ATLANTIC SEAL HUNT

2002 MANAGEMENT PLAN

Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Pêches et Océans Canada

Fisheries Management
Gestion des pêches

Canada

Published by:
Fisheries Resource Management – Atlantic
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0E6

Cat. N° Fs23-341/2002

ISBN 0-662-66392-6

Printed on recycled paper

Table of Contents

1. THE 2002 ATLANTIC SEAL HUNT AT A GLANCE

On December 12, 2002, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans announced the 2002 management measures governing the 2002 seal hunt as follows:

- The Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for harp seals would remain at 275,000 animals.
- The hooded seal TAC would remain at 10,000 animals, and
- A small harvest of grey seals would again be allowed in areas other than Sable Island.
- The licence conditions put in place in 2000 to prohibit the harvest of whitecoats and bluebacks would also remain in place.

On the same date, the Minister also announced the release of the final report of the Eminent Panel on Seal Management. (See section 7.2).

On February 22, 2002 the Supreme Court announced its decision on the *Ward* case. The Supreme Court's decision confirmed DFO's position that the prohibition of the sale of blueback and whitecoat seals under Section 27 of the *Marine Mammal Regulations* was a valid exercise of the federal fisheries power. Section 27 of the *Marine Mammals Regulations* prohibits the sale, trade or barter of whitecoat and blueback seals. The Supreme Court's decision means that DFO can continue to enforce section 27 to prohibit the harvest of whitecoat and blueback seals. For 2002, seal licences will again contain licence conditions prohibiting the taking of blueback and whitecoat seals. (A whitecoat is a harp seal up to two and a half weeks old. A blueback seal is a hooded seal up to about 16 months of age). (See section 7.3).

2. BACKGROUND

The Northwest Atlantic harp seal (*Pagophilus groenlandica*) is the most abundant of all seal species in Atlantic Canada and accounts for most of the harvest.

Although harp seals have been hunted commercially since the 16th Century, the present day Atlantic coast commercial seal hunt took shape in the late 1980s after the collapse of the large-vessel hunt for whitecoat harp seals.

The seal hunt is managed on a long-term, sustainable basis, with a view to facilitating the renewal of an industry badly damaged by trade barriers and animal rights activities. The taking of whitecoat seal "pups" was the basis for much of the damage inflicted by animal rights groups on the markets for seal products in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

In 1987, following the report of the *Royal Commission on Seals and Sealing in Canada* (the Malouf report), the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans announced prohibitions on:

- The use of vessels over 65 feet (19.8 metres) in length;
- The commercial hunt of whitecoats (harp seals that have not begun to moult, which occurs at about 10 to 14 days of age); and

- The commercial hunt of bluebacks (hooded seals that have not begun to moult, which occurs at about 15 to 16 months of age).

In February 1993, the *Marine Mammal Regulations* were established to replace several sets of regulations. These regulations included the current prohibition on the sale, trade or barter of whitecoats and bluebacks.

The commercial hunt is now carried out using longliners or small boats. Where there is solid ice and seals are close to shore, sealers may hunt on foot or using snowmobiles. The hunt provides important seasonal income and food to residents of small coastal communities where there have been fisheries closures and employment opportunities are limited.

Since 1995, a policy change allows residents adjacent to sealing areas throughout Newfoundland and Quebec to hunt up to six seals for their own use. Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal coastal residents who reside north of 53°N latitude can continue to hunt seals for subsistence purposes without a licence.

3. Overview of the Atlantic Seal Hunt

3.1. Species Hunted

Six species of seals — the harp, hooded, grey, ringed, bearded and harbour — are found off the Atlantic coast of Canada, although ringed and bearded seals are typically Arctic species. Of the six species, harp and hooded seals account for almost all the seals hunted commercially. A number of grey seals are also taken for commercial uses under licences issued for that purpose.

3.1.1. Harp Seals

There are three populations of this abundant species, of which the northwest Atlantic stock off Canada is the largest. The others are the White Sea population and the Jan Mayen or Greenland Sea population.

3.1.2. Hooded Seals

There are two stocks of hooded seals; one breeds in Canadian waters and the other off Jan Mayen Island, although there may be some degree of exchange between the two populations.

Apart from the commercial hunt, some seals of all species are taken in subsistence hunts in Labrador, northern Quebec and Nunavut. Some harp and hooded seals are taken for personal use by residents adjacent to sealing areas. Further details on recent landings are set out in Section 12.

3.2. Participants

In recent years, commercial licences issued to sealers averaged 10,000 per year. In 2001, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) issued 11,185 **commercial sealing licences**. Table 1 shows a breakdown by licence type and region. With few exceptions, licensed

commercial sealers engage in fishing for other species or have economic ties to the fishing industry. Groundfish fishery closures have increased the relative importance of sealing as a source of livelihood.

TABLE 1
NUMBER OF SEAL LICENCES ISSUED IN 2001

PROVINCE	Professional	Assistant	Personal Use	TOTAL	# of vessels > 35′
Newfoundland and Labrador	7,025	2,697	1,387	11,109	126
Quebec	1,284	161	566	2,011	44
Nova Scotia	0	0	0	0	0
Prince Edward Island	6	12	0	18	6
TOTAL	8,315	2,870	1,953	13,138	176

As noted above, residents of Labrador north of 53°N latitude do not need a licence to hunt seals for subsistence purposes.

Since 1995, **personal use sealing licences** have been issued to residents adjacent to sealing areas in Newfoundland and Labrador (south of 53°N latitude), the Quebec North Shore, the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands. These are areas hard-hit by the groundfish fishery closures. This type of licence allows the holder to take up to six seals for personal consumption.

3.3. Location of the Hunt

The Northwest Atlantic breeding stock of harp seals summer in the Canadian Arctic and Greenland. They begin their southward migration in early fall and by late November reach the southern Labrador coast. From here, about a third of the mature seals enter the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the rest migrate southwards along the east coast of Newfoundland.

Although the movement of ice floes and ice conditions often determine the degree of effort in any given area, the majority of the seal hunt occurs on the Front, off the north and east coasts of Newfoundland and off southern Labrador (see Figure 1 for seal migration patterns).

In 2001, as a result of favourable ice conditions and the seals being carried into the Northern Gulf by the ice flows from the Front, harvest levels of harp seals in the Gulf were high. In 2000, because of poor ice conditions in the Gulf, about 90 per cent of the commercial hunt took place in the Front area, up from 1999 when the Front hunt accounted for 60 per cent of the harvest. See Section 12 for a detailed list of seal landings by area and species for the past 10 years.

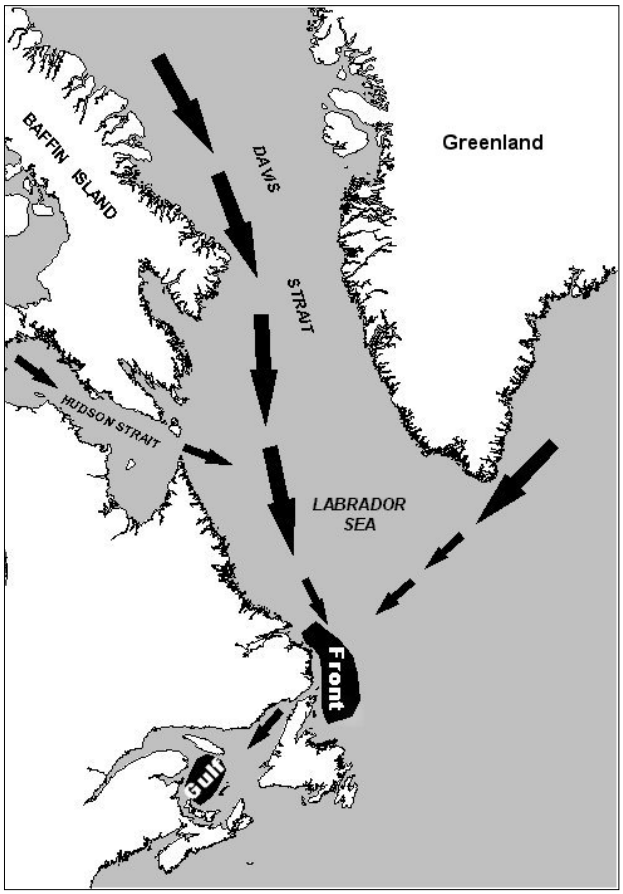


Figure 1: Harp Seal Southward Migration

3.4. TIMEFRAME OF THE HUNT

The season for the commercial hunt of harp and hooded seals is from November 15 to May 15 as established in the *Marine Mammal Regulations*, although this can be altered by a Variation Order to deal with circumstances that may arise. The majority of sealing occurs between early March and May. Beginning around the second week in March off the Magdalen Islands, and about the second week in April off Newfoundland. The timing of hunt activities in the Gulf of St. Lawrence depends largely on the movement of ice floes on which seals are located. The peak commercial hunt in this area is in March, although sealing does occur along the Quebec North Shore in January and February.

The season for harp and hooded seals opened on November 15, 2000 and was scheduled to close on May 15, 2001. Because of unfavourable weather conditions the industry requested that the season be extended to June 2 given that the TAC had not been reached. On June 2, and for the same reasons, the season was further extended to July 14, 2001.

As in the previous two years, the Canadian Sealers Association and industry, requested that the opening date for the harp seal harvest in Sealing Areas 5, 6, 7 and 8 be postponed from March 25, to April 6, 2001. This request was made to improve the quality of the pelts in allowing the ragged-jacket harp seals to become more mature beaters before being harvested. This request was granted and variation orders closing these areas were issued. The seal hunt was allowed to continue in the Gulf during the closed time for the Front.

The season for the subsistence hunt of ringed seals in Labrador is from April 25 to November 30 as established in the *Marine Mammal Regulations*. The grey seal hunt is set by Variation Order to reflect the presence of seals and the hunt is further controlled by conditions set out in the licences given for this activity.

