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Townsville News

Introduction

These educational activities feature the complex relationships between humans and seals around the world.

They are designed to be a useful aid for students and teachers focussing on citizenship issues regarding how the law protects animal welfare and how animal welfare is an international concern.

Sections of the pack can also be used for other subjects including science, geography, drama and English.

Please note:

The activities are linked with the Animal **Action Week Making Waves for Seals main booklet**. We hope you find it useful in planning your lessons.

Section 1 - Teachers' Notes

Making Waves for Seals CD/Video activity

The film and accompanying student quiz **What's your score?** on page 3 are an introduction to seals and the role they play in the environment and the problems that face them. The notes on pages 4-11 of the **Animal Action Week Making Waves for Seals main booklet** also give useful background information.

You may wish to use this information in discussion with the students and/or write some points on the board before they start **What's your score?** on page 3.

The answers appear on the quiz, but upside down and at the bottom of the page.

Ground rules

Discussions on animal welfare and environmental issues have the potential to provoke strong reactions from students. You may think it worthwhile to remind the class of ground rules for discussion before you start any of the activities in this pack.



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About IFAW

IFAW is an international campaigning organisation founded in Canada more than 35 years ago. Its mission is to improve the welfare of wild and domestic animals by reducing their commercial exploitation, protecting wildlife habitats and assisting animals in distress. Recognising that the fates of people and animals are inextricably linked, IFAW seeks to promote animal welfare and conservation policies that advance the well-being of both animals and people. It has bases in 15 countries and two million supporters worldwide.

More copies

Additional copies of this pack can be ordered from:
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Credits

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What's your score?

What do you remember from the film you have just seen?

Tick the correct answers below.

1 Most of the world's seals live in the Arctic and the Antarctic oceans
 True False

7 IFAW's research vessel is called *Song of the Seal*
 True False

2 The deepest dive recorded for a seal is:
 a) 10,000 feet b) 1,500 metres
 c) 1,000 feet d) 1,000 metres

8 How many harp seals are allowed to be hunted in Canada in 2006?
 a) 335,000 b) 3,500
 c) none d) only old and sick ones

3 The milk female seals produce for their pups is not very nutritious
 True False

9 Common and grey seals live in the sea around the UK
 True False

4 The scientific name for seals is pinnipeds which means big-eyes
 True False

10 Seals are usually hunted for their blubber rather than their fur
 True False

5 The largest species of seal is the
 a) harp seal b) northern elephant seal
 c) fur seal d) leopard seal

11 It is legal to import seal skins and seal products into the USA
 True False

6 The Mediterranean monk seal is the most endangered marine mammal in Europe
 True False

12 Seals are hunted in
 (tick any that you think – there is more than one correct answer)
 a) Russia b) Namibia
 c) Norway d) Greenland



Section 2 - Teachers' Notes

Demon dilemmas What would you do?

Learning objectives

Students should learn:

- to develop listening and reasoning skills
- to express views and to establish a basic understanding of issues surrounding the killing of seals in the world today
- to consider some of the social, moral and political dimensions of the animal welfare issues surrounding the protection of and hunting and killing of seals.

Outcomes

Students will:

- have achieved the objectives by observing good citizenship practice relating to the creation of a positive listening and sharing environment. This should result in attitudes and values being clarified and even challenged respectfully
- identify reasons both for and against an issue both orally and/or in writing
- understand the term pressure group.

Resources

You will need:

- for individual work, the **Demon dilemmas** listed opposite will need to be transferred to handout sheets
- appropriate pages 4-11 from the **Animal Action Week Making Waves for Seals main booklet** will provide helpful background information.



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Activity

This activity can be run as a **whole class activity**; as **group work** or on an **individual basis**.

Group activity

- For group work give each group one dilemma, ask them to appoint a spokesperson and ask them to spend ten minutes discussing the dilemma and the decision they would make as a group. Ask them to feed back their decision to the rest of the class.
- Ask the class what conclusions they have reached. Did any of the discussions make them change their minds on various issues? How would they summarize the usefulness of this exercise?

Whole class activity

- Read out the **Demon dilemma statements** on page 5. After each dilemma, ask members of the class to share their views as to what decision they would make and why. You may find the **Demon dilemma discussion points** on page 5 useful to prompt discussion after a few minutes.
- Ask the class what conclusions they have reached as a result of the exercise. Did any of the discussions make them change their minds on various issues?
- Invite the students to summarize the usefulness of this exercise.

