

TRACS

*The Responsible
Animal Care Society*

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Winter 2006/2007

aim

**animal issues
magazine**



Wings Over the Valley

**President's Message:
Pests Unite**

At what point does one stop being worthy and become a pest? Whether we were born to be human or non-human, it seems to me that all of us have pest potential. It just takes someone high up the ladder of authority to assign a demeaning label to an individual or a group, and the seeds of exploitation have been sown.

Sadly, those with no voice to speak in their own defense often become victims of such misdirected power. *Animals are easy targets.* Municipal, provincial, and federal officials are in a habit of dubbing certain species "nuisance wildlife" or "pests", perhaps expecting that no one will question that label. In addition, the disposal of anything pesky is currently an acceptable practice in our society. (There are even university courses in pest management.) Labels are convenient, for it is much easier to kill "pests" than "sentient living beings". Not all officials in charge of dealing with wildlife want to kill animals, though. I've known some ethical ones, who will go the extra mile for the underdog. And I've met others who, duped and jaded, have become pawns of the callous system they work for. Somewhere in the process of moving up the political ladder, they have stopped questioning and caring. They are victims of the system themselves.

So perhaps the most formidable enemy faced by all living beings is the monster that creates bullies and brainwashes the gullible into believing that pests abound and that they are to be eliminated. The scary part is that we feed the monster when we don't question its motives and when we blindly accept its rhetoric. No wonder that more and more animal species are facing extinction every day as their habitat is destroyed and gun-toting hunters are called in to "cull" what authorities decide is a species explosion. Incidentally, consider the words typically used --"cull" and "harvest". Has the monster unleashed its power to morph living beings like geese, raccoons, beavers and urban bunnies into orchard fruit? Is this magic, or a new science?

May pests unite against the monster of bureaucracy, so that all may share the earth--no matter what the colour of their fur, skin or feathers.

--Sinikka Crosland

(Please see our feature article, "Wings Over the Valley", on pages 12 and 13.)

TRACS Directors

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Newsletter Editor: Carmen Crosland

Upcoming Events

- **Thursday, March 15, 2007:** Please join the international animal protection community by speaking out against the cruel slaughter of harp seal pups on Canada's east coast. March 15th is the opening day for the carnage, when sealers will again be permitted to descend upon helpless seal pups (the vast majority are less than eight weeks old) and to kill them by clubbing or shooting. Every year, gross animal welfare violations are documented by observers, and Canada's legislators have ignored the concerns.

- **On March 15th, please take *this* action for the seals!** Do you have access to a fax machine or a computer? We implore you to send a short, firm message about seal slaughter cruelty to Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Ensure that *your* voice is added to the global chorus. Contact the prime minister at: pm@pm.gc.ca (e-mail) or 613-941-6900 (fax).
Too busy to write an original letter? Please see page 9 of this newsletter for a sample you can photocopy, sign, and fax in (courtesy of HSUS). We've included a Myth vs. Fact sheet for your information.

- **Saturday, April 21, 2007 at 5:30 p.m.:** Okanagan Vegetarian Potluck at the EECO Centre—2363 Springfield Road at Mission Creek Park, Kelowna (Springfield Road and Durnin). Please bring a vegan dish, enough for 6-8 servings with serving utensil, ingredient list & your own eating dishes & cutlery. ***\$2.00 entry fee general admission to dinner (to help cover the EECO Centre rental cost) and \$7.00 if you do not bring a dish to share.***
Questions? Visit: www.okanaganvegetarian.com for details, or call Lauren at (250)766-2550.

Support for the Animals

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Alice Hooper of Coldwell Banker Horizon Realty is putting her compassion to work in a unique way. She has offered to donate \$500 to TRACS for *every referral that comes her way and results in a successful sale*. Thank you, Alice...from the animals!

Sweet Nothing: One Year Post Amputation



“Sweet Nothing had a successful visit to the veterinary hospital last week. The vet checked the mobility of her joints, and found no problems. They also did a series of x-rays, and report that her three feet all look really good - no signs at all of any laminitis. We’ve been wondering about some stiffness in her right front leg, but the x-rays show that so far her joints are looking fine. The vet suggested we start her on some glucosamine as a preventive measure. Sweet Nothing was a real trooper with everything. She loaded both times just fine. The vet said she was a ‘star’.