3.4.1. Ice Conditions in 2001

By the beginning of March 2001, ice conditions did not look favourable for a long harvesting season. The largest ice floes along the Labrador coast and the Northern Gulf consisted mainly of

thin ice. By mid March the ice floes had deteriorated to small floes. However, the southerly flow of ice along the Labrador coast persisted, bringing ice 70–120 cm thick. Wind from the East and Northeast caused the bays to became filled and the new flow of ice was forced into the Strait of Belle Isle, which accumulated in the Northern Gulf and Straits areas.

Ice conditions along the Labrador coast and the Northern Gulf stayed the same from the middle of March until the middle of April. The only area that had any significant change in ice condition was along the Northeast coast of Newfoundland where it had nearly disappeared by mid April.

From mid April to mid May, ice flows moving south along the Labrador coast had a large area of coverage, however, most of the floes consisted of mainly thin ice. The ice slowly deteriorated as it moved further south but strong winds forced the tightly packed ice into the bays making it difficult for sealing vessels to leave port.

By mid May 2001, the ice coverage along the northeast coast of Newfoundland had deteriorated to small floes. In the northern Gulf, ice gradually disappeared except for some small floes of thick ice that entered the Strait of Belle Isle after a brief period of no ice. This ice stayed in the Strait of Belle Isle until early June.

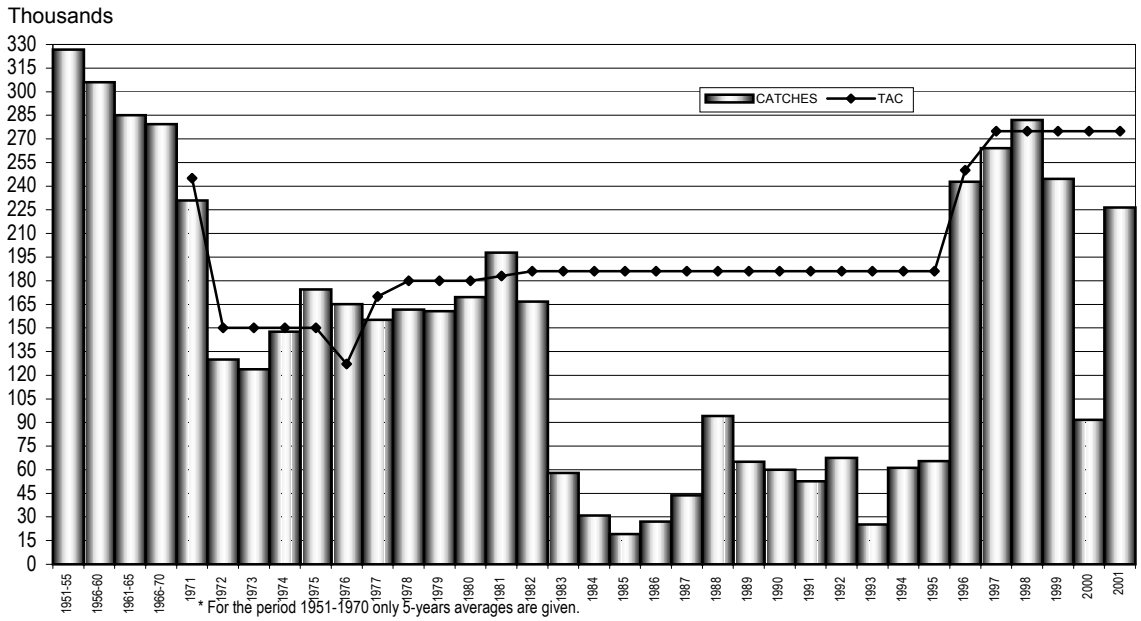
3.5. LANDINGS

3.5.1. Harp Seals

The nature of the present Atlantic coast commercial hunt for harp seals took shape in the late 1980s after the collapse of the historic European markets for whitecoat and blueback pelts. From 1983 to 1995, the average annual harp seal harvest was 51,000 despite a TAC of 186,000 animals. As shown in Figure 2, the hunt levels for harp seals were much higher before the market collapsed. High catch levels reduced the population to a level of less than two million in the early 1970s. The harp seal population is now around 5.2 million.

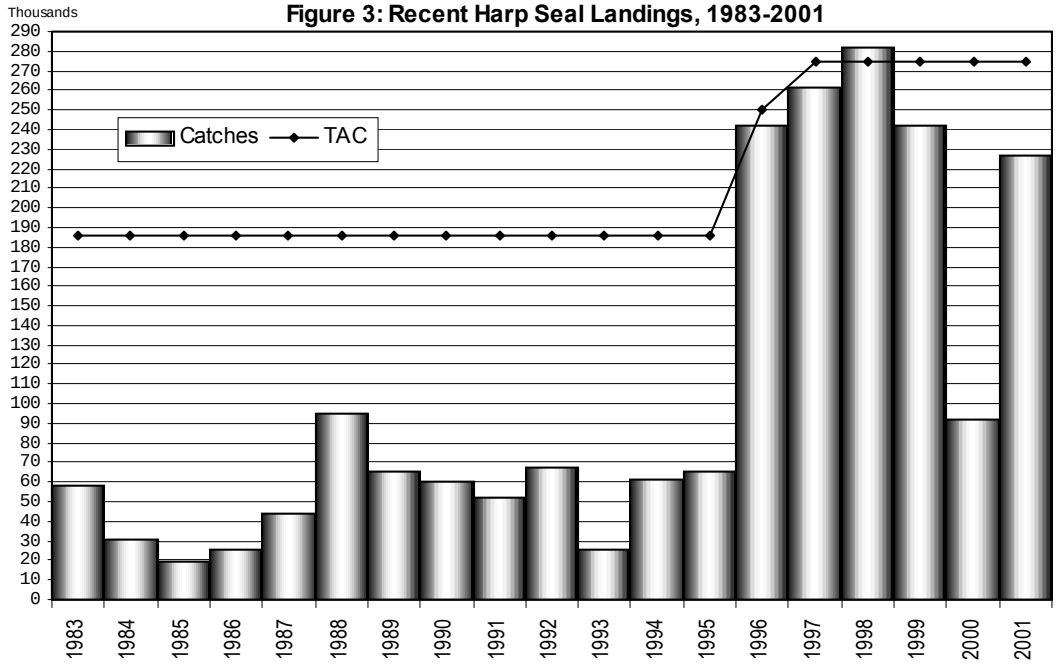
After 1995, the market for sealskins improved and in 1996, based upon new scientific information, the TAC for harp seals was raised to 250,000. The TAC was further increased to 275,000 in 1997, which was within the estimates of ***replacement yield***. Replacement yield is the number of animals that can be taken in a given year without reducing the total population in the next year. The TAC for harp seals has remained at 275,000 animals since then.

Figure 2: Historical Harp Seal Landings (1951 to 2001)



Market demand drives the price of seal pelts. DFO does not take into account the market situation when establishing the maximum number of seals that can be harvested. The TAC is a scientifically determined ceiling that represents the number of seals that may be taken without affecting the total population. The actual size of the harvest is determined by economics; which is the reason for the widely fluctuating harvests experienced in the last few years. (See Figure 3).

Figure 3: Recent Harp Seal Landings, 1983-2001



3.5.2. Greenland Harvest

Canada and Greenland both hunt harp seals from the same population (the northwest Atlantic stock). The Canadian and Greenland governments have been exchanging information on their respective hunts and have agreed to continue such exchanges with the intent of verifying harvest activities and strengthening conservation. Discussions are also underway with Greenland scientists on a possible joint Satellite tagging program to better define seal movements and stock boundaries.

The annual catch of harp seals in Greenland has been increasing in recent years to about 80,000 animals.

In 2000, the National Marine Mammal Peer Review Committee determined that the replacement yield for harp seals was estimated to be in the order of 500,000, which is close to the current level of combined catches by Canada and Greenland. The replacement yield is the number of seals that can be harvested without changing the total population.

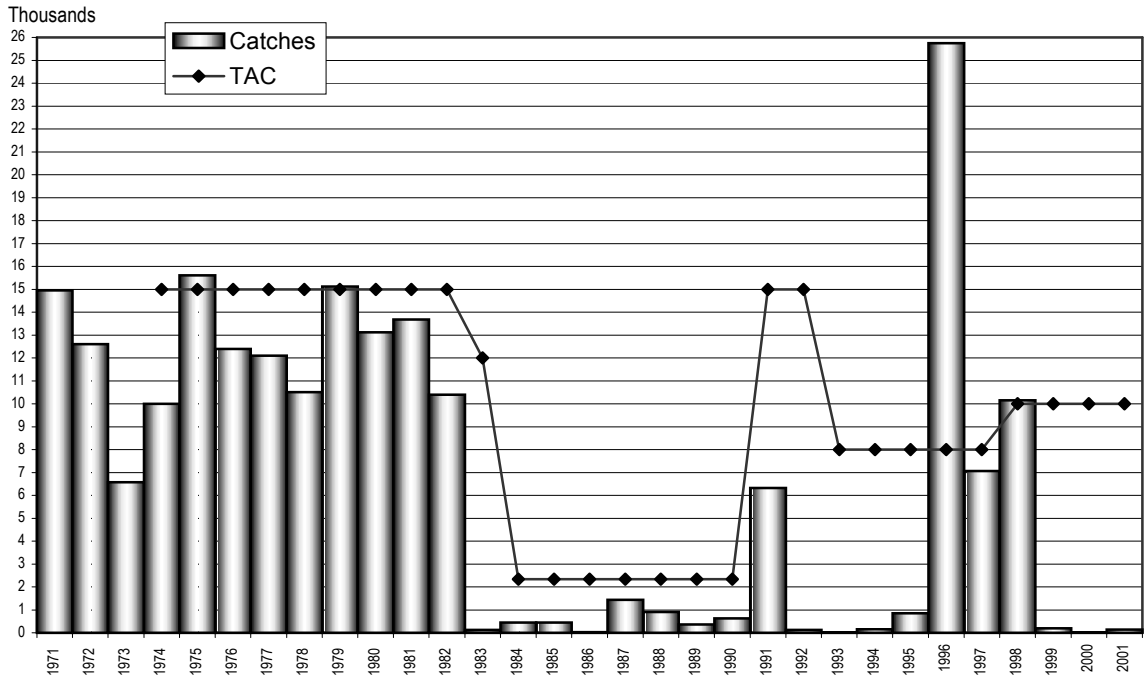
3.5.3. Hooded Seals

The hooded seal (*Cystophora cristata*) is a large species (200 kg to 400 kg) found in the northern Atlantic. In Atlantic Canada, most pups are born in March in Davis Strait and on the Front. Other hooded seals whelp in the Gulf of St. Lawrence but very little is known about the relationship between Gulf seals and those in the Front. Surveys conducted in 1990 and 1991 estimated that 80,000 pups were born in the Front as opposed to 2,000 in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Hooded seals can be harvested in the Front but not in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The TAC for hooded seals has remained at 10,000 since 1998. The hunt for these seals is only a minor part of the commercial and personal use hunts. In recent years the harvest of hooded seals has been less than 200 animals per year. See Figure 4 for recent hooded seal landings.

