

# Traditional seal hunt in Greenland

**Kalaallit Nunaanni Aalisartut Piniartullu Kattuffiat  
Sammenslutningen af Fiskere og Fangere i Grønland  
The Organization of Fishermen and Hunters in Greenland  
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### Introduction of KNAPK

- KNAPK member is fisherman and hunters (west, middle, north- and East Greenland)
- KNAPK have about 2550 members
- KNAPK have 74 local union in hole Greenland
- KNAPK have member from small boats owners to big commercial trawlers (companies like Polar Seafood)



John Biilmann  
Director in KNAPK

# Short history

- Archaeological investigations and discoveries have shown that the Greenlandic culture has always been based in sealing.
- Hunting has always been and still an important part of our cultural and social identity. Until a couple of decades ago, sealing was the principal occupation in the winter ice areas. There are still parts of Greenland where sealing is the most important component in the pursued livelihood strategy, combined with other forms of hunting. It provides people living in remote communities with a significant amount of meat and income.
- Traditional use of dog sledge is still conducted in winter ice areas, but usually in Greenland the hunters and free time hunters uses small boats for sealing.
- Fishing acts also as a supplement to hunting activities and as an economic buffer for families when no other income sources are available.
- Seal hunting, which takes place year round in every settlement in Greenland, provides food, clothing and income, for both commercial and free time hunters.
- In 2008, there are about 2300 commercial hunters in Greenland and about 6.500 free time hunters.



# Hunting methods in Greenland

- **Northern Greenland (Avanersuaq) – Municipality of Qaanaaq:**
- *Habitat, hunting methods and hunting equipment used:*
- During the winter when there is sea ice (during the dark period) ringed seals and bearded seals are hunted by their breathing holes in the ice and also by using nets closer to the shore. The seal is shot using a calibre 30-06 rifle, then using the *Iimaq* lance, designed for winter use, to ensure a swift kill.
- During the spring (April to June) when seals are up on the ice, they are being hunted using shooting screens with 222, 243 and 30-06 calibre rifles.

# Hunting methods in Greenland

- During the summer and early fall (July to September), harp seals appear in the Qaanaaq region.
- Hooded seals have become rare in the Avanersuaq and are sighted infrequently, since the range of the sea ice is decreasing and moving further north due to the warming of the climate.
- *Protection of environment (of hunting grounds):*
- When the sea ice disappears in July, any traffic and hunting using motorized boats into the fiords ceases and commence only after September 1st. wift kill.
- During the spring (April to June) when seals are up on the ice, they are being hunted using shooting screens with 222, 243 and 30-06 calibre rifles.
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# Hunting methods in Greenland

- **Central Western Greenland:**

- *Harp seals:*

- Harp seals appear around Sisimiut in June. At early fall they can disappear, but numerous seals are to be encountered at late fall. They disappear around March – April while they are breeding on the sea ice. Once in the area, subsistence hunters catch the seals using dinghies and smaller vessels and the catch is sold at local meat and fish markets. Fishermen in larger fishing boats also hunt the seals for subsistence, as do recreational hunters.
- Younger harp seals appear around Sisimiut by the end of June and disappear during March April and are hunted primarily by subsistence hunters in dinghies, using calibre 22 Magnum and 222 rifles.
- Around Kangaamiut seals are hunted regardless of time of year. In July August younger harp seals are hunted using dinghies and smaller calibre rifles; 222's and Magnum's. Adult harp seals are rarely hunted in Kangaamiut.
- In the Maniitsoq area younger and adult harp seals appear in mid-May and disappear in February being more numerous during October – December. They are hunted from June to February. Younger harp seals termed as '*aniguussat*' (remaining winter supplies or stocks) appear in September – October and disappear around November - December.

