

2011 Fur Seal Subsistence Harvest Report



**The Subsistence Harvest of Northern Fur Seals
On
St. George Island in 2011**

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Report prepared by:
Mark Merculief - Island Sentinel, Kayumixtax Eco-Office

Aleut Community of St. George Island
St. George Traditional Council
Kayumixtax Eco-Office
PO Box 940
St. George Island, Alaska 99591
907-859-2447/2448 (voice)
907-859-2251 (fax)

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Michael T. Williams, NMFS

Traditional Council of St. George Island

INTRODUCTION

Laqux, northern fur seal (*callorhinus ursinus*) is an important customary traditional food for the Unangan of St. George Island, Alaska. Together, the Traditional Council of St. George along with the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service coordinated, monitored, and managed the subsistence harvest of northern fur seals to safeguard their existence. The 2011 subsistence fur seal harvest was conducted in accordance to 50 CFR §216 Subpart F on St. George Island.

METHODS

The Island Sentinel of the St. George Traditional Council Kayumixtax Eco-Office monitored the 2011 subsistence fur seal harvest for the Aleut Community of St. George Island and in accordance with the Co-management Agreement between the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Aleut Community of St. George. Within this context, management and activities were conducted under a cooperative agreement with the National Marine Fisheries Service. During the 2011 subsistence fur seal harvest information was collected on:

- a) the number of sub-adult male fur seals harvested
- b) incidence of by-products and waste during the harvest process
- c) the occurrence of older male seals judged to be 124.5 cm or more in length
- d) female seals killed or injured during the harvest operation
- e) the number of seal deaths due to overheating
- f) number of seals entangled in marine debris and the number of seals disentangled
- g) evidence of oil contaminated seal pelts
- h) other types of fur seal mortality
- i) weather conditions at the time of the harvest
- j) any other unusual conditions related to the harvest
- k) Research conducted during the harvest, and visitors requesting to view or film the harvest

RESULTS

Fur Seals Harvested

The 2011 subsistence fur seal harvest season on St. George Island was conducted in 7 harvests; the harvest season began on July 8th, 2011. The final harvest took place on August 5th, 2011. A total of 120 sub-adult male fur seals were taken for subsistence from 3 harvests at the Northeast haul out and 4 harvests at the Zapadni haul out.

Table 1: Dates, locations, weather, numbers of harvests and sub-adult male fur seals harvested at the locations for the 2011 subsistence fur seal harvest on St. George Island, Alaska.

Date	Haul-out	Roundup	Temp F	Wind Direction	Wind MPH	Weather	Harvested
07/08/11	Northeast	10:15	48	SW	15mph	overcast	11
07/14/10	Zapadni	9:20	47	W	15 mph	overcast	17
07/21/10	Northeast	9:45	42	W	7 mph	overcast	14
07/28/10	Zapadni	9:45	43	VAR	5 mph	overcast	16
08/02/10	Zapadni	9:45	45	WNW	15 mph	fog	18
08/04/10	Northeast	9:20	43	W	23 mph	overcast	22
08/05/10	Zapadni	9:45	45	ESE	13 mph	overcast	22

By-products and Waste

No waste of significant edible portions of harvested northern fur seals occurred during the 2011 season.

Males 124.5 cm or More in Length and Female Seals Harvested or Struck

Based on our observations at every harvest, we estimate no male fur seals 124.5 cm (49 in) or more in length were struck and harvested. No females were harvested or stunned during the round – ups.

Heat Strokes

No deaths of any fur seal occurred due to heat stroke (over heating) during or as part of the 2011 subsistence fur seal harvest. However, we did have one occasion where an animal appeared to be showing early signs of heat stress. The animal was removed from the pod and allowed to recover on its own. Within 5 - 10 minutes, the young male seal returned to the haul out and appeared fine.

Entanglement

During the three harvests conducted at the Northeast haul out, no entangled seals were present. The four harvests that took place at the Zapadni haul out resulted with no entanglements as well.

Oil Contamination

No evidence of oil contamination on fur seals pelts of harvested animals during the 2011 subsistence fur seal harvest was observed.

Other Mortality

No other fur seal mortality occurred.

Anomalies

There were no anomalies observed.

Research

100 percent of the upper canine teeth from each harvest were taken for the National Marine Mammal Laboratory (NMML) in Seattle, Washington under NMFS Scientific Research Permit 1119-1882 issued to the St. George Traditional Council. Along with the upper canines, lower canines were also taken from 20 harvested seals. This research is to gather age related data from the harvested animals and compare aging of the traditionally used upper canines with that of the lower canines.

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