

# Aleut Marine Mammal Commission Newsletter

Fall 2013

~ *The Aleut Marine Mammal Commission (AMMC) is a tribally authorized non-profit organization established in 1997 by the eleven federally recognized Aleut Tribes of; Akutan, Atka, Belkofski, False Pass, Nelson Lagoon, Nikolski, Pauloff Harbor (Sanak), Sand Point, Unalaska and Unga; for the conservation, co-management and sustained use of marine mammals for subsistence purpose by Aleut and Alaska Natives of the Aleutian Islands and Alaska Peninsula Region (AMMC Region).* ~

## Welcome to our annual meeting

Each year tribally authorized representatives from each of AMMC's member tribes meets with the National Marine Fisheries Service authorized representatives to approve the annual Action Plan to and to exchange information and to consult on matters relevant to the marine mammal used for subsistence by the Aleut and Alaska Native peoples within the AMMC Region. We welcome and invite you to attend the upcoming annual meeting being held on November 12-13, 2013 at the Hampton Inn in Anchorage Alaska.

## Marine Mammal Protection Act and Co-management

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In 1972 U. S. Congress passed the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The MMPA was put into place to protect marine mammals so their numbers would not be so reduced as to negatively affect the marine ecosystem.

Throughout millennia the Aleut People have depended upon marine mammals for cultural, spiritual and subsistence purposes within the AMMC region. In recent decades, anthropologists studying historic Aleut village sites the Aleutians have unearthed thousands of marine mammal parts from seals, sea otters, sea lions, and whales documenting the Aleut People historically utilized marine mammals to sustain their way of life.

Today the Aleut People and other Alaska Natives continue to rely upon marine mammals to fill their nutritional and traditional needs.

Section 101b of the MMPA ensures Alaska Natives the right to continue to take marine mammals for subsistence purposes, as long as it is done in a non-wasteful manner.



Sea Lion



Ribbon Seal

### Section 101b of the MMPA

*(b) Exemptions for Alaskan natives Except as provided in section 1379 of this title, the provisions of this chapter shall not apply with respect to the taking of any marine mammal by any Indian, Aleut, or Eskimo who resides in Alaska and who dwells on the coast of the North Pacific Ocean or the Arctic Ocean if such taking—(1) is for subsistence purposes; or (2) is done for purposes of creating and selling authentic native articles of handicrafts and clothing: Provided, That only authentic native articles of handicrafts and clothing may be sold in interstate commerce: And provided further, That any edible portion of marine mammals may be sold in native villages and towns in Alaska or for native consumption. For the purposes of this subsection, the term “authentic native articles of handicrafts and clothing” means items composed wholly or in some significant respect of natural materials, and which are produced, decorated, or fashioned in the exercise of traditional native handicrafts without the use of pantographs, multiple carvers, or other mass copying devices. Traditional native handicrafts include, but are not limited to weaving, carving, stitching, sewing, lacing, beading, drawing and painting; and (3) in each case, is not accomplished in a wasteful manner.*

On November 9, 2006 AMMC entered into an agreement authorized under Section 119 of the MMPA with NMFS to set forth an operational structure for the conservation and management of all marine mammal subsistence species under NMFS jurisdiction in the AMMC Region, with particular focus on the species *Eumetopias jubatus* (Stellar sea lion) and *Phoca vitulina* (harbor

Seal). Since the signing of the agreement AMMC has been working in partnership with the NMFS to achieve the goals outlined in the agreement. These goals include: (a) promote the sustained health of the Species (b) promote scientific research and the collection of data, including the traditional knowledge (TEK) of Aleut and

other Alaska Natives (c) develop Action Plans for the conservation and the co-management of subsistence uses of the marine mammals in the AMMC Region; (d) identify and resolve any management conflicts that may arise associated with the marine mammals and (e) to provide information to subsistence hunters and the public.



Pictured: Aleut Dancers at 2006 Culture Camp, Sand Point Alaska  
The Aleut People traditionally used marine mammals in clothing.

## Marine Mammal Research

Here are some highlights of the marine mammal research conducted in the AMMC region by NOAA. More information about the research projects can be found at the website included in this article.

