

# Sea Otter Pelts to Be Sold for First Time Since 1911

Sea otter pelts will be sold for the first time since 1911 next Jan. 30 at the Seattle Fur Exchange.

Ed Shepherd of Anchorage has been named by Governor Walter J. Hickel to oversee the sale of 1,000 pelts. He estimates they will sell for \$1,800 to \$2,700 each.

Sea otters were hunted to near extinction until 1911 when by a protection treaty between the United States, Canada, Russia and Japan. The pelts will be taken

this fall by Aleut hunters from Atka under supervision of the Department of Fish and Game. Under the 1911 treaty sea otter could not be taken either within or beyond the three mile limit of Alaska coastal waters.

With statehood, Alaska gained control of the three mile coastal waters and decided to harvest some pelts.

"We want to stress that every precaution is being taken to see that we will

enhance development of our sea otter herds through this controlled kill," Shepherd said. "By no means will this project endanger this vital resource and historically significant animal."

In 1911, sea otter was considered to be the most valuable fur animal in the world. Only 500 existed. Today the Department of Fish and Game estimates about 30,000 Alaska sea otter.