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April 09, 2010

Report from the Seal Slaughter, Special Chance to Help

It's a day I dread each year: the first blow or bullet landed against a baby seal off Canada's East Coast. It marks the beginning of the world's largest, intentional slaughter of marine mammals.

[Our ProtectSeals team](#) is there to document this open-air massacre, and to help transmit images of the barbarism to the world. We are shrinking the kill dramatically, with the ultimate goal of ending it permanently.



Gray Mitchell/The HSUS

A seal is killed on day one of Canada's commercial seal slaughter.

But it's a doubly difficult year for seals. They face not only the sealers, with their clubs and guns. They are also threatened by the [absence of their sea ice habitat](#)—with warm temperatures, this is the lowest sea ice formation on record off of Canada's East Coast.

We are conducting a global [boycott of Canadian seafood](#) as a means of applying pressure on Canada's fishing industry and political leaders. We've also succeeded in lobbying to close international markets for seal skins; last year, the [27 nations of the European Union banned their trade](#) in seal products.

This fight can be demoralizing. But we must keep our gaze fixed on our goal. Today, I'm asking for your support to help us stop it once and for all. If you [give now to our efforts to save seals](#), your donation will be tripled by the Giant Steps Foundation and other generous donors. With every dollar you give, until we hit a total of \$400,000, these other donors will give two dollars. [Please consider a special gift](#)—with this chance to turn every dollar you donate into three—to help us finally win the battle.

I've asked [Rebecca Aldworth](#), our Canadian director, who bravely bears witness to the slaughter year after year, to send a dispatch.

It is hard to find words to describe [what I witnessed](#) yesterday. In the twelve years that I have documented this seal kill, this is some of the worst cruelty I've ever seen.

The Canadian government claims that it has made the killing humane...but I can't imagine that there is a person alive who could watch what occurred and think for one second it should continue.

Flying in our helicopter, we watched as sealers gunned down and clubbed defenseless baby seals. One seal pup was shot in the face and left thrashing in agony. We couldn't hear her cries from up there, but we knew the awful sound. For three minutes of hell, the three-week-old pup screamed and fought for her life. Her desperate battle was lost when the sealer finally clubbed her and tossed her bloodied body into a mass of carcasses on the boat.

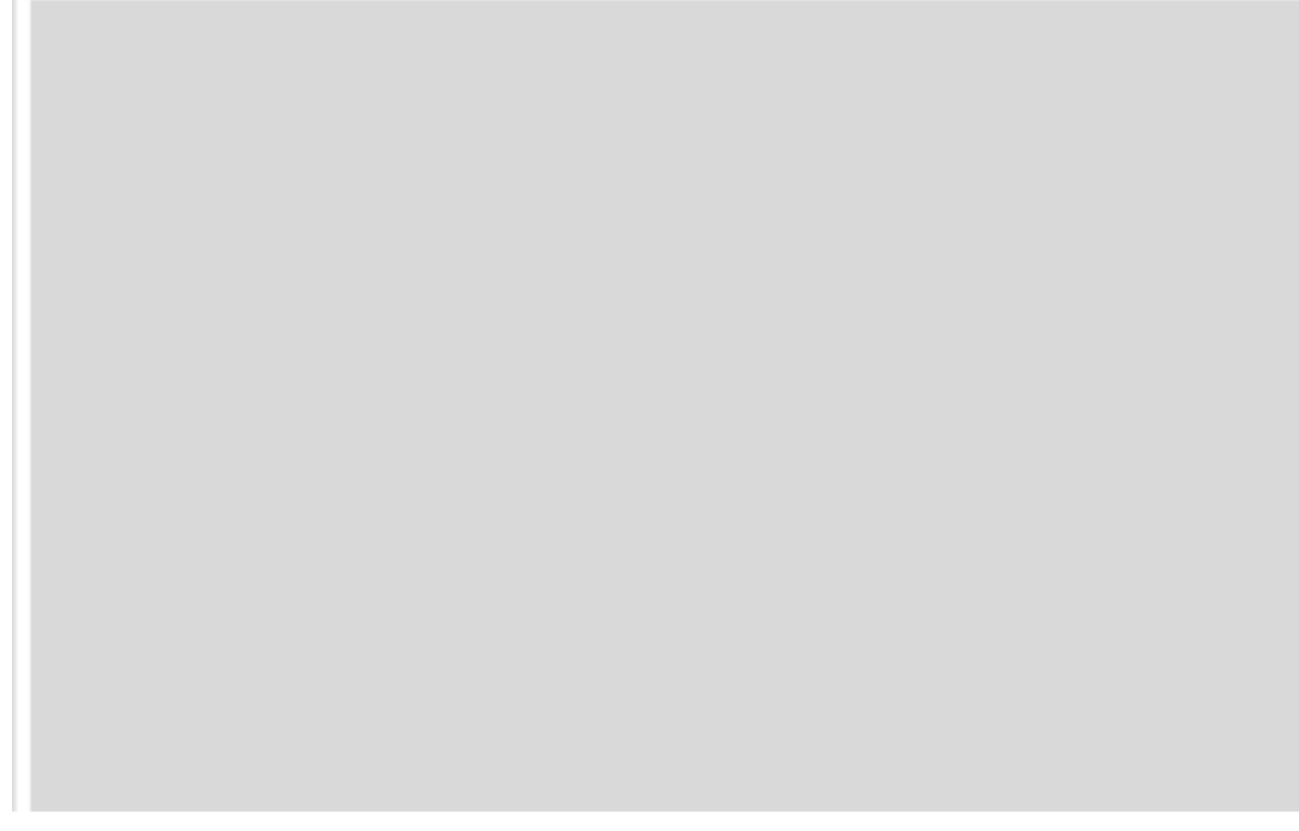
One seal was shot but dove beneath the water's surface, left behind by the sealers to slowly bleed to death. Another wounded seal was shot and thrashed bleeding in the water. A sealer leaned over the side of his boat, stabbing her with a metal hook. He used the hook to drag her on board and clubbed her to death.

I saw so many seals writhing in agony as their blood spilled out across the ice.

In my life there are no worse moments than these. How people can take the harp seal nursery and turn it into this grotesque horror is beyond me. But stopping the horror is not, and we are so close to shutting the killing down for good.

You have helped us to close global markets for seal products, and hundreds of thousands of seal pups may survive the slaughter this year as a result. [Less demand](#) means lower pelt prices, and many sealers aren't joining the kill. And our [boycott of Canadian seafood](#) is forcing Canada's fishing industry to think twice about its support of commercial sealing. In the end, we will win this fight for the seals. We will never give up.

Today, we return to the scene to bear witness and gather more evidence of this gruesome crime against nature.



Posted by Wayne Pacelle on 09 April 2010 at 12:43 PM in [Actions to Help Animals](#) , [Humane Society at Work](#) , [News & Culture](#)

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About Wayne

Few are in a position to speak for the animals like Wayne Pacelle. As President and CEO of The Humane Society of the United States, he leads 11 million members and constituents in the mission of celebrating animals and confronting cruelty. [Read more >>](#)

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