

Suumacirpet Our Way of Living

The Kodiak Archipelago is filled with animals. Sea mammals play in island waters. Schools of fish fill the deep. Shellfish crust the shores. Salmon and trout pack streams. Bears and foxes roam grassy meadows and thousands of birds soar through the skies. Each animal has an important tie to the Alutiiq/Sugpiaq.

Alutiiq people harvest animals to care for their families. Animals provide meat and fat for food, and materials for tools and clothing. Living off the land is an ancient tradition. Alutiiq people hunt and fish with knowledge passed down over thousands of years—an understanding of animal behavior, awareness of the weather, and carefully honed harvesting skills. Relying on wild resources is more than subsistence, it is *suumacirpet*—our way of living.



Neq'rkapet Our Food

- 1 Gull—*Qatayaq*
- 2 Shearwater—*Qatayaruaq*
- 3 Swan—*Qugyuk*
- 4 Cormorant—*Agasuuq*
- 5 Chiton—*Uriitaaq*
- 6 Duck—*Saqul'aaq*
- 7 Loon—*Uyaqurtuliq*
- 8 Puffin—*Tunngaaq*
- 9 Northern Fulmar—*Qatayaq*
- 10 Bald Eagle—*Kum'agyaq*
- 11 Fox—*Kaugya'aaq*
- 12 Brown Bear—*Taquka'aaq*
- 13 Ground Squirrel—*Qanganaq*
- 14 Gray Whale—*Arwaq; Ar'uq*
- 15 Orca—*Arlluk*
- 16 Sea Otter—*Arhnaq*
- 17 Octopus—*Amikuq; Utguiq*
- 18 Harbor Seal—*Isuviq*
- 19 Sea Lion—*Wiinaq*
- 20 Halibut—*Sagiq*
- 21 Dolly Varden Trout—*Anciq*
- 22 Capelin—*Iqalluarpanguaq*
- 23 Herring—*Iqalluarpak*
- 24 Salmon Shark—*Arluguaq*
- 25 Mussel—*Qapilaq*
- 26 Cod—*Amutaaq*
- 27 Clam—*Mamaayaq*
- 28 Cockle—*Qahmaquq*
- 29 Sea urchin—*Uutuk*

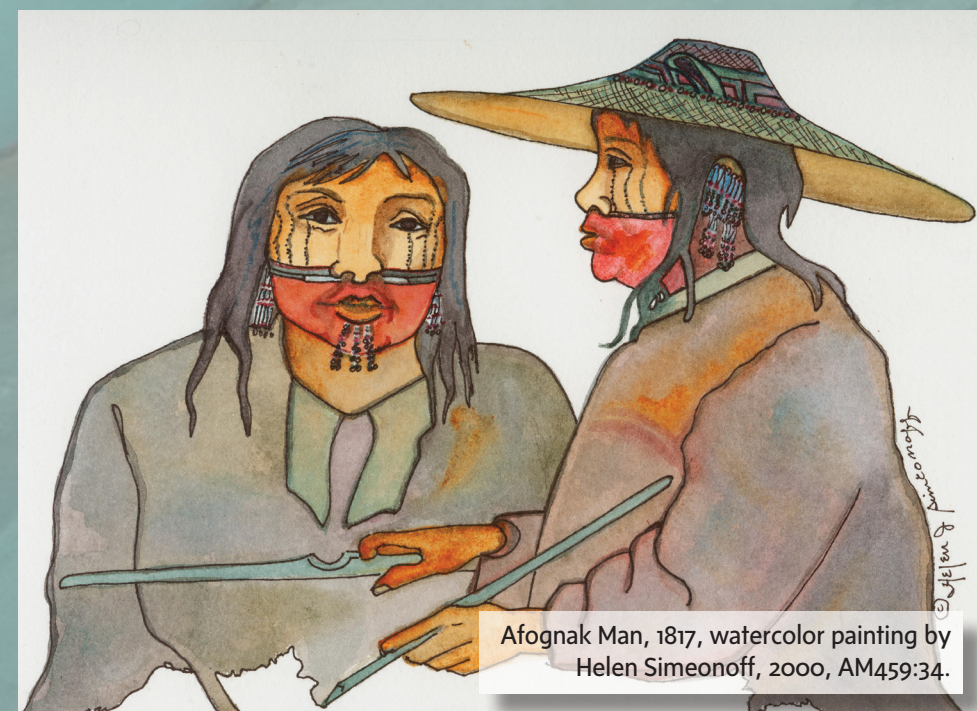
Artwork: When We Were Seals, by Lena Amason, oil and acrylic on panel, 2022, AM1023.

