

Game Department Tries Sea Otter Transplant

Last August, 23 sea otter were transplanted to southeastern Alaska reports the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The sea otter were released at Klag Bay approximately 60 miles north of Sitka.

The Department is optimistic that the transplanted otter will establish themselves, said John Crawford, southeastern regional game supervisor.

Most of the otter have remained in the release site area and appear to be doing well. He added there has been only one known case of mortality.

Next spring, the Department may bolster the initial re-

lease with 10 or 20 additional sea otter, said John Vania, the marine mammals biologist.

It will then take several years to determine if the transplant is successful. If these first otter survive and begin reproducing, transplants to other areas of southeastern will be considered, Vania continued.

Once the "King of the Furs," the sea otter was exploited almost to extinction, Vania explained. The Department hopes to reestablish this valuable fur bearer throughout its former range.