In their nursery off the east coast of Canada, docile young pups are in danger as soon as their coats start to change from white to gray. That’s when Canadian fishermen in their off-season begin slaughtering the seals for their fur. In 2013, The HSUS and Humane Society International helped shut down global markets for seal pelts. We helped defend the E.U.’s ban on trade in commercial seal hunt products from a World Trade Organization challenge. We also won a major victory in Asia when Taiwan banned the trade in all marine mammal products.

Critically endangered North Atlantic right whales face a different kind of problem: collisions with fast-moving ships that kill mother whales and their young off the East Coast of the U.S. In 2013, following an HSUS legal petition, the National Marine Fisheries Service made permanent a rule requiring certain ships to slow down in areas where right whales congregate. Each life saved has a huge impact on the survival chance of the species: The most recent count found just 444 in the North Atlantic.

HSI and The HSUS also made strides for captive marine mammals. India banned keeping cetaceans in captivity and advised its state governments not to grant permission for dolphinariums—facilities where dolphins and other marine mammals are kept on display. In the U.S., 69,000 people and institutions signed an HSUS petition urging the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to reject an aquarium’s request to import wild-caught beluga whales from Russia. NOAA heeded the outcry and denied the permit.

Victories for Marine Mammals

Calling a School to Account, more than 100 protesters marched in late 2013 at Georgia Regents University in response to an HSUS undercover investigation that revealed researchers pulling dogs’ teeth, replacing them with dental implants and then euthanizing the animals to extract pieces of their jaws. After the video was released, Georgia Regents announced it would stop using dogs from random source Class B dealers, who get animals from places such as shelters and flea markets. The HSUS is pushing the university to give up dental experiments on dogs entirely, pointing to alternatives that don’t make animals suffer.

Around the world in 2013, HSI and The HSUS’s Be Cruelty-Free Campaign challenged the testing of cosmetics on animals. In the United States, more than 70,000 people signed a pledge not to buy animal-tested products. China announced it would no longer require domestically manufactured nonmedicated cosmetics to be tested on animals. India prohibited all cosmetics testing on animals. Israel banned the sale of all newly animal-tested cosmetics. And the European Union, which had previously banned testing of cosmetics on animals, took the next step in outlawing imports and sales of products or ingredients tested on animals. The momentum is such that maybe one day soon consumers won’t have to search for humane products, says Troy Seidle, HSI director of research and toxicology. “With the EU closing its doors to animal-tested cosmetics, the beginning of the end of global cosmetics cruelty is within our grasp.”

Progress for Animals in Laboratories