“The weather out here has been turning much more pleasant lately, and we've had Sweet Nothing out for grazing often. Today after grazing she decided to take the long way back to her paddock and went visiting with some of the other horses - running most of the way with me alongside trying to keep up! We sure enjoy her!”

--Cindy Wasney, February 17, 2007

Creature Feature

Imagine, as you stroke your dog or cuddle your cat, that there are roughly 2 million dogs and cats killed internationally for their fur.

China is one of the few countries in the world where there is not one single law designed to protect animals from cruelty. Local suppliers of fur aren't subject to any regulations, and the industry makes no distinction between strays and pets, rounding up any animals they can find. They are raised in horrendous conditions, and are then killed using extremely inhumane methods.

Because the slaughter of dogs and cats is seen as despicable in western countries, the Asian fur industry attempts to conceal the truth by intentionally mislabeling fur exports. Investigators found out that fur producers in China were willing to sew any label onto garments made from dogs or cats to be able to sell them anywhere. To make matters worse, Canadian laws do not require garment labels to state the origin of the fur, nor which species of animal it comes from.

Fur from dogs and cats is not generally used to make full length coats etc.; they are utilized to line parkas, gloves, hats, handbags and other accessories.

Eight countries, including the U.S, have banned the pet fur trade; no imports are permitted. In Canada, it is 100 percent legal to import and sell "Dog and Cat Fur". Presently China is the second biggest commercial partner of Canada and the Canadian Government hopes to double commercial trade with China.

Are the Canadian people, who are in general sensitive to the rights and welfare of animals, going to stand by and watch Canada become wealthier by allowing the brutal killing dogs and cats for their fur?

--Elli Kohnert

For more information, visit:

http://www.hsus.org/furfree/dogs_cats/dog_and_cat_victims.html (Humane Society of the United States).

Note: In order to plug up a legislative loophole that allows a jacket trimmed with \$150 worth of fur to be sold without a label, The Dog and Cat Fur Prohibition Enforcement Act has been introduced by fed-up members of Congress. Recent HSUS tests showed that animal fur is frequently mislabeled or marked as faux fur.

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**TRACS Education Program** TRACS is seeking to expand our humane education program, and requires classroom presenters for topics concerning animal protection. If interested, please call Linda at (250)862-9479.

## For the Love of Theo: An Update

Theo, a lovable rescued veal calf, was featured in our Autumn issue of AIM. Several months later, we are happy to report that Theo continues to thrive. He fought off a respiratory illness in January, and has recently been sterilized. “He is still being bottle fed three times a day, and is growing at a fast rate,” states one of his rescuers. Theo has thoroughly captured the hearts of those who know him! We wish that all little calves could enjoy this level of care as well as a viable future.



## Canadian Bloodbath on Thin Ice?

As this issue of AIM goes to print, the future of the Canadian commercial seal slaughter appears to be rather precarious. A number of crucial events have unfolded in recent months that may soon spell the end of the annual carnage:

- Horst Seehofer, Germany's Agriculture Minister, is tired of waiting for the European Union to ban Canadian seal imports to its member countries, and is introducing legislation to prohibit these products from entering Germany  
In January, Belgium became the first country in the European Union to introduce a ban on seal imports
- In February, Britain announced it was pushing for EU-wide measures to implement a similar ban
- While the EU has not yet taken steps to implement a ban on Canadian seal products, it may do so after some research into whether or not the "hunt is humane"
- Mark Small, former head of the Canadian Sealers Association, has publicly stated that the "hunt is at risk of a collapse similar to the one it experienced when Ottawa banned the hunting of young harp and hooded seals 20 years ago...." (this statement was made after Minister Seehofer's announcement)
- Due to climate change and melting of sea ice, seal populations could be at risk; in fact, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans has recently admitted to a decline in population, and has considered adjusting the kill quota accordingly
- Prince Edward Island fishermen have publicly asked the DFO to move their official seal communications office away from Charlottetown because "the annual hunt is giving the island a bad name around the world"
- On March 5, 2007, Fisheries Minister Loyola Hearn opened up a can of worms by publicly denying children the right to freedom of speech, i.e. joining a protest against the seal slaughter. "Fisheries Minister Loyola Hearn is accusing a Vancouver group of despicable, immoral and exploitive behaviour for planning an anti-seal hunt protest for later this month using children as 'props' to attract media attention" (excerpt from National Post article). Children, sensitive to issues of animal cruelty, have long attended protests and have even chosen to be spokespeople for certain causes.