In 1996, 22,800 young hooded (blueback) seals were hunted and more than 100 charges were laid. Less than one per cent of licensed sealers were involved in this activity, which took place within a period of a few days. The matter went before the Courts and on December 14, 1999 the Newfoundland Court of Appeal struck down section 27 of the *Marine Mammal Regulations*, which makes it an offence to buy, sell, or trade blueback seal pelts. In 2000, to conform to the policy enacted as a result of the recommendations of the Malouf Report, licence conditions were imposed to prohibit the taking of blueback and whitecoat seals. On February 22, 2002 the Supreme Court ruled that section 27 is a valid exercise of the federal fisheries power. It means that DFO can continue to enforce section 27 to prohibit the harvest of whitecoat and blueback seals. (See section 7.3). The licence conditions imposed in 2000 prohibiting the killing of whitecoat and blueback seals will also remain in place for 2002.

Figure 4: Hooded Seal Landings (1971-2001)



The most recent data provided by the Greenland government on hooded seal catches shows that 6,328 hooded seals were taken in 1998 and 7,086 for the first nine months of 1999. The combined hooded seal hunt for both Canada and Greenland is below the replacement yield.

3.5.4. Grey Seals

Grey seals *(Halichoerus grypus)* are found in the Gulf of St. Lawrence year-round. In the summer, they can be found in the estuary as far upriver as the Saguenay. Grey seals breed on Sable Island and on the ice floes in the southern Gulf from late December to early February. After breeding, they disperse, mainly to the Scotian Shelf, the Gulf of St. Lawrence and off the southern coast of Newfoundland.

In 1997, the grey seal population in the northwest Atlantic was estimated to be 190,000. The herd on Sable Island was increasing at a rate of 13 per cent, or doubling every six years, while in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the herd appeared to have declined substantially.

The last two population surveys in the Gulf of St. Lawrence show that pup production in that area is declining and has likely declined from 10,000 a few years ago to 7,000 now. Pup production apparently continues to increase on Sable Island. In 1999, an aerial survey was planned for that area but was not completed due to bad weather. The survey has now been rescheduled for January 2003.

Only small numbers of grey seals are hunted each year and a TAC has not been established. Sealing is limited to a small traditional commercial hunt in an area off the Magdalen Islands and to

commercial hunts of small numbers of grey seals in other areas, except Sable Island where no commercial hunting is permitted.

Grey seals have more recoverable meat but markets remain poor. Grey seal pelts are much less valuable than harp seal pelts. With lower pelt demand and prices, marketing grey seals remains difficult.

In 2001, there were 77 grey seals taken for commercial purposes, compared to 243 in 2000. 98 grey seals were taken in 1999, and 275 were taken in 1998.

The last time any significant numbers of grey seals were taken was before 1984, under a bounty program (1976-83) and a culling program (1967-83). The first program resulted in an average take of about 720 seals per year and the latter removed about 1,000 animals per year from the grey seal population.

3.5.5. Ringed Seals

In 2001, there were 2,009 ringed seals (*Phoca hispida*) taken in the subsistence hunt in Labrador. In 2000, there were 1,695 ringed seals taken compared to 772 in 1999. In 1998, the number was 1,046 and 1,639 in 1997.

Ringed seals are also taken for subsistence purposes in Arctic Canada. The Nunavut Wildlife Management Board is conducting a harvest study on all species of seals hunted in Nunavut. Results of the study will be available in 2003.

3.5.6. Other Seals

Small numbers of harbour (*Phoca vitulina*) and bearded seals (*Erignathus barbatus*) are taken each year in the subsistence hunt in northern Atlantic areas. In 2001, 168 bearded seals were taken. In 2000, sealers landed 63 bearded seals. In 1998 and 1999, sealers landed 58 and 61 respectively. No harbour seals have been harvested since 1997.

3.5.7. Total Landings

Section 12 shows the Atlantic seal landings for the last 10 years by area and species.

4. MARKET OUTLOOK

Market levels and weather conditions determine the level of each year's hunt (within the allowable quota of 275,000). In 2001, sealers harvested 226,493 harp seals. In 2001, there were four seal buyers/ processors in Newfoundland and Labrador, one in Prince Edward Island and one in the Magdalen Islands. These companies purchased a total of approximately 224,000 seal pelts (including the fat). The estimated landed value of harp seals for the 2001 seal season was is in the order of $5.5 million. The estimated value is based on the average price processors paid the sealers.

Canada exports seal products under three forms: seal meat, seal oil and sealskins. Exports of seal oil and skins were down in 2001, though prices for both products rose. Exports of seal meat rose in 2001, but they remain significantly below export levels in the 1990s. Due to a sharp decline in exports to Asia, that region was replaced by Europe as the main destination for seal oil and skins, but it remains the principal market for seal meat exports. Asia could regain its position as the main market for all types of seal exports in 2002, should the Asian economies sufficiently recover to make seal imports more attractive.

4.1. Market Development

As a result of the government-wide review of priorities and activities in 1994, DFO is no longer involved in product support or promotion activities.

4.2. Seal Pelts (Fur and Leather)

In the last few years, the seal harvest in Atlantic Canada has been directed at beater seals (harp seals between 25 days and 13 months of age). Beater seals provide the most valuable pelts and market conditions are stronger for this type of pelts. Due to high inventory of hooded seal pelts, the market has been very poor in recent years. As a result, there has not been a directed harvest for hooded seals in the last few years.

4.3. Seal Meat

Finding a market for seal meat continues to present a major challenge for the sealing industry. The amount of seal meat landings for 2001 was extremely low, in part based on a more directed effort at the younger animals (beater). This resulted in a small local market for seal meat.

4.4. Seal Oil

The market for seal oil remains positive. Presently, a good percentage of seal oil is finding its way into areas other than the traditional marine and industrial oils. The industry is positive about this new development but is aware that more R&D is required to expand the range of products derived from seal oil.

4.5. Seal Flippers

There has always been a local market for a number of seal flippers In Newfoundland. In 2000, the value of this market was estimated at less than $100,000. Markets would have to be found elsewhere, if flipper prices are to go up substantially.

4.6. Seal Organs

There has been was virtually no market for seal organs since 1998.

4.7. Value of the Hunt

The estimated landed value of harp seals for the 2001 season was is in the order of $5.5 million. The estimated value is based on the average price buyers paid to sealers.

Besides the economic benefits of the hunt, seals are an important source of nutrition, as well as a focus of social and cultural life for Aboriginal peoples and other residents of Atlantic Canada, Quebec and the Far North.

4.8. Consultation

Each year, it is customary for the Department to hold consultation sessions with the sealing industry in both Newfoundland and the Gulf of St. Lawrence. In particular, it is important to maintain an open dialogue between resource users and government to ensure the best management of the seal hunt.

4.9. Management Approach

The Canadian government's policy on seals and sealing is consistent with its policies on the management of other fishery resources. Seals are considered a natural resource available to be humanely harvested like many other species. The harvesting of this resource is permitted only within the limits of sound conservation principles, taking into account their role in the ecosystem. The government's objective is to gain the maximum socio-economic benefits for Canadians in general and those who depend directly on the resource in particular.

Since 1987, the seal hunt has been managed on a long-term, sustainable basis, with a view to facilitating the renewal of an industry badly damaged by trade barriers and animal rights activities. The replacement yield has been used as a benchmark for sustainability. As stated above, replacement yield is the number of animals that can be taken in a given year without reducing the total population in the next year.

The Malouf Report provided much of the guidance for our existing management approach, for example, the ban on the commercial hunt of whitecoats (harp seals) and bluebacks (hooded seals) and on the use of large vessels more than 65 feet long. The commercial hunt is now carried out largely from inshore boats owned and operated by coastal residents.

With a plentiful and sustainable seal resource hunted well below its TAC for many years, DFO has concentrated on improving and enforcing hunting practices and regulatory and licensing requirements. This approach has increased the proficiency of sealers in the quick and humane dispatch of seals as well as in the proper handling of the hunt.

The Malouf Report also recommended that assistance be provided to the industry following the collapse of seal markets in 1983. DFO and other federal and provincial government agencies have provided funding to support sealing associations, as well as market and product development projects. Since 1986, DFO has provided more than $3 million for these purposes through the Atlantic Fisheries Adjustment Program and Grants and Contributions. The DFO assistance

program ended in 1999, with $250,000 in funding for the sealing industry. No financial assistance program has been offered since 2000 and none is planned.

5. STOCK STATUS

5.1. PROSPECTS FOR 2002

5.1.1. Harp Seals

In April 2000, the *National Marine Mammal Review Committee* met in Ottawa to review the most recent information on the status of the northwest Atlantic harp seal population. Attending the meeting were scientists from four international research institutes, a non-governmental environmental group, two individuals from the seal harvesting sector, as well as a number of DFO scientists from across the country.

