

FOOD FROM THE SEA: SEALS GR: 6-8 (LESSONS 6-9)



Seal Stomach Float, Museo de América, Madrid; Photo by B. Kopchak

Elder Quotation:

“After a little while he went back to the seal again. The seals sleep a lot, that is why he (*Pukituq*) turned back into one. Whenever a seal dices, it sleeps a half hour or hour at a time. People hurry up in their baidarkas when a seal dives, and when they spit in the water. It wakes the seal up and it comes right away. When he turned into a human he told the people not to spit in the water because it splashed on the bottom and woke the seals up. “Spit on your paddles instead!” When he turned into a human he forgot to take out his seal canine teeth, that is why some people have “high teeth” now.”

‘Pukituq Who Turned into All Kinds of Animals’ as told by Makariⁱ

Grade Level: 6-8

Overview: Traditionally the Sugpiaq and Eyak peoples migrated from their villages to fish camps to harvest seasonal resources. More permanent villages were established with the advent of Russian trading posts and commercial canneries. Permanent villages changed the pattern and intensity of local resource use and availability.

Standards:

| <i>AK Cultural:</i> | <i>AK Content:</i> | <i>CRCC:</i> |
|--|---|---|
| D1: Acquire in-depth cultural knowledge through active participation and meaningful interaction with Elders. | Science C (2): A student should understand and be able to apply the concepts, models, theories, facts, evidence, systems, and processes of life science and should (2) develop an understanding of the structure, function, behavior, development, life cycles, and diversity of living organisms;. | L1: Students should understand the value and importance of the Sugt’stun language and be actively involved in its preservation. |

Lesson Goal: To research and recognize the adaptive uses of traditional seal hunting techniques and uses for the seal over time by the people of the Chugach region.

Lesson Objectives: Students will:

- Research subsistence seal hunting techniques and uses of seal in the traditional and modern lifestyles of the people of the Chugach region.
- Prioritize and select hunter and Elder observations to ‘tell the story’ of seal hunting and usage.
- Create a digital poster to summarize how the people of the Chugach Region’s subsistence hunting and use of the seal has changed over time.
- Learn to pronounce the Sugt’stun and Eyak vocabulary.

Vocabulary Words: Sugt’stun Dialects

| English: | PWS: | Lower Cook Inlet: | Eyak: |
|-------------------------|---|---|--|
| They are hunting | <i>Pisuhtuk.</i> | <i>Pisuhtuk.</i> | |
| seal | <i>qaigyaq</i> | <i>qaigyaq</i> | keeLtaa (harbor seal) |
| braided seal intestines | <i>qaigyam qilui</i> | <i>qaigyam qilui</i> | |
| seal oil | <i>qaigyam uqua</i> (pl: <i>qaigyam uquwii</i>) | <i>qaigyam uqua</i> (pl: <i>qaigyam uquwii</i>) | |

Materials/Resources Needed:

- Computer projection screen
- FFS 68 Seal.3 Poster Guidelines handout (See below) - one per student
- FFS 68 Seal.3 Research Sources handout (See below) - one per student
- Access to internet for research and capability of projecting students’ digital posters

Kit Library:

Neq’rkat: The wild foods cookbook

DeCourtney, Christine A., et al. *Traditional Food Guide for the Alaska Native People*

Salomon, Anne K. et al. *Imam Cimiucia = Our Changing Sea*

Smelcer, John E. and Morgen A. Young. *We Are the Land We Are the Sea: Stories of Subsistence from the People of Chenega*

Stamp, Bobby A. *Chenega as I Saw It – It’s People*

Tabios, Derenty, et al. *Looking Back on Subsistence: Interviews with Elders of the Chugach Region*

Unger, Suanne. *Qaqamiigux; Traditional Foods and Recipes from Aleutians and Pribilof Islands.* (Seals pp.61-96)

Web Resources:

Seal Characteristics

http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/education/educators/curricula/pdfs/ice_seal_student_guide.pdf

Seal Hunting and Safety, Yupik Region, Student Workbook (Grades 4-6). Overview of seal anatomy and ice seal species

<https://www.smithsonianchannel.com/videos/how-are-seals-different-from-sea-lions/35377>

