said, I am from the Gaspé Peninsula, a region where fishing is extremely important.

I believe the committee has heard testimony from some associations I'm very familiar with, like the Regroupement des pêcheurs professionnels du sud de la Gaspésie. The witnesses talked about the closure of certain fisheries, including the herring and mackerel fisheries. For them, the consequences have been significant.

I'm sure everyone here knows how the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard responded when she was asked about this issue. Instead of proposing a solution and offering the fish harvesters financial compensation, she suggested that they change jobs. Obviously, that's a whole other issue.

I did some reading on this subject, and I gather that there's a link between the pinniped population and fish stocks. Mr. Jones talked about the mackerel, cod, shrimp and crab fisheries. If I understand correctly, the closures in certain fisheries were related to pinniped overpopulation. Do I have that right? If so, can you tell us more about that?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Who would you like to answer your question?

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** I would like to hear from Mr. Jones.

[*English*]

**Mr. Trevor Jones:** Thank you for the question.

The relationship between the decimation of all of our stocks... It's not because we're overharvesting. We're harvesting at a lower level than we've ever harvested most species. The only relationship we can see is through the pinniped population. That has exploded, and our fish stocks went down. I don't see how anybody can argue with that.

We decided we needed to find something else to do. I'm a big mackerel fisher, and have been all my life. I'm an advocate that we should be harvesting mackerel right now, yet here we are in a moratorium. I don't know how to further apply our answer to the question, to be honest with you.

Just to see the massive amount of stock of seals in our ocean, and in our bays right now with all the young. The population is going to increase again this year and we're going to harvest somewhere around 35,000 or 40,000 maybe. That's what it seems like, a modest harvest, and we should be harvesting 400,000. It's gotta be decimating our stocks.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Thank you, Mr. Jones. I think what you said was similar to what Mr. Woodford said earlier, namely that there have been enough studies and research over the years. You yourself are on the ground, or on the water, rather. You're witnessing what's going on, and you'd like the government to take action.

The Bloc Québécois held a fisheries round table on the right whale in December. Fish harvesters from various regions came to talk to us. It was very enlightening. That's where I found out that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans doesn't always consult fish harvesters, for fear of a conflict of interest. But the problem isn't a conflict of interest, it's more that fish harvesters and hunters are familiar with the reality on the ground and could help departmental officials understand what's happening and respond accordingly.

Do you think that's what's happening right now with pinnipeds? Do you think that not enough consultations are being done with the people on the ground, like you, the hunters, the fish harvesters and the associations?

My question is for all three witnesses. They can answer one by one.

• (1605)

[*English*]

**Ms. Ginny Boudreau:** Thank you for that question. It's near and dear to my heart.

I am 100% convinced that harvesters need to be consulted. In almost all cases, they have the answers, if they're asked and allowed to contribute. The issue with many of our stocks is that because of the lack of seal diet datasets, it is very difficult to access the existing ones and to get the Department of Fisheries and Oceans scientists and managers to include field predation on whatever species we're talking about. Only in 2023 did we actually get mackerel as part of the assessment of the predator. Gee, there's a revelation. Fishermen have been telling the department this for over 20 years, not just with regard to mackerel, but also cod, herring and halibut. It goes right down the line with the species. Therefore, it's imperative that we have input and that we get to contribute to what the predators are in the fishery.

That's not to say that fishing effort does not impact fishing stocks, but when we have a biomass and we have a model that's fed into it and we're the only ones who are fed into the model, then the output is going to come out wrong every time. Right now, we can afford a short amount of time to come up with a harvesting plan for pinnipeds. Very soon, and we may already be past it, we will be at a point where harvesting is not going to do it. We're going to have to start talking about cull. As harvesters, we don't want to have that conversation. We want to have the conversation of how can we harvest these. That's the solution from harvesters. We're at that time when the clock is ticking and we are getting to the point where these fish species can no longer absorb the predation.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madame Michaud. We went a bit over.

We'll now go to Ms. Barron for six minutes or less, please.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.



Thank you to all of our witnesses here today.

My first question is for Mr. Jones.

You spoke about the importance of full utilization in pinniped harvesting. Could you tell me a bit more about whether you currently have the infrastructure in place to successfully harvest in a manner that allows for the full utilization of a seal harvest? What's in place currently? What's needed? What government support would be required in order to ensure that such a harvest would be sustainable and, as you say, fully utilizing the entire pinniped?

• (1610)

**Mr. Trevor Jones:** That's a tall question. I'll try to do my best with it.

Over the last number of years, I have harvested older seals over the younger ones for the purpose of full utilization. We harvest the meat, some organs, the pelt and the fat. We've even brought in some daddlers with nails and that so they could use that or do some experimental work with that.

There's quite a bit of infrastructure in place when it comes to processing facilities—not just seal plants, but other plants that do fish products. We would certainly need an investment if you were going to do a large-scale full utilization of the animals. There's no doubt. If you're going to harvest 400,000, that's a huge number for full utilization, especially on the older seals. It would no doubt require quite a bit of infrastructure to help that along.

The first step would be markets. I believe the infrastructure would fall in place once we have the markets in place where we could move the products.

I don't know if that helps or if that's enough of an answer for you.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** Yes, that's very helpful. Thank you.

It sounds like it's a continued conversation. I agree.

My next question for you, Mr. Jones, is about the market. I know you've spoken to it already in your testimony and in answers to other questions. You discussed the importance of governments working with other governments. Could you share a bit with us about the barriers that you see in your position and that you're hearing about from fish harvesters? Are there any barriers that you're seeing for us to be able to move forward? What do you think would be helpful to get these discussions moving at a quicker pace? What do you think you could do on your end?

What do we need to know in order to move forward in a constructive way? Perhaps that's a better question.

**Mr. Trevor Jones:** Perhaps a better relationship between the harvesters and the government.... We don't hear of any real conversations with other governments on this issue. Our friends to the south of us have a huge population of 300 million or so and a great market, yet they've had a ban on it for decades. Those conversations need to be had with top-level officials.

We need to make them realize just how huge an impact this overpopulation of pinnipeds is having on our fish resources, which the world needs and starving people need. We're going to need it, and we're going to continue to need it. My fellow harvesters and I need

it now for a living, and the rest of our country needs it for good protein and whatnot.

We have to get down and have real conversations, but we're not hearing tell of any of that. We don't see any effort from our governments in that manner. If it's being done, we're not being told about it.

At least let us know where the government truly stands on it.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** Thank you, Mr. Jones.

What are your thoughts around the Canadian market, specifically?

