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Seal hunt advocates protest anti-seal hunt school assembly

BY JENNY YUEN ,TORONTO SUN

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A seal looks up from its enclosure at the Rehabilitation Center “Seal” at the settle Tavrishanka outside the Russian far Eastern port of Vladivostok, April 20, 2012. provides emergency aid for seals in distress or who have been injured, and relea back to the wild once they have recovered. REUTERS/Yuri Maltsev

TORONTO - Politicians and fishermen want animal activists to stop harping on teenagers to adopt an anti-seal hunt agenda.

Christ the King Catholic Secondary School in Georgetown held a three-hour concert Thursday educating students on commercial seal slaughter in Canada. They invited animal rights group from the Green Party.

But no pro-seal hunt advocates showed up.

"This is shocking they would do that — that kind of information being provided from one side from the alternative," Keith Ashfield, minister of fisheries and oceans, said Friday. "Anti-sea whole campaign of misinformation. They're not providing the whole story to anyone. They're photo of the white seal pup being killed and that's been illegal in this country for over 30 year

This is the second year the school has held one of these concerts organized by a school group which creates awareness on marine biodiversity.

Mark Knowlton, the teacher overseeing the school group, said he always ensures students see both sides of an issue.

This is why two weeks prior to the concert, the students held two assemblies — one speaking and one against.

"We always encourage critical thinking," Knowlton said. "A lot of the time it is learning about mammal. That being said, (students who attend the assemblies) have had a chance to make a whether they want to take part and learn more."

In addition, Knowlton said other politicians who were pro-seal hunt were contacted, but none. The Canadian Sealers Association said educating young minds on only one side of a contentious consequences.

People need to be educated about the exploding harp seal population, the association's executive Pinhorn said, reaching 9 million this year, more than doubling numbers in 2005.

"They're not an endangered species," he said. "The herd today has probably been the largest years.

"Why we need an economical and viable sealing industry is because it derives income for our isolated villages and it's equally important it maintains equality in the ecosystem, so that all species can co-exist with the seals," Pinhorn added.

Roughly 400,000 seals are slated for the hunt this year, which runs mid-November to June.

"If you start with seals today, where are you going to tomorrow? You can't single out one species unacceptable but for every other species, it is," Pinhorn said.

Nick Wright, a campaigner for Humane Society International, spoke at the school concert and

the impression pro-sealer groups were contacted, but didn't respond to the invitation.

"So, that may speak to the issue," he said.

Wright said he spoke of several issues surrounding the seal hunt, including urging the federa off 50% of existing licences so seal hunters give up the practice.

The government should provide east coast communities with more money to make sure endi wouldn't decimate them financially, he said.

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