

Will these baby seals survive the cruelty of the Canadian Seal Hunt?

(Charlottetown, Canada - 8 March 2005) - IFAW (International Fund for Animal Welfare) today issued pictures taken within the last 24 hours of harp seal pups off Canada's east coast. These pups are between five and ten days old, and still being suckled by their mothers on the ice.

IFAW confirmed that in only a matter of days up to 319,500 of these pups will be inhumanely killed for their fur. It is legal to kill a harp seal pup as soon as it begins to moult its white coat at around 12 days old.

Canada's annual seal hunt is the largest marine mammal hunt in the world. The current three-year kill quota of almost one million seals is now in its final year. IFAW is calling on the Canadian government to stop completely this cruel and ecologically unsustainable seal hunt.

IFAW is the only organisation in the world to consistently observe and document the hunt each year. For the last 36 years IFAW has brought media and government officials from around the world to view the hunt firsthand. This year, European parliamentarians and media from around the globe are observing the hunt with IFAW's help.

The international community, including over two million IFAW supporters is appalled by the cruelty of Canada's hunt for baby seals.

About IFAW (International Fund for Animal Welfare)

IFAW was founded in 1969 to end the Canadian baby seal hunt. Over the next two decades, IFAW won many hard fought victories for seals, including the 1982 European Union ban of whitecoat and blueback sealskins. These victories almost stopped the baby seal hunt in the 1980s. Three years ago the seal hunt returned to levels unseen in decades and it is bigger than ever. To learn how to help IFAW protect seals, visit www.ifaw.org