



Aleut Community of St. Paul Island
Tribal Government
Ecosystem Conservation Office

**2001 Subsistence Fur Seal Harvest Season Report
St. Paul Island Alaska
December 2001**

by
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Contents

	<i>page</i>
Acknowledgements	1
List of Tables and Figures	1
Introduction	1
Fur Seals Harvested	2
By Products and Waste	3
Adult Female and Male Seals Killed or Injured	3
Heat Strokes	5
Entanglement Monitoring	6
Oil Contamination	6
Other Mortality	6
Evaluation	7
Recommendations	7
References	8

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List of Tables and Figures

<i>Table or Figure</i>	<i>Page</i>
Table 1. Locations, Number of Harvests, and Number of Fur Seals Harvested	2
Figure 1. Number of Fur Seals Harvested, 1995 – 2001	2
Figure 2. Number of Adult Female Fur Seals Killed 1995 – 2001	3
Figure 3. Number of Adult Male Fur Seals Injured 1995 – 2001	4
Figure 4. Number of Adult male Fur Seals Killed 1995 – 2001	4
Figure 5. Number of Heat Strokes 1995 – 2001	5
Figure 6. Number of Fur Seals Disentangled 1995 – 2001	6

Introduction

This is the first Northern Fur Seal Subsistence Harvest Season Report prepared by the Tribal Government of the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island. Over the last decade, there have been various situations and activities that have led the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service and the Tribal Government of St. Paul to work together in efforts to safeguard the existence of the Northern Fur Seal. Hopefully this report will serve as an instrument in these endeavors.

Fur Seals Harvested

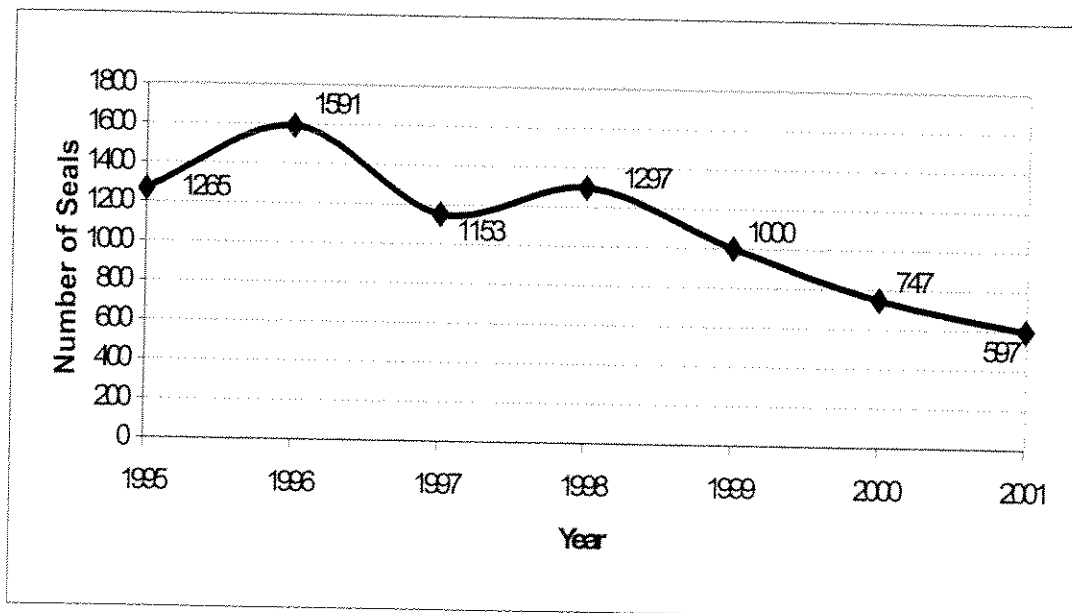
The 2001 Northern Fur Seal Subsistence Harvest Season was conducted in 10 harvests starting on June 28, 2001. With an approved extension beyond the usual August 8th closing date, the last harvest took place on August 17, 2001. A total of 597 fur seals were taken this season on St. Paul Island over those 10 days at 4 different haulouts (*Table 1*).

