

Oil spill hits Pribilofs

**Japanese fishing boat
runs aground**

A Japanese factory Fishing Ship ran aground near St. Paul, in the Pribilofs last Friday. Initial Coast Guard estimates that over 100,000 gallons of the ship's high octane diesel fuel had spilled into the waters.

According to early reports, the ship - Ryuoyo Maru No. 2 ran aground near Tolstoi Point, a mile from St. Paul, an Aleut village of about 500 people. Apparently, the ship was attempting to reach St. Paul in 30 mile an hour winds and in waves over 20 feet high on the dark rocky coastline. A National Marine Fisheries observer had an emergency in her family and apparently requested to be dropped off. None of the 82 persons on board were injured.

Larry Mercurieff, President of Tanadgusix Corporation of St. Paul, was told all of the ship's dozen tanks ruptured. Four seal pups and scores of seagulls have died. It is yet uncertain of more marine life damages.

It is also unclear of who is responsible for payments of damages and clean up-though Environmental Protection Agency and Coast Guard oil spill specialists are at the scene. Tundra Times publisher is also winging his way to the area and will report full news and photo coverage next week.

Clean up efforts are also hampered by bad weather, ammonia fumes from the ship's ruptured refrigeration system, and fumes of tons of decaying fish. State Rep. Al Osterbeck, D-Sand Point, has called for a full investigation by the state Environmental Protection Agency.



FOR THE FIRST STORY JUST RECEIVED FROM ST. PAUL, SEE PAGE FIVE.

Oil spill on the Pribilofs



ST. PAUL ISLAND, TUESDAY 13. Aleut residents in the Pribilof Islands of the Bering Sea are puzzled about why the fishing vessel Ryuoyo Maru No. 2, which ran aground here on the evening of November 8, was ever given permission to enter the natural harbor of St. Paul.

Tanaogueix Corporation President Larry Merculieff told the *Fundra Times*, "The local people can't understand why the Coast Guard allowed the ship to enter these waters. There was no possibility that they would have been able to off load anyone from that ship under those conditions. Waves were from 20 to 30 feet high, there was no ship to sound any communications. There was no means of removing anyone from the ship." Ryuoyo Maru No. 2 entered the harbor at 8:30 on the evening of November 8, after receiving Coast Guard permission for the purpose of disembarking National Marine Fisheries Service observer Sally Powers of Tacoma, Washington at St. Paul Island.

The acting commanding officer of the Coast Guard station at St. Paul went on the Citizens Band Radio channel to request local residents to take Miss Powers from the ship to the shore using small skiffs. The townspeople refused, **saying** weather conditions were too severe. At 8:45 p.m., the Coast Guard station was advised the ship had run aground. Rescue operations, involving Coast Guard personnel and local residents, continued through the night.

Father George Pletnikoff, of the neighboring island of St. George, praised the response of local residents during the emergency. "The local people climbed up and down dangerous cliffs, in 50 mile per hour winds and driving rain, above angry 30 foot seas, to help with rescue efforts. They really ought to be commended."

The Aleuts are disturbed that this is the fourth accident of this nature in the last five years. "We pointed out that this isn't the first time a foreign vessel has run aground in Pribilof waters. This is the fourth time in the last five years. In none of these has there been any inquiry," said Merculieff.