The NMFS hosts an annual coordination meeting of researchers who are conducting field studies of Stellar sea lions in Alaska. This meeting is held to maximize collaboration and data or sampling sharing opportunities and to minimize potential disturbance of the animals. During the past several years, NOAA has held the Stellar Sea Lion Research Coordination meeting immediately following the Alaska Marine Science Symposium in Anchorage, Alaska. The AMMC Executive Director is invited to attend these meetings, and thereby to have a direct oppor-

tunity to learn about planned research that may be occurring on Stellar sea lions in the Aleutian Islands, to provide AMMC's input to the assembled researchers about coordination with local residents, and to provide other input from AMMC relevant to the coordination of research on Stellar sea lions. NMFS has posted the reports of the annual research coordination meeting held since 2007 at: <http://www.afsc.noaa.gov/nmml/species/> This website also contains research reports on other cetacean (whales, porpoises) and pinnipeds (sea lions, seals) species.



The Alaska Marine Mammal Stranding Network (AMMSN) collects and compiles data about marine mammal stranding's throughout the entire state of Alaska. Stranding's occur when marine mammals swim, float, or become beached or stuck in shallow waters. Collecting data from stranded mammals provides a wealth of scientific information to the management agency, as well as the cause for mortality. Please contact the stranding network if you see sick, injured, entangled or dead marine mammals in the water or on the beach. The stranding network responds to or provides professional advice on handling stranding's. The Stranding Hotline Number is: **1-877-925-7773** or you can contact the NMFS Alaska Regional Office in Juneau at: **907-586-7235**. Your participation in reporting stranding within the AMMC region is appreciated.

## Welcome Intern

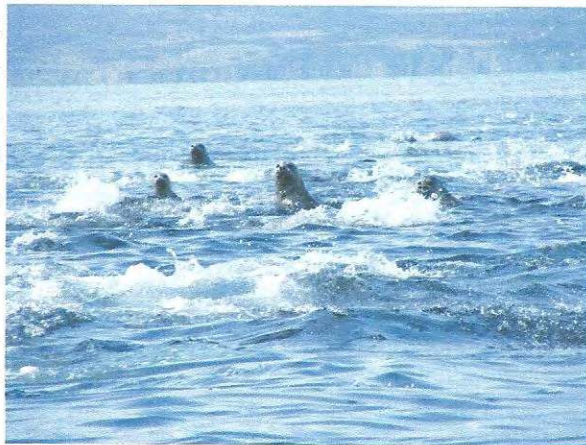
The AMMC Intern Program educates the Alaska Native younger generation in Section 119 co-management of marine mammal resources used for subsistence and in methods to preserve traditional ecological knowledge (TEK). The goal of the intern program is to educate and prepare the

younger generation to assume future leadership roles in co-management of the marine mammals we depend upon for subsistence with the federal government management agencies. This year, AMMC would like to welcome and introduce you to our new intern, Cathy Adams. Cathy Adams has lived in Sand Point

for most of her life. She has a vested interests in marine mammals and learning how Aleut tribes and the Alaska Native community works with federal agencies in co-management. This program is funded through a grant from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

## Stellar Sea Lions

Since I started working as an intern for the Aleut Marine Mammal Commission, I have learned a lot about marine mammals. One of the most interesting marine mammals is the stellar sea lion. They are the fourth largest of the pinniped, meaning “feather” or “fin” footed. Their life span is from 20-23 years, although some may live up to 30 years. The average adult male stellar sea lion is approximately 9 feet in length and 1500 lbs. The average adult female is about 7 feet in length and 600 lbs. At birth, stellar sea lions pups weigh around 45 lbs. and are about 3 feet in length.



The easiest way to distinguish between male and female stellar sea lions is that males have much wider chests, necks, and broader, higher foreheads, and flatter snouts. They also have long whiskers which are used to navigate underwater and find prey. Their ears are visible and are turned downwards so that water does not enter them when the sea lions go underwater.

Adult stellar sea lions are light brown to blond with a darker

brown around the flippers and undersides. Stellar sea lion pups are dark brown at birth.

