

Northern
Fur Seal
Harvests
St. George
Island, AK

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Harvest report
for the 2018
Season
06/21/2018-
08/08/2018

2018 Northern Fur Seal Subsistence Harvest

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 2018 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 2016 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
- 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

The Traditional Council of St. George Island requested NMFS allow the subsistence harvest begin prior to June 23rd, 2018 due to shortages of food in the community store due to canceled flights. NMFS authorized the subsistence harvest of fur seals to be extended to open the season on June 20th, 2018. The first harvest occurred on June 21st, 2018 and the last harvest was conducted on August 6th, 2018. A total of 62 northern fur seals was harvested during the 2018 season. Seven harvests were conducted at East Rookery and three 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
06/21/18	East Rookery By the Gate	Wind: NW @ 13 Temp:	Start: 11:05 AM End: 11:13 AM	1
07/10/18	East Rookery By the Gate	Wind: NW @ 16 Temp: 43	Start: 10:15 AM End: 10:30 AM	5
07/16/18	Zapadni Rookery	Wind: W @ 18 Temp: 43	Start: 1:45 PM End: 1:57 PM	6
07/18/18	East Rookery By the Gate	Wind: E @ 13 Temp: 42	Start: 1:36 PM End: 1:43 PM	8
07/26/18	East Rookery By the Gate	Wind: NW @ 12 Temp: 46	Start: 10:32 AM End: 10:40 AM	10
07/30/18	East Rookery By the Gate	Wind: SE @ 23 Temp: 48	Start: 1:45 PM End: 1:53 PM	4
07/31/18	East Rookery By the Gate	Wind: S @ 19 Temp: 46	Start: 11:33 AM End: 11:38 PM	6
08/01/18	East Rookery By the Gate	Wind: S @ 23 Temp: 54	Start: 1:35 PM End: 1:50 PM	11
08/02/18	Zapadni Rookery	Wind: W @ 16 Temp: 47	Start: 1:51 PM End: 1:56 PM	5
08/06/18	Zapadni Rookery	Wind: SW @ 6 Temp: 52	Start: 1:31 PM End: 1:37 PM	6
TOTAL				62

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 2018.

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

No entangled seals were seen during the harvests. Should Island Sentinel find any entangled seals during the harvests, steps are taken to disentangle the seal provided that its safe enough for Island Sentinel personnel to do so and that it will not inflict further harm to the seal.

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 seals were observed, recorded and pictures were taken by Island Sentinel. One harvest permit was issued for the 2018 harvest season.

The Island Sentinel sampled seals harvested for the Marine Mammal Laboratory (MML). 58 pairs of canines and 2 single canines were collected and prepared for aging. Nasal swabs were also taken of every seal harvested.