**Mr. Trevor Jones:** I think there's been some promoting going on in the last year or so. At the seal summit I attended this fall, there were talks of some marketing that has been done. There's no doubt we could expand more. There are lots of people within this country who like seal or can acquire a taste for it and its product.

I think we're doing very well, but I believe we can do much better.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** Thank you.

My next question is for you, Ms. Boudreau. I'm wondering if you could build on this question. I know that in your testimony you were speaking about the importance of an international marketing plan around pinnipeds. Can you share a little bit more around how you foresee that working? What needs to be done for us to move forward in a more timely manner on this plan?

**Ms. Ginny Boudreau:** A good start would be to have our federal minister come out and publicly promote the seal industry in Canada for what it actually is. In my presentation, I mentioned the meat, the oils, the pelts and even the fashion. It's a whole product. It's not a challenge to utilize the whole animal. It's a matter of Canada sticking up for this industry and saying that we're proud of this. This is part of our culture. This is part of our economy. This is part of who we are. It's not to say that we're barbarians and that we club baby seals. That's the perception out there, but our Canadian government has allowed that perception to be out there.

It would go so far if our minister would come out and say, "This is a viable, sustainable, humane industry." Then, if we build it, they will come, if we put the investment into the infrastructure to grow these markets internationally and nationally. I think nationally it's very important that we do that foundation work first. If we don't have our own Canadian people promoting this and supporting this, then how can we expect to expand it into the international market? That goes for our politicians as well.

• (1615)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Barron. You've gone a good bit over, actually.

We'll go now to Mr. Arnold for five minutes or less, please.

**Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll be splitting my time with Mr. Perkins.

Thank you to the witnesses for appearing before the committee.

I want to start out with you, Mr. Woodford. You mentioned that a number of studies have been done over the years. Would you be able to provide to the committee a list of the studies that you're aware of so that those can be submitted as testimony for this study as well? If you could provide that in writing to the clerk, I think it would be very helpful.

Would you be able to provide that?

**Mr. Eldred Woodford:** I most certainly could, sir, but I would imagine that you probably got a list maybe a week or so ago from Mr. Bob Hardy. I think he made a presentation to your committee as well. He did a massive amount of work putting this all together. I'm assuming that he presented that to you. If not, then I can definitely get a copy of it and provide it to the committee.

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** Thank you. We'll double-check that list, then.

Thank you very much. I have really limited time here.

Mr. Jones, could you describe what you and your network of colleagues see as the biggest impediments to growth in Canada's fisheries industry? That would be all types of fisheries—the regrowth of the cod harvest, the other fisheries that are potentially there, and even the seal fisheries, if you want to call it that.

What would you describe as the biggest impediments?

**Mr. Trevor Jones:** When it comes to the biggest impediment to growth, it appears that people are always blaming, as Ginny alluded to earlier, the harvesters and overfishing, but that's certainly not the case. We have the right environment. We have everything we need naturally. What people are not seeing is that the overpopulation of pinnipeds is eating away at our livelihood and eating away at our fish stocks.

For 2J harvesters in Labrador, one of the biggest impediments to the growth of their fish stocks and the struggles they're having is pinnipeds. That's where they spend most of their year until they... You know, some come up in our bays, but that's where the biggest population of our herd of seals is for the bulk of the year.

If we want fish stocks to grow and rebound, we have to address this overpopulation.

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** Thank you.

**Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Boudreau, at the seal summit last fall, the big announcement at the end of the day from the minister was that we needed to do more science to figure out what seals were eating.

Do we need to do more science?

**Ms. Ginny Boudreau:** I didn't think that was such a big announcement, but thank you for pointing that out.

Yes, we do need to do more seal science, but only in relation to the effects of these pinniped populations on the ecosystem and on that food web. What are these species eating? We know what

they're eating. Harvesters know what they're eating. We see it. We're living it every day, but that has failed to get into the datasets that are presented by our species scientists and managers. That is the only area where I feel we need more science.

• (1620)

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** Mr. Jones, you fish a lot of mackerel. There is a DFO slide that I think came from the Atlantic mackerel advisory committee meeting in Halifax a few weeks ago. It shows that DFO found from the grey seals' stomach contents that more than 47% of the diet they had eaten in the winter was mackerel. I thought mackerel aren't supposed to be around in the winter.

What's happening that they would be eating mackerel?

**Mr. Trevor Jones:** Obviously, there's a shift in the biomass of mackerel. Our waters stay warmer for longer throughout the winter. You can see that in our ice floes, which disappear much faster than in previous years with the weather conditions and whatnot. The mackerel seem to be staying in our waters more throughout the year and for longer periods of time. I guess that's why.

If they're there more, then the grey seals are going to be eating a lot more throughout, so it's going to be affecting that stock even more.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Perkins.

We're a little bit over, but we'll try to make up for that as we go.

We'll now go to Mr. Morrissey for five minutes or less, please.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My question would be for Ms. Boudreau and possibly Mr. Jones.

In fairness, Ms. Boudreau, I've heard the current minister articulate exactly what you said about promoting the value of the Canadian seal as products and how it's harvested in a humane way. In fact, in fairness, most ministers over the past 20 years have been saying the same, from both the former government and this government.

They've also been making the comment that we have to expand markets as a solution. Those markets have never come. For the seal herd, everybody recognizes that there is a current allowable hunt of somewhere between 400,000 and 500,000 animals. I understand 600,000 would be optimal to bring the seal herd back in balance on the east coast. This discussion has occurred for some time with no resolution.

To have a market, you need a customer. Who is the customer we are missing? Without a customer, I fail to see what the solution would be. Who is the customer we should be identifying for the products that would come from a sustainable harvest?

That's for Ms. Boudreau, and then I'd be curious to have Mr. Jones's comment.

**Ms. Ginny Boudreau:** Thank you.

First and foremost, I am your customer. I buy seal oil tablets currently. I buy mittens and I buy boots for my grandchildren. I make them wear them to school, by the way, and they do get very interesting responses. I am your customer. My neighbours are your customer. Canadians are our customer. Then we expand.

Whom do we currently market our marine products to? It's the United States, China and the U.K. Over the whole world, there are people starved for protein. Protein is becoming one of the most difficult and expensive items to access that we require in our diet. It's—

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** Then where's the disconnect? As you identify, you're a customer, but we're harvesting 18,000 seals or somewhere around that. We need more customers than you and whoever else you identified to sustain a harvest that's estimated to have to be about 600,000 animals to stabilize the seal population and reduce it to a manageable level that would not have that impact on other fisheries. While that's okay to say, you need a substantive customer base.