Table 1: Locations, number of harvests and seals harvested at the locations for the 2001 Subsistence Fur Seal Harvest Season on St. Paul Island, Alaska (Tanaliġ Amġignaġ 2001).

Location	Number of Harvests	Number of Seals Harvested
Gorbatch	4	287
Big Zapadni	3	168
Polovina	2	97
Lukanin	1	45
Total	10	597

The number of fur seals taken by our community has been declining over the past few years (*Figure 1*).

Figure 1: Numbers of fur seals harvested, Subsistence Fur Seal Harvest Seasons 1995 – 2001, St. Paul Island Alaska (Cormany 1997, 1996, 1995; Zavadil 1999, 1998; Tanaliġ Amġignaġ Program 2001, 2000).



By Products and Waste

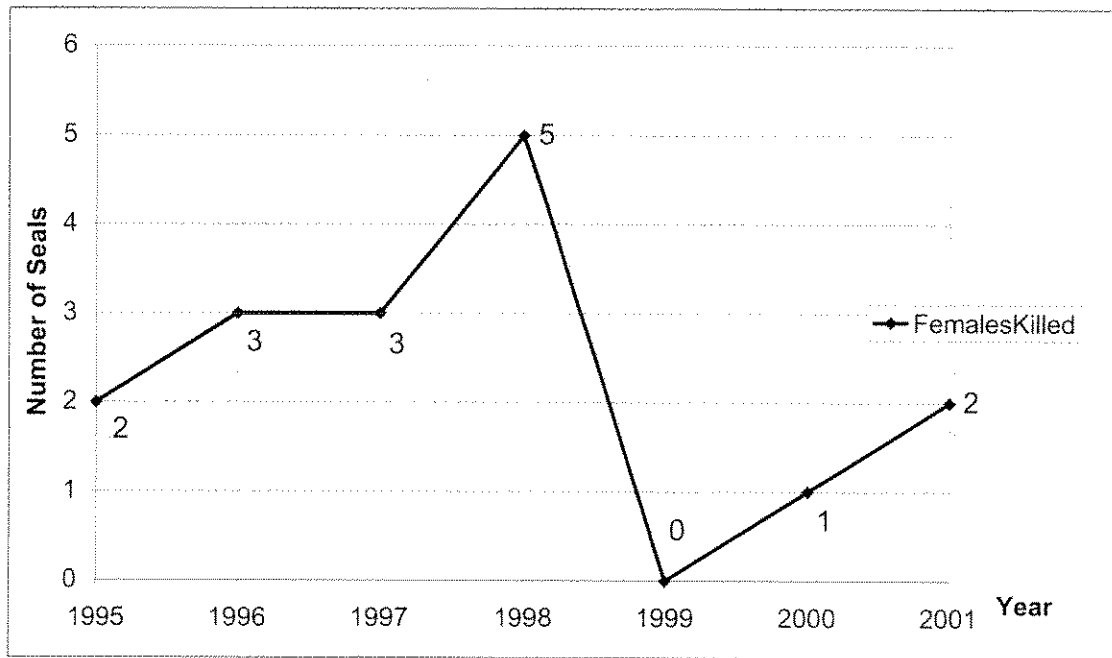
A small number of fur seal pelts were taken, no teeth were taken for arts and crafts. Nearly all seal throats and some whiskers were taken for arts and crafts purposes during the 2001 harvest season.

The wastage this season included 27 whole cut-up fur seal carcasses disposed of in various residential refuse containers. They were found and reported to ECO by the local refuse handlers.

Adult Male and Female Seals Killed or Struck

All precautions are taken to avoid the killing of adult males and females, but unfortunately accidents do happen. During the 2001 harvest season two adult female fur seals were struck and killed (*Figure 2*)

Figure 2: Number of adult female fur seals killed, Subsistence Fur Seal Harvest Seasons 1995 – 2001, St. Paul Island Alaska (Cormany 1997, 1996, 1995; Zavadil 1999, 1998; Tanaliġ Amġignaġ Program 2001, 2000).