# Hunting methods in Greenland

- Hunters in the Maniitsoq region have noted that the frequency of appearance of younger harp seals can vary a great deal depending on ice conditions. Another factor, which is believed to be the cause for such a trend, is the Southern Canadian hunt for baby seals which again have an influence on the number of seals reaching Greenland shores.
- *Hooded seals:*
- In the Sisimiut area hooded seals appear in April and newborn seal pups of this species appear on the floe edge or in the drifting ice. In May their numbers decrease. Subsistence hunters using dinghies primarily hunt this seal using 222's up to 30-06's.
- *Ringed seals:*
- The fiords around Sisimiut no longer are covered with ice in the wintertime and as a consequence ringed seals rarely are encountered. In earlier years when the fiords were covered with ice, ringed seals could be encountered at the mouths of the fiords and were caught using nets. During the early spring in March – April as the sun grows stronger numerous seals would be basking in the sun on top of the ice, and they were hunted walking on the ice or using dog sled. Now they are hunted using dinghies or smaller vessels since they are easy to sell due to their tasty meat. Calibre 222 up to 30-06 rifles are used in the hunt.
- In the Kangaamiut region hunters have noted that the catch of ringed seals have dramatically dropped and climate change is believed to be the mayor cause, since fiords no longer are covered with ice in the winter time and encounters with seals therefore have become rare



# Hunting methods in Greenland

- ***Bearded seals:***
- ● During the winter time, when the floe edge off Sisimiut has become more defined, bearded seals begin to appear in large numbers, but tend to disappear when the ice begins to break up. During the last years, the ice has thinned considerably thus resulting in the seals disappearing during the month of April. Bearded seals are not hunted very often, but younger seals called *qaqortat* (whites) are rarely brought back. When bearded seals are hunted, this is conducted using larger vessels and commonly using calibre 222 and 30-06 rifles.
- **Southern Greenland:**
- ● In Southern Greenland harp seals are to be encountered year round. They are hunted throughout the year, except during their shedding period in May and June, using dinghies. Calibre 22 and Magnum 222 rifles are used for the hunt.
- ● Hooded seals frequent the area of Nanortalik from the beginning of April until the end of June and are primarily hunted by subsistence hunters from dinghies, using calibre 30-06 and 222 rifles.
- ● Ringed seals are to be encountered and hunted year round in the Nanortalik region.
- **Eastern Greenland:**
- ● In the Kuummiut region, young and adult harp seals, hooded seals as well as bearded seals and ringed seals are to be encountered and hunted year round. From January until April ringed seals are caught from the sea ice using nets. From May until December the seals are hunted by means of vessels. The hunting equipment used depends on the size of the seal. For larger seals Sako 222 rifles are used and for smaller seals 22 Magnum or rifles are used.



# Cathes in 2005 and 2006

	Free time hunters	Full time hunters	Total cathes
<b>Ringed seal (<i>Phoca hispida</i>)</b>			
Cathes in 2005	13.653	71.917	85.570
Cathes in 2006	12.029	67.832	79.861

	Free time hunters	Full time hunters	Total cathes
<b>Bedlamer (<i>Phoca groenlandicus</i>)</b>			
Cathes in 2005	12.048	45.338	57.386
Cathes in 2006	10.850	53.060	63.910