Individual work

Give students the **Demon dilemmas** on a handout. For homework, or in class time, ask them to think of each of the dilemmas, explain their decisions in writing and the reasons behind them.

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Demon dilemmas. What would you do?

Demon dilemma statements

You are an aspiring supermodel. You have always said you would never wear fur. You are asked to model a seal skin coat for a top fashion house to advance your career. What would you do? **What could be the implications of your decisions?**

You are an indigenous person. Seal hunting is one of your people's traditions. You live in an area where the seal population has dropped significantly because of large scale, commercial hunting. The law, however, says because you are a native person you can still hunt them. **What could be the implications of your decisions?**

You are a fisherman or woman. The friends that you have worked with all your life tell you that the seals in your area are destroying the fishing nets and eating the fish. They want you to help them shoot the seals. What would you do? **What could be the implications of your decisions?**

You work for an animal welfare pressure group. You have campaigned against the hunting and killing the seals for profit. The government of a country which holds a big commercial seal hunt every year asks you to come and work for them on their pro-hunting campaign. They will double your salary. What would you do? **What could be the implications of your decisions?**

You are a teenager and have just finished school. Everyone is poor in your area. You hate cruelty to animals, and you love seals, but you know that you could make money that your family needs by cooking for the men who come to kill seals each year. What would you do? **What could be the implications of your decisions?**

Demon dilemma discussion points

Supermodel – What would happen if the aspiring model wore the seal fur and then used her position once she was famous to campaign against the seal fur trade?

What would happen if the aspiring model decided to tell the press that she refused to wear fur?

Indigenous person – What would happen if the indigenous person and his or her community stopped hunting seals – how would this affect their traditions and lifestyle? What would happen if the indigenous person kept on hunting seals and sold them to the commercial organisations which could no longer hunt in your area?

Fisherman or woman – How would the fisherman or woman get evidence to say that seals don't eat all the fish – that it's a more complicated issue?

What would happen to the fishermen and women and the environment if they decided to kill as many seals as they could?

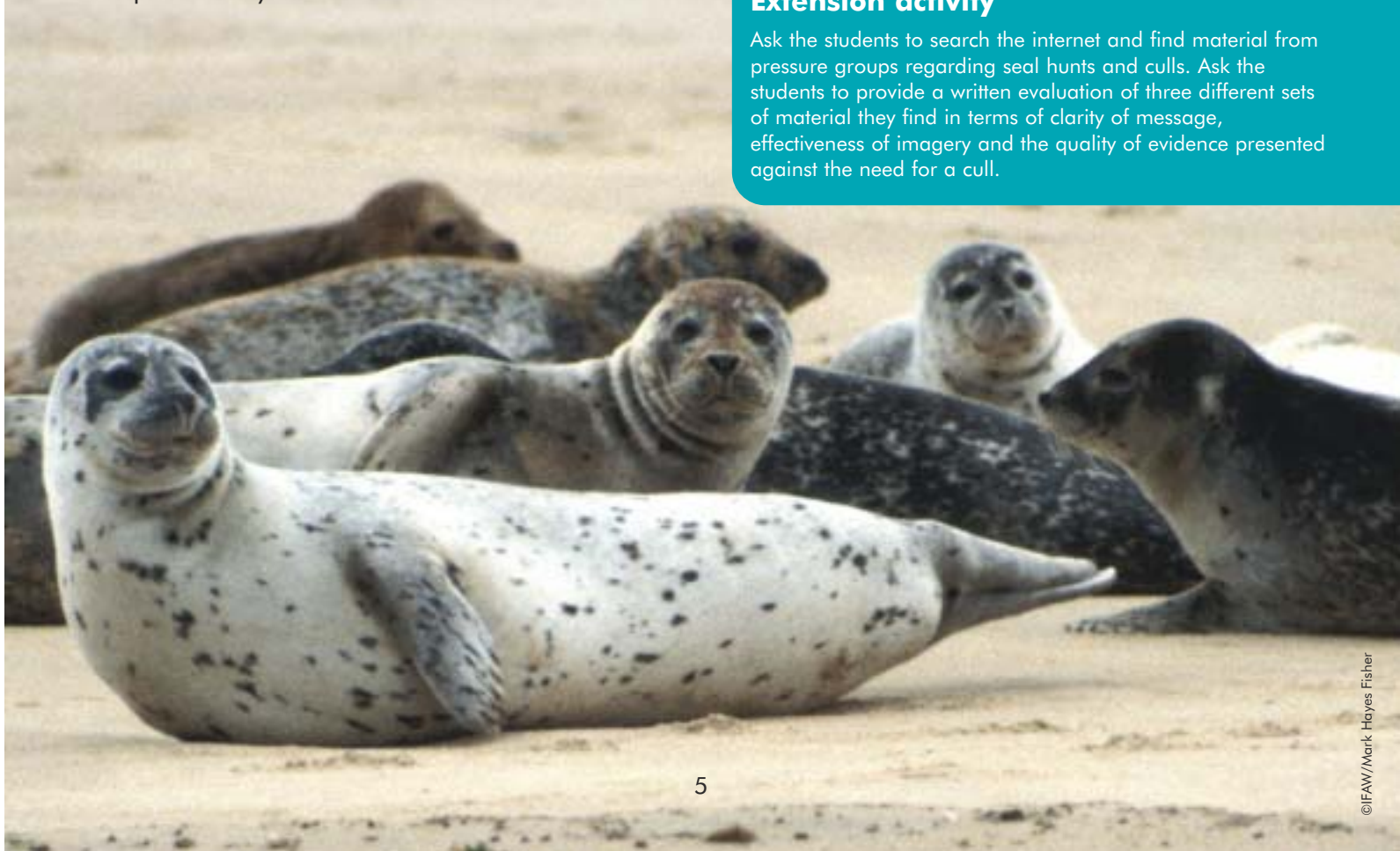
Campaigner – If the campaigner took this job what would be the effects on his/her future career and relationships with colleagues?