Two adult male fur seals were struck and injured, but no adult male seals were killed during the 2001 harvest season (*Figures 3 and 4*)

Figure 3: Number of adult male fur seals injured, Subsistence Fur Seal Harvest Seasons 1995 – 2001, St. Paul Island Alaska (Cormany 1997, 1996, 1995; Zavadil 1999, 1998; Tanaliġ Amġignaġ Program 2001, 2000).

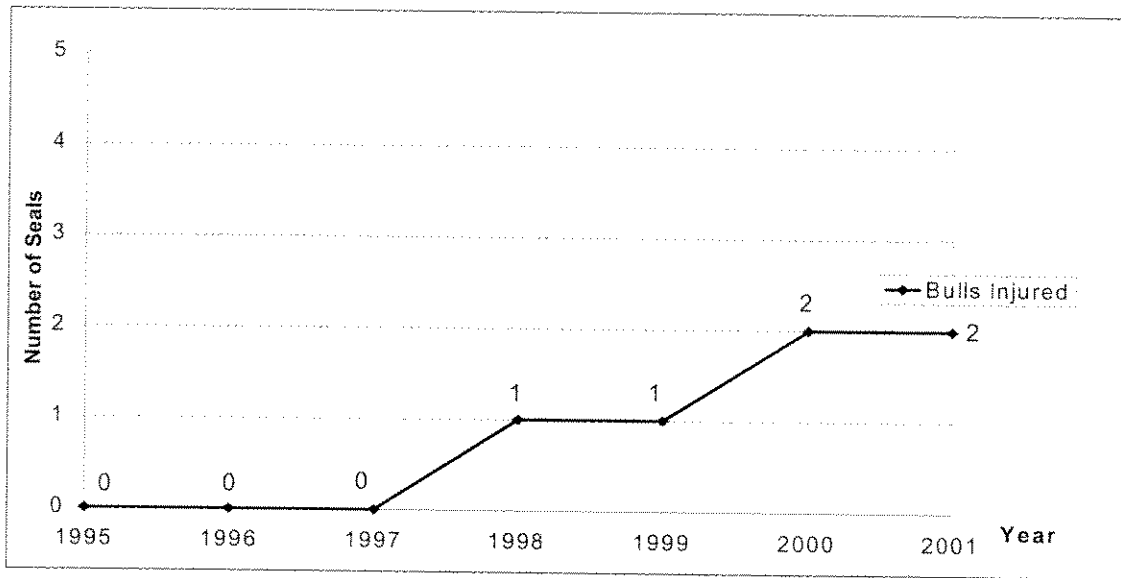
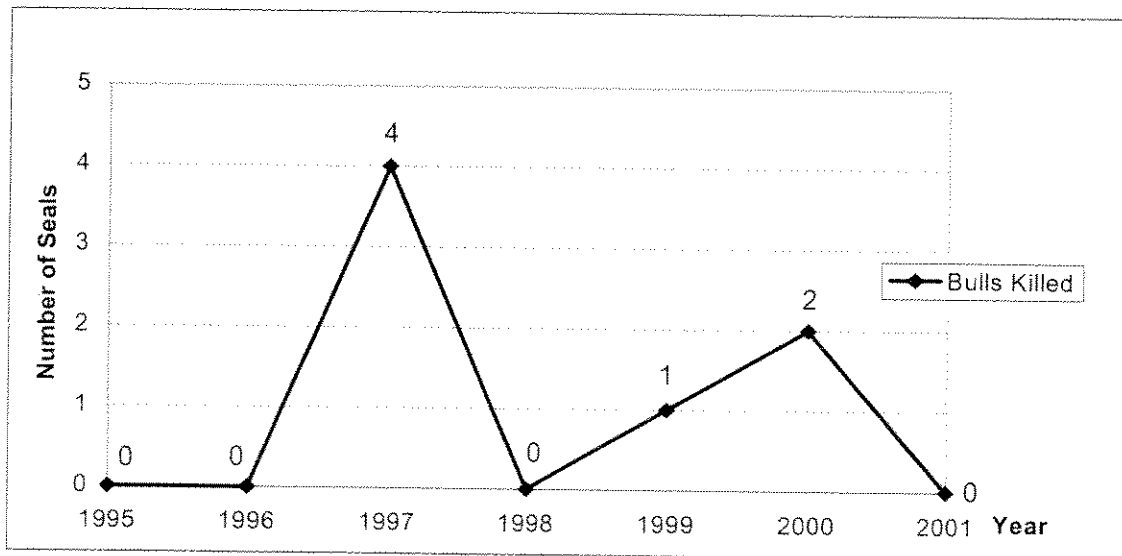