# Cathes in 2005 and 2006

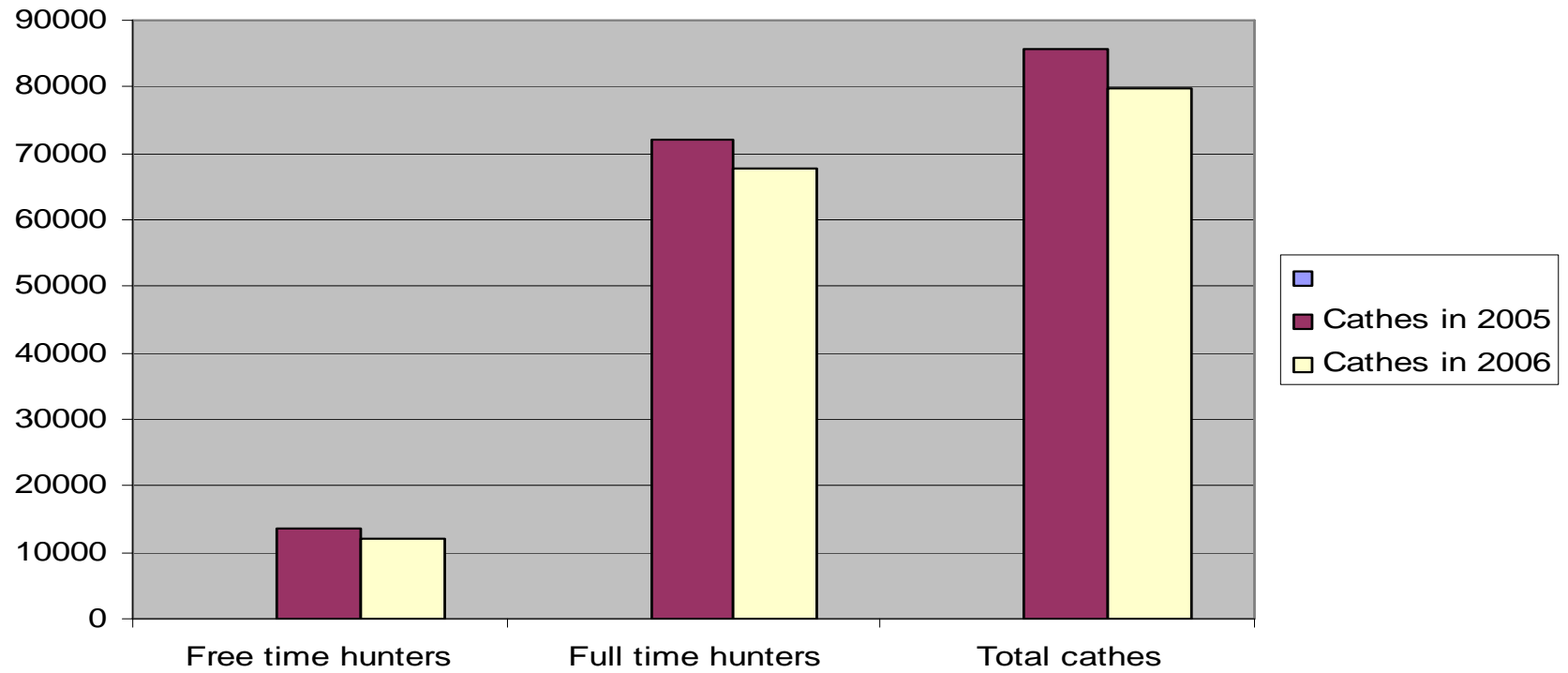
<b>Harp seal (<i>Phoca groenlandicus</i>)</b>	Free time hunters	Full time hunters	Total cathes
Cathes in 2005	6.847	25.336	32.183
Cathes in 2006	4.927	26.120	31.047
<b>Ringed seal (<i>Phoca hispida</i>)</b>	Free time hunters	Full time hunters	Total cathes
Cathes in 2005	13.653	71.917	85.570
Cathes in 2006	12.029	67.832	79.861