In recent years, Canada's strategy has been to set its total allowable catch (TAC) based on an estimate of replacement yield.

The Committee agreed that the harp seal population has been stable at 5.2 million since 1996, which is the highest level since estimates have been available (1960).

5.1.2. Hooded Seals

Hooded seals are considerably less abundant than harp seals. The 1990 hooded seal population was estimated between 400,000 and 450,000. The TAC for hooded seals (10,000 seals) is considerably below the replacement yield, which is estimated to be between 24,000 and 34,000 animals, depending on the age composition of the hunt.

Genetic work aimed at separating the distinct populations of hooded seals in the Canadian Atlantic region is underway, and satellite tagging of these animals has been undertaken. Discussions are also in progress with Greenland scientists to develop a more comprehensive tagging program to better define movements and stock boundaries.

5.1.3. Grey Seals

The 1993 grey seal population estimate was 144,000 (82,000 from the Sable Island rookery and 62,000 from the Gulf of St. Lawrence). Since the 1960s, the Sable Island grey seal population has been increasing at a rate of 13 per cent per year. A decline in pup production was observed in the Gulf in 1997. Another survey in 1999 confirmed that Gulf grey seal pup production was no longer increasing and may have declined since 1990. A new pup production survey is planned for 2003. New population and replacement yield estimates will be produced after results of the survey are available.

5.1.4. Ringed Seals

A study of Arctic ringed seals has confirmed the existence of several distinct groups of ringed seals. Based on growth data, along with the existence of geographic barriers, distinct population boundaries can be defined (e.g., Hudson Bay, Baffin Island/Davis Strait, Arctic Archipelago). The structure of the ringed seal population in Labrador is less well known.

In response to a suspected population decline, a sampling program for ringed seals has begun in Hudson Bay in cooperation with the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board. Ringed seals are a critical prey item for polar bears in the North. Consequently, any proposal for a commercial harvest of this species would have to take into account the potential impact on polar bears. There are few detailed estimates of ringed seal abundance for Canadian populations. Hunting of ringed seals is currently done for subsistence only.

5.1.5. Other Seals

There are no reliable population estimates for harbour and bearded seals.

5.2. Environment and Habitat

DFO is responsible for managing the sustainable use of fisheries resources with conservation as the paramount consideration. The scope and nature of environmental effects are considered when developing management plans. Various management options are weighed against one another based on careful considerations of all information, including traditional knowledge, local knowledge and industry experience along with the best scientific information available from both DFO and external organizations. This management plan was formulated in consideration of any environmental or habitat concerns.

5.3. Species Interactions

Studies of predation by seals on fish in Atlantic Canada have focussed on harp seals and grey seals. Predation by harbour and hooded seals has also been estimated. Harp seals accounted for the largest amount of consumption, followed by hooded and grey seals. However, recent data on diets of hooded seals suggest that they may also be important predators.

Comprehensive estimates indicated that in 1996, harp seals consumed some 3 million tonnes of food in the Canadian Atlantic, whereas grey seals consumed some 314,000 tonnes. A high portion of the diet of both species was fish, with some invertebrate prey as well. The vast majority of fish prey were small forage fish. Commercial species made up only a small portion of their diet.

The three major species consumed by harp seals are capelin (893,000 tonnes); Sand lance (350,000 tonnes); and Arctic cod (186,000 tonnes).

For grey seals, the main prey species was sandlance (133,000 tonnes). Grey seals also consumed an estimated 55,000 tonnes of Atlantic cod.

The Panel on Seal Management also reviewed the available estimates of the consumption by seals of different fish species and concluded that more information is needed to understand the relationship between seals and their prey. They stated that seals consume large amounts of fish throughout Atlantic Canada, but that there is much less evidence that this predation is having a major impact on the recovery of most commercial fish stocks. However, the report also mentioned that, in certain areas, the consumption of cod by seals is considerable and that a reduction in seal predation could reasonably be expected to have a substantial effect on the size of these stocks.

5.4. Research

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans has maintained an active seal research program for many years. This program is aimed at better understanding seal populations fluctuations and the factors that influence them, as well as the role of seals in marine ecosystems.

Recently, most of the research has focussed on the population dynamics and the predation on fish by seals. Studies on these aspects will continue to gain a better understanding of seal populations and of their interactions with other components of their ecosystem.

Other aspects of the seal science program include the monitoring of the health, growth and condition of seals and determining stock structure, diet and parasite loads.

Additional projects studied the transfer of contaminants from females to pups, the impact of contaminants on immune system function, seasonal movements, diving activity and the measurement of heart rate as an indication of energy expenditure.

Scientists have also observed the seal hunt in order to collect data on the age composition of the harvest as well as on "struck and loss". In any harvest, animals may be killed but not recovered and therefore not included in the reported landings, a factor referred to as "struck and loss".

These projects are carried out in collaboration with the University of Waterloo, Laval University, Memorial University of Newfoundland, the Norwegian Institute of Fisheries and Aquaculture, the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources and Aquaplann (Tromso, Norway).

6. Management Objectives

6.1. Conservation, Sustainability, and Hunting Practices

DFO is committed to conservation and sustainability of the seal resource. Seals are a valuable natural resource that can be harvested wisely to provide economic benefits to coastal economies. Canada manages seals to provide for their long-term sustainable use. The harvest is based on conservation – it is not a cull.

6.2. Long-term Sustainable Use

The 2002 Management Plan provides a management framework to support the long-term, sustainable commercial and subsistence hunt of seals on the Atlantic coast. This hunt provides sealers, Aboriginal peoples and northern residents of Atlantic Canada with an opportunity to use adult and self-reliant juvenile seals to provide economic benefits and food for their families and communities.

6.3. A Market-Driven Commercial Hunt Within Conservation Parameters

The commercial seal hunt takes place in response to market demands, subject to conservation parameters that ensure the sustainability of seal stocks.

6.4. Full Use of Each Animal Hunted

The federal government continues to encourage the fullest possible use of each seal hunted. The objective of full use is also being explored under regulatory review (see Section 7.1).

6.5. Humane Hunting Practices

Section 8 of the *Marine Mammal Regulations* stipulates that persons can only dispatch marine mammals in a manner designed to do so quickly. Under these regulations, seals may be killed only by the use of high-powered rifles, shotguns firing slugs, clubs and hakapiks. Further requirements pertaining to the size, weight, muzzle velocity and gauge of weapon are specified in subsection 28(1) of the regulations.

Licensing policy, which requires a commercial sealer to work under an experienced sealer for two years to obtain a professional licence, augments the regulatory requirements. Sealers are also encouraged to take a training course on proper hunting techniques, product preparation and handling. Personal use sealers must have a hunter's capability certificate or big game licence and attend mandatory training sessions before a licence can be issued.

As a result of recommendations received from the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA), regulatory amendments to improve hunting practices have been proposed. These regulatory requirements are being examined under regulatory review (see Section 7.1). DFO is aiming to have these regulatory amendments in place for the 2003 season.

CVMA veterinary experts produced these recommendations following observation of hunting activity in the last few years.

6.6. International Considerations

6.6.1. Greenland Hunt

Canada and Greenland hunt harp and hooded seals from the same populations. The Canadian and Greenland governments have been exchanging information on their respective hunts and

have agreed to continue such exchanges with the intent of verifying harvest activities and strengthening conservation.

6.6.2. Trade and Trade Barriers

Markets in Asia have been key to expanding international markets, but Asian currency problems have caused marketing difficulties in the past two years. These problems may continue in 2002.

Canadian seal products are unable to access the United States market due to the prohibition on the import of seal products under the *U.S. Marine Mammal Protection Act* (MMPA). This prohibition has been in place since 1972, and the federal Government is working in cooperation with provincial governments, Aboriginal representatives and the sealing industry to affect changes that would lead to the elimination of this trade barrier. The Department of Foreign Affairs has the lead on this issue, and is presently developing a plan in an effort to open the U.S. market to Canadian sealing products.

6.6.3. Campaigns and Public Information

Some animal rights groups raise funds through media and mail-out campaigns based on graphic depictions of the seal hunt. They also make effective use of websites to present their views on the hunt.

The sealing industry is responsible for communicating its position and representing its interests. Industry groups, such as the Canadian Sealers Association, have played an important role in offering an alternative perspective on the seal hunt to the media and others. The CSA operates a website (**www.sealers.nf.ca**) to provide an industry perspective on the seal hunt.

The federal government continues to provide factual and up-to-date information on the seal hunt to diplomatic posts and to foreign and domestic media, businesses, government representatives and citizens. Information is provided in news releases, fact sheets and backgrounders and through DFO's website **(www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca).**

In 2000, the Department launched a new section on its website specifically dedicated to seals, to ensure that information on the seal hunt is current and easily accessible. This website can be accessed at:

http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/seal-phoque/index.htm

In addition, the Department of Foreign Affairs will continue to promote public education on the seal hunt on the international front.

6.6.4. Canadian Attitudes Toward the Seal Hunt

In 2000, Fisheries and Oceans Canada undertook a national survey of public attitudes toward the seal hunt. The survey was conducted by the Environics Research Group.

The objective of the survey was to provide the department and the Eminent Panel on Seal Management with an up-to-date view of public opinion across a range of sealing issues.

Results of the survey indicate that, after being presented with arguments for and against the hunt, 53% of Canadians support the seal hunt. This support would increase if they had confidence that the hunt was being carried out in a humane, well-regulated and sustainable manner. That is an increase of eight percentage points since the last survey in 1992. The complete report is available at:

http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/seal-phoque/reports/study_e/sealstudy.htm

6.7. Domestic Considerations

6.7.1. Equitable Allocation

DFO ensures that all sealers are allocated a minimum share of the TAC of harp seals, based on their traditional reliance on seals and recognizing the importance of this industry to residents of coastal communities adjacent to the major sealing areas. The land-based, small-vessel hunt undertaken by these sealers has been the cornerstone of the industry for the last decade.