(1:14) Quick review of physical differences between seals and sea lions

Seal Hunter Interviews

- <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/techpap/tp249.pdf> Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence. (1999) Ecology, harvest, & use of harbor seals and sea lions: interview materials from Alaska Native hunters Technical Paper No.249. pp.105-164
- <http://jukebox.uaf.edu/NanPG/nanwalek/html/23503.html> Interview with Nanwalek sea lion hunter Nick Tanape, Sr. (1996)
 - Section 1 (2:03) Personal Introduction
 - Section 2 (2:54) Marine Mammal Hunting: learning from father
 - Section 3 (2:57) Marine Mammal Hunting (cont.): 1950s, population changes, hunt techniques
 - Section 4 (2:37) Seals: sharing, seal fat, delicacies, preparation, manyuk (*cook on open fire*), celebrations
 - Section 5 (2:16) Seals (cont.): sharing, family, population decline, pup season
 - Section 6 (2:38) Seal and sea lion hunting, sharing, flippers
 - Section 9 (2:42) Animal Uses: meat, seal gut and pelt preparation, arts and crafts [Note: *renewed production and sale of Native crafts revived interest in pelts*]

Subsistence Seal Hunting

- <https://alutiiqmuseum.org/explore/lecture-videos> Patrick Saltonstall, Alutiiq Museum Archaeologist, 2016 Fall Lecture on “The Pursuit of Marine Mammals Before Gas and Ammo” prior to Russian arrival and use of guns (1 hr: 15 min)
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BdX5m0rY_CY “Alutiiq Pride: A Story of Subsistence” (27:28)
 - 0-24 sec - Lidia Robarts’s Quyana song
 - 2:45-16:12 - Seal hunt: Elder Ed Gregoriouff on differences between bidarki and motorized hunt; When to shoot seal; Scientific research; Difference between male & female seal
 - 16:12-16:35 – Seal population changes

Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Western Science

- http://ankn.uaf.edu/Curriculum/Articles/BarnhardtKawagley/Indigenous_Knowledge.html Article Abstract with Venn diagram of TEK and Western Science comparison

Teacher Preparation:

- Review Activities and practice Sugt'stun or Eyak vocabulary.
- Invite Elder or Recognized expert in sealing to describe a seal hunt and the processing and use of the animal. Ideally, the Elder or Recognized Expert could also discuss changes in hunting techniques and seal uses over past decades.
- Before the Elder or Recognized Expert arrives, review with how to show respect for the Elder during his or her visit.



Traditional Seal Hunter Helmet, Museo de América, Madrid; Photo by B. Kopchak

Opening: Seals were a mainstay of the traditional Chugach regional diets. Special techniques and tools were developed to successfully hunt and use the seal. The sharing, preparation, and consumption of seal are an integral part of Sugpiat culture. But seal populations fluctuate, technological and governmental regulations are introduced, and time marches on. We want to examine and educate ourselves on how the people of the Chugach have adapted their seal hunting and their uses of the seal to today's world.

Activities:

Class I:

1. Introduce and invite the Elder/Recognized Expert to describe seal hunting and changes in techniques and uses for the seal he or she has observed in his or her lifetime. Advise the students to take notes, as their class project will rely on Elder/Recognized Expert quotations to tell the history of sealing and adaptations of hunting techniques and uses of the animal over the years.
2. Encourage student questions and sharing of any personal seal hunting stories or seal recipes.
3. Present Smithsonian overview of Seal vs. Sea Lion comparisons (*See website above*)
4. Show Seal Adaptation and Anatomy pages from ADF&G Seal Hunting & Safety Guide (*See website above*)
5. Share these Elder quotations and student's notes of traditional seal hunting techniques.

“Chenega Glacier, it played a big part in the village if you hunted seal. You will know that the seal like to stay out of the water on ice and they stay in herds, you would pick a point outside of the glacier and sit on the shore and wait for in-coming and out-going seal. They generally went with the tide. Seal was one of the main foods for my people.”

- Bobby Stampⁱⁱ

“If they caught a seal with a pup inside unborn they would take the film that was over the young seal and put it on the figure head of the bow and it was supposed to bring good luck.”

