



## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release PM's MARCH 16, 1950

#### HIGH MORTALITY IN FUR-SEAL PUPS DUE TO VIOLENT STORMS

Hundreds of fur-seal pups were found dead along the coasts of Washington and Oregon after severe storms in January, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today. In former years, not more than a dozen fur-seals -- of all ages -- have been found washed ashore.

Twenty-thousand pups were tagged last summer by the Service in the Pribilof Islands in the Bering Sea. Of those tagged pups, 16 were found among the dead animals in the vicinity of Astoria, Tillamook, Newport, and Reedsport in Oregon and on the Washington coast. This is an unusually high percentage of deaths, state Service biologists, and is an indication that many hundreds of other pups must have died which were not found.

The young seals apparently died in the churning seas that accompanied the low temperatures and violent 90-mile-an-hour gales of last January's storms. Like other fur-seals, the pups migrate south for the winter -- returning to the Pribilofs in the spring. About 3,000,000 fur-seals gather in the Pribilofs yearly to breed. Under the protection and management of the Fish and Wildlife Service, the fur-seals have increased from a low of 132,000 in 1910.

The present group of year-old seal pups will be ready for harvest in 1952, when the surplus three-year-old males are killed. Although the 1952 take may be reduced, the Service does not expect the loss to affect the fur market. The Fouke Fur Company in St. Louis, which handles the processing and sale of the skins for the Government, has built up a reserve of skins in past years to prevent any drastic fluctuations in supply.

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