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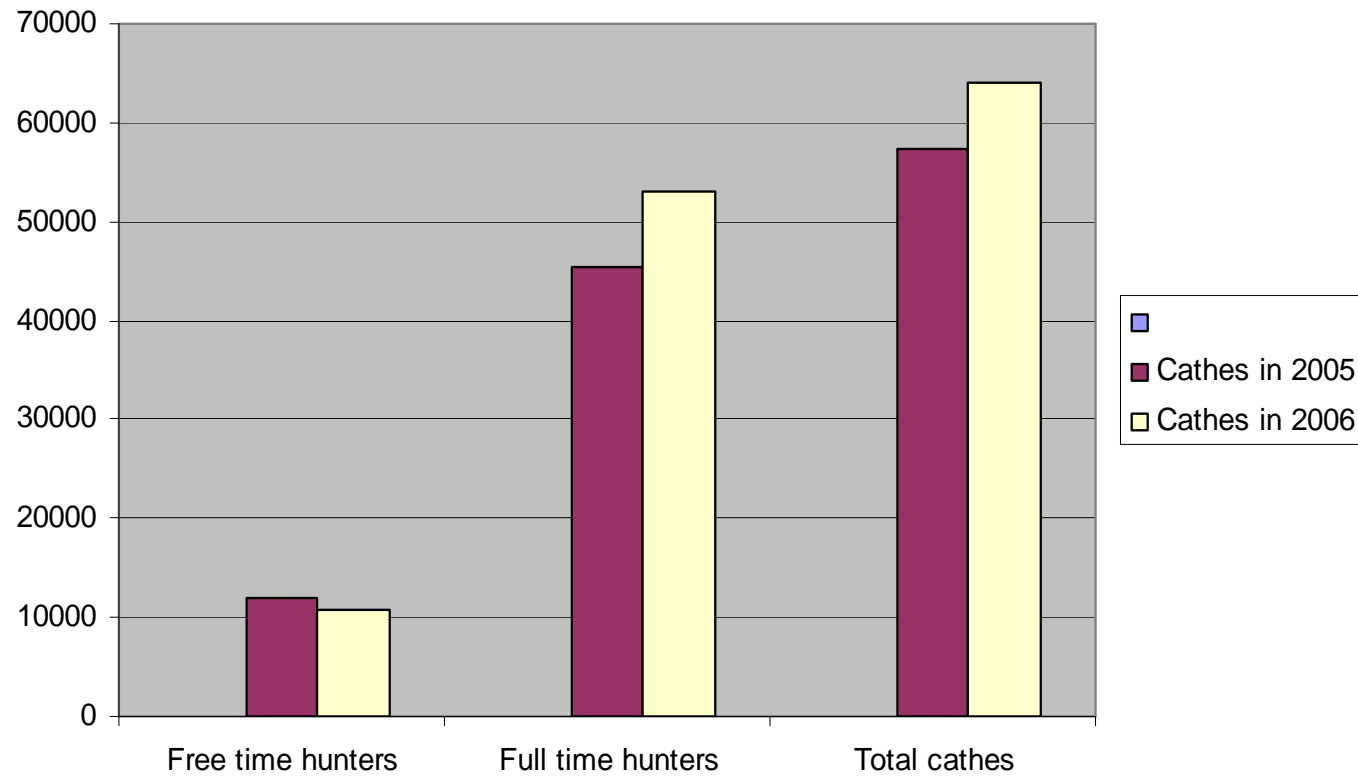
Bearded seal ( <i>Erignathus barbatus</i> )	Free time hunters	Full time hunters	Total cathes
Cathes in 2005	346	1.108	1454
Cathes in 2006	127	438	565