- Bobby Stampⁱⁱⁱ

“Because the seal was far ranging geographically speaking, hunters had to travel over water, sometimes great distances, by kayak (*paitalek*) or in later years by rowboat. Seals were hunted by bow and arrow or spears. Much of the hunting in the early days required the hunters to become familiar with beaches or reefs frequented by seals to rest and sun themselves out of the water. A good hunter could stalk and come within touching distance so they could club or spear the mammal. In more recent years with the advent of the firearm, seals could be taken while they were in the water, and from greater distances. Simeon Kvasnikoff told me the men were able to tell the difference between the males and females by their snout. The females were left alone during the gestation period when they were carrying pups.”

- Derenty Tabios^{iv}

6. *Optional Homework:* Ask students to interview a seal hunter about seal hunting techniques and animal uses and any observed changes in same.

Class II:

1. Watch a Tatitlek seal hunt from “Alutiiq Pride: A Story of Subsistence” (Minutes 2:45-16:12) (*See website above*) and discuss. *Optional video to add:* For butchering a seal
2. Divide students into small groups, distribute ‘Seal Poster Guidelines’ and ‘Seal Research Resources’ handouts and review project. See also Heritage website Science Poster Prompt. [Note: Student groups may choose their own topic (*Subsistence Seal Hunting* or *Subsistence Seal Usage*) OR Teacher may assign topic.]
3. Begin research.

Class III: Small groups continue research, select quotations for poster, and begin poster design.

Class IV: Students complete digital posters, review, and share. Which factors did students find most affected changes in seal hunting techniques and seal usage? Discuss how student re-telling varies or is similar? What are the effects of oral tradition? These Elders' quotations represent Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK). How do these observations mesh with Western science?

**Posters will be judged on fulfillment of the guidelines (minimum of 10 appropriate quotations); organization, coherence, and clarity of information presented, and overall impression.*

Assessment:

- Students researched seal hunting and subsistence uses of seal in the Chugach Region.
- Students synthesized Elder, seal hunter, and Recognized Expert quotations to summarize the story of traditional and modern seal hunting and seal uses.
- Students created original posters to explain the historic changes in subsistence seal hunting and usage.
- Students correctly pronounced Sugt'stun or Eyak vocabulary words.

ⁱ Johnson, John F.C., et al. *Chugach Legends: Stories and Photographs of the Chugach Region*. Anchorage, AK: Chugach Alaska Corporation., 1984. p.53

ⁱⁱ Stamp, Bobby A. *Chenega as I Saw It – It's People*. Chugach Alaska Corporation, 2010. p.4

ⁱⁱⁱ Stamp, p.15

^{iv} Tabios, Derenty, et al. *Looking Back on Subsistence: Interviews with Elders of the Chugach Region*. Chugachmiut Corporation, 2000. pp.15-17



Seal Hunter Helmet, Museo de América, Madrid; Photo by B. Kopchak

Project Goal: To tell the story of Sugpiat/Eyak seal harvesting and usage as described by Sugpiat/Eyak Elders, seal hunters through illustrative posters

Project Description: You are to research the history of the subsistence uses of seals, adaptations over time, and the importance of the seal to Sugpiat and Eyak culture. Then you will create an original digital poster (or posters) to tell the story of subsistence seal harvesting and usage in the Chugach region through the words of Elders and Recognized Experts. You must use a minimum of ten quotations as detailed below but you are, of course, free to add more. You may include additional information in your posters as needed to serve your selected quotations.

Topic Choice/Research/Quotation Selection/Poster Design

Determine if your group will produce subsistence seal hunting or seal usage poster. Review the poster guidelines and decide on a work plan. You will have two days to research and create your posters. You may choose to make a single poster or several. Use the “*FFS 68 Seals.2.2 Research Sources*” handout as a starting point for your research efforts.