Stellar sea lions occupy the cool coastal waters of the North Pacific. They range from the Kuril Islands and the Sea of Okhotsk in Russia to the Gulf of Alaska in the north, and south to Año Nuevo Island off central California.

When not in the water, they gather

on rookeries and haulouts which are secluded rocky islands. Rookeries are locations where adult males actively defend territories, pups are born, and mating takes place. Haulout sites are those where sea lions rest on land (haulout), but where few or no pups are born.

Stellar sea lions eat a wide range of fish including herring, pollock, salmon, cod, rockfish, as well as squid and shrimp. To survive, an adult sea lion needs to eat at least 6% of its body weight each day. They do not chew their food, most

is swallowed whole. Feeding occurs in groups and mostly at night.

Two stocks are recognized for stellar sea lions - an Eastern Stock and a Western Stock. Under the ESA, they are considered "Distinct Population Segments" or DPS. The Eastern DPS is listed as "threatened", and the Western DPS is listed as "endangered".

Scientific research has been conducted to gain a better understanding as to the cause of the population declines that have occurred in recent decades in stellar sea lion populations.

Scientific studies include research on genetics, diet, reproduction, foraging habits, human interactions and impacts.

For each species (such as the stellar sea lion) listed on the MMPA and ESA, a recovery plan was developed by the federal management agency. Included in that plan is a provision for monitoring human take, which includes Alaska Native subsistence harvest. The stellar sea lion recovery plan and information on the scientific research that has been conducted about stellar sea lions can be found at:

[Http:// www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/mammals/pinnipeds/stellersealion.htm](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/mammals/pinnipeds/stellersealion.htm)

## Harbor Seals

Harbor seals are another species I learned about. The pupping season varies widely among the regional populations. Pups range from 29.5-39.4 inches in length and weigh 18-26 lbs. They are well-developed at birth, eyes are open, and they can swim and follow their mothers. Most pups are born February through July. Harbor seals of the northern Pacific population give birth from May to July. Harbor seals inhabiting the coasts of British Columbia and Washington give birth from June to September. Farther



south, the pupping season becomes progressively earlier. In Baja California, the season is February through March. Females generally give birth to one pup each year. Multiple births are extremely rare, but twin fetuses have been documented. The average adult male Harbor seal reaches about 4.6-6.6 ft. in length and weights 154-375 lbs. The average adult female is about 3.9-5.6 ft. in length and weights

110-331 lbs.

Harbor seals possess unique patterns of spots, either dark on a light background or light on a dark background. They vary in color from brownish black to tan or grey; under parts are generally lighter. The body and flippers are short, the head is rounded. The female is smaller in size than the male.

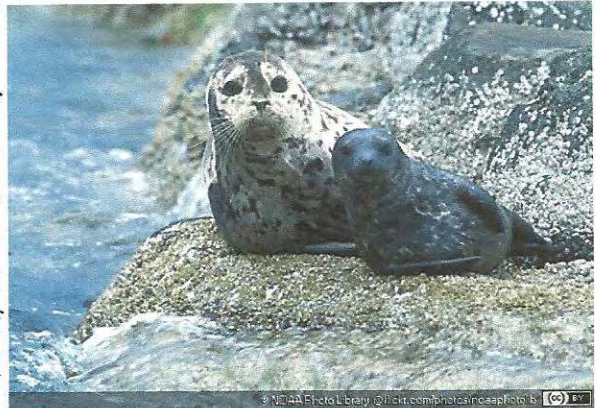
Harbor seals are one of the most widely distributed pinniped. They are found in temperate, sub-arctic, and arctic coastal areas on both sides of the North Atlantic and North Pacific oceans.

There are an estimated 5 to 6 million harbor seals worldwide, which include 5 sub-species :

- Western Atlantic common seals, which inhabit eastern North America.
- Ungava seals, which are found in freshwater lakes in Alaska and eastern Canada
- Pacific common seals, located in western North America.
- Insular seals, found in in eastern Asia.
- Eastern Atlantic common seals which inhabit Europe and

western Asia.

