

Many years ago sea otters inhabited the whole of the west coast, but man over-harvested them to a point where Canada has not had a single one of these creatures for seventy to eighty years in her waters. A few sea otters were fortunately left, some in the Aleutian Chain and some down in California. Sea otters from the Aleutian Chain have been recently introduced to the kelp bed off the west coast of Vancouver Island. These creatures are particularly sensitive to oil pollution.

Canada receives \$500,000 annually as her share of the revenue from the seal industry. If a major oil spill were to occur 10 - 50 miles off the British Columbia coast during the period of January to May there could be a significant kill of fur bearing and immature seals from suffocation and ingestion of oil. It may take a decade to restore the equilibrium before controlled harvesting could commence once more.

Related to the fur bearing seal is the sea-lion which inhabits the large bare rock islands in large pods or rookeries on both the west coast of Vancouver Island and the inside passage. Like the fur bearing seal these surface moving marine mammals could encounter a severe spill which could drastically reduce their numbers.

Seven to eight species of whale can be found in Canadian waters, of which the great grey whale and the killer