



## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### INFORMATION SERVICE

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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#### SECRETARY SEATON URGES RATIFICATION OF FUR SEAL CONVENTION

Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton today urged the United States Senate to take early, affirmative action on the interim Convention for the conservation of North Pacific fur seals.

The Convention, now before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, sets forth the fundamental principles which will be followed in the management of the North Pacific fur seal herd. The Convention was signed by representatives of Japan, Canada, Soviet Russia, and the United States on February 9, 1957, after discussions which began November 28, 1955.

In a letter to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Secretary Seaton declared: "We consider this Convention an important step in the continued preservation of one of our great natural resources". He expressed the hope that the Senate would ratify the Convention this session since a resolution passed at the negotiating conference "stipulated that the Governments would again consult on this matter if ratifications were not deposited by January 1, 1958."

Secretary Seaton stated that two Nations, Canada and Japan, have already ratified the Convention and that Russia reportedly is waiting action by the United States.

Besides stating that the seal harvesting shall be done by the United States on the Pribilof Islands and by Russia on the Asian Islands, the Convention provides:

1. The establishment of a North Pacific Fur Seal Commission of four members, one from each signatory nation.
2. A six-year cooperative research program.
3. The prohibition of pelagic sealing, except to the extent specified for research purposes.

4. Boarding and search of vessels at sea in suspicious circumstances and arrest of vessels and crews upon reasonable belief of seal hunting, with trial in the country of the flag of the vessel.
5. The enactment and enforcement by the signatories and the application of such measures as may be necessary to guarantee the observance of the Convention.
6. A sharing of the land kill, with Canada and Japan each receiving annually fifteen percent of the sealskins taken by the United States and by Russia.

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