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ECONOMIC VALUE OF THE SEAL HUNT

DOCUMENTS

Since the days of the earliest settlements on Canada's east coast, sealing has been an important part of the area's fishing industry, supplying meat for food and oil, and skins for fur and leather products.

In many areas on Canada's Atlantic coast, fishing is a series of seasonal activities. Sealing is one of these fisheries, and produces, in many instances, the only source of income in late winter and early spring.

Value of Sealing in 1981

The value added to the Atlantic economy by the sealing industry in 1981 is estimated at \$12.8 million (based on the multipliers developed following an extensive survey of the sealing industry in 1976) including a contribution of \$7.0 million by the primary, or harvesting sector and \$5.8 million by the secondary, or processing sector. This compares with \$10.7 million value added in 1980, and \$9.5 million in 1979.

Total receipts accruing to the large vessel component (vessels over 20 meters - 65 feet - in length) of the seal fishery were estimated at \$2.3 million in 1981, derived from the first sale of pelts and oil. Receipts from small vessels (nine to twenty meters - 30 to 65 feet - in length) in Newfoundland were estimated at \$1.6 million, while those collected by landsmen operations also amounted to \$1.6 million. The utilization of meat and other seal products contributed an additional \$1.5 million to the regional economy.

The nine large vessels participating in the 1981 hunt had 211 crew members, while the 175 small vessels employed 759. It is estimated that 4,300 landsmen took part in the 1981 hunt. Returns to labour for large vessel sealers averaged \$4,010 for less than four weeks work, with the sale of oil and meat

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accounting for approximately 25 per cent of their income. Sales of meat in the large vessel component of the seal fishery, which averaged over \$600 per hunter, go entirely to the sealers, whereas a share of the pelt and oil value goes to the ship. Average incomes to small vessel operators and to commercially active landsmen were estimated to be \$2,763 and \$711 respectively.

The continuing annual increase in value added to the economy by the sealing industry, going from \$10.7 million in 1980 to \$12.8 million in 1981, relates in part to a steady rise in the value of the product. It is expected that current efforts aimed at improving the quality of seal products will result in substantial further increases in revenue for those involved in the sealing industry, particularly for the sealers.

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