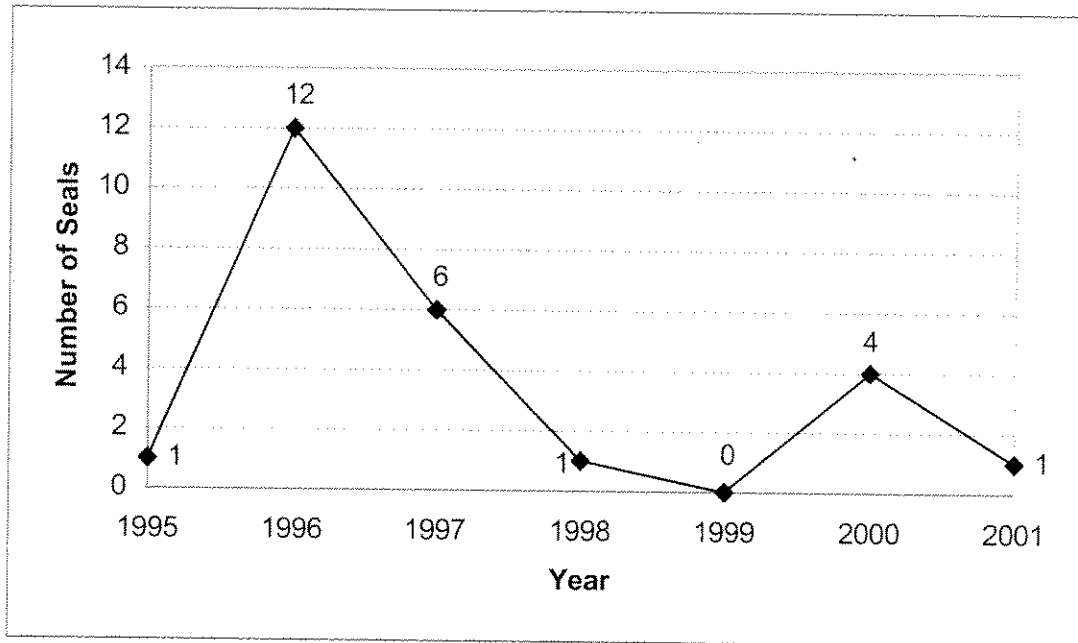
Figure 4: Number of adult male fur seals killed, Subsistence Fur Seal Harvest Seasons 1995 – 2001, St. Paul Island Alaska (Cormany 1997, 1996, 1995; Zavadil 1999, 1998; Tanaliġ Amġignaġ Program 2001, 2000).



Heat Strokes

One fur seal death occurred due to heat stroke (over heating) during or as a part of the 2001 harvest season (*Figure 3*).