This is where I'm about to go to Mr. Jones—and I believe you may have commented on it as well, Ms. Boudreau. Do we have the adequate infrastructure to harvest that capacity of animals at sea and get them back to land in a state that an entrepreneur can process as sellable products? I'm referring to the fishing fleet. I'm not familiar with it in Newfoundland, but you're dealing with a very bulky, large animal and you have to get it back to a processor in a state that the processor can do something with. Do we have the adequate infrastructure to harvest effectively at sea?

I ask because if we don't solve that problem, you're not going to build that customer base or market base. You have to be able to target and get enough animals back to shore on a sustained basis, on a long-term basis, that would give the confidence to the processor to process.

Would you comment, Ms. Boudreau, and then Mr. Jones? And then I'll be in overtime.

• (1625)

**Ms. Ginny Boudreau:** Thank you.

I cannot currently access all of the products when I want them and as readily as I would like to have them. As a customer, that's an issue for me. We're already not producing enough.

Regarding the issue of whether we have the capability or capacity on our vessels, we handle bluefin tuna right now. It's a massive species. If there was an investment by the government and a market, harvesters would invest in their vessels so that they can respond to this fishery.

I'll let Trevor respond.

**The Chair:** Actually, I'll ask Mr. Jones if he can send a response in writing to the committee, please, because Mr. Morrissey has gone a little bit over time and we're trying to keep it as close as we can to the suggested time frame.

I will now go to Madame Michaud for two and a half minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'm going to continue along the same lines with you, Ms. Boudreau.

Earlier, my NDP colleague asked you about an international marketing plan. What about local marketing? You talked a bit about marketing the product, meaning not just the meat, but also the oil, the pelts and skins, and all the by-products. Last week, Sandra Gauthier of Exploramer told us that just over 200 restaurants in Quebec and several supermarkets want these products, but there's not quite enough supply to meet demand.

What kind of vision should be in place at the local level before we start thinking about marketing these products internationally?

[*English*]

**Ms. Ginny Boudreau:** I think Mr. Woodford would probably have a better response to that because that is definitely his area of expertise, if you wouldn't mind my passing the question on to him.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Sure.

[*English*]

**Mr. Eldred Woodford:** The international market was there. The doors were shut. We had products. The Newfoundland seal industry, and the Canadian seal industry people in general, was a success story. We built this industry from a few thousand in the eighties up to years when we harvested 350,000 to 360,000 and could have harvested more. The demand was there. The customers were there. The markets were being addressed.

We had four processing companies on the island that produced seals, competed for the seals and put a great value onto the seals. When we lost our access to the market, those companies generally shut down, one after the other, and right now we only have one. As someone stated earlier, when asked what we need, we need access to markets because the customers are there. The customers are the general population out there who could walk into the store, look at a product and make a personal decision on whether or not they want to buy that product. That has never been the problem. The problem has always been the access.

Our success in Newfoundland from building a seal industry after the whitecoat ban of the 1980s was wonderful. The communities were ecstatic about the money that was being generated, the extra money and the plant workers working all the time. It was providing the international marketplace with the products. These products weren't being sold here in Canada. For the last few years, the government has invested greatly in the Canadian market, and for some reason, I guess, it has not taken a foothold. The only thing that's keeping our industry alive today is a small Canadian market. Our main market has been international; it always has been and probably always would be.

The industry needs assistance in the ability to access the marketplace. That is what it is. We talk about DFO and its studies and all the reports that have been written. I was at the seal forum in November when Minister Murray made a statement that it was the first official seal forum. That's not true. I was at the much larger seal forum in 2002, when the industry made recommendations that were going to be required to have attention and to be addressed in order that we wouldn't be in the state we are in today, because industry predicted all of this.

For everyone's information, we, the Canadian seal industry, were the first industry in Canada to adopt the precautionary approach framework for dealing with the seal population. At the time, in 2002, it was somewhere in the vicinity of 4.8 million to 5.2 million animals. It was providing us, at the time, with a total allowable catch of somewhere in the vicinity of 320,000 animals per year. That did somewhat control the population, but it still increased.

Now we're at a point where our population of seals is up around the tens of millions. One gentleman earlier said that we'd need a harvest of 600,000 to control it. That would be only to control it. We need a number much larger than that now for the protection that our ecosystem and our fish stocks need. It's only a matter of time.

I sat here this evening as a favour to a person to come here and do this, because I've seen so much of this in the last 30 years that I'm full to the chin, pretty much. We need action. The action right now is a cull to control the population on an ecosystem basis.

If you had an aquarium and you had fish growing in it and you tossed in a seal, you know what he'd do. If you need to do studies on what seals eat.... Seals are the most opportunistic feeders in the ocean. They will eat whatever is there in that vicinity. All of the studies previously, going back some 30 years, may have been taken from seals in the bays when there were no capelin or no cod and the seals were living off the fat reserves that are in their fat—

• (1630)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Woodford. I have to end it there. We have gone way over. I want to get Ms. Barron in before we end this first hour of testimony.

We'll go to Ms. Barron for two and a half minutes, please.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My question is for Mr. Jones again.

Mr. Jones, help me understand the information here. Just to be clear, I'm very much in support of a region-specific, sustainable seal harvest. I feel like we've received ample information to support

a move for region-specific, sustainable seal harvesting already to date. What I am trying to understand, though, is that we are hearing that there is pressure for this to happen immediately and that this needs to be timely.

I'm also hearing that we don't have the infrastructure in place, that we don't have the market in place and that we need to have an international market for this to be successful. If we truly want to move forward with a sustainable seal harvest—not a cull, which, as I'm being told over and over, is not what we're pushing for—what do we need to know as a committee?

I'm hoping to get, at the end of this, sound recommendations to provide to the government on the best next steps in a timely, clear manner. Any information that you can provide today will help us to be able to have those clear recommendations and be able support a move in the right direction.

Can you share your thoughts around that?

**Mr. Trevor Jones:** Let's put some boots on the ground and get running with it if we want to do it in a timely manner. Let's open up the markets.

We harvested 400,000 seals in a matter of two or three weeks at one time. That was not a problem, but we've lost some of that infrastructure along the way. If we could have access to markets, I think the rest of it will begin to fall in place. You would get the investments. I guarantee there will be other countries wanting to invest in it.

The problem is that we need to open up that access. Before that European ban on seals, we were moving seal product at three times the price we're getting today and we were moving all of the 400,000 that were being harvested year over year. Then that ban came in place and it was just like turning a valve and it closed off.

• (1635)

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** Thank you, Mr. Jones.

I know it's a big question that I just asked you, and I appreciate that. I'm running out of time, so perhaps you could provide this in writing.