Subsistence Seal Hunting Posters should:

- _____ Illustrate and describe where to harvest seals (1 Elder/Hunter quotation)
- _____ Illustrate a traditional seal hunt or *manyuq* (beach cookout)
- _____ Describe traditional seal hunting techniques (2 Elder/Hunter quotations)
- _____ Describe how hunting lore was passed along (2 Elder/Hunter quotations)
- _____ Illustrate and describe changes in techniques due to evolving technology and/or government regulation (3 Elder/Hunter quotations)
- _____ Describe importance of the seal hunt to Sugpiat and/or Eyak cultures (2 Elder quotations)
- _____ Include three Sugt’stun or Eyak vocabulary words

Subsistence Seal Preparation and Usage Posters should:

- _____ Illustrate and describe which seal parts are used and for what (1 Elder/Expert quotation)
- _____ Illustrate traditional seal gut braiding or a *manyuq* (beach cookout)
- _____ Describe traditional seal preparation techniques (2 Elder/Expert quotations)
- _____ Describe how seal preparation lore was passed along (2 Elder/Expert quotations)
- _____ Illustrate and describe changes in techniques due to evolving technology and/or lifestyle changes (3 Elder/Expert quotations)
- _____ Describe importance of preserving and eating seal as a part of Sugpiat and/or Eyak cultures (2 Elder quotations)
- _____ Include three Sugt’stun or Eyak vocabulary words

Posters will be judged on fulfillment of the guidelines; organization, coherence, and clarity of information presented; overall impression.

Final Class – Presentation

Team members will present poster information to class using both the English and Sugt’stun and/or Eyak words where appropriate.

FFS 68 Seals.3.2 Research Sources

Kit Library:

Neq'rvat: The Wild Foods Cookbook

DeCourtney, Christine A. et al. *Traditional Food Guide for the Alaska Native People*

Salomon, Anne K. et al. *Imam Cimiucia = Our Changing Sea*

Smelcer, John E. & Morgen A. Young. *We Are the Land, We Are the Sea: Stories of Subsistence from the People of Chenega*

Stamp, Bobby A. *Chenega as I Saw It – It's People*

Tabios, Derenty. *Looking Back on Subsistence: Interviews with Elders of the Chugach Region*

Unger, Suanne. *Qaqamiigux; Traditional Foods and Recipes from Aleutians and Pribilof Islands*. (Seals pp.61-96)

Web Resources:

Eyak Dictionary

- <http://eyakpeople.com/dictionary>

Seal Characteristics

- http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/education/educators/curricula/pdfs/ice_seal_student_guide.pdf Seal Hunting and Safety, Yupik Region, Student Workbook (Grades 4-6). Overview of seal anatomy and ice seal species
- <https://www.smithsonianchannel.com/videos/how-are-seals-different-from-sea-lions/35377> (1:14) Quick review of physical differences between seals and sea lions

Seal Hunter Interviews

- <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/techpap/tp249.pdf> Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence. (1999) Ecology, harvest, & use of harbor seals and sea lions: interview materials from Alaska Native hunters Technical Paper No.249. pp.105-164
- <http://jukebox.uaf.edu/NanPG/nanwalek/html/23503.html> Interview with Nanwalek sea lion hunter Nick Tanape, Sr. (1996)
 - Section 1 (2:03) Personal Introduction
 - Section 2 (2:54) Marine Mammal Hunting: learning from father
 - Section 3 (2:57) Marine Mammal Hunting (cont.): 1950s, population changes, hunt techniques
 - Section 4 (2:37) Seals: sharing, seal fat, delicacies, preparation, munyuk (*barbecue*), celebrations
 - Section 5 (2:16) Seals (cont.): sharing, family, population decline, pup season
 - Section 6 (2:38) Seal and sea lion hunting, sharing, flippers
 - Section 9 (2:42) Animal Uses: meat, seal gut and pelt preparation, arts and crafts [Note: *renewed production and sale of Native crafts revived interest in pelts*]

Subsistence Seal Hunting

- <https://alutiiqmuseum.org/explore/lecture-videos> Patrick Saltonstall, Alutiiq Museum Archaeologist, 2016 Fall Lecture on “The Pursuit of Marine Mammals Before Gas and Ammo” prior to Russian arrival and use of guns (1 hr: 15 min)
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BdX5m0rY_CY “Alutiiq Pride: A Story of Subsistence” (27:28)
 - 0-24 sec - Lidia Robarts’s Quyana song
 - 2:45-16:12 - Seal hunt: Elder Ed Gregoroff on differences between bidarki and motorized hunt; When to shoot seal; Scientific research; Difference between male & female seal
 - 16:12-16:35 – Seal population changes

