



Hide painting by Aurolyn Stwyer, Honorable Mention at the Member Art Show. Courtesy the museum

Seals and sea lions 'out of control'

For the first time in decades, a small-scale seal hunt is taking place on Canada's West Coast—all in the hopes that it leads to the establishment of a commercial industry to help control booming seal and sea lion populations and protect the region's fish stocks.

In early November, a group called the Pacific Balance Pinnipeds Society started using First Nations hunting rights as part of a plan to harvest 30 seals.

The society plans to test the meat and blubber to see if it's fit for human consumption and other uses.

"We can look at opening up harvesting and starting a new industry," said Tom Sewid, the society's director, member of the Kwak-

waka'wakw group of Indigenous peoples, and a commercial fisherman. "Since

the [West Coast] seal cull ended in the 1970s, the population has exploded."

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