Produced by the Alutiiq Museum with assistance from Catherine Foster West and the Boston University Zooarchaeology program, with funding from the Kodiak Island Borough School District Reading English and Alutiiq Development project.



Cuumillat Ancestors

Alutiiq people have called Kodiak home for over 7,500 years. The Alutiiq make their living from the sea, streams, and land. They live along the coast and once built their houses from wood and sod. Remains of ancestral Alutiiq settlements are still visible. They are now archaeological sites that contain tools and trash.



Afognak Man, 1817, watercolor painting by Helen Simeonoff, 2000, AM459:34.



Sod houses and fish drying racks, Old Harbor, 1889. Albatross Collection, National Archive, 22-FA-264.

Callret Midden

Piles of animal remains are often found in Alutiiq village sites. Archaeologists call this material midden. Shells and bones provide a record of the animals people harvested. They tell us the foods people ate, how animals were butchered, and sometimes the season an animal was harvested. Alutiiq middens hold many kinds of animals remains.



Ancient garbage eroding from an old village on Uganik Island.



Fish bones



Shell midden



Net weights



Lance



Fishhook

Studying Animal Remains

A team of researchers from Boston University studies ancient Alutiiq midden to understand how people lived. As part of their work, these zooarchaeologists (archaeologists who study animal remains) compiled a list of all the animals found in ancestral Alutiiq sites. This list shows that Alutiiq people harvested many of the species available to them, making use of the abundance of food and material found in the natural world.

