

## NIS News Bulletin

### Netherlands Bans Trade in Seal Products

THE HAGUE, 19/05/07 - The cabinet has decided to ban the import, trade and possession of fur, skins, oil and other products made from seals. The ban applies to two species, the harp seal and the blueback (*Cystophora cristata*).

The import of skins or products manufactured from the skins of young seals (up to around 12 days) of both species is already banned throughout the EU. "The large-scale hunt has however shifted to animals slightly older than 12 days", explained the Agriculture and Nature Ministry. "The cabinet is concerned about issues including the population count, the decline in the habitat quality of the seals and the hunting methods used".

The cabinet decision now taken introduces a ban regardless of age category. "An exception applies to products originating from the traditional hunt by the Inuit people, to live animals and to products that have previously been lawfully brought to the Netherlands", said the ministry. The decision to introduce the ban meets with a wish by the Lower House.

In Belgium, a comparable trade ban is in place, and Germany is also preparing such a ban. The Dutch government will continue insisting on a ban at EU level, but up to the present there is insufficient support for such a measure.

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