

Mexican Senate recommends banning importation of seal products

(México City, México - 22 March 2005) - IFAW (International Fund for Animal Welfare - www.ifaw.org) announced today that Mexico's Chamber of Senators has officially condemned the Canadian baby seal hunt. The Chamber of Senators has also sent a request to the Ministry of Economy to ban the importation of any seal fur products into Mexico.

"The Mexican senate has demanded the Ministry of the Economy to ban the importation of seal products from Canada. This is an accurate and strategic decision because Mexico is a commercial partner with Canada in the North American Free Trade Agreement," said Beatriz Bugada, IFAW's Director for Latin America and the Caribbean.

The official criticism by the Mexican Senate now means that legislative bodies from both of Canada's NAFTA partners, Mexico and the United States, have advanced legislation denouncing Canada's hunt for baby seals. On February 1, 2005 a resolution, co-sponsored by 16 senators, was introduced into the U.S. Senate urging Canada to end its seal hunt.

Canada's annual seal hunt is the largest marine mammal hunt in the world with a three-year kill quota of almost one million seals. Last year, according to statistics provided by the Canadian government, 365,971 seals were killed and 96.6% of those were less than 3 months old. Seals are skinned for their pelts and then sold to fur distributors to feed the demand of the fashion industry. More seals are killed today than were during the 1950s and 60s when overhunting significantly reduced the seal population. Over the next several weeks up to 319,500 baby seals will be killed for their fur.

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 aggregate 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