Harbor seals can dive for extended times because they can slow their heart rate from 75-120 beats per minute to only 4-6 beats per minute. They slow their metabolic rate, drop their body temperature, which tolerate high levels of carbon diox-



ide, and collapse their lungs before diving.

Alaska natives use virtually all of the seal for food, clothing, and other subsistence products. It is important that the harbor seal is protected and managed so hunters and users will continue to have access to this important resource.

More information on Harbor seals can be found at:

[www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/mammals/pinnipeds/harborseal.htm](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/mammals/pinnipeds/harborseal.htm)



Sunrise in Atka



Hunter's meeting



Russian church



Blessing the iqyax



Atka by the sea

### A Trip to Atka

One of the 2013 Action Plan priorities for AMMC and NMFS staff was to travel to Atka to meet with the Atka Tribal Government and the marine mammal hunters. The purpose of the meeting was to develop a mutually agreed upon framework for real-time harvest monitoring and for gathering information on population ecology and factors for the recovery of the Western stock of Stellar Sea Lion. The meeting was a success and as a result, AMMC is preparing to assist the Atka tribal government and hunters develop plans and funding proposals for the real-time monitoring program to be implemented and managed through the Atka IRA tribal government. Following the meeting, the AMMC and NMFS staff were invited to tour Atka's 1st Culture Camp near Korovin Bay, attend the iqyax launch, and invited to Culture Camp's community potluck. It was a wonderful trip and on behalf of the AMMC and NMFS staff we would like to express our appreciation and thank everyone in Atka for their hospitality. (2013 Atka community photo below)



Gennadiy singing with Nadia



Iqyax Sea Trials



## Sea Lion Meatballs

Recipe by: Elekonida Kashevarof (St. George Island Cookbook, 2000)

### Ingredients:

2 pounds ground sea lion meat

1 large onion, chopped

2 teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon pepper  
2 tablespoons Worcestershire

Flour, to coat meatballs

Oil, for frying

1 cup water

### Directions:

Mix all ingredients to-

gether in a medium-sized bowl. Shape into a ball and coat with flour. Fry over medium heat on both sides until brown. Put meatballs in a 9x13 inch pan with 1 cup of water. Cover with tinfoil and bake at 400 degrees for 45 minutes. Serve with

## Salted Seal Soup

Recipe by: Jennie Webster (Hunters of the Sea Akutan Cookbook, 1993)

### Ingredients:

1 very small piece of seal meat, cut into small pieces

1 medium onion

2 small potatoes

1 cup rice

Flour

½ cup petruski

### Directions

Let seal meat soak for one day, changing water about 3 or 4 times. Boil seal for about 1 ½ hours. Add the rest of the ingredients and cook until potatoes are

done. To thicken soup, make a paste with flour and water, and add to soup. Add petruski.

## Mossberry Pie

Recipe by Gloria Gronholdt (Sand Point Women's Club Cookbook

4 c. mossberries  
1 to 1 1/2 c. sugar  
1/2 tsp. cinnamon  
3 Tbsp. cornstarch  
1 1/2 Tbsp. butter  
2/3 c. water

Put berries in saucepan with the water. Add sugar and cinnamon. Boil until tender. Dissolve cornstarch in water and thicken berries. Cool and add to unbaked pie shell. Dot with butter. Cover with top

top crust. Bake in 425° oven for 35—40 minutes.



Stellar sea lion meat with fat (raw) Atak serving size 3.4 oz (100g or @ 1/4 pound)		
Amount per Serving 1		
Calories	188	Calories from Fat 83
% Daily Value *		
Total Fat	9.25g	14%
Monounsaturated	2.2g	
Polyunsaturated	1.8g	
Saturated Fat	1.65g	8%
Cholesterol	62.7 mg	21%
Sodium	71.3 mg	3%
Total Carbohydrates	2.1g	0.7%
Dietary Fibers	<1g	0%
Sugar	0g	0%
Protein	24.25 g	49%
Calcium	6.2 mg	0.6%
Selenium	118 mcg	169%
Vitamin A	88 RE	6%
Vitamin C	<3 mg	0%
Iron	10.5 mg	58%
Zinc	4.5 mg	30%

\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 Calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

Calories	2000	2500
Total Fat	Less than 65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg	2400 mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g	375 g
Dietary Fiber	25g	30g

**Sue Unger,**  
who works at  
**APIA's**  
**Traditional**  
**Foods Program**  
Supplied these  
Recipes for our  
Newsletter.