Would you be able to provide us with some tangible ask through FFAW for what fishers would be needing in order to move forward with a sustainable seal harvest if this were to move forward in a timely manner? I'm trying to understand what's currently in place and what we need.

Is this information that you have access to?

**Mr. Trevor Jones:** I think we could gather some information. For me, it gets busy this time of year, but I think I could pass it along to FFAW, and I'm sure Eldred there, with the Canadian Sealers Association, could gather whatever information you might want or need. We could see where we go from there.

It sounds positive to have someone asking those questions. Thank you for the question.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Barron.

That concludes our first hour of testimony. We'll suspend for a few minutes to change out to our second panel. I want to thank all of the witnesses for taking the time to appear today and share their knowledge with the committee.

Thank you.

• (1635) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1640)

**The Chair:** We're back.

I'd like to make a few comments for the benefit of the witnesses.

Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. For those participating by video conference, click on the microphone icon to activate your mike. Please mute yourself when you are not speaking. For interpretation for those on Zoom, you have the choice, at the bottom of your screen, of floor, English or French. For those in the room, of course, you can use the earpiece and select the desired channel. All comments should be addressed through the chair.

Finally, I remind you that the use of a House-approved headset is mandatory for all of our participants in parliamentary proceedings.

I would now like to welcome our witnesses.

Appearing by video conference is Dr. George Rose, professor of fisheries. Representing SEA-NL, we have executive director Ryan Cleary, who needs no introduction in any of these committee rooms, I'm sure, and Mr. Merv Wiseman, ex-officio board member.

Thank you for taking the time to appear today. You each have five minutes for an opening statement.

We'll start with Dr. Rose, please, for five minutes or less.

**Dr. George Rose (Professor of Fisheries, As an Individual):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Greetings to everyone.

I would like to make a few broad ecological statements first about the situation on our east and west coasts, and then maybe get to some more specifics as time allows for your questions.

I think it's beyond dispute that the marine ecosystems on both our east and west coasts are what I call out of kilter, which is very different from the past norms that supported our fisheries on both coasts for hundreds of years. One of the chief symptoms of this "out-of-kilterness" is a huge relative increase in some cases—and in other cases not as huge—in pinnipeds relative to the things they eat, which is almost everything in the ecosystem, but especially our commercially important fishes.

In [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] ecosystem that will have a pyramid of what we call trophic energy, or you look at it as biomass. In simple terms, there should be a lot more small things than large things, because large things eat smaller things in generality. You should see that pyramid. That's what sustainable ecosystems look like.

If you look at, for example, our northern cod ecosystem off Newfoundland and Labrador, what you see is the exact opposite. What you see is that the biomass of seals is greater than the biomass of cod and capelin put together in that ecosystem. This is an extreme case of being out of kilter.

Another thing that's really important in the ecological sense is that most of the pinniped species are migratory. They can sustain very high populations, not based on the commercial species that we're talking about, but on other things. The potential impacts on the commercial species can be looked at as collateral damage from the standpoint of the pinnipeds. They don't need to be focusing on those species to have that big effect.

That's kind of the case. If we look at the case of harp seals in Newfoundland, which is on people's minds, some of the better studied cases are in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence with grey seals. That is clearly an example of the cod stock there, which, according to some of our better scientists—Dr. Swain and his colleagues down that way—could even face extirpation because of pinniped predation.

The west coast here, out in the Pacific, is not immune from this either. There has been new immigration of California sea lions into the coastal areas of British Columbia. They're moving north. This brings in the climate change impact, which is affecting just about everything.

Recent studies by a colleague of mine, Dr. Carl Walters at UBC, have shown fairly convincingly that pinniped predation has severely impacted Fraser River salmon stocks, and it is one of the reasons why—out here on the west coast as well—we're seeing this kind of inverted pyramid of biomass in our ecosystems. Depending on what your goal is in managing ecosystems.... If it is commercial fisheries, it's hard to look at this positively.

To get to some specific things that I'm sure you're interested in, the northern cod ecosystem off Newfoundland and Labrador is where I spent most of my career. I've been retired now for a number of years, but I spent most of my career there as a working scientist on the fish stocks.

• (1645)

The system there is extreme, as I mentioned earlier. I take exception with the DFO statement. If you look at their brochure on harp seals, they state that harp seal predation was not a significant factor in the lack of cod recovery, and there was no evidence that harp seals negatively impacted capelin. I know the studies this is based on. This is based on a couple of studies by colleagues over a decade ago. However, I think the evidence for this—that they have no impact, particularly on capelin—is quite weak, and in some cases there's really no substantial evidence of that at all.

That's one of the things I would like to stress from the ecological side, though. The effects that pinnipeds can have, or that any predators can have, are not necessarily direct. They can be indirect. The best example that I could use is that the effects on cod, for example, might be actually through capelin. By influencing capelin, you will influence cod.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Rose. We've gone way over the five-minute mark, almost up to another minute.

I'll go now to Mr. Cleary and Mr. Wiseman.

I don't know if you're sharing your five minutes or not.

Mr. Cleary, when you're ready, you have five minutes or less, please.

**Mr. Ryan Cleary (Executive Director, Seaward Enterprises Association of Newfoundland and Labrador Inc.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans for the invitation to testify as part of this latest pinniped study. I say "latest" because, as this committee has already heard, there have been dozens of federal government studies and reports since the early 1990s on the east coast seal problem.

To this point, Ottawa's seal strategy has been to study the animals to death. I can report conclusively to this committee that, beyond a shadow of any doubt, this strategy is not working.

It was only last year that the federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, in the biggest single advancement for the pro-sealing cause in decades, acknowledged on behalf of the Government of Canada, for all of the nations of the world to hear, that seals eat fish. What sweet central Canadian words those were to the ears of the small boat fishermen and women of Newfoundland and Labrador. There's an old joke back home that seals don't eat Kentucky Fried, but that joke stopped being funny years ago when the inshore fishery began fading before our eyes on every coast of Newfoundland and Labrador.

As the seal population of Atlantic Canada has ballooned to 10 million-plus animals, the number of small boat enterprises in my province alone, the sector that SEA-NL represents, has dropped like a rock from more than 20,000 in 1992 to just over 3,200 today—and has been dropping every single year. That is no coincidence. The seal population is up; the fishermen population is down.

I attended a northern cod advisory this week in St. John's, and DFO mathematicians—who cannot be called scientists anymore because there has not been any solid seal science in years—said with absolute confidence that seals do not impact northern cod. I remind the committee that this is year 31 of what was supposed to be a two-year northern cod moratorium. The moratorium was supposed to end in 1994, 29 years ago.