“Because the seal was far ranging geographically speaking, hunters had to travel over water, sometimes great distances, by kayak (*paitalek*) or in later years by rowboat. Seals were hunted by bow and arrow or spears. Much of the hunting in the early days required the hunters to become familiar with beaches or reefs frequented by seals to rest and sun themselves out of the water. A good hunter could stalk and come within touching distance so they could club or spear the mammal. In more recent years with the advent of the firearm, seals could be taken while they were in the water, and from greater distances. Simeon Kvasnikoff told me the men were able to tell the difference between the males and females by their snout. The females were left alone during the gestation period when they were carrying pups.

As I mentioned the seal were far ranging and required hunters to travel. I recently learned from Alex Moonin that my grandfather Mick Mumchuck and his oldest son, my namesake Derenty (*Tali*), would row from Port Graham to Windy Bay and other places by rowboat without the benefit of a motor. Covering distances that sometimes were greater than fifty miles or more. These were not overnight trips. They were gone sometimes weeks or months. Hunting whatever game was available, primarily seal.

The seal provided much in the way of food and clothing. There was very little of the seal that was not used. The meat was cooked over an open fire, boiled, or fried. It was also smoked and dried. The intestines were weaved, sometimes stuffed with meats and fats into a sausage. The heart, live, and kidneys were either boiled or cooked over an open fire. The flippers were singed of the hair and boiled (considered a delicacy). The skull was boiled and the brains eaten. The blubber was rendered into oil for garnishing other foods such as boiled or dried fish and also as the chief ingredient in “*akutaq*” (Native ice cream).

The different bones provided tools or other useful implements. The stomach was blown up and dried, a container used to store many things such as seal oil, salmon eggs, berries, and other foods. The dried stomach could also be used as a float tethered to a harpoon tip when hunting at sea.

The seals, once plentiful, today have become scarce. It was one game animal that provided for the entire community when shared. When the men returned from a hunt they deposited several seal carcasses on the beach and invited everyone to take home what they needed.”

- Derenty Tabios, Port Graham^{iv}

“I remember how when I was young we would go to a little cove at Coghill Point up around Port Wells. I had to wait at camp because I was too young to hunt with my dad and my brothers and the other hunters. When they took off, I used to walk up this hill around the point toward the glaciers. From the top of the hill, I could watch as they hunted seals amid the icebergs. I could also see the seals. I watched hunters sneak up on the seals and shoot one or two of them. That was fun. I would sit up there until they started heading back. They’d be back in camp before I could make it back down the hill.”

- Pete Kompkoff, Jr., Chenega^{iv}

“I was six years old the first time I shot a gun. We were seal hunting. My dad gave me a .32-20, which couldn’t hit the broad side of a barn. Maybe that’s why he let me use it. The government used to have a bounty on seals, on their faces. I think we used to get two dollars apiece. I got pretty good at shooting them. We’d give the government the faces and keep the rest for ourselves. We used to get so many back then. I don’t know why the government wanted them, probably because of the salmon because the seals were eating them. I used to go seal hunting with my Grandfather Willie Kompkoff, my Uncle Richard, and my dad. I would be tucked inside a bidarka. My grandfather died in the 1964 Earthquake. We’d go up into Icy Bay, just across from Old Chenega. We’d pick the right place, and I remember that we used to have to wait for the wind to turn, because you didn’t want to go in against the north wind and expend all your energy fighting it. At night we used to sleep on goatskins. Here it was the middle of winter, January. It would be cold outside. We would build a little campfire and put the goatskins on top of a piece of canvas underneath a tree. The canvas was to keep the goatskins from getting snow on them, to keep them dry. The skins were so warm that we really didn’t need a sleeping bag. Just a couple goatskins kept us warm. We had some tea and bread.”