How could the campaigner still work against the seal hunt while being employed by the pro-hunting government?

Teenager – What would be the effects on the teenager if he or she took this job? How would friends and family view the decision? How could he or she help the seals?

Extension activity

Ask the students to search the internet and find material from pressure groups regarding seal hunts and culls. Ask the students to provide a written evaluation of three different sets of material they find in terms of clarity of message, effectiveness of imagery and the quality of evidence presented against the need for a cull.



Section 3 - Teachers' Notes

Seals and the law

This section can be divided into three activities

Learning objectives

Students should learn:

- to consider some of the social, moral and political dimensions of an issue such as animal welfare
- about the need for international cooperation in order to address matters of global concern
- to consider the part that people play in creating social pressure both individually and by joining together
- about the role of public opinion in politics and influencing government agendas
- about the difference between international and national laws.

Outcomes

Students will:

- identify reasons why some issues need to be addressed through international cooperation
- know about and describe the role of voluntary organisations and pressure groups that operate internationally and describe their relationships to government in terms of making the law
- understand the differences between national and international law.

Resources

You will need:

- Pages 10-11 of the *Animal Action Week Making Waves for Seals main booklet*
- ICT access or printouts from websites listed in this section
- Photocopies from *Townsville News* on page 8 of this booklet.



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Activity 1

- Invite the students to discuss their understanding of the differences between national and international laws.
- Ask the students to think about the killing of seals as an issue of international concern and how the law relates to it. Pages 10-11 of the *Animal Action Week Making Waves for Seals main booklet* contains helpful information.

Points of law summary points follow below.

- British law says seals can be shot if they are interfering with fishing gear or if they are simply in an area where fishing gear is in use.
- The Canadian government decides how many seals can be killed every year in Canada. Canadian law also says that harp seal pups can be killed when they are 14 days old.
- It is illegal to import harp seal white coat pup pelts into the European Union (EU).
- The Mediterranean monk seal because it is so rare is protected by international law, EU law and Greek law.
- It is legal to hunt seals in Namibia, Russia, Greenland and Norway.
- It is illegal to kill seals in Australia, but they are still shot by fishermen.
- International co-operation is important to ensure that several countries do not hunt a certain population/species to extinction.
- It is illegal to import seal skins and other seal products into the US.

Reference point

International law: A body of rules established by custom or treaty and recognised by nations as binding in their relations with one another.

National laws: A body of rules particular to individual countries.



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Activity 2

Ask the students to think about who and what influences the way that seals are treated? The following points provide useful starting points:

- What role does national government play and why does it develop certain policies and laws?
- What role does the media play?
- What do students know about pressure groups and the role that they play – the **Animal Action Week Making Waves for Seals main booklet** explains IFAW's role as a pressure group. Further information can be obtained from www.ifaw.org
- The Canadian seal hunt is the largest legal and organised seal hunt in the world. What do the students know about it in terms of international approval and disapproval?
- How does the way seals look affect their treatment? Are they killed for their fur because people find it attractive? Do they get more sympathy/attention because they look cute?