DFO will maintain the present sealing opportunities for Aboriginal peoples, residents of the Far North and residents adjacent to traditional sealing areas. DFO will also be supportive of Aboriginal efforts to hunt seals commercially. As in 2001, a relatively large allocation for Labrador will allow for greater Aboriginal involvement in commercial sealing. There is a small allocation of 2,000 harp seals for the Canadian Arctic, as sealing for this species has been limited in recent years. DFO is mindful that there may be opportunities for a commercial harp seal hunt in the Canadian Arctic and will discuss allocations and re-allocations as opportunities arise. The Canadian Arctic hunt may have accounted for up to 5,000 harp seals before the market collapse in the early 1980s.

Again in 2002, an industry committee will be established to sub-allocate seals to various areas and fleet sectors once the overall TAC had been established.

6.7.2. Good Sealing Practices

To ensure that seals are handled and processed so as to provide high-quality products, as well as dispatched quickly and humanely, licensing policy requires a form of apprenticeship before a commercial sealer can obtain a professional licence. As well, personal use sealing licences will not be issued to any person who did not have a licence, a valid hunter's capability certificate or big game licence the previous year, and who has not attended a mandatory training session.

DFO works closely with the sealing industry to help develop and provide information sessions on methods of hunting, handling and processing to ensure high standards for Canadian seal products. To this end, DFO has been supportive of the establishment of industry councils in Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec.

7. CURRENT MANAGEMENT ISSUES

7.1. REGULATORY REVIEW — *(MARINE MAMMAL REGULATIONS)*

The current regulations were enacted in 1993 to reflect the sealing policy announced by the Honourable Tom Siddon on December 30, 1987, which was based on the Malouf Commission Report.

Since 1998, DFO has consulted with over 80 groups on prospective changes to the regulations respecting seals and sealing. Those consulted included representatives of Aboriginal groups, conservation and animal rights groups, special interest and academic groups, fishing and sealing industry groups, and provincial and territorial governments. The proposals were derived from prior consultations and submissions from interested parties. Consultations were conducted by means of mail-out in October 1998 and a public forum held in Newfoundland in May 1999. About 50 groups participated in the consultations.

DFO is aiming to have these regulatory amendments in place for the 2003 sealing season, therefore, the proposed amendments do not affect the conduct of the 2002 seal hunt.

Although Aboriginal groups have always been part of the consultations, it should be noted that the regulations do not apply to harvests managed under land claims agreements.

The proposed amendments to the *Marine Mammals Regulations, 1993* are intended to:

- Establish separate licences for commercial and non-aboriginal personal use sealing. This would allow DFO to establish different management regimes, for different user groups;
- Establish licences for vessels greater than 65' to collect seals from sealing vessels. This would allow DFO to ensure that large vessels collecting seals are not being used for actual hunting; and as a possible safe haven for smaller sealing vessels during bad weather.
- Establish licences and licence prerequisites to allow the killing of nuisance seals where there is a danger to property and other efforts have failed or where they are inflicting great damage on migrating fish stocks;
- Introduce testing methods that will establish a clearer determination of death before bleeding and skinning. This is meant to ensure that all animals are checked for death after they are shot or clubbed, using a method recommended by veterinarians;
- Establish a requirement to land either the pelt or carcass of seals taken by commercial or personal use sealers. This will make it illegal to harvest a seal for only smaller parts such as its organs; and
- Extend the existing gear restrictions to commercial sealing throughout Atlantic Canada. This would prevent the use of nets for all commercial sealing and would ensure a consistent standard for sealing.

The proposed amendments apply only to commercial and non-aboriginal personal use sealing. The regulations do not apply to aboriginal sealing for food, social or ceremonial purposes.

7.2. Formation of an Eminent Panel on Seal Management to Advise the Minister

In response to the *13th Report of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans* (SCOFO) Minister Dhaliwal appointed a panel to evaluate the current state of scientific knowledge, and to provide advice on a long-term strategy for the management of seal populations in Atlantic Canada

The objectives of the Eminent Panel's work were to:

- Evaluate the current state of scientific knowledge;
- Develop a strategic harvesting plan for seal populations over a 5-year period; and
- Provide advice on long-term strategies for seal populations management in Atlantic Canada.

Dr. McLaren of Dalhousie University, a highly respected scientist who has worked on seal biology, chaired the Panel. Other Panel members were Mr. David Vardy, Chair of the Newfoundland Public Utilities Commission, who has broad experience in the Newfoundland public service; Professor John Harwood of the Sea Mammal Research Unit in St. Andrews, United Kingdom; and Dr. Solange Brault of the University of Massachusetts in Boston. Dr. Harwood and Dr. Brault are both respected scientists with extensive expertise in marine mammals and population dynamics.

The Final Report of the Eminent Panel was publicly released on December 12, 2001. (See Section 14).

The report of the Panel provided a good review of the existing science on seal in the Atlantic. It includes a list of management strategies for seal with the costs and benefits associated with each.

The Panel made some important observations on the probable impact of seals on groundfish. However, they were unable to reach firm conclusions on their impact due to the uncertainties involved in the estimate of seal consumption and the complexity of the ecosystem interactions involved.

The Panel has recommended many additional research projects to be done on seal-fish interactions, seal diets and on the factors involved in cod mortality.

In 2002, DFO will review the conclusions and recommendations of the Panel and hold consultations with stakeholders on management strategies for seal populations. A first meeting with industry representatives took place in January 2002.

The department will consider the Panel's recommendations for additional research on seal as it prioritizes budget allocation for science for 2002-2003. In developing the management plan for the 2003 season, the department will be taking into account the recommendations of the Eminent Panel and the results of the consultations with stakeholders.

7.3. The Supreme Court Decision on the *Ward* Case

On February 22, 2002 the Supreme Court rendered its judgement on the *Ward* case. This case arises as a result of charges laid in 1996 against Mr. Ward, a Newfoundland sealer, who, along with about 70 other sealers, was charged with selling blueback seal pelts contrary to section 27 of the *Marine Mammal Regulations*. Section 27 prohibits the sale, trade or barter of a whitecoat or blueback seal. (A whitecoat is a harp seal up to two and a half weeks old. A blueback seal is a hooded seal up to about 16 months of age).

Mr. Ward challenged the charges in the Supreme Court of Newfoundland on the basis that section 27 of the *Marine Mammal Regulations* was unconstitutional in that the power to regulate marketing of seals falls within the exclusive jurisdiction of the province. In 1997, the Newfoundland Supreme Court ruled that section 27 of the regulations was constitutional. Mr. Ward appealed to the Newfoundland Court of Appeal. In 1999, Newfoundland Court of Appeal ruled that section 27 of the Regulations was beyond the legal power *(ultra vires)* of the federal Government and therefore invalid.

The Government of Canada did not agree with this verdict, and in June 2000, the Supreme Court of Canada granted the Crown's application for leave to appeal this decision. The Supreme Court heard the case on October 31, 2001 and decision was made public on February 22, 2002.

In a unanimous judgment, the Supreme Court held that section 27 of the *Marine Mammal Regulations,* while on its face a simple ban on sale, trade or barter, is concerned with curtailing commercial hunting of young seals to preserve the fisheries as an economic resource, vitally connected to protecting the economic viability of the Canadian fishery as a whole.

The Court held that the federal fisheries power embraces commercial and economic interests, aboriginal rights and interests and the public interests in sport and recreation and extends this power to maintenance and preservation of the fishery as a whole, including its economic value.

The Supreme Court's decision means that DFO can continue to enforce section 27 of the *Marine Mammal Regulations*. The Attorney General will decide how the Government will proceed with the charges against the 70 or so sealers, who were charged under section 27.

7.4. Use of Large Vessels (Over 65 feet in length)

There has been some interest in the possible use of large vessels as platforms to assist the existing small vessel hunt. Although current government policy does not permit sealing directly from large vessels, there is no policy against the use of a large vessel to collect, transport and process seals hunted by small vessels and as a possible safe haven during bad weather. These vessels are commonly referred to as "collector vessels."

It should be stressed that under no conditions can collector vessels be used to hunt seals. Seal hunting refers to any activity that takes place on the hunting ground, including:

- The act of hunting, killing and skinning seals;

- Handling and transporting raw seal skins and carcasses from the place where the animals are killed to land or to the point of sale (collector vessel); and
- Transporting hunters from land to the hunting ground and from the hunting ground to land.

The crew of the collector vessel must limit its activities to transferring seals from the harvest location onto the boat. However, some activities may take place on the collector vessel, including primary processing of products, such as the cleaning and preparation of meat.

In 1999, a collector vessel was used to collect about 25,000 harp seals from sealers in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence. No collector vessels were used in 2000 or 2001.

8. Management Measures for 2002

8.1. Total Allowable Catches (TACs)

8.1.1. Harp Seals

The TAC for harp seals remains at 275,000 in 2002.

8.1.2. Hooded Seals

The TAC for hooded seals remains at 10,000 in 2002.

8.1.3. Grey Seals

A hunt for a few hundred grey seals may be permitted off the Magdalen Islands and in small-scale hunts in areas other than Sable Island.

8.1.4. Ringed Seals

The season from April 25 to November 30 will continue for the subsistence hunt of ringed seals in Labrador.

8.1.5. Other Seals

The numbers of bearded and harbour seals taken for subsistence purposes are small and no season is necessary.

8.1.6. Subsistence Catches

The subsistence hunt of small numbers of harp, hooded, grey, ringed, bearded and harbour seals will continue. Any subsistence hunt of seals in areas other than Atlantic Canada is not dealt with in this plan, although an allocation of harp seals is made for the hunt in the Canadian Arctic.

8.2. Hunt Location and Timing

Residents of Labrador north of 53°N latitude and the Arctic (Sealing Areas 1 to 4 – see map in Section 15) can hunt seals of any species at any time of the year for subsistence purposes, except as specified for ringed seals below. Aboriginal persons can also hunt seals throughout the year for food, social and ceremonial purposes.