- Paul Kompkoff, Jr., Chenega^{iv}

“Back then we ate everything we caught. Most of our food came from the land or the sea. Seal was a favorite. There was hardly any part that was discarded. The whole seal was utilized. Once you butchered a seal, the fat was anywhere from an inch thick to two or three inches thick. We cut off the fat to make seal oil. First, you cut off the seal fat into squares. Then, over an open fire, you toss the fat into maybe a five gallon can. You keep adding the little pieces of seal fat, dicing them up, and pretty soon you’ve got a five gallon can full of seal oil. You pour the rendered seal oil into jars. I used to ask my sister Jessie why my granny and mom used a little bit of water while making the seal oil. They used to put a little bit of water into the boiling seal oil. It was to purify it in some way, to get all the murkiness out of it. Once it settles in a glass jar, seal oil looks as clear as olive oil.

In the wintertime you’d invite your neighbors over. “Come have some tea and dried fish.” That’s what they’d say. You’d have a little bowl full of seal oil. Everyone would have their pieces of dried salmon, their cups of tea, and they would dip the dried fish in to the seal oil. Talk about good. You know, nowadays, I guess they found out that fish oil is the best for you. It’s full of omega 3. Seal oil is very similar – no cholesterol or anything. In fact, I can remember my dad drinking seal oil straight out of the jar. Most of the time, we just kept it in gallon jugs or barrels all winter long. It keeps well. In fact, I’ve got some now. I must have five gallons of seal oil in pint jars at home. Every now and then, I open one up and dip my dried or smoked fish in it.

I can remember my grandma preparing food when my dad brought in a seal. She'd take the seal guts and make a slit, maybe, every six inches. She would milk the guts and clean them out in water. Then what she did. What all the ladies did, they'd get a chunk of seal fat, a continuous strip of it, and the ladies would take the seal gut and had some way of braiding it around the fat. When they were done, they'd have this long braided rope, maybe two inches across, with seal fat stuffed inside. Then they would boil it. When it was done boiling, they would take it out of the pot, put it in a pan, and bake it in the oven. When it was ready, they'd cut it up into little slices. I tell you, it was delicious. And along with that, I used to think seal stomach was a gourmet part of the seal, once you cleaned it up. Boil it right along with the heart and the liver and then braid it, and when you had a feast you got a little bit of all of it. A lot of times seal was baked. They would make sure they left a certain amount of fat on the meat when they baked it. It was so good."

- Henry Makarka, Chenega^{iv}

"Sometimes, we went seal hunting at Icy Bay, which was a favorite spot for seal hunting because it was close to the village. There's a glacier there, and in the spring when the ice breaks, seals were everywhere. We would hunt in a bidarka or in a regular fishing boat. You had to paddle baidarkas, but even then most boats had outboard motors. There would be three or four people hunting together. It was a lot of fun. Sometimes we would see maybe fifty seals at a time. Hunting with rifles changed everything. I don't know what they used before. They had a spear in the bidarka, but I never saw anyone stab a seal with a spear. We would shoot the seals when they got up close enough to use.

After you shoot a seal, you cut it up and clean out the rib cage. You ate the liver, the heart, the kidneys, the intestines. The best part was the breast. You would take the kidney, the liver, and breast, and everyone would take every bit, trim the skin, cook it, put it on the boiler. They'd say, "The soup is no good if you don't stir it." We even ate seal pups. They tasted good."

- Andy Selanoff, Chenega^{iv}

"Some of the really strong memories I have of subsistence are about seal hunting. I remember being with my dad and watching him hunt seal. They used to hunt baby seal in the springtime. For about twenty years after the 1964 earthquake, we barbecued seal on the beach throughout the sound. I would watch my dad when he cut the seal open. He would tell me, "You have to be careful when you get to this part because there's a little bile sack, and if you get it on the meat you have to rinse it quickly. It's not good for the meat." He would catch a seal and go up to the beach and cut it open. He would cut out the parts we wanted and then go cut alder sticks for us to roast the seal meat, ribs, kidneys, and liver."

