

Plenty Favorite Tidbits of Sea Otter on Amchitka

A recent diving survey by the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Commercial Fisheries (BCF) has provided reassuring information on the abundance of sea urchins, a favorite food of the sea otters of Alaska's Amchitka Bay.

Charles H. Meacham, Commissioner of Fish and Wildlife, said a special team of divers from the BCF Biological Laboratory at Auke Bay and the University of Washington spent 7 days surveying the area around Amchitka Island, 2,000 miles east of Juneau.

What was expected to be a routine diving assignment turned out to be an extremely productive underwater venture. It was believed that Amchitka sea otters had become so numerous that they had reduced their main food supply of sea urchins to a low point.

Instead, the diver-scientists found that in depths of 30 to 70 feet, sea urchins literally carpeted

the floor of the sea.

Concentrations of urchins averaged 100 per square yard in the zones investigated, suggesting that a plentiful food supply exists for the sea otters. Additional dives later this year will verify

whether the sea urchins are abundant around the entire Island.

The study group concentrated on subtidal areas, gathering information on the kinds and abundance of marine plants and animals to help the Atomic Energy

Commission measure environmental effects of an underground atomic test to be conducted at Amchitka.

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Mammoth 102 Pound Salmon Record Catch

A monster-sized Alaska King Salmon, reportedly the biggest ever caught by troll fishing, has been purchased by the State Departments of Fish and Game and Economic Development and will become, after mounting, a permanent exhibit of the State of Alaska.

According to Economic Development Commissioner Frank H. Murkowski, the fish—which weighed a whopping 102 pounds at the time it was landed—will occupy a place of honor in the Alaska exhibit at the 1970 Japanese world's fair in Osaka.

Prior to that, the fish will be placed on initial display in the Alaska booth at "Fish Expo" in Seattle, October 5-8. "Fish Expo," Murkowski explained, is the nation's largest annual exposition for commercial fishermen and processors. It draws attendance among fishing industrialists from throughout the United States.

The salmon—measuring 52" in length and 39" in girth—was landed August 10 at Tebenkof Bay between Petersburg and Sitka. Fishermen were Mr. and Mrs. Ray Gatchell, Jr. of the trolling vessel Capella II. Fisheries experts peg the red king's age at six-years-plus.

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