March 15, 2007 is *International Day Against the Canadian Seal Hunt*. A major demonstration will be taking place in Ottawa on Parliament Hill, as well as in numerous cities around the world. Two completed "seal petition boxes" from the Okanagan Valley have now been sent to protest organizers in Ottawa. These decorated boxes, bearing signatures of citizens opposed to the annual slaughter, will become part of a "Monument to the Seals" on March 15<sup>th</sup>. We urge you to take action for the seals from your home or work office. Details are outlined on page 3 of this newsletter under Upcoming Events. At this time, plans are underway in Kelowna to further highlight the cruelty of the seal killings.

Please phone 250-768-4803 if you would like to be a part of this.

## Sealing: Myth vs. Fact

**Myth:** “Seals need to be culled because of overpopulation.”

**Fact:** There is no scientific data to support this claim. The DFO makes this unsubstantiated claim in a vain effort to justify the slaughter. Seal populations are a fraction of what they were before commercial sealing began.

**Myth:** “Baby seals are not killed, only adults.”

**Fact:** 98.5% of the seals killed in the commercial seal hunt are pups less than two months old. In 1985, a change in the law was made which prohibited the slaughter of “white coats”. As soon as a seal starts to molt, however (normally two weeks after birth), it is legal to slaughter.

**Myth:** “Seals are killed humanely.”

**Fact:** Seals are slaughtered by the most horrific means imaginable, most bashed over the head with a spiked club or shot. Because a seal’s brain is so small (about the size of a walnut), it is extremely difficult to kill one with a single blow or bullet, and many blows or bullets are often needed to render a seal unconscious or dead. The DFO’s own studies have proven that over 6,000 baby seals could have been inhumanely killed every year, possibly skinned alive. Their “98% humanely killed” estimate leaves 2% (thousands of seals) that would not have experienced a humane death.

**Myth:** “The commercial seal hunt brings important economic benefits.”

**Fact:** The seal slaughter is not economically viable, as the cost to conduct the hunt (ice breaking, helicopters, administration, enforcement, etc.) is believed to exceed the value of the hunt itself. Furthermore, income earned from the seal slaughter typically makes up only 5% of a sealer’s income. As an industry, sealing is insignificant, accounting for a scant 0.06% of Newfoundland’s gross domestic product.

**Myth:** “Seals eat too many fish, especially cod.”

**Fact:** Scientists have proven that 97% of a seal’s diet is fish other than cod, many of these being predatory fish that feed on baby cod. If you take away the seals, you increase the number of predators, which means less cod! More seals have always meant more cod.

**Myth:** “Much of the seal is utilized.”

**Fact:** The pelt and sometimes the penis and blubber are taken. The rest of the seal’s body is often left to rot on the ice. Slaughtering seals serves only one purpose: VANITY. Oil derived from seals can contain PCBs, mercury, and other toxins, which in quantity are not considered safe for humans. There are other healthier, plant-based sources of Omega-3 fatty acids.

**Myth:** “Seal populations are healthy.”

**Fact:** The DFO claims that seal populations are “three times what they were in the ‘70s”. What the DFO does not tell you is that the annual kill quotas were (and still are) so high that it has seriously affected the population which was many times higher before commercial sealing began.

**Myth:** "Sealing is an important tradition."

**Fact:** The Canadian commercial seal hunt is the largest slaughter of marine mammals on earth, and takes place right here in Canada. Each spring, sealers carrying rifles or spiked clubs (hakupiks) invade the harp and hooded seal nurseries, clubbing and shooting baby seals who are barely weaned, and lay helpless and defenseless on the ice. If this is tradition, then the majority of Canadians as well as much of the world community believes that it is a brutal and bloody tradition that should be ended

*(Courtesy of Bruce Foerster, Sea Shepherd Conservation Society volunteer ("Enough propaganda...Here are the FACTS"))*

Prime Minister Stephen Harper  
Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa  
K1A 0A2 Fax: 613-941-6900

\_\_\_\_\_, 2007

Dear Hon. Mr. Harper,

Once more, Canadian fishermen are heading to the ice for the annual commercial slaughter of baby seals. I have joined hundreds of thousands of individuals worldwide in a boycott of Canadian seafood.

