

Northern
Fur Seal
Harvests
St. George
Island, AK

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Harvest report
for the 2017
Season
07/10/2017-
08/08/2017

2017 Northern Fur Seal Subsistence Harvest

INTRODUCTION

Laqox, 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 2017 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 2017 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 2017 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 the number of seal deaths due to overheating
- e) number of seals entangled in marine debris and the number of seals disentangled
- f) evidence of oil contaminated seal pelts
- g) other types of fur seal mortality
- h) weather conditions at the time of the harvest
- i) any other unusual conditions related to the harvest
- j) research conducted during the harvest, and visitors requesting to view or film the harvest

RESULTS

The 2017 season opened with the first harvest taking place on July 10th, 2017 and ending the harvest season on August 8th, 2017. A total of 38 northern fur seals was harvested during the 2017 season. Seven harvests were conducted in the month period, with four being at East Rookery and three being at Zapadni Rookery.

a) The number of sub-adult male fur seals harvested

Table 1: Dates, locations, weather, harvest time and number of Sub-adult males harvested.

Date of Harvest	Rookery	Weather	Time of Harvest	# Of Seals Harvested
07/10/17	East Rk	Wind: SW @ 9 Temp: 51	Start: 10:30 AM End: 10:35 AM	2
07/20/17	Zapadni Rk	Wind: W @ 10 Temp: 53	Start: 10:24 AM End: 10:36 AM	5
07/25/17	East Rk	Wind: SW @ 15 Temp: 52 (Rain)	Start: 10:35 AM End: 10:45 AM	5
08/01/17	East Rk	Wind: NE @ 20 Temp: 51 (Rain)	Start: 10:09 AM End: 10:21 AM	6
08/03/17	Zapadni Rk	Wind: NE @ 14 Temp: 50 (Light Rain)	Start: 10:19 AM End: 10:36 AM	10
08/07/17	Zapadni Rk	Wind: W @ 5 Temp: 47	Start: 10:21 AM End: 10:23 AM	6
08/08/17	East Rk	Wind: SE @ 8 Temp: 49	Start: 10:15 AM End: 10:24 AM	4
TOTAL				38

b) Incidence of by-products and waste during the harvest process

No waste of edible portions of seals was observed during the harvest season. Harvesters did not collect pelts from the harvest for the creation of handicrafts. No other by-products were collected from the harvested seals.

c) The occurrence of older male seals judged to be 124.5 or more in length

Older males are often rounded up during the harvest process and released during the drive to the killing field or released during the harvest. No seals judged to be longer than 124.5 cm in length were harvested in 2017.

d) Female seals killed or injured during the harvest operation

No female fur seals were observed in the harvest round-ups or killed accidentally during the harvest.

e) The number of seal deaths due to overheating

No seals died during the harvest due to overheating.

f) Number of seals entangled in marine debris and the number of seals disentangled

1 entangled seal was found during one of the harvests conducted but not rounded up. Due to the fact that there were so many seals around the entangled seal, it was not captured to be disentangled. The entangled seal did not appear to be in distress or injured due to the rope around its neck. The rope appeared to be loose around its neck.

g) Evidence of contaminated seal pelts

No evidence of oiled seal pelts or oiling of seals was observed during the harvest.

h) Other types of seal mortality

No accidental or intentional mortality occurred during the harvest.

i) Weather conditions at the time of the harvest

No unusual conditions were observed during the harvest.

j) Any other unusual conditions related to the harvest

No unusual conditions were observed during the harvest.

k) Research conducted during the harvest, and visitors requesting to view or film the harvest

Tagged animals were observed by harvesters, but due to limited staffing they were not captured to allow the tags to be recorded or individual tagged seals to be weighed. However, they were let out of the groups to ensure no harm was done to them. No tagged seals were harvested during the 2017 season.

The Island Sentinel sampled seals harvested for the Marine Mammal Laboratory (MML).

The upper canines of harvested Sub-adult males were collected, bagged and tagged. The teeth will be processed by the Island Sentinel for aging by the MML. 38 teeth were collected and 35 teeth were sent out to the MML because 3 got misplaced. The subsistence harvest of sub-adult males was low in 2017 due to the dwindling population of St. George and the lack of people to assist in the harvest round-ups.