8.2.1. Harp Seals

The commercial hunt will continue in traditional sealing areas on the Front (Sealing Areas 5 to 8) and in the Gulf (sealing areas 9 to 16, 20, 22, 26 and 27 – see map in Section 15). The season is from November 15 to May 15. Regional Directors General may alter the seasons (close times) by publicly issuing Variation Orders. As in the last two years, a condition of licence will again prohibit the taking of whitecoats.

The personal use hunt will be off Newfoundland, Labrador south of 53°N latitude and off Quebec's North Shore, the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands. The seasons will be the same as the commercial seasons and will be established by the period of validity on licences until seasons can be included in the regulations. It is illegal for personal use licence holders to take whitecoats.

8.2.2. Hooded Seals

The commercial season will remain from November 15 to May 15 in Sealing Areas 4 to 7 and 12. Regional Directors General may alter the seasons (close times) by publicly issuing Variation Orders. Sealing Areas 8 to 11 and 13 to 33 (see map in Section 15) are areas where hooded seals have not been hunted and they will remain closed. As in 2000 and 2001, a condition of licence will again prohibit the taking of young hooded seals (bluebacks).

Personal use licences may allow hooded seals to be taken in areas where the commercial season is open. As noted above, the personal use season will be established by period of validity until seasons are included in the regulations. It is illegal for personal use licence holders to harvest bluebacks.

8.2.3. Grey Seals

The timing of the grey seal hunt will be controlled by condition of licence. The small commercial hunt near the Magdalen Islands will likely occur in January and February, and other grey seal hunts will be approved on a case-by-case basis. There is no personal use hunt for grey seals.

8.2.4. Ringed and Other Seals

The season from April 25 to November 30 will continue for the subsistence hunt of ringed seals in Labrador. The numbers of bearded and harbour seals taken for subsistence purposes are small and no season is necessary.

8.3. ALLOCATIONS

8.3.1. Harp Seals

The overall TAC of harp seals is subdivided into commercial sealing allocations applicable to different areas (see Section 13), a personal use allocation for all areas and a subsistence allocation for northern communities. For the 2002 sealing season, the industry may decide to reallocate some of the quota

Seals hunted by sealers licensed in an area or sub-area will be counted against the allocation for that area or sub-area regardless of the area in which they are taken.

There are commercial allocations of 271,000 harp seals. In some areas, they are further allocated based on the length overall (LOA) of the vessels used. There is an allocation of 2,000 seals for personal use and a nominal allocation of 2,000 seals for the northern subsistence hunt. There may be some commercial by-products of the northern subsistence hunt such as pelts and handicrafts.

Affected stakeholder groups will be consulted on any in-season re-allocations or sub-allocations among sectors or areas. Committees have been established for these purposes.

8.3.2. Hooded Seals

The TAC of 10,000 hooded seals is for sealing in the Front, is not allocated among the various hunters, and applies to commercial and subsistence sealers in the aggregate. There is no hooded seal hunt in the Gulf.

8.3.3. Ringed and Other Seals

There are no TACs or allocations of other species of seals. Conditions of licence are used to limit the commercial hunt of grey seals to a small number. Licences will also be used to control any commercial hunt of ringed seals. There are no allocations for ringed, harbour or bearded seals taken in the subsistence hunt.

8.4. OTHER PLAN ELEMENTS

As well as the TACs, seasons and allocations noted above, the 2002 Management Plan includes the elements noted below. The *Marine Mammal Regulations* and the *Seal Licensing Policy for Eastern Canada* are used to manage many of these elements.

8.5. MAJOR ELEMENTS

Whitecoats (harp seal pups) and bluebacks (young hooded seals) may not be hunted.

Persons may not hunt adult seals in breeding or whelping patches.

Land-based sealers with or without small vessels (65 feet and less in length) will do the hunting, although vessels beyond that length may be considered for use to collect, transport and prepare hunted seals from small vessels and as safe havens for sealers in bad weather.

DFO will continue to enforce regulatory requirements for the firearms, ammunition, clubs and hakapiks used in sealing to ensure the right tools are used properly for the quick and humane dispatch of animals.

8.6. Specific Licensing Elements

Licences are not required by Labrador residents north of 53°N latitude hunting seals in Sealing Areas 1 to 4 for food purposes. They are also not required by Aboriginal people hunting for food, social or ceremonial purposes and who are not the beneficiaries of a claims agreement.

Professional commercial sealing licences may be issued only to full-time or bona fide fishers registered with DFO who:

a) Held a professional sealing licence the previous year; or

b) Have participated in the seal hunt during the previous two years as the holder of an assistant sealing licence.

Assistant sealing licences may be issued only to registered fishers who are in possession of written confirmation, from a professional sealer, to the effect that the assistant sealer will be hunting seals under the supervision of the professional sealer during the sealing season.

Personal use sealing licences, allowing the hunt of up to six seals a year for personal consumption, may be issued only to residents who:

a) Live adjacent to established sealing areas throughout Newfoundland, in Labrador south of 53°N latitude, on Quebec's North Shore, the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands; and

b) Held a personal use sealing licence in the previous year; or

c) Hold a valid provincial hunting licence for big game or a hunter's capability certificate to demonstrate their proficiency with firearms* and have attended a mandatory information session on regulations, safety and the proper handling of hunted seals.

Special sealing licences may be issued for small-scale projects to hunt seals in 2002.

The use of firearms to hunt seals near communities or areas of fishing activity may be controlled by condition of licence to ensure public safety and an orderly hunt. In Newfoundland, the licence condition on firearm states: "While fishing and attempting to fish for seals, you are not permitted to possess a rifle that produces a muzzle velocity of less than 1,800 feet per second and/or a muzzle energy of less than 1,100 foot pounds."

* Applicants from the Magdalen Islands need not meet the requirements for firearms proficiency if they are using a club in accordance with the traditional hunting practices in that area.

9. CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION ISSUES AND STRATEGIES FOR 2002

The major emphasis of DFO's Conservation and Protection strategies will be on monitoring catches, ensuring humane hunting practices and enforcing the prohibition on the harvest of whitecoat and blueback seals.

9.1. ORGANIZATION

The following DFO staff will be responsible for the operational coordination of the hunt:

Gulf Coordinator:	**Front Coordinator:**
Roger Simon Magdalen Islands Tel: (418) 986-2095	Anthony Dunne Newfoundland Tel: (709) 772-2784
Maritimes Region	
Gary Weber Halifax, Nova Scotia Tel: (902) 426-9609	Stewart Manderson Moncton, New Brunswick Tel: (506) 851-7800

9.1.1. Mandate

Their mandate is to coordinate enforcement operations in the various areas of Atlantic Canada.

9.2. ENFORCEMENT PRIORITIES FOR 2002

TABLE 2: ENFORCEMENT PRIORITIES FOR 2002

Priority	Regulation	Strategy
Monitor hunt and enforce regulations	Sections 8, 28(2) and 29 (1) of the *Marine Mammal Regulations*	♦ aerial surveillance ♦ on-site inspections ♦ observer coverage
Maintain accurate reporting of landings and quota compliance	Section 22 of the Fishery (General) Regulations	♦ in-port inspections ♦ observer coverage ♦ on-site inspections
Monitor by-catches of seals	Section 5 of the Marine Mammal Regulations and Section 33 of the Fishery (General) Regulations	♦ in-port inspections ♦ observer coverage ♦ on-site inspections
Ensure that no whitecoats or bluebacks are harvested	Licence condition	♦ aerial surveillance ♦ on-site inspections ♦ in-port inspections ♦ observer coverage

9.3. Objectives

DFO will seek the effective application of legislation, policies and directives related to:

- Quotas;
- Licensing;
- The prohibition on harvesting of whitecoats and bluebacks;
- Hunting methods (humane hunting and instruments);
- Observation permits; and
- Communications.

9.4. Quotas/Quota Monitoring

Sealers will be required to maintain logbooks and hail (report orally) seal harvests daily for vessels greater than 35 feet in overall length. These reports, and hunt estimates made by fishery officers, will be compiled, by species, zone and vessel class, in weekly quota reports. For vessels less than 35 feet in overall length and land-based sealers, fishery officers will provide hunt estimates based on community reports, plant statistics, weekly reports and/or checks of landings. In Newfoundland, weekly reports will be compiled based on species, area and vessel class.

9.5. Enforcement/Regulations

The enforcement objectives for 2002 will be to seek overall compliance with regulations and to ensure the maintenance of effective quota monitoring. Priority will be given to enforcing regulations pertaining to proper hunting techniques, the accurate reporting of landings and quota compliance, monitoring by-catches of seals in other fisheries and ensuring that whitecoats and bluebacks are not hunted for commercial purposes. The department will also promote the fullest possible use of each animal harvested.

9.6. Enforcement Strategy

The enforcement program will be based on the utilization of air/surface platforms, as well as on the deployment of fishery officers and observers.

9.7. Air Surveillance

Commencing in mid-February, fixed-wing aerial patrols will be conducted to determine the location of seals and sealing vessels. If necessary, the frequency of patrols will be increased during the season. Helicopter patrols will be conducted in both the Gulf and Front areas as required. An additional helicopter may be added in the Gulf area.

9.8. At-sea Surveillance

During peak harvest activity, patrol vessels, with fishery officers, will conduct at-sea surveillance in the Newfoundland Region. Fishery officers will conduct at-sea boardings to ensure compliance with the *Marine Mammal Regulations*, with particular emphasis on hunting methods. Fishery officers may also be deployed directly on sealing vessels and randomly moved to various vessels throughout the fleet.

In both the Newfoundland Region and the Magdalen Islands area, Canadian Coast Guard vessels will be called upon for assistance if required to transport fishery officers to the hunt.

9.9. Observers

Commencing in late February, independent observers will be deployed to the seal hunt in the Newfoundland Region as required.

9.10. Other Patrol/Surveillance Activity

Fishery officers will conduct coastal patrols, dockside checks and quota monitoring.

