

on the sand. The nest scrape is sometimes lined with bits of broken sea shells. Both parents share in the incubation duties, relieving each other so each has time for feeding on the lower beach. Both adults defend the territory. After four to five weeks the eggs hatch and several hours later the young begin to run about, pecking the sand in search of food. During the next five weeks the eggs hatch and several hours later the young begin to run about, pecking the sand in search of food. During the next five weeks the parents may be seen escorting their broods down to the feeding territories that border the waterfront like cottage lots. While not feeding, the birds are usually moving about or resting in the nesting territory. As the young learn to fly, they break away from the family group, spending increasing amounts of time feeding on their own. By mid August most Piping Plovers have left the beaches and are on their way south to spend the winter along the Florida and Texas coasts.

- Winifred Cairns  
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#### SAVE THE SEAL

Between February 25 and March 15, the annual slaughter of 150,000 harp seal pups will take place on the Labrador ice floes. Seventy-five years ago there was an estimated twelve million adults, today less than one million will make the southward journey to breed in the ice field nurseries in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and off the Labrador coast. Our complacency in light of this obvious slaughter which is responsible for the drastically reduced populations is alarming. The harp seal is becoming an endangered species on the brink of extinction.

The seals, mostly pups are killed solely for the commercial value of their silken, pure white fur. Furs are made into fashionable coats in Europe. Since the pups shed their coats at three weeks of age, the commercial seals must kill them when they are still nursing on the ice, before they can even swim, let alone defend themselves. Every thirty seconds during the hunt, one baby seal is clubbed on its head until unconscious or dead, and the pelt is removed. Sometimes the week old seals are still aware of the skin being ripped off their bodies and they scream in agony until death comes from shock and freezing temperatures. Mother seals sometimes remain with the carcasses of the babies up to three days, trying to restore them to life, to nurse again.

Norwegian sealing ships hire about four hundred Canadians in Halifax and transport them to the Labrador harp seal nursery where in a space of four days they leave a trail of blood for twenty miles in every direction. Canadian Coast Guard ice-breakers clear their way in to the heart of the seal territory. Canada also provides costly rescue services to the Norwegian ships. Although we can hardly deny these latter services they do encourage and subsidize the hunt, in the sense that if they weren't supplied the sealers would not venture into the treacherous ice floes.

Conservationists mounted such incredible pressure against the seal hunt during the early 1970's, that Canada was forced to ban all large-scale commercial sealing in the Gulf of St. Lawrence in 1972. The Canadian Embassy in West Germany received thousands of letters each weeks from Europeans who wanted Canada to end the seal kill. Most pressure in North America originated from Brian Davies and the International Fund for Animal Welfare, which sent observers and film makers onto the ice every season until Canada finally halted the Gulf killing by Norwegian sealers. The hunt then moved to the Atlantic side of Labrador, unbeknown to many environmentally concerned people.