More and more, the citizens of the world are showing their opposition to the seal hunt -- we will not buy Canadian seafood until the cruel hunt is over for good. Canadian seafood exports to the United States alone contribute nearly \$3 billion annually to Canada's economy -- dwarfing the small sum provided by the seal hunt.

Already the boycott has cut into the industry's profits, and the industry will continue to suffer the effects of the boycott for as long as the hunt continues.

As the Prime Minister of Canada, you have an unparalleled opportunity to put an end to the cruel annual slaughter of more than 300,000 baby seals on the ice off Canada's East Coast. The Canadian seal hunt, the largest commercial slaughter of marine mammals on the planet, targets baby seals as young as 12 days of age.

I urge you to make a firm commitment to do everything in your power to end this barbaric and economically unnecessary hunt as soon as possible.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this important matter.

Yours truly,

My contact information for a reply:

## *Hot Off the Press*

**February 28, 2007--SPRINGFIELD, ILL.--**A bill that would prohibit the transportation of horses into Illinois for the purpose of slaughter for human consumption was introduced to the state legislature last week (dvmnewsmagazine.com).

**February 21, 2007--JERUSALEM--**Jews must not wear fur skinned from live animals, Israel's chief rabbi said in a religious ruling yesterday. "All Jews are obliged to prevent the horrible phenomenon of cruelty to animals and be a 'light onto nations' by refusing to use products that originate from acts which cause such suffering," Rabbi Yona Metzger said ("Rabbi bans living fur", Reuters).

**February 7, 2007--HOBBS, N.M.--**Cockfighting appears to be on its last legs in New Mexico, one of only two states where it is legal (ABC News).

**February 1, 2007--SASKATOON, SK--**Maple Leaf Foods Inc. announced to shareholders it will gradually phase out sow gestation stalls over the next 10 years and move to group housing of swine, following the lead of the pork industry in the United States (Saskatoon StarPhoenix).

**January 19, 2007--NEW ORLEANS--**The 5th Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans, Louisiana, ruled that horse slaughter is illegal in Texas. This overturns a 2005 Lower Federal District Court ruling and upholds a 1949 Texas law that bans the sale of horse flesh for human consumption. As a result of the January 19th Appeals Court ruling, two major airlines suspended the shipment of horse meat to overseas markets (defendhorsescanada.org).

**December 11, 2006--CROATIA--**The Croatian government has introduced a new Animal Protection Act that will ban fur farming. The legislation comes into force on January 1, 2007 and the ban will be subject to a 10 year phase out period (respectforanimals.co.uk).

Sincere empathy is extended to Joan Currie and her family on the passing of Joan's beloved son, **Jerry Bouchard**, on Christmas Day, 2006. Jerry was a TRACS member, and attended some meetings with his mother when Joan was on our board of directors a few years ago. As well as his human family, Jerry left behind his dear cat, Harley.  
We miss you, Jerry, and your love for animals will always remain in our memories of *very special you*.

## Okanagan Health Forum A Success!

Many thanks to all TRACS members who supported the 2<sup>nd</sup> Okanagan Health Forum. This year's event was a tremendous success. OHF guest speakers, **Dr. David Jenkins**, **Dr. Joel Fuhrman** and **Brenda Davis** were able to share crucial health and nutrition information with approximately 1200 people in Kelowna and Penticton, including physicians, dietitians, nurses and other health professionals, hospital administrators, government agencies, researchers, educators, and members of the general public. Events included two grand rounds and one family physician rounds (lectures to doctors), two health professional events, one VIP talk for upper management of sponsoring organizations, and two large public events. We are delighted with the feedback received from enthusiastic participants who have been empowered to make the shift towards a plant-based diet. In addition, physicians and allied health professionals are excited about using the information they gathered to educate and motivate their patients. The benefits will be enjoyed by residents of the Okanagan Valley for many years to come. The Okanagan Health Forum Executive Committee deeply appreciates the support and encouragement of TRACS members.

