



For Immediate Release

***The Hidden Faces of The Seal Hunt* wins prestigious Audience Award at Paris Film Festival**

Documentary depicts the importance of Quebec's sealing industry

Grindstone, March 15 2012 – *The Hidden Faces of the Seal Hunt* received a warm welcome at the *Sustainable Hunt and Biodiversity Film Festival* in Paris, winning the Audience Award. The film features footage captured on the ice of the Magdalen [Islands](#), as well as interviews with leading wildlife conservation experts, activists and the sealers themselves.

The film demonstrates the important impact the sealing industry has on rural sealers, who depend on that traditional activity for up to 35 per cent of their annual income. The film also explores the importance of conservation, biodiversity and animal welfare practices, which are of great importance to the industry as it continues to struggle against adversity in the public sphere.

The presentation was followed by a discussion with filmmaker Raoul Jomphe, and Magdalen Islands's Sealers Association's president, Denis Longuepee, who was very encouraged by the audience's reaction to the film.

“After the screening, it became very apparent to me and Raoul that we had made an impact. On behalf of sealers everywhere, I would like to thank the audience for their support,” he said. “For too long, this debate has been framed by animal rights groups and extremists spreading misinformation about our industry. I think it's time we gave the public the real facts, and let them decide for themselves.”

The sealer and the filmmaker met with French media at a press lunch organized by the Quebec's General Delegation in Paris. They also visited the Brigitte Bardot Foundation where Christophe Marie, head of the office, agreed that an overpopulation problem should be addressed.

Sealers in Magdalen Islands are now preparing for this year's commercial hunt. Roughly 600 000 seals were spotted just off the coast of the archipelago. Their number and proximity encouraged a record 250 new hunters to apply for a permit this year.

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