9.11. Royal Canadian Mounted Police/Other Assistance

The RCMP will be available, upon request, should situations arise where assistance is required in both the Front and Gulf areas. As required, DFO will participate in joint patrols with the RCMP and the Surêté du Québec to ensure an orderly hunt. This assistance could be important in avoiding potential confrontations between sealers and members of anti-sealing groups.

9.12. Monitoring of Enforcement Operational Plan

Weekly conference calls will be conducted to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the operational plan. If required, in-season adjustments will be made to the plan.

10. Management Plan Evaluation Criteria

- Sustainable hunt within the TAC
- Adherence to regulations
- Fullest possible use — product sales
- Number of participants throughout season
- Economic benefits
- Consultations with stakeholders

11. Conservation and Protection Plan Evaluation Criteria

- Compliance with overall TAC
- Compliance with quota and allocations
- Compliance with blueback/whitecoat prohibition
- Number of incidents
- Number of warnings issued
- Number of charges laid
- Penalties
- Feedback from sealing industry
- Feedback from fishery officers
- Feedback from public

12. Seal landings by area and species – 1992 to 2001

Species	Year	Nfld. Front/ Labrador	Newfound-land Gulf	Cape Breton, N.S., P.E.I.	Magdalen Islands	Quebec North Shore	Personal Use	Yearly Total
Hooded Seals	1992	111	8					119
	1993	19						19
	1994	129	20					149
	1995	856	1					857
	1996	25,712	42					25,754
	1997	7,024	34					7,058
	1998	10,144	4					10,148
	1999	182	6				13	201
	2000	10						10
	2001	123	17					140
Harp Seals	1992	58,244	3,907	137	2,704	2,436		67,428
	1993	20,260	2,541	25	1,572	777		25,175
	1994	52,914	6,811	56	330	1,065		61,176
	1995	52,378	8,238	470	1,196	3,109		65,391
	1996	165,335	60,856	1,145	13,709	1,672		242,717
	1997	198,841	33,754	255	28,900	2,454		264,204
	1998	215,693	44,154	3,127	18,075	1,021		282,070
	1999	148,005	56,202	3,528	34,756	711	1,350	244,552
	2000	82,104	3,610		5,167		721	91,602
	2001	80,990	124,359	1,020	17,621		2,503	226,493
Harbour, Bearded, Ringed	1992	1,127						1,127
	1993	1,125						1,125
Harbour Seals	1994	90						90
	1995	27						27
	1996	58						58
	1997							
	1998							
	1999							
	2000							
	2001							
Ringed Seals	1994	1,581						1,581
	1995	1,384						1,384
	1996	670						670
	1997	1,639						1,639
	1998	1,046						1,046
	1999	772						772
	2000	1,695						1,695
	2001	2,008	1					2,009
Bearded Seals	1994	84						84
	1995	24						24
	1996	45						45
	1997	118	9					127
	1998	56						56
	1999	60	1					61
	2000	63						63
	2001	168						168
Grey Seals	1993							
	1994				40			40
	1995			7	357			364
	1996		40	33	59			132
	1997				72			72
	1998			69	206			275
	1999			98				98
	2000			342				342
	2001		1	75				76
Total All Species	1992	59,482	3,915	137	2,704	2,436	0	68,674
	1993	21,404	2,541	25	1,572	777	0	26,319
	1994	54,798	6,831	56	370	1,065	0	63,120
	1995	54,669	8,239	477	1,553	3,109	0	68,047
	1996	191,820	60,938	1,178	13,768	1,672	0	269,376
	1997	207,622	33,797	255	28,972	2,454	0	273,100
	1998	226,939	44,158	3,196	18,281	1,021	0	293,595
	1999	149,019	56,209	3,626	34,756	711	1,363	245,684
	2000	83,872	3,610	342	5,167	0	721	93,712
	2001	83,289	124,378	1,095	17,621	0	2,503	228,886

13. HARP SEAL ALLOCATIONS FOR 2002

General Area/	Category of Sealing	Allocation	Sealing Area(s)
Northern Areas	Subsistence Sealing	2,000	1 to 4
Labrador	Commercial	10,000	4
All Areas	Personal Use Sealing	2,000	5 to 20
Front Area	Commercial		
Front Area	- Vessels less than 35 feet	64,000	5 to 8
Front Area	- Vessels 35 to 65 feet	120,000	5 to 8
FRONT	**TOTAL**	**184,000**	**4 to 8**
Gulf	Vessels less than 35 feet (May 1 to May 15)	7,000	
Gulf	Gulf — vessels less than 35 feet	20,000	9 to 27
Gulf	Gulf — vessels 35 feet to 65 feet	50,000	9 to 27
GULF	**TOTAL**	**77,000**	**9 to 27**
	CANADIAN TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCH	**275,000**	**ALL**

The allocation between areas and sectors is subject to change.

For the purpose of the allocations set out in this table, sealers that obtain access to the seals without the use of a vessel shall be considered as sealers on vessels less than 35 feet.

The 2,000 allocation for subsistence sealing in northern areas (Sealing Areas 1 to 4) is a nominal amount only – it is not a quota.

14. NEWS RELEASE

News Release

December 12, 2001

DHALIWAL ANNOUNCES CONSULTATIONS ON REPORT OF EMINENT PANEL AND MAINTAINS TAC FOR 2002 SEALING SEASON

OTTAWA -- The Honourable Herb Dhaliwal, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, today accepted the final report of the eminent Panel on seal management.

"I would like to thank the members of the Panel for their dedicated work. I know that this is an important issue for many Canadians and this is why I established the Panel," said Mr. Dhaliwal. "The findings in this report will help us develop seal population management strategies that are based on the best available science and that offer a balanced perspective on seal harvesting."

"Given that this process will take some time and needs to be done with careful attention, I have decided to maintain the existing management measures for the 2002 sealing season," said Mr. Dhaliwal. "Since the seal population is healthy and abundant, these management measures should not affect the status of the stock."

For 2002, the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) will remain at 275,000 animals. The hooded seal TAC will remain at the 1998-2001 level of 10,000 animals. As in the 2001 management plan, a small harvest of grey seals will be allowed in areas other than Sable Island. Also, the licence conditions put in place in 2000 to prohibit the harvest of whitecoats and bluebacks will remain in place.

While the Panel did not provide an optimum population size for the various seal species, it did examine several different management strategies that will be considered carefully by the department. Over the next year, DFO officials will take the necessary time to consult with interested stakeholders to develop a long-term management plan for the following season, based on the findings and recommendations contained in the Seal Panel report.

The mandate of the Panel, established in April 2000 in response to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans' report on seals, included a review of:

- scientific methodologies for estimating seal populations;
- scientific methodologies for estimating the total magnitude of the hunt;
- the current state of knowledge about the diet of seals and the impact of seal consumption on cod and other commercial fish stocks; and,
- the optimum size of the harp seal population in terms of its interaction with the ecosystem and commercial fish stocks.

Members of the Panel included:

- Dr. Ian Mclaren as Chair, currently President of the Sable Island Preservation Trust;
- Professor John Harwood, Scientist at the Sea Mammal Research Unit of the University of St. Andrews, United Kingdom;
- Mr. David Vardy, currently Chair of the Public Utilities Commission of Newfoundland; and
- Dr. Solange Brault, Assistant Professor at the University of Massachusetts, Boston.

The Panel's report is available on the departmental website at www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca.

- 30 -

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

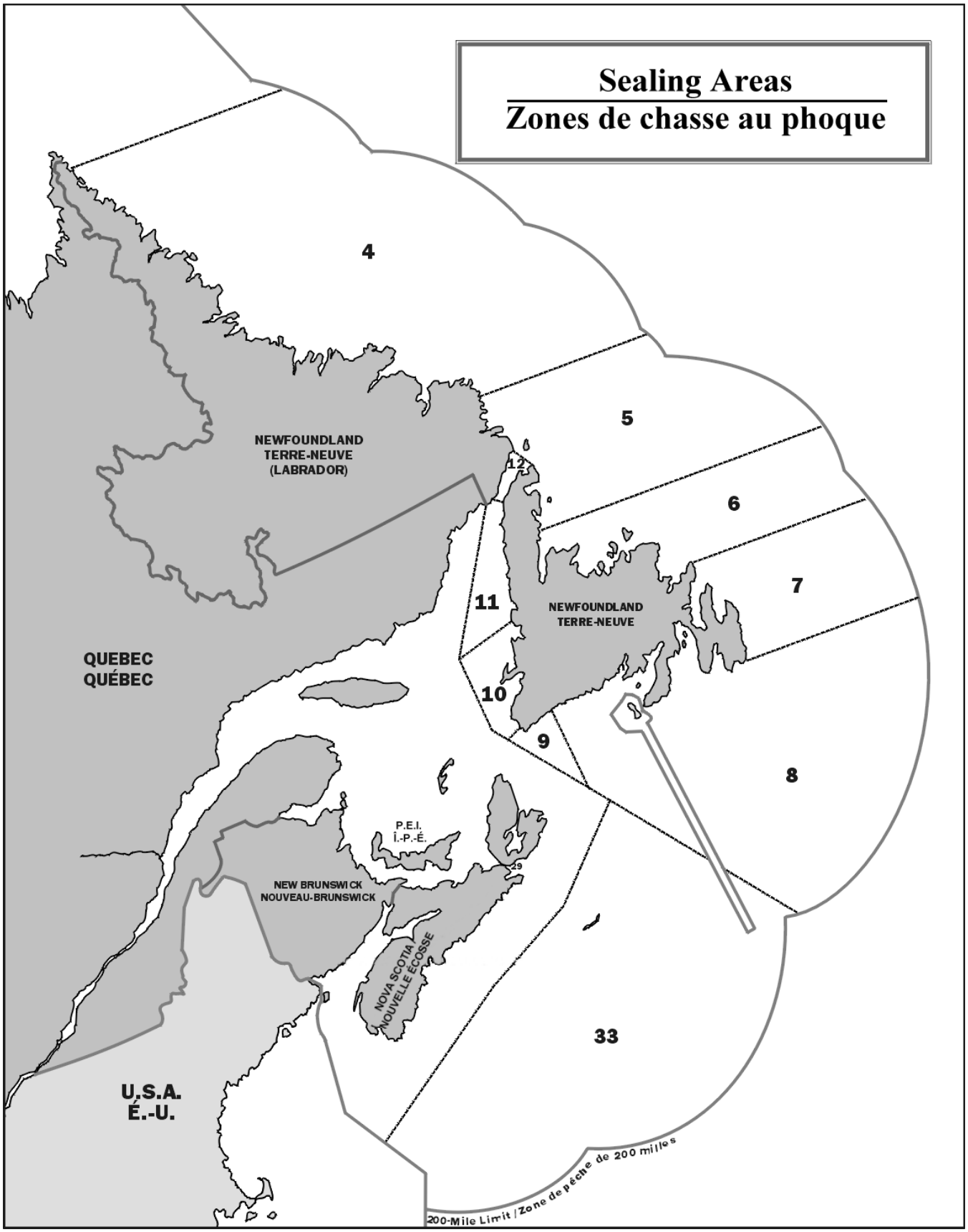
Heather Bala
Director of Communications
Office of the Minister
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Ottawa
(613) 996-0076