**AMMC WORD SEARCH**

B A W E L A H W S A E W P C N  
 E C K N F Q L A T V A M S O S  
 L T A U N W N E O A R J O O F  
 K U G T T A M C U G I G H A T  
 O O N P K A G B S T A W L U N  
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 T U O N T F A R C D N A H E S  
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 X L S A R E T T O A E S Y T P

- AKUTAN**
- ALEUT**
- ALEUTIANS**
- ATKA**
- BELKOFSKI**
- FALSEPASS**
- NELSONLAGOON**
- NIKOLSKI**
- PORPOISE**
- ROOKERY**
- SANAK**
- SANDPOINT**
- SEAL**
- SEALION**
- SEAOTTER**
- SUBSISTENCE**
- UNALASKA**
- UNGA**

**Cryptogram**

VXEVLVWHQFH – D ZDB RI OIIH



Basket Weaving Grass



Aleut Footware  
(Russian)



## Sea Otters [chngatux]

***Did you know that sea otters hold hands when they sleep to keep from drifting apart?***

Sea otters are marine mammal that are native to and live along the Eastern and Northern Pacific Ocean. They are the smallest of marine mammal species.

Sea otters have an average lifespan of 15 - 20 years. Female sea otters do not begin to breed until age 2 - 5 years and may breed annually up around age 20. Males become mature and start breeding around the age of 4—6 years.

Like rabbits, sea otters mate year round, and young may be born in any season, though in Alaska most pups are born in late spring. A pup will weigh from 3 to 5 pounds at birth and stay with its mother from 3 - 6 months. Adult sea otters usually weigh between 31 and 99 lb. making them the heaviest members of the weasel family.

Unlike most marine mammals, the sea otter's primary form of insulation is an exceptionally thick coat of fur, the densest in the

the animal kingdom. Although it can walk on land, the sea otter lives mostly in the ocean.

Sea otters, polar bears and walrus are the three marine mammal species under the jurisdiction and federal management of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Currently, sea otters in the Aleutian Region, in listed as threatened under the ESA.

For more information, go to: [www.factsmonk.com/sea\\_otter\\_facts](http://www.factsmonk.com/sea_otter_facts)



### Frequently Asked Questions:

1. Are Alaska natives allowed to take (harvest) marine mammals protected by the MMPA and listed under the ESA?
2. How many marine mammals may I harvest during the year?

Answer: Yes, if done in accordance with section 101b of the MMPA and the recovery plan does not restrict the harvest.

Answer: Currently there are no harvest limitations outlined in the Stellar sea lion recovery plan, but all harvests must be done in accordance with 101b of the MMPA.

### Questions?

**Contact the Aleut Marine Mammal Commission**

**At**

**(907) 383-2662**

AMMC

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TO:

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**Peggy Osterback**

*Intern:*

**Cathy Adams**



*"Whale having fun in Unalaska Bay"*

### AMMC Board of Commissioners

- |                         |               |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Jenny Webster           | Akutan        |
| Leonty Lokanin          | Atka          |
| Heather Mack            | Belkofski     |
| Gilda Shellikoff        | False Pass    |
| Marvin (Big Shot) Mack  | King Cove     |
| Paul (Butch) Gundersen  | Nelson Lagoon |
| George Bezezekoff       | Nikolski      |
| Arlene Gundersen        | Sanak         |
| Peter Devine Jr.        | Sand Point    |
| William (Buzz) Lekanoff | Unalaska      |
| Bruce Foster Sr         | Unga          |

### **\$\$Logo Contest\$\$**

AMMC is looking for a new Logo that depicts the Aleut Culture and marine mammals. Submit drawings on an 8 ½" x 11" sheet of paper, to:

**AMMC  
P.O. Box 26  
Sand Point, Alaska 99661**

**Deadline: November 30, 2013  
\$100.00 award for the winning Logo.**