Seals eat millions of tonnes of fish a year, including the very capelin that northern cod feed on, yet DFO managers and mathematicians, who, to be frank, have precious little credibility back home, can say with supreme confidence—the most confidence I've ever heard DFO staff speak with about any species—that seals are not having an impact on cod and are not really having an impact on any species—not snow crab, not northern shrimp, not capelin.

DFO's poster boy species for successful fisheries management in eastern Canada is the seal, at the expense of the wild commercial fishery's groundfish, pelagic fish and shellfish.

In 1991, 32 years ago, the Leslie Harris report on the state of the northern cod stock recommended the following: "That every reasonable effort be made to understand the cod-capelin-seal interactions and to incorporate appropriate data into cod population assessments." That was not done. DFO still has no handle on cod-capelin-seal interactions. I can show you all kinds of videos of seal stomachs literally bursting with capelin, herring and snow crab. In cod stomachs and livers, they're not so easy to point out.

The impact of millions of seals is not factored into fisheries management assessments. That is inexcusable. DFO is not doing its job. DFO purposely chose to ignore advice about incorporating seals into management assessments because seals take precedence over fishermen with the Government of Canada. That's what it comes down to. It is absolutely undeniable. If DFO's chief cod mathematician can brazenly tell the world that seals are not having an impact, DFO has zero credibility. I can tell you for a fact that 10 million-plus seals are having a crushing impact on 520,000 Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Does that count for anything?

I served for four and a half years here in Ottawa as an MP, and the unwritten rule was that there are two subjects MPs do not talk about: their pension plan and seals. Some parties may take a public stand in support of the seal hunt, but in private their stand is that they do not open their mouth. That is the Ottawa reality.

The membership of SEA-NL passed a motion at our February AGM to demand that DFO develop an action plan to deal with seals on the Pacific and Atlantic coasts, as well as Arctic waters, within six months. That's SEA-NL's advice to this committee.

● (1650)

I have a final, important point about groups like Oceana Canada, which have the Liberal government's ear on fisheries management. It was only last year that Oceana Canada called for the shutdown of the commercial capelin fishery at the same time that DFO's own mathematicians said the impact of that 15,000-tonne capelin fishery does not register on the capelin stock. It does not register. It's not comparable in any way to the millions of tonnes consumed by seals.

It is a job not to be suspicious of groups like Oceana Canada, which urgently recommend the counting of every last fish caught in Canadian waters when they don't have a policy on seals and when they don't have a policy on foreign overfishing outside of the 200-mile limit. Groups like Oceana Canada and Oceans North are seen as lackeys of the Government of Canada.

Groups like Oceana Canada don't say a public word about seals. They don't have an official stance on seals. However, if you review their social media posts, you'll read that baby harp seals are adorable, that harbour seals are the cutest and that grey seals like to play peekaboo. What does that tell the members of this committee about their motives?

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

• (1655)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Cleary. You've gone way over your five minutes.

We'll now go to our round of questioning. We'll start off with six minutes or less for Mr. Arnold.

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will again be splitting my time, but this time with Mr. Small.

Mr. Cleary, can you describe what the impact of managing only prey species and not managing predator species would be?

I only have three minutes, because I have to split my time.

**Mr. Ryan Cleary:** The answer is that it's not proper management. If you're not managing the entire ecosystem—all the predators and the prey—that is not proper management.

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** Can you describe what the impacts would be?

**Mr. Ryan Cleary:** The impacts would be exactly what you have now.

We have three cod stocks adjacent to Newfoundland. All three cod stocks are in the critical zone around Newfoundland. We have a moratorium on northern cod, year 31. We have a moratorium in 4R in the gulf, year two. We have a 1,500-tonne quota on the south coast 3Ps cod. All three groundfish stocks are in ridiculous shape. The capelin, which is one of the foundational species for our ecosystem, is in ridiculous shape.

It's not improving. Why is that?

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** Thank you.

Mr. Rose, you spoke briefly about the evidence of the impact on capelin as being quite weak. Could you elaborate on that a little further?

**Dr. George Rose:** These conclusions are based on studies that were done by DFO scientists well over a decade ago. The evidence is weak. It's all correlative, and the problem with that is that it doesn't prove anything. Scientifically, it proves no cause and effect at all. It's just very weak. The data are weak to start with, and so on.

I think the main mechanism that's going on here in these ecosystems with the pinnipeds is removing the prey of other species. It's been mentioned about capelin. It's so important in the north Atlantic. The effects of this.... There are studies that have been done in Norway that show very clearly that what happens with capelin is

going to affect what happens with seals and what happens with cod. That's probably the main mechanism at work here, but the evidence that DFO is basing this on is very weak.

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** Thank you.

I'll turn my time over to Mr. Small now.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I heard Mr. Cleary say that the seals were studied to death, but it hasn't really brought down the population, so there wasn't much death to it.

Would we have to be here today, doing this study, if Bill C-251 had passed? What do you think, Mr. Cleary?

**Mr. Ryan Cleary:** No.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** I guess we'll keep on going here.

Mr. Wiseman, we heard a couple of witnesses earlier today talk about markets. Do you agree with these folks that the markets are the main thing that's holding back the harvesting of our current seal quotas?

**Mr. Mervin Wiseman (Ex-Officio Board Member, Seaward Enterprises Association of Newfoundland and Labrador Inc.):** Yes, I absolutely do.

Look, we can talk about the leverage that we have available to us to bring the seal population under control, and you can talk about culls, but I think before proceeding on that path of culling, we have to give a fair chance to developing the marketplace.

I'm involved in fur farming. I operate the largest silver fox farm in the world in North Harbour, Newfoundland and Labrador. I've been involved at the organizational level. I've been a director on the marketing board with the North American Fur Auctions out of New York and Toronto, and so on. We have had, for a long time—for years, for decades—a framework of marketing and promotion for furs, for mink, for fox, in particular, domestic farming, and so on.

In the international marketplace, I've watched the performance of the various companies involved in marketing and promoting all of these furs, and I know that it was taboo on the runways of Milan, Hong Kong, Frankfurt and New York. It was taboo to talk about and to bring seals into that particular domain. So why did this happen?

I know, likewise, that it's been almost taboo to discuss the issue of fur in trade negotiations, such the North American Free Trade Agreement, CETA, and others. There are so many others to choose from—the WTO, the EU, and some of the things that have been done. It seems like it's absolutely taboo to discuss the idea of opening the gateway for seals and allowing them to get in. Until we've gone there and done that, then we really can't say we've done a good job at the marketing of seals.

