



**The Subsistence Harvest of Northern Fur Seals  
On  
St. George Island in 2007**

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## DISTRIBUTION LIST

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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 Unangan of St. George Island, Alaska. The Traditional Council of St. George and U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service coordinate, monitor and manage the subsistence harvest of northern fur seals to safeguard their existence. The 2007 subsistence fur seal harvest was conducted in accordance to 50 CFR §216 Subpart F on St. George Island.

## METHODS

The Tanam Amgi }naa (Island Sentinel) of the St. George Traditional Council Kayumixtax Eco-Office monitored the 2007 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 Communities of St. George. Within this context, management and activities were conducted under contract with the National Marine Fisheries Service. During the 2007 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 males 124.5 cm or more in length,
- d) females 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 2007 subsistence fur seal harvest season on St. George Island was conducted in 14 harvests; the harvest season began on 10 July 2007. The final harvest took place on 8 August 2007. A total of 206 sub-adult male fur seals (SAMs) were taken for subsistence from 7 harvests at Northeast and 7 at Zapadni **Table 1**.

Table 1: Dates, locations, weather, numbers of harvests and sub-adult male fur seals harvested at the locations for the 2007 Subsistence Fur Seal Harvest on St. George Island, Alaska.

Date	Haul-out	Weather	Wind MPH	Temp (°F)	Roundup	Harvested
7.10.2007	Northeast	Fog	NNW 5	46	10:04AM	9
7.13.2007	Zapadni	Fog, mist	Calm	43	9:35AM	14
7.14.2007	Northeast	Fog, mist	Calm	45	9:25AM	10
7.16.2007	Zapadni	Cloudy	SE 15	46	9:38AM	10
7.18.2007	Northeast*	Fog, mist	NE 5	45	Aborted*	0
7.18.2007	Zapadni	Fog, mist	NE 5	45	9:50AM	16
7.20.2007	Northeast	Cloudy	W 10-15	45	9:38AM	15
7.23.2007	Zapadni	Fog, drizzle	NW 15	46	9:35AM	14
7.25.2007	Northeast	Fog	E 5	49	9:20AM	17
7.27.2007	Zapadni	Fog, drizzle	SW 5	47	9:40AM	16
7.30.2007	Northeast	Fog	SW 25	49	9:25AM	14
8.1.2007	Zapadni	Fog, drizzle	NW 5	46	9:20AM	18
8.3.2007	Northeast	Rain	SE10	46	9:20AM	11
8.6.2007	Zapadni	Cloudy	Calm	47	9:40AM	17
8.8.2007	Northeast*	Rain	S25	50	Aborted*	0
8.8.2007	Zapadni	Rain	S25	50	9:45AM	25
<b>Total</b>						206

- *\*July 18th harvest at Northeast was aborted after a botched roundup attempt and harvest was moved to Zapadni*
- *\*August 8<sup>th</sup> harvest was moved to Zapadni due to insufficient number of SAMs at Northeast*

### *By-products and Waste*

An undocumented number of fur seal pelts, throats, teeth, and whiskers were taken for arts and crafts purposes during the 2007 subsistence fur seal harvest. During a harvest roundup at North hauling ground two SAM accidentally plunged off a cliff to their deaths July 10<sup>th</sup>, the carcass

location within a rookery prevented retrieval. These two accidental deaths were accounted for as waste, but are not included in table 1.

#### *Males 124.5 cm or More in Length and Female Seals Killed or Struck*

Based on our observations at every harvest we estimate no male fur seals 124.5 cm or more in length were struck and killed. Two (2) females were struck and killed at the July 30<sup>th</sup> Northeast harvest and are not included in Table 1. The sealing crew discussed the anomaly and all agreed to be vigilant at future harvests to prevent additional take of females.

#### *Heat Strokes*

No deaths of any fur seal occurred due to heat stroke (over heating) during or as part of the 2007 subsistence fur seal harvest.

#### *Entanglement*

One entangled SAM and One female were rounded up during this year's subsistence fur seal harvest. Both were disentangled and released, the male at Northeast July 20<sup>th</sup> and the female at Zapadni August 8<sup>th</sup>.

#### *Oil Contamination*

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

#### *Other Mortality*

No other fur seal mortality occurred.

#### *Anomalies*

One bull slipped off a 4 foot ledge at North July 30<sup>th</sup> however, appeared unharmed.

#### *Research*

50% of the upper canine teeth from each harvest were taken for the National Marine Mammal Laboratory (NMML) in Seattle, Washington to gather age related data from the harvested animals. Additionally, the St. George Traditional Council is permitted under permit # 1119-1882 to collect upper canines and as a result up to 100% of snouts with upper canines intact were subsequently collected. The remaining canines not sent to NMML are archived at the St. George Traditional Council Eco Office for future research projects.

Andrew Malavansky collected canines under Contract No. AB133F-06-CN-0184.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The St. George Traditional Council's Kayumixtax ECO-Office conveys special thanks to the St. George harvest foreman - Alex Merculief & Mark Merculief. We also thank the harvest crew, Nathaniel Lekanof, Sergei Lekanof, Derrick Philemonof, and Jasmine Simeon, for all their hard work and diligence during the 2007 St. George Subsistence Harvest. Thanks to the community members who assisted with various aspects of the harvest.

This report was funded (contract # AB133F-CN-0184) and reviewed by the National Marine Fisheries Service.