

italy

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Italy denounces seal hunting Rome is preparing to pass a law banning hides import

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A new, shocking video documents the massacre of seals in Canada, where the seal-hunting season has recently reopened with a government-set target of 270,000 animals to cull. LAV (Italy's Anti-Vivisection League) and IFAW (the International Fund for Animal Welfare) showed the video in the media room of Italy's Senate for an audience of Italian MPs, "advocating an urgent act ensuring that last year's temporary ban on the import and trade of seal hides and other seal products becomes permanent."



The new video, recorded a few days ago in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, shows seals isolated on ice sheets thinner than usual, wounded with rifle shots and then harvested from the ships used by the hunters, unable to walk on the thin and instable ice sheets. The Government of Canada did not stop the hunt even after ice melting caused the death by drowning of numerous seal cubs still unable to swim. In 2002, ice melting caused the drowning of 75 percent of seal cubs: a record that this year's even warmer temperatures could break. Over the past three years, over 1 million seals were killed in Canada, and in the past four years the sustainable quota, suggested by Canadian scientists to maintain a healthy seal population, has always passed. For instance, in 2007 scientists suggested a quota of no more than 165,000 animals: the Canadian government allowed 270,000 seals to be hunted. Ninety-eight percent of the seals killed range between 12 days and 3 months of age; since these mammals can live to 30 years, these are cubs. "We appeal to minister [of Environment] Pecoraro Scanio to propose an urgent bill putting an end to this massacre, thus giving force of law to a motion passed by the Senate, a written declaration issued by the European Parliament, and a resolution from the Council of Europe urging national governments to ban the trade of seal pelts," declared Roberto Bennati. Scanio heeded the appeal, announcing a bill to stop the import of seal hides. Higher temperatures have recently determined a drop in the demand of furs, and this in turn has led to a 60 percent drop in the price of seal hides on international markets.

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