The following sites contain interesting background material for handouts and discussion.

BBC report of the Canadian seal hunt
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/4844008.stm>

Scotsman newspaper report of possible seal cull in Scotland
<http://thescotsman.scotsman.com/scotland.cfm?id=440012004>

IFAW information about South African and Namibian fur seals
<http://www.ifaw.org/ifaw/general/default.aspx?oid=13130>

Activity 3

- Ask the students to read the **Seal hunt to lure tourists?** news story (photocopiable sheet) on page 8 which talks about a seal hunt planned for the imaginary Townsville area.
- Give other additional resources as you feel appropriate. These could include the websites listed above, others from your own research and appropriate pages from the **Animal Action Week Making Waves for Seals main booklet**.
- For the purposes of this part of the activity you can explain that Townsville is a fictitious place in a fictitious country. However, in reality the Norwegian government issued a similar proposal in 2004.
- Divide the students into groups. Each group should represent and role play one of the areas which has a say in the hunt shown in bold below.

A person from the ministry of fisheries and coastal affairs

A fisherperson supporting the hunt

A campaigner from an animal welfare pressure group

The head of Townsville's chamber of commerce

A marine biologist from the local university

A tourist who regularly comes to Townsville to enjoy the coastline and scenery

- Ask the groups to spend the rest of the lesson and for homework (if necessary) to prepare the arguments for or against the hunt from their person. Some suggestions for presentation could include: a verbal report as though they were presenting their opinion at a public meeting; a PowerPoint presentation; a written letter to the editor of *Townsville News*; creating artwork or drama to get their messages across.
- Ask each group to appoint a spokesperson and divide up other tasks amongst the group members as required to help put together a case.

Conclusion

- Ask the groups to present their cases in turn.
- Ask the class to come back as a whole and invite them to explain what they think they have learned from the exercise and what they have learned from each other.
- Have any of them changed their views on a seal hunt being carried out by tourists and others in Townsville? Have their views changed on seal hunting in general as a result?
- Ask the class if they think the Townsville situation – combining tourism and seal hunting – is ever likely to happen. Provide the link/or handout to the following website which is a true story about a hunting/tourism proposal:

<http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2004/10/15/1097784016257.html>

Ask for the students' thoughts and reactions.

Townsville News

Seal hunt to lure tourists?

"Seal hunting could be promoted as an exotic outdoor adventure"

Simon Johnson,
Minister of Fisheries
and Coastal Affairs



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A proposal to use seal hunting as a new way of attracting tourists to Townsville, North Savenia has drawn protests from some quarters and concerned the travel industry.

Minister of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs Simon Johnson made tempers flare this week with his hunting proposal which would affect three Townsville beaches in July each year. The beaches are currently inhabited by 20,000 seals.

"Hunting could be a big hit," Mr. Johnson told *Townsville News*. "We could promote it as an exotic outdoor adventure. A cull of about 5,000 seals

is needed to protect the livelihoods of the fishermen.

"If we open the hunt up to experienced marksmen and game hunters from all over the world and charge them to take part in the shoot they will bring in a lot of money to an area of high unemployment. Their families will come to enjoy the lovely coastline which means even more money and jobs for the area."

Travel industry concern

The travel industry was concerned by the announcement.

"I think the idea needs further thought and investigation as it could have a negative effect on tourism and the way we are perceived in the rest of the world," said Christine Dodd managing director of North Savenia government tourism office. She said she had already received at least 100 emails protesting about the hunt from overseas including several from high profile animal welfare and conservation groups expressing their outrage.

Foreign tourists spent approximately \$4 billion in North Savenia last year.

However, Carl Roberts of the 300-strong Townsville Fisherman's Association welcomed the news.

"There are too many seals and not enough fish – it is a simple equation. If tourists want to join us on this hunt – as long as they pay good money for a licence – I'm not going to argue against it."

But not all local people are behind the hunt. Marine biologist Dr Marcus Howard from Townsville University believes it is unnecessary: "It is scientifically inaccurate to draw a direct link between the lack of fish and too many seals. The food chain is more complex than this."

"Modern commercial fishing methods and over-fishing are responsible for the decline. Methods used to kill the seals – shooting and clubbing them to death – are also completely inhumane and have no business at all in a modern and civilized society," he said.



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