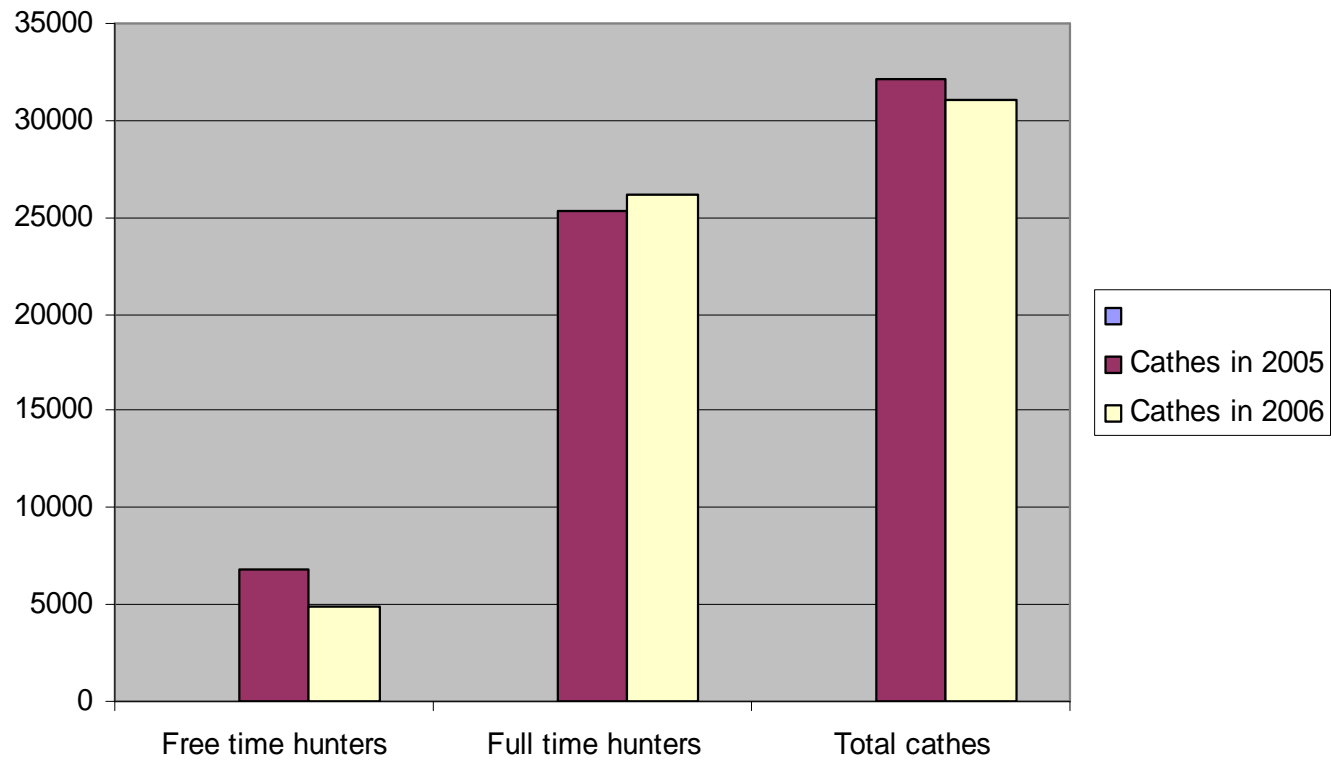
### Ringed Seal ( *Phoca hispida* )