- Carol Ann Kompkoff, Chenega^{iv}

"My mother is from Tatitlek. In the mean time we lived here [in Cordova]. I lived here for eleven years. We migrated to Makarka Point. That was named after my father. We lived there for about five years and in that time I was also living with my grandparents, my father's father. In them days food was hard to get. We had to live off the land. He went seal hunting, duck hunting, and when the tide went out, he would go get octopus and cockles and dry them. He had a big smokehouse. I can't see anybody with that kind of smokehouse today that I can recall. They would just take the three of us and go down and pick up these fish for the winter. Here

were different ways to put them up. We salted the seal and the saltwater ducks. He would smoke cockles, boil the octopus and smoke that, get some codfish and dry it in the sun. After three days he would take them into the smokehouse and smoke them. I don't see anyone doing that now, you know. For the sinter, he'd just put them away. We would get seal oil. We would use a lot of seal oil for our lights in a wooden, well, it's like a stone, he had, a stone and a cloth for a wick in the seal oil.

.....

I took them [the grandchildren] and I barbecued a seal they got. I was surprised that they really went for it; I didn't think that they would eat a barbecued seal. They were watching me clean it on the beach. By the time I got through and put it on a stick and put it on this open fire, the best part was the liver, and I put a chunk of liver and seal blubber, then the kidney like a delicacy, you would call it in our days, the choice part of the seal, I barbecued that."

- Jessie Tiedeman, Tatitlek, Cordova^{iv}

"My dad is still a commercial fisherman. Every summer I go fishing with my dad and my brother Michael.....Before the oil spill, we used to long line for bottom fish, like halibut. Every summer we go seal hunting. Every time we go fishing, we tell my dad we need to stop because there's a seal right near the boat. All summer long, we put up fish, freezing it, canning it, and smoking it.

My dad was always trying to teach us independence and how to take care of ourselves and how not to panic in the wilderness. This past summer, one of the starters broke down, and we couldn't start the boat. My dad had to anchor us in a bay and leave with one of his buddies and go to Whittier. He was gone for five days. We had a lot of food. We had a little skiff with five gallons of gas in it...

My brother and I got really tired of eating store-bought food during those five days. There was this one seal...I swear he was asking for it. At first we thought, well Dad's not here, so let's just wait because he's going to want to skin it. My dad usually skins it out and lets us keep the hide if we want it. He pretty much keeps everything on the seal. So, this seal was following us around the whole five days. Every time we were in the skiff, it would pop its head up and just watch us. It was getting to know us pretty well. Seals usually stay pretty far off, but pretty soon it was getting within twenty feet of us. We would catch fish and when we'd reel them in, the seal would chase after them. My brother loves seal heart and liver. He said, "Beth, can I shoot it?" He was bothering the whole time. Finally, on the fifth day, I said, "Ok, we're going to get it today." Finally, it popped up again and Michael shot it. If you shoot a seal, you have to retrieve it quickly before it sinks. You have to look at it and see it breathe and then shoot it right when it gets full of air. There have been times when we've had to use fishing poles and try to snag them and reel them up. Seal are really tricky. They're really mischievous. But, we got that seal on board with no problem.

Usually, two kids stranded in a bay, hundreds of miles away from anywhere, is not a good thing. But we were perfectly happy. We still talk about it every day. We went on land and explored everywhere. We would not have been able to do that if we had not been taught all our lives how to survive. It was like paradise for us. We were just running wild. It was the coolest thing. I don't think anyone can understand how much we had to be taught in order to be comfortable in that situation.

- Beth Pipkin, Chenega^{iv}

How to Make Seal Oil

Put some seal blubber (fat) in a jar and place it under a stove or in a warm place.

Keep it under the stove until you get oil.

Fry the rest of the fat to get more oil. – Ephim Anahonak Sr.^{iv}

^{iv} Tabios, Derenty et al. *Looking Back on Subsistence: Interviews with Elders of the Chugach Region*. Chugachmiut Corporation, 2000. pp.15-17

^{iv} Smelcer, John E. & Morgen A. Young. *We are the Land, We Are the Sea: Stories of Subsistence from the People of Chenega*. Chenega Heritage, Inc., 2007. p.68 (Pete Kompkoff, Jr.)

^{iv} Smelcer, p.62 (Paul Kompkoff, Jr.)

^{iv} Smelcer, pp.75-76 (Henry Makarka)

^{iv} Smelcer, pp.93-94 (Andy Selanoff)

^{iv} Smelcer, p.48 (Carol Ann Kompkoff)

^{iv} Crittenden, R. (Ed.) *Out of Our Time: The Storytellers = Oonechguk Edowchu*. Cordova Baptist Press, 1980.