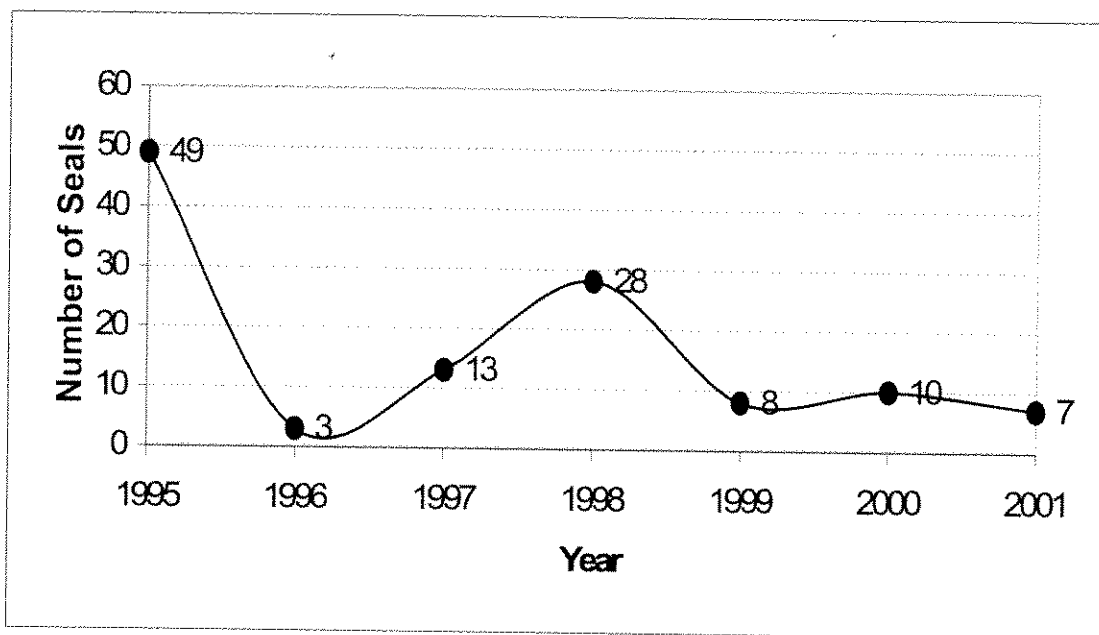
Figure 5: Number of heat strokes, Subsistence Fur Seal Harvest Seasons 1995 – 2001, St. Paul Island Alaska (Cormany 1997, 1996, 1995; Zavadil 1999, 1998; Tanaliġ Amġignaġ Program 2001, 2000).



Entanglement Monitoring

Seven entangled fur seals were sighted in various subsistence harvest round ups. Marine debris was removed from seven fur seals during the 2001 harvest season. The number of fur seals observed entangled in marine debris and the number of fur seals disentangled during the subsistence fur seal harvest is down from the previous years (*Figure 4*).

Figure 6: Number of fur seals disentangled, Subsistence Fur Seal Harvest Seasons 1995 – 2001, St. Paul Island Alaska (Cormany 1997, 1996, 1995; Robson et al 1997, 1996, 1995; Zavadil 1999, 1998; Tanaliġ Amġignaġ Program 2001, 2000).



A full report on the St. Paul Island Northern Fur Seal Entanglement Monitoring Program for the 2001 season will be available in January 2001.

Oil Contamination

No pelts of harvested animals during the 2001 harvest season were reported with oil on them.

Other Mortality

No other fur seal mortality occurred during the 2001 subsistence fur seal harvest season.

Evaluation

The 2001 harvest season was a crossroads experience. There were less harvests, and less animals harvested. Yet, there was more human transitioning - to the next generation, to other community members - than seen in previous years, such as, younger people being encompassed in the actual performance of the key aspects of on field activities, such as stunning, other community participants cutting, etc. A feeling of change was experienced. All involved either will transition various aspects of the harvest to other community members and/or processes, or will accept the harvest as a community activity they must be involved in for it to work as a truly subsistence activity verses a "quasi- commercial days techniques" harvest.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations from the Tribal Government of St. Paul's Ecosystem Conservation Office Co-Directors:

1. Community members pick up their seal meat from the harvest field or make their own arrangements for someone (family or friend) to provide transport for their seal(s) from the harvest field to place of delivery.
2. Community members must provide salt, buckets, bags or barter and trade with one another to handle this. The Tribal Government of St. Paul should not provide these items. The same for the equipment used on the field. The Sealers are a community group NOT Tribal Government of St. Paul employees.
3. Put forth ideas to avoid wastage, such as trading parts with one another, an individual compensation another individual for labor such as cutting meat if they're unable to.
4. Tribal Government employees may participate in the harvest as community members on their personal time, except for specific paid positions such as researchers, research assistants, and the Island Sentinel or Harvest Monitor. If "government" is involved it becomes a dependent situation where the organization is expected to do it all.
5. Evening harvests for community members who work during the day.
6. Review Harvest Plan prior to the next harvest season.

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