



**Seal Islands National Historic Landmark
St. George and St. Paul Islands, Alaska**

The Unangâ people of the Pribilof islands were instrumental in the commercial harvesting and processing of fur seals for nearly 200 years. When Russian traders discovered the Northern Fur Seal which was the world's largest single herd of mammals, the Pribilof islands became the primary fur seal processing site. This industry generated conflict between nations and peoples from the time of the Russian landing in 1786 until Alaska statehood in 1959. An international conservation agreement signed in 1911 ensured the preservation of the flourishing fur seal herds on the islands of St. Paul and St. George in an important example of the principle of international arbitration. Today, the seals are harvested for subsistence use. Both islands continue to reflect the decades long settlement pattern based on the arrangements of houses, with Russian Orthodox Churches, and other community and commercial buildings present that reflect the unique life and labor force of the early fur seal industry (Illustration, inspired by photograph by Victor B. Scheffer, Courtesy of NOAA NMMI, Library).