Interview with Jessie Tiedeman by Dean Kramer pp.58, 62 (Out of print)

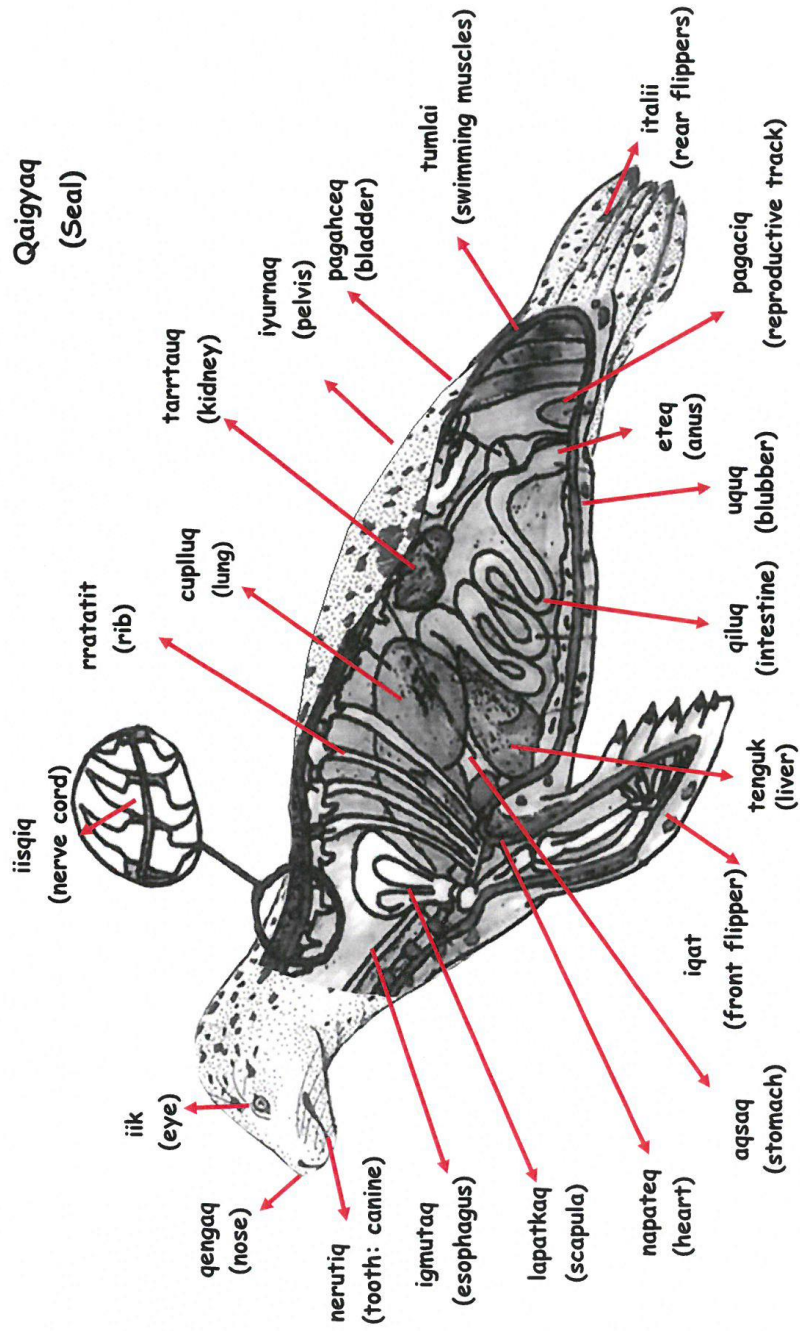
^{iv} Smelcer, pp.84-85

^{iv} Anahonak, Ephim Sr. "How to Make Seal Oil." *Fireweed – Cillqaq* No.3, p.40



Seal Hunter Figurine, Museo de América, Madrid; Photo by B. Kopchak

Sugt'sturlinaaq Nupuglluta: We Only Speak Sugt'stun



Sugt'sturllinaq Nupuglluta: We Only Speak Sugt'stun