--Brenda Davis, R.D., Director of  
Nutrition & Food Animal Issues



Dr. Joel Fuhrman  
[www.drfuhrman.com/](http://www.drfuhrman.com/)

## **Wings Over the Valley**

There are few sights more inspiring than a flock of Canada geese in V-formation, moving with graceful precision against a backdrop of seemingly endless sky. What human face hasn't turned upward in awe, searching for the source of familiar honking as changing seasons herald the migration of these magnificent birds?

Yet goose populations have become a source of consternation for City of Kelowna officials. Some geese have settled into the area as year-round resident birds, while migratory geese appear to consider our lake-studded valley a wonderful temporary home. Moreover, Okanagan parks departments have made it easy for these birds to be attracted to our communities—our beaches and other recreational grounds provide perfect habitat for waterfowl in search of nesting and loafing areas. Very little has been attempted in terms of habitat modification. Intervention has included egg adding, use of noisemakers and other scare tactics, as well as hard core lethal means such as falconry and shooting.

TRACS is now working closely with national and international animal protection organizations in an effort to deliver a strong message to Kelowna City Council and Parks officials, requesting that they join numerous North American cities that have successfully tackled goose issues through a combination of non-lethal strategies. Lethal means are neither a humane nor an effective tool to use.

Recently, the Canadian Wildlife Service denied a permit to these officials that would have allowed the shooting of up to 200 geese in this area. CWS understands that habitat modification is the key to successful goose management, and expects the Okanagan Valley to employ this method in the future. However, adamant City Parks officials and certain councilors have expressed their determination to appeal this ruling. They have ignored an offer by TRACS and other organizations to bring in experts to speak with them about humane, environmentally friendly, and safe alternatives to shooting. They need to understand the principle that properly modifying the habitat has been proven to produce an environment less amenable to both resident and migratory geese. The Kelowna area, with its vast shoreline and beautiful parks, is strategically a perfect candidate for such a plan, and indeed could enjoy the same success as Mississauga, High Park, Greater Chicago, and many other communities that have actively participated in habitat modification initiatives.

Kelowna officials need to hear from concerned citizens who agree that the Valley should join the growing list of other communities that have experienced success while focusing on sensible, long-term goals in solving human/goose conflicts!

Please e-mail Mayor Sharon Shepherd and Council at: [mayorandcouncil@kelowna.ca](mailto:mayorandcouncil@kelowna.ca), or fax a short letter expressing your views to: (250)862-3399. Letters can also be sent by post to: 1435 Water Street, Kelowna, BC V1Y 1J4.

TRACS would like to thank the following organizations for joining the fight to defend Canada geese in the Okanagan Valley: Animal Alliance Environment Voters Party of Canada, Animal Protection Institute, Canadians for Snow Geese, Humane Society of the United States, Humane Society International, and Zoocheck Canada. We are deeply grateful for the support of these organizations, the work that they have put into this issue, and the knowledge that they bring.



Canada geese have strong family bonds. They mate for life, and are extremely protective of their young.

### **Conversation Piece**

Anyone convicted of animal cruelty in Sedalia, Missouri, is sentenced to a month's confinement in the county animal shelter!  
([www.topfive.com/amazingtruefacts.shtml](http://www.topfive.com/amazingtruefacts.shtml))

### **Yummy Snack: Spicy Parmesan Popcorn**

**(from Garden of Vegan, by Tanya Barnard & Sarah Kramer) Page 13**

The aroma of this spicy concoction will have you drooling like Pavlov's dog. In a small bowl, stir together ¼ cup flax oil and 2 tsp. all-purpose spice\*. Stir into large bowl of popcorn. Add 1/3 cup of soy Parmesan cheese and mix well. Serve.

**\*All-Purpose Spice:** Combine the following: 2 tbsp. chili powder; 2 tsp. onion powder; 2 tsp. cumin; 2 tsp. garlic powder; 2 tsp. oregano; 1 tsp. paprika; 1 tsp. salt; ½ tsp. cayenne. Store in an air-tight container. Makes approximately ¼ cup.

### *Caring For Their Future*

*Animals need long-lasting protection, and TRACS has a proven history of acting staunchly and valiantly on their behalf. Please consider making a bequest to The Responsible Animal Care Society in your will, and your compassion will help the animals for years to come....*



Interesting Fact: **Researchers in Canada and the United States said ...that people with Type 2 diabetes taking oral medications have seen dramatic improvements after switching to a low-fat, vegan (plant-based) diet [CBC News, July 27, 2006].**

TRACS