### Bedlamer ( Phoca groenlandicus )

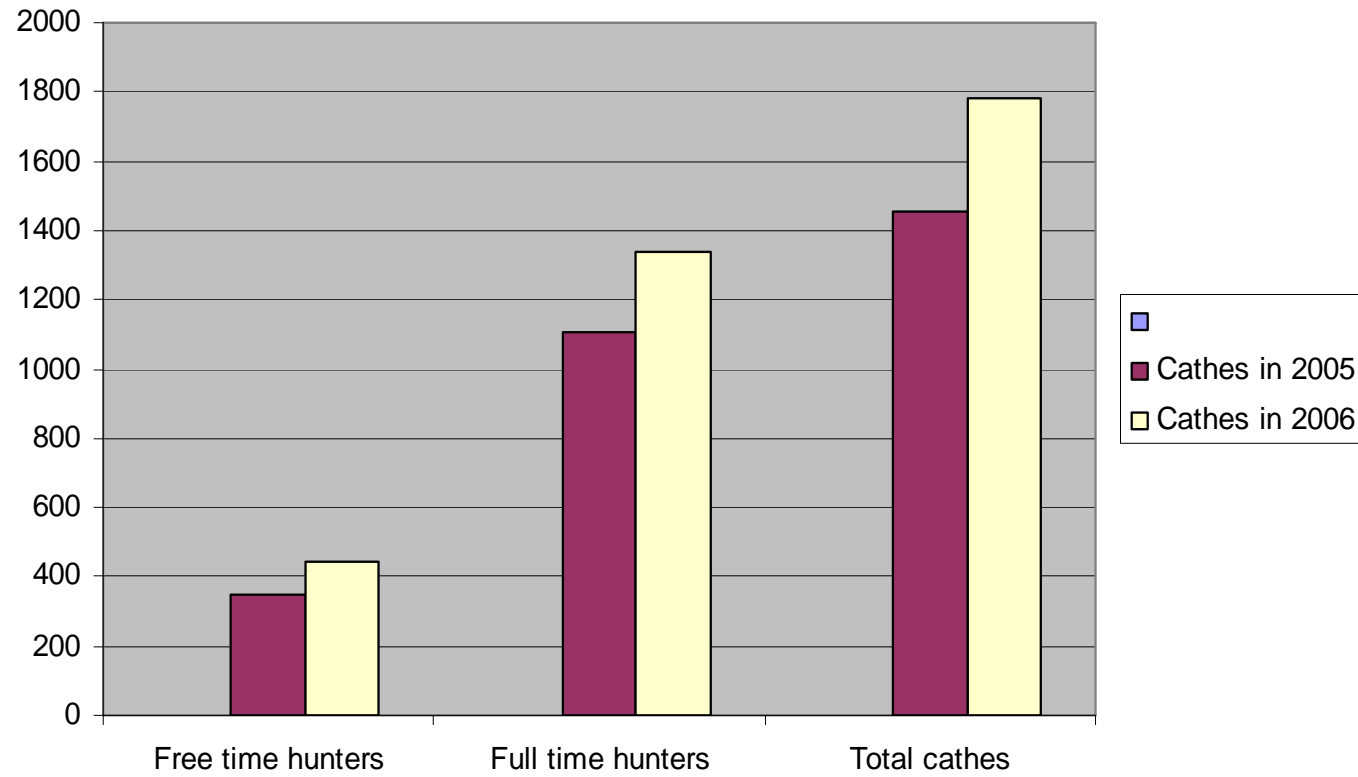


### Harp seal (*Phoca groenlandicus*)

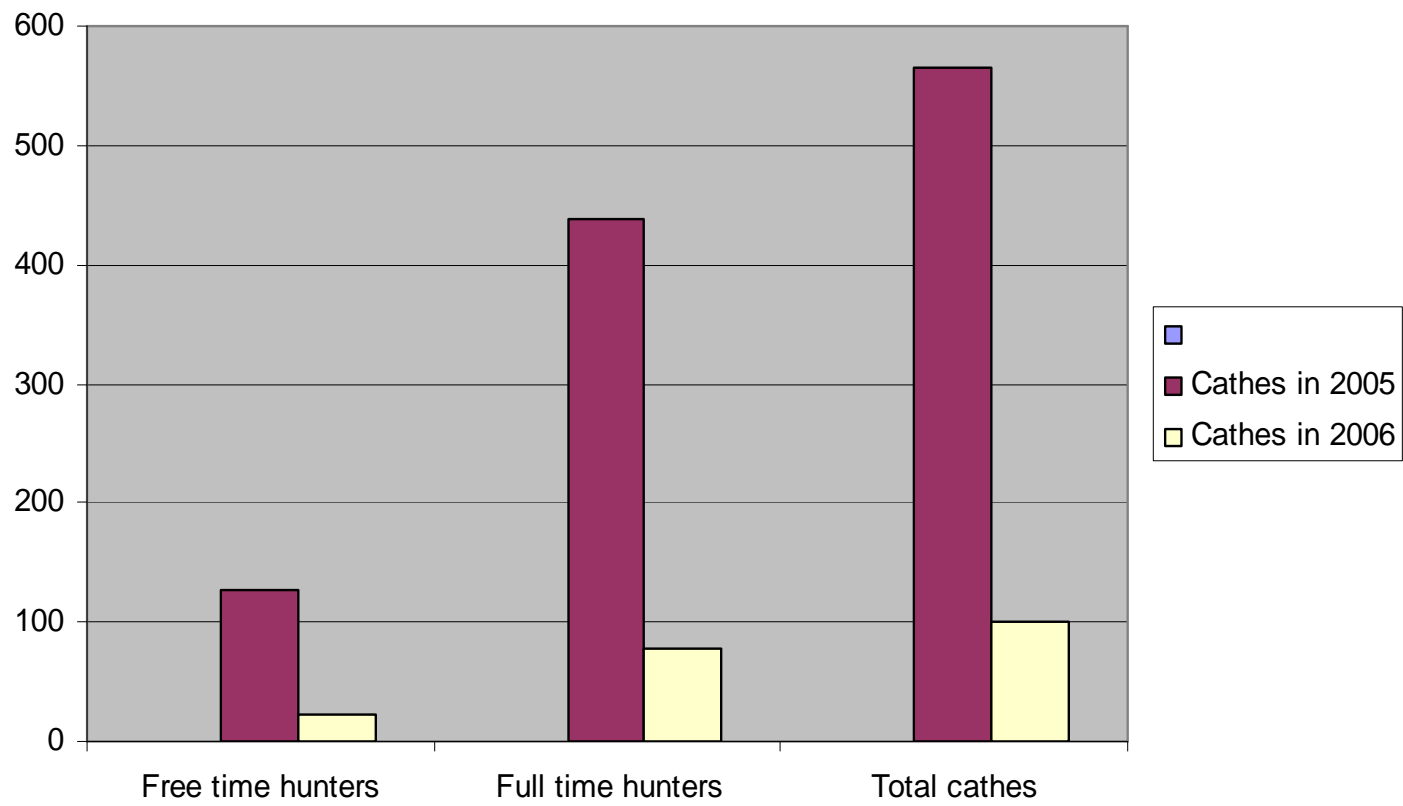




### Bearded seal ( *Erignathus barbatus* )



### Harbour seal ( *Phoca vitulina* )



# Kalaallit Nunaanni Aalisartut Piniartullu Kattuffiat

## The Organization of Fishermen and Hunters in Greenland

- How we are organize in Greenland
- Agreement about sealskin
- KNAPK make agreement every year with Greenland Home Rule Government and Great Greenland about sealskin.
- Every member in KNAPK paying 1.5% every time a hunter sold sealskin to Great Greenland or to another company.



## **Kalaallit Nunaanni Aalisartut Piniartullu Kattuffiat** **The Organization of Fishermen and Hunters in Greenland**

- **Future prospects**
- Sealskin production have some market problems in European market.
- Denmark is member of EU and Greenland is under Danish Government.
- Greenland have to make political work, so EU members can understand how important sea hunting is for hunters life and settlement.
- If world market going down in future for sealskin, it's can be very dangerous for traditional Greenlandic hunters life and economic survival.
- Why is market going back in EU ? - we think it's combination of NGO 's bigger role in EU and warmer weather (sealskin coats too warm).
- We have to find new market, example in Asian and develop market in east Europe.

# The magic balance

- This symposium ought to following:
- Collect information from management plans and politics from administration
- Collect all information from biological examination / advises
- Collect all information from biological examination / advises
- Collect information from hunters
- Balance between seal and fish species, what´s that ?
- We think it´s hole ecosystem in the sea (whales, seals, fish, vind, sun, hunters etc. )
- Importen for Greenland
- The **magic balance** between enough fish and another mammals in the sea

# Qujanaq / thank you

- And have a Nice symposium
- John Biilmann
- KNAPK - Greenland