• (1700)

**Mr. Ryan Cleary:** Mr. Small, can I elaborate a bit on that first question you asked?

**Mr. Clifford Small:** Yes, go ahead.

**Mr. Ryan Cleary:** In terms of your bill to legislate the management of seal populations, that was doomed. You didn't have a chance, because the Government of Canada doesn't manage seals. They don't want the management of seals incorporated into population assessments for other stocks.

Again, the stand of the parties in Ottawa, from my time here—and I mean, I live and breathe this stuff—is that they may have a public stand to support the seal hunt, but it's a public stand. The private stand is the opposite.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Small. The time is up.

We'll move on now to Mr. Morrissey for six minutes or less, please.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** Thank you, Chair.

What's been interesting for this committee is that we hear a lot of lecturing. We hear a lot of bravado statements, but I'm more interested in substantive answers on what steps have to be taken, first of all, to encourage fishers to actually utilize the resource that's allowed to be taken, but that hasn't been taken for some time, which is several hundred thousand animals. I believe you can harvest between 400,000 and 500,000 animals.

We hear a lot of generalized statements, but those haven't worked because this problem has occurred over the past 20 years or so. We have to get to the root of the problem of what has to be done to encourage fishers to go out and harvest the seal population they're allowed to, and then begin working from there.

What action would government have to take that would actually get the harvesters on the sea harvesting those seals they're allowed to?

I'll go to you, Mr. Wiseman, on this.

**Mr. Mervin Wiseman:** Look, if you want to go back to.... I go back too far, I think, as I'm 70 years old as of this year. I grew up in a family of 14 people who depended on the seal and sealing, and the kind that came from that. It was common throughout the 1960s even, and the 1970s and 1980s, to harvest half a million seals, so it's not rocket science to harvest it and to bring it ashore.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** But why are we not doing it now?

**Mr. Mervin Wiseman:** Well, we're not doing it now because we have no marketplace.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** Right. You need a customer before you can have a market.

**Mr. Mervin Wiseman:** Yes.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** So how did we...? Where did the disconnect come between the customer and...? I ask because that harvest you were referring to was primarily dealing with taking the pelt off and marketing just that part. Am I correct?

**Mr. Mervin Wiseman:** Yes.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** Now we're talking about a seal hunt that must utilize the full animal, so the dynamics of the harvest will be different. Am I correct?

**Mr. Mervin Wiseman:** Yes.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** Would we need a much different vessel capacity to sustainably harvest that animal?

**Mr. Mervin Wiseman:** Not necessarily. We still use the same vehicles. For the vehicles we use now—if you want to use “vehicle”—or the vessel that we use, it's customary, in fact, for lots of them now to have the kinds of facilities on board that can sustain sensitive products, as they do, whether it's crustaceans, pelagics—no matter what it is. We actually end up in a much better position now to do this in an expedient manner and to get it ashore very quickly.

The question becomes this: Can it be facilitated onshore? Yes, there will have to be some modernization programming, for sure, but the facilities are there.

Then, it's the gateways to the marketplace.

It's a balanced approach. Yes, it's science, absolutely.

• (1705)

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** In that balanced approach, Canada depends heavily for some of its key fisheries on the U.S., which is still our biggest market for seafood, at somewhere around 70%, then on the European Union. Can we take a risk with having those two marketplaces retaliate against Canada?

You can enter in the trade courts, which is a process that can take years and years. Could you give me an opinion on that? Does government have to be very cautious about how it moves in a harvest to ensure that our key trading partners, who we depend on, do not retaliate against us?

**Mr. Mervin Wiseman:** Look, I may not have the perfect solution to this, but I understand from the motion that this committee has and the terms of reference, that, basically, to do the work you're going to do to solidify the report.... You're going to be travelling internationally.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** No, we're not. That was turned down.

**Mr. Mervin Wiseman:** It was turned down, was it? Well, find some other way to ask Norway how they managed to do that. Ask Iceland. Ask other countries that seem to have the fortitude to stand up and say they're going to do what they have to do to harvest their seals, and to do it on behalf of their fish harvesters and the people of their countries. They did it, and they seem to be doing quite fine.

I think it's a question of priority and standing up. Will it be easy? Not necessarily, but other countries seem to be able to do it. I think the answer lies there somewhere.



I think, yes, we have to take the risk. I don't see what the pat answer is to that, but I certainly don't see it as putting your tail between your legs and running, because that's what we've been doing up to this point.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** I agree. Successive governments have been unable to create or find a marketplace that sustains a seal hunt.

Mr. Chair, I have just one closing comment, because there was a reference made to the minister's statement, and I just want the record to be clear. The minister was asked to make that statement by fishers in Newfoundland, who said they wanted to hear a minister actually say publicly that seals eat fish.

That's why Minister Murray made that statement, because she was asked to by the fishers who were attending that summit.

With that, Chair, I don't have any other questions.

**The Chair:** Thank you. You're right on your mark for six minutes. Perfect.

We'll now go to Madame Michaud for six minutes or less, please.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I also want to thank you, Mr. Cleary, Mr. Wiseman and Mr. Rose. We're so glad to have you with us.

Mr. Cleary, I just want you to know that I really enjoyed your speech. It was very original. It's too bad that sometimes, you have to use sarcasm to make a point. In any case, I certainly got your point, so well done.

I've been a member of the House of Commons for three and a half years, and it's true that I've never talked about my pension plan. However, this is the first time I've sat on the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, and I am talking about seals, so there's a first time for everything.

What you and the other witnesses said today makes a lot of sense. It is completely mind-boggling to me that Fisheries and Oceans Canada isn't listening to fish harvesters and seal hunters, because I think we're really at a crossroads, the point where something needs to be done. You've been saying that yourself for years.

What everyone seems to agree on today is the need to control the pinniped population. Let's say that tomorrow morning, the federal government starts taking an interest in the seal hunt. What do you think DFO's priorities should be?

Should it issue more commercial fishing licences, provide more investment for processing plants, for example, opening up access to local or international markets, or develop a marketing plan?

What do you think are the first steps DFO should take?

[*English*]

**Mr. Ryan Cleary:** As I said in the opening remarks, the first steps are an action plan within six months: action, action and action.

I know a lot of harvesters who shoot on sight. If they are in a boat and they see a seal that's interfering with what they are doing,

they take the seal out. I think a lot more of that is going to be happening. It's time for the rubber to hit the road.

I don't know exactly how it works in Australia in terms of kangaroos and the 100 billion animals they have taken out in the past decade or so. I don't know if there's a market for all that meat and all that skin.