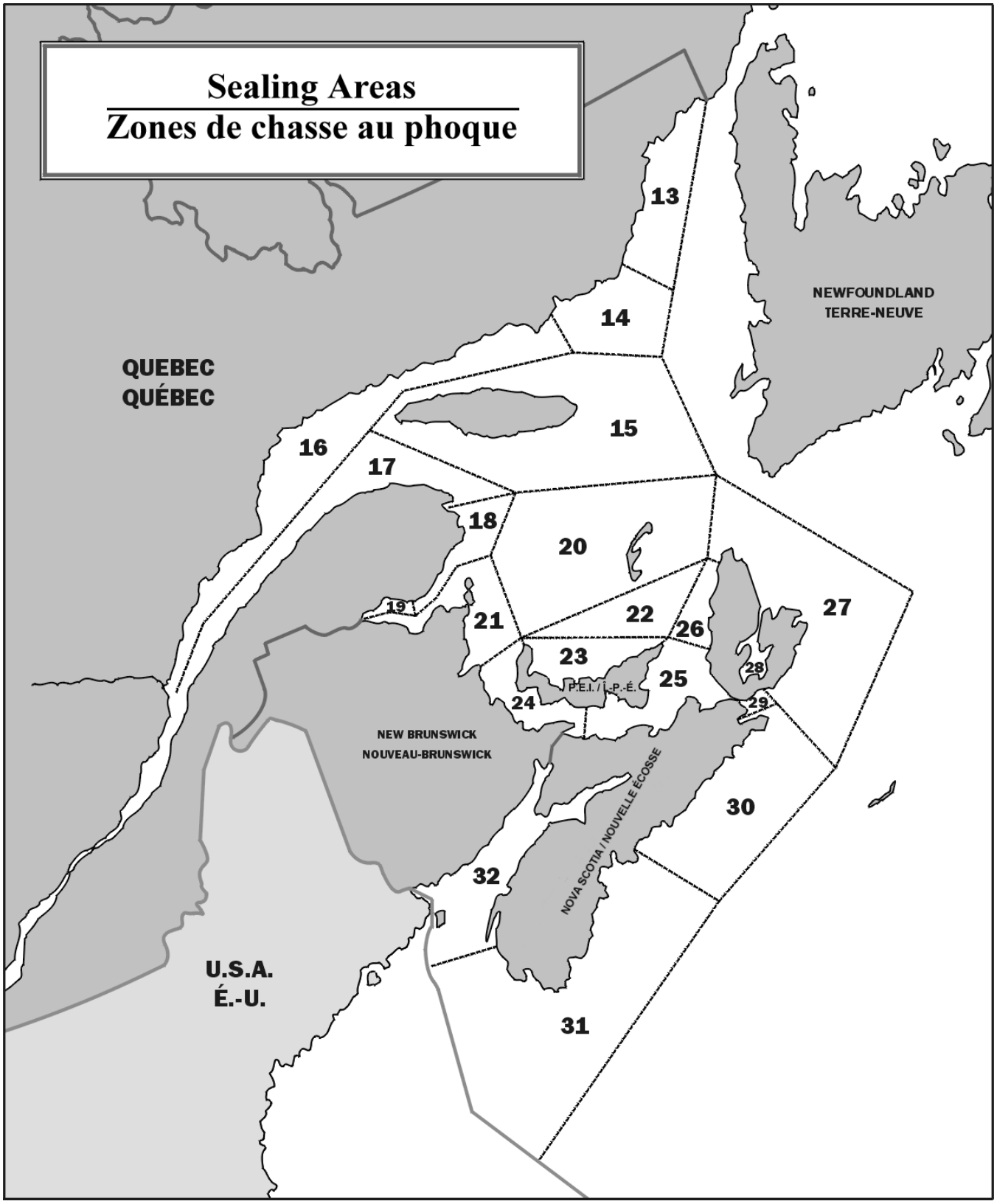
Myriam Brochu
Manager, Media Relations
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Ottawa

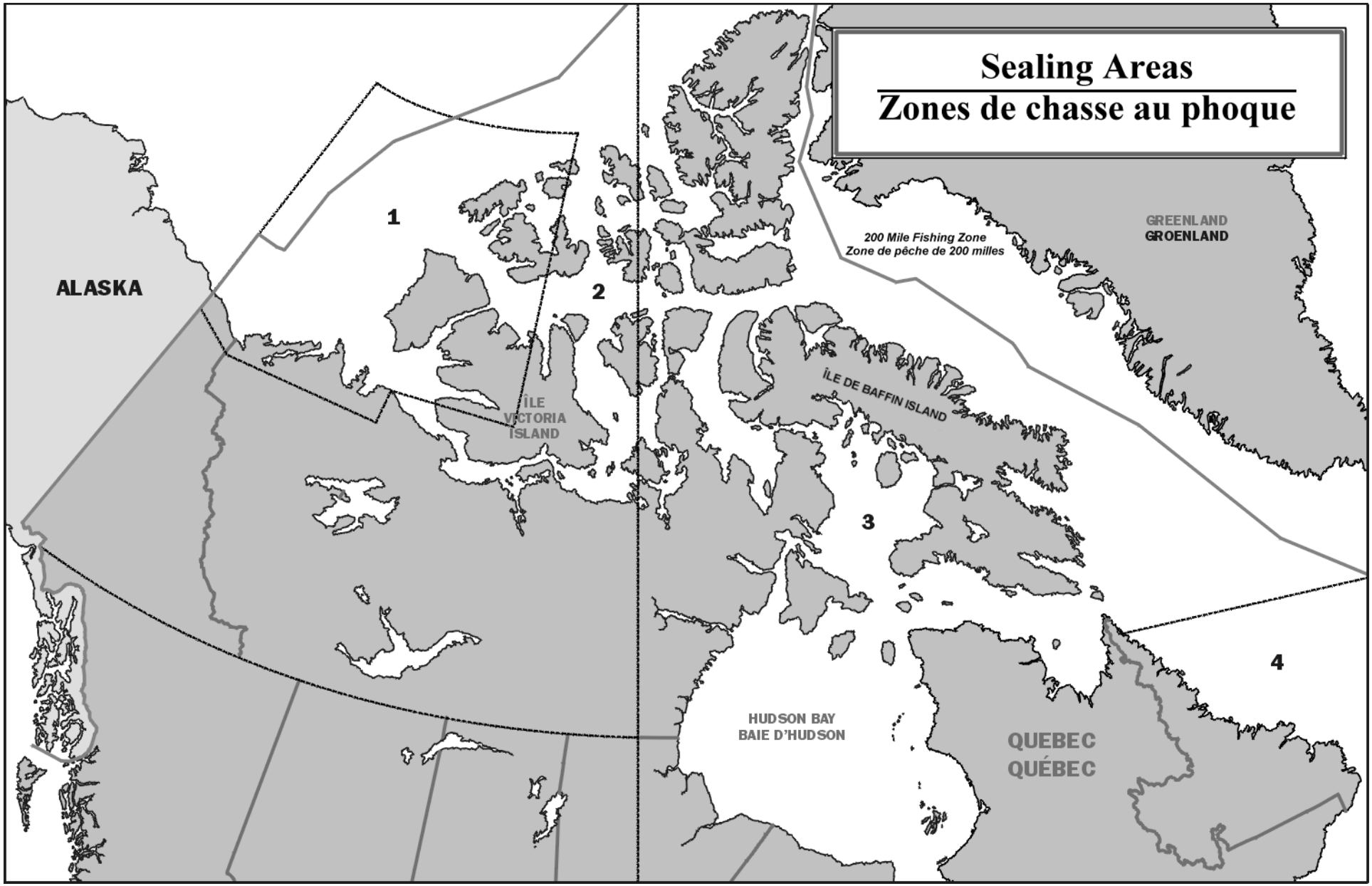
(613) 998-1530

Internet : http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca

15. Maps of Sealing Areas




Sealing Areas
Zones de chasse au phoque
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
NEWFOUNDLAND
TERRE-NEUVE
QUEBEC
QUÉBEC
P.E.I. / Î.-P.-É.
NEW BRUNSWICK
NOUVEAU-BRUNSWICK
NOVA SCOTIA / NOUVELLE ÉCOSSE
U.S.A.
É.-U.


Sealing Areas
Zones de chasse au phoque
1
2
3
4
ALASKA
200 Mile Fishing Zone
Zone de pêche de 200 milles
GREENLAND
GROENLAND
ÎLE VICTORIA ISLAND
ÎLE DE BAFFIN ISLAND
HUDSON BAY
BAIE D'HUDSON
QUEBEC
QUÉBEC