



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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## PRIBILOF ISLANDS FUR-SEAL TAKE ANNOUNCED

A total of 60,090 fur-seal skins <sup>were</sup> ~~were~~ taken this year in the Government-administered sealing operations on Alaska's Pribilof Islands, the Secretary of the Interior Oscar L. Chapman announced today. The annual seal-skin harvest began on June 10 and continued through July 27.

Last year's total was 70,891, while the average annual yield over the past ten years has been 66,920. Fewer seals were killed this year as a result of normal fluctuations--such as occur in all wildlife populations. Variations in food supply, the abundance of predators, and other natural mortality factors determine the number of seals available, just as soil and climatic conditions are reflected in the production of farm crops. Stabilization of the yearly kill at about 67,000 indicates that the seal herd may have reached its maximum size.

The fur-seal industry on the Pribilofs is a Government responsibility, but 20 percent of the annual take of skins becomes the property of the Canadian government under the provision of the Fur Seal Act of 1944 between the two countries. The U. S. seal skins are dressed and dyed by the Fouke Fur Company in St. Louis--Government agents in the processing and selling of the skins--and are sold at public auction. The net proceeds go to the U. S. Treasury.

Approximately 80 percent of the world's fur seals come to the Pribilof Islands to breed. During the winter they range southward as far as southern California and then return in the spring to the barren, volcanic Pribilofs. The pelts are obtained chiefly from three-year-old males.

Pelagic sealing--the killing of seals while they are at sea--is prohibited under the agreement between Canada and the U. S. At one time pelagic sealing nearly brought about the extinction of the animals.

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