I do know that, again, with a population of 520,000, our fisheries and our rural communities are suffering. Every single commercial species is suffering because of seals. It's time for action, and if the Government of Canada doesn't take action, I have no problem with the fishermen and fisherwomen of Newfoundland and Labrador taking action, because it has come to that point.

• (1710)

**Mr. Mervin Wiseman:** As quickly as I can, on the ground, we have to get at the fundamentals. Science is the fundamental function of where we need to go.

There was a milestone achieved in St. John's last November, not necessarily because the minister said, "Seals eat fish," and I would hate to think that she said that under duress, by the way, but she did say it. Somewhere in the bureaucracy there's a problem. I don't think it's at the ministerial level, other than the accountability of it.

For years, it was purported that seals have no impact on the ecosystem. The chief scientist for DFO was the one who said that and was highly offended that somebody would suggest that. Now we have come out of this summit with a fundamental change in science, so we're going there. What we didn't achieve, though, at the summit was having a fundamental approach, strategically, to do the marketing. Some of the gateways to marketing are through our international agreements.

How could we allow the EU to pass morality clauses on the actions of fishermen engaged in a legitimate fishery? We allow that, but we have levers through some of our trade negotiations to do something about that. The WTO has clauses to protect that. It has never been properly challenged—through the North American Free Trade Agreements and so on—to try to see if we can leverage the species protection act that the United States has to prevent us from getting our seal products in.

These are the items that we certainly have to address. Clearly, doing proper science now that we're supposed to be doing—we'll have to wait and see on that—will allow us then to neuter some of the outrageous and vacuous arguments that the animal welfare people keep using on us.

Somewhere within that fundamental science, by the way, it has to be acknowledged that fish harvesters do have a few clues about the population of seals, and they have a few clues about what they eat. I think that's important.

We have to factor into that mosaic of science the idea of pure science, as well as the empirical knowledge provided by fish harvesters who are out on the ocean every day.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** I'd like to pick up on what you were saying, Mr. Wiseman.

Even if we all agree that we need to listen to the science, you think that DFO officials should communicate more with the people on the ground, because they know all too well that seals feed on all kinds of fish stocks. As you said, they're not picky.

Should communication between the department and the people on the ground be improved?

[*English*]

**Mr. Mervin Wiseman:** Absolutely. We have to utilize that information. It's not being properly utilized. Obviously, there are more parts to the equation than just the fish harvesters, but that's a piece that's missing. We have simply eliminated that from the equation. The idea, the science, that we have is predicated on our having to prove that it has no impact on fish populations, so we have to develop the proper terms of reference for the kind of science that we're doing.

I don't know what that is. We're going in the right direction, but nobody really knows yet exactly what the wording and the language is going to be around that. That's an important piece.

We heard from the witnesses today—the people who have lived on the water and understand the impacts—the frustration and the mistrust. There has to be a feeling of trust between the people who are on the oceans, the fish harvesters, and the government, DFO and science. The mistrust that's there now, when you hear ludicrous and silly statements from educated scientists saying 10 million seals have no impact on fish.... Come on; that's a joke. Even bureaucrats in Ottawa who have never been to the east or west coasts would know the difference in that.

• (1715)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madame Michaud.

We'll now go to Ms. Barron for six minutes or less, please.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to our witnesses for being here.

If I could take a lighter note for just a second, I'm originally from Newfoundland; I'm not sure if you're aware. I was surprised to hear the joke was surrounding Kentucky Fried Chicken and not Mary Brown's. As an aside, I always preferred Mary Brown's.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** I actually wanted to see if Mr. Wiseman wanted to take some of my time to speak to the committee today about some of his opening statement he was hoping to present.

**Mr. Mervin Wiseman:** Thank you for that.

A lot of what I said—I'll ad lib also here—was statements that were already made about the effect it has on the social and econom-

ic well-being of the families of, actually, hundreds and thousands of harvesters out there.

I shared my experience of growing up in a family of 14 and what it meant to get out there and harvest animals in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s at a time when there were somewhere between 2.5 million and three million seals. We seemed to have a sustainable harvest at that point, although we agreed that we'd like to build a little onto that. I talked about that a fair amount.

Then, as we proceeded into the 1990s and 2000 and beyond, there seemed to be that dropping-off point that started to dictate that we were bringing about 40,000 to 50,000 seals to the marketplace. We went from that number of half a million seals in that period of time for reasons that I'm not sure anybody can entirely understand, quite frankly. Clearly, as I mentioned, we allowed the animal welfare people to really come in the back door, for reasons that were very nefarious.

I think the lack of science, or poor science—I spoke about that as well—and the rationalization for the kind of hunt we should have allowed these groups to come in and destroy the marketplace. I think all roads ultimately lead to the marketplace. I think we have to unravel that and understand that particular dynamic.

It was the pressure of the animal welfare groups, among others, that then allowed the kind of legislation we saw in the EU, which cut off a lot of populations and countries from accessing our products. Also, in the bilateral, trilateral and multilateral trade agreements and so on, there was always an absence of language around seal. It was taboo to even talk about it, let alone negotiate it.

We've missed something there. We've missed the gateway that would allow us to access these countries.

I didn't speak a lot about it, but I alluded very quickly to the idea of a marketing framework. There has always been an absence of a marketing framework. I say this because I was on the board of directors that travelled globally to market fur products in mink and fox in particular.

We grew the mink industry, by the way, to 125 million. We overstepped a little. We've had to rein that in. We've having challenges these days, because of the war in Ukraine, with our biggest buyers for long-haired furs in particular. In Russia, it's been eliminated. COVID in China and so on has been a problem; there's no question about that. Plus, their economy has really declined a lot. Those are geopolitical issues and so on that come and go, but we're still missing that fundamental framework that's needed for marketing and promotion.

We have had fashion shows with mink and fox in the great hall in China. Would they consider that for seals? Why weren't there seal products there? There's never been a collaboration with the marketing experts around the world to try to move that product out into the marketplace.

Denmark created the Great Greenland company. It's a massive enterprise that had a lot of success. They put a lot of money into the marketing of seals in Greenland—the same seals we are harvesting—and put them right into a world-renowned auction house in Copenhagen. They also put seal product and worked with seal fashion in one of the greatest fashion houses they've created, which exists in Denmark as we speak. There's never been any discussion with the Canadian government to consider moving seal product into these various venues and promoting it.

Unless we build that international marketing framework, we're going to continue to be in trouble. We can talk about domestic use of product even here in Canada, but it's not there.

• (1720)

Canada is not going to take us where we need to go. We can set some examples, of course—local use of products and so on—especially with some of the nutraceutical functional foods that we're now starting to derive from all this.

Here is the other leg up, the other piece of strategy that we could work on that we didn't have, let's say, with mink and fox. We could only talk about fur and fur products. We couldn't talk about full utilization of a mink carcass or of a fox carcass, because we were dealing with fur. We have fur from seals, but we now also have the fat, the meat products, the protein and all these functional foods.

I'm getting the flag that I've reached my time limit.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Barron.

Mr. Wiseman was speaking about utilizing the fat, and I finished my last bottle of seal oil capsules the other day, so I have to replenish them.

We'll now go to Mr. Hanley for five minutes or less, please.

**Mr. Brendan Hanley (Yukon, Lib.):** Thank you.

I've really been enjoying this testimony, so I appreciate all three of you for appearing today.

I want to pick up on some of the themes that we've just been hearing from Mr. Wiseman.

I'll go back to you, Dr. Rose.

I've had the opportunity to look at some of your writings and learn of your experience, particularly regarding northern cod. One of the themes I think I'm picking up is the lack of investment in rigorous stock assessment over the years. Therefore, there's a lack of reliable data; therefore, erroneous conclusions are being drawn.

If we're going to try to continue to document the effects of seals on cod, and particularly if we actually get into serious augmentation of harvesting, can you talk about the importance of rebuilding our ability to survey cod and other fish stocks? How do we need to better include fishers' observations in the evidence gathering?

**Dr. George Rose:** That question is really important.

For a number of years we've had difficulty, particularly in the Atlantic regions, with surveys and vessels. This is well known to people. I was involved in this for 30-plus years. That goes a long way back, but it seems recently it's gotten more extreme. Some of the

more important species that we have, commercially, depend on the surveys, and the surveys just aren't getting done.

It's been blamed on vessels that are not serviceable. We have new vessels coming in that weren't calibrated with the old vessels, and you can ask questions about why that wasn't done more efficiently and so on and so forth, but the bottom line, as was pointed out, is that the data—which is all-important in answering any of these questions that we have—for some of the key species, like capelin and now cod, just isn't there. What science does, when data isn't there, is create a model, which is just an abstraction. Unfortunately, models can prove just about anything, and that's sometimes where it goes astray.

If I can answer a previous question, I feel I have to put in some lines of defence for science. Certainly, in the questions of the interactions between pinnipeds and fish, it isn't universally accepted among working scientists that there's no effect. That's simply not the case.

There are very good examples within DFO, for example, of scientists who have published things that are definitely on the side of, "Yes, there's an influence. We may not be able to quantify it, because of the lack of data that we've referred to, but there's almost certainly an influence." To argue otherwise is ecological nonsense. That's true on the east coast and the west coast.

When it comes right down to it, we need better information on these things. There's no doubt about that. It seems to me, particularly in the last few years, that the situation—far from getting better, which we hoped it would—has been getting much worse.

• (1725)

**Mr. Brendan Hanley:** Thank you.

You spoke about the west coast, and I wanted to bring you back to the west coast, where you are already. It's around a focus.

One interesting suggestion that we had last week from Ken Pearce and Matt Stabler from the Pacific Balance Pinniped Society—I think it was Matt Stabler—was that they're ready to go. They could harvest 5,000 seals and evaluate the effect with a view to scaling up according to the results. In a way, it was to just get on with this and then evaluate what we do as part of a scientific assessment of harvesting and evaluation.

I wonder what your thoughts are on how that could work. Is that something you think could be scientifically justified in building our expertise? Also, I'm starting to go down that pathway of something we're apparently not supposed to be speaking about.

**Dr. George Rose:** Well, yes. This comes under the heading of what we used to call "experimental management". Management is tough; there's no question about that. It's very difficult to know.

One way it operates right now is on model projections, which are always questionable at best. Another way to look at this is what you've just described. It's what we call "experimental management". We don't know the outcome, but that's the whole idea.

Putting in place experiments like this is very interesting from the standpoint of management. From the standpoint of science, it's incredibly interesting to actually get real data on a well-controlled experimental basis that would involve harvesters. That's been spoken to before, and I totally agree with that. The involvement of harvesters is key to the success of any management. That would allow that. It would facilitate that in a big way.

Without going into specifics or details, in principle and in general from a science standpoint, my own view towards initiatives like that is very positive.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Rose, and thank you, Mr. Hanley.

We'll now go to Madame Michaud for two and a half minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Rose, in your opening remarks, you said that climate change would drive more migration north, with the expansion of populations of piscivorous pinnipeds on both coasts, namely California sea lions on the west coast and grey seals on the east coast.

I would like to hear you tell us more about the impact of climate change on pinnipeds. The hunt usually takes place from November to December. Is that still true? As we know, the ideal hunting season is now January to March, possibly due to climate change.

Do you think the dates should be adjusted?

Could you elaborate on the consequences of climate change?

[*English*]

**Dr. George Rose:** Climate change is impacting marine animal distributions, fish and mammals, right around the world. There's ample evidence of that. In some cases it's extreme, and in some cases it's minor.

Let me say a few words about the west coast first. In the case of pinnipeds, there have been massive increases in California sea lions

in the Salish Sea, off southern British Columbia. In some ways, they could be called an invasive species: They were never here before, and they're big fish eaters—big salmon eaters—so this impact that's taking place is changing the predator-prey relations.

On the east coast, the best example of this, or probably the most extreme, is the expansion of grey seals. I did a lot of work...I spent half my life, it seemed, in Placentia Bay for a period of almost two decades some years ago, but I never, ever saw a grey seal. I haven't been there recently, but people I know there will tell me, and some of the others who are more knowledgeable of the current situation there could speak to this perhaps, that grey seals are now seen on the south coast of Newfoundland, and may even be colonizing there.

There you have another example of where climate is changing. Seals will respond to temperature in the ocean and also to prey distributions. If they can find those two favourable factors, they will move there, especially—and this is key—if their populations are expanding. It's like anything else: When a population expands in numbers, it's going to try to expand in area. They're not all going to stay in the same place as their populations increase.

Both of those things are happening. It's less clear what's happening on the northeast coast of Newfoundland and Labrador, because those are ice seals—the harp seals and hooded seals—and they may move north. I'm not sure about that.

• (1730)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Dr. Rose. That is the end of our time for today's committee.

I want to say a big thank you to our guests in the second hour: Dr. Rose, Ryan Cleary, who's no stranger to the Hill, and Mervin Wiseman.

**An hon. member:** On a point of order—

**The Chair:** The clerk has advised me that the meeting started at 3:30 and has to end at 5:30.

The meeting is adjourned.







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