Species Found in Ancestral Sites

Common Name	Scientific Name	Common Name	Scientific Name
Albatross	<i>Phoebastria</i> sp.	Spiry dogfish	<i>Squalus acanthias</i>
Northern fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	Northern fur seal	<i>Callorhinus ursinus</i>
Shearwater	<i>Ardenna</i> sp.	Northern sea lion	<i>Eumetopias jubatus</i>
Comorant	<i>Phalacrocorax</i> sp.	Harbor seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>
Ducks, geese, swans	Anatidae (family of waterfowl)	Sea otter	<i>Enhydra lutris</i>
Dabbling duck (mallard-sized)	<i>Anas</i> sp.	Northern river otter	<i>Lontra canadensis</i>
Eider	<i>Somateria</i> sp.	Dall's porpoise	<i>Phocoenoides dalli</i>
Gull	Laridae (family of gulls)	Harbor porpoise	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>
Kittiwake (small gulls)	<i>Rissa</i> sp.	Whale	Cetacea (whale order)
Puffins, auklets, murres, etc.	Alcidae (family of small sea birds)	Domestic dog	<i>Canis familiaris</i>
Puffin	<i>Fratercula</i> sp.	Red fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>
Pigeon guillemot	<i>Cephus columba</i>	Arctic ground squirrel	<i>Urocitellus parryi</i>
Cassin's auklet	<i>Ptychorampus aleuticus</i>	Hoary marmot	<i>Marmota caligata</i>
Parakeet auklet	<i>Aethya psittacula</i>	Brown bear	<i>Ursus arctos</i>
Crested auklet	<i>Aethya cristatella</i>	Deer, elk, moose, caribou	Cervidae (deer family)
Rhinoceros auklet	<i>Cerorhinca monocerata</i>	Black, Katy chiton	<i>Katharina tunicata</i>
Marbled murrelet	<i>Brachyramphus marmoratus</i>	Limpet	<i>Lottia</i> sp.
Ancient murrelet	<i>Synthliboramphus antiquus</i>	Puppet or little margarine	<i>Margarites pupillus</i>
Murre	<i>Uria</i> sp.	Gray hairy snail	<i>Ariadnaria insignis</i>
Bald eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Oregon hairy triton	<i>Fusitron oregonensis</i>
Loon	<i>Gavia</i> sp.	Littorine snails (periwinkles)	<i>Littorina</i> sp.
Common raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	Northwest Pacific trochoph	<i>Boreotrochophora pacifica</i>
Crow	<i>Corvus</i> sp.	Sandpiper trochoph	<i>Scabrotrochophora malthani</i>
Ptarmigan	<i>Lagopus</i> sp.	Cannelled dog winkle	<i>Nucella canaliculata</i>
Capelin	<i>Mallotus villosus</i>	Friiled dog winkle	<i>Nucella lamellosa</i>
Pacific salmon	<i>Oncorhynchus</i> sp.	File dog winkle	<i>Nucella lima</i>
Dolly Varden trout	<i>Salvelinus malma</i>	Baer's buccinum	<i>Buccinum baeri</i>
Pacific cod	<i>Gadus macrocephalus</i>	Lyte or ribbed whelk	<i>Neptunea lyata</i>
Walleye pollock	<i>Gadus chalcogrammus</i>	Blue mussel	<i>Mytilus</i> sp.
Saffron cod	<i>Eleginus gracilis</i>	Northern Horse mussel	<i>Modiolus modiolus</i>
Pacific herring	<i>Clupea pallasii</i>	Bay or foolish mussel	<i>Mytilus trossulus</i>
Starry flounder	<i>Platichthys stellatus</i>	Horse clam	<i>Tresus capax</i>
Arrowtooth flounder	<i>Atheresthes stomias</i>	Butter clam	<i>Saxidomus gigantea</i>
Rock sole	<i>Lepidopsetta bilineata</i>	Pacific little-neck clam	<i>Leukoma staminea</i>
Pacific halibut	<i>Hippoglossus stenolepis</i>	Alaska jingle	<i>Pododemus macrostigma</i>
Flathead sole/Bering flounder	<i>Hippoglossoides</i> sp.	Nuttall's cockle	<i>Clinocardium nuttalli</i>
Rock greenling	<i>Hexagrammos lagocephalus</i>	Arctic surf clam	<i>Macromeris polyynina</i>
Atka mackerel	<i>Pleurogrammus monopterygius</i>	Razor clam	<i>Siliqua</i> sp.
Lingcod	<i>Ophiodon elongatus</i>	Great Alaskan tellin	<i>Tellina lutea</i>
Great sculpin	<i>Myoxocephalus polyacanthocephalus</i>	Arctic hialella	<i>Hiatella arctica</i>
Red Irish Lord	<i>Hemilepidotus hemilepidotus</i>	Giant Pacific octopus	<i>Enteroctopus dofleini</i>
Yellow Irish Lord	<i>Hemilepidotus jordani</i>	Whale barnacle	<i>Coronula idahama</i>
Rockfish	<i>Sebastes</i> sp.	Rock or thalated barnacle	<i>Semibalanus cariosus</i>
Salmon shark	<i>Lamna ditropis</i>	Lurchin	<i>Strongylocentrotus</i> sp.
Skate	Rajidae (skate family)		

Protect the Past

Kodiak has over 1500 archaeological sites—places Alutiiq ancestors lived and camped. Every site is like a book. It has a story to tell. If you rip pages out of a book, it is hard to read. The same is true for archaeological sites. Once damaged, sites lose information and their ability to teach us about the past. You can help protect Alutiiq history.

Never dig in a site.

Never collect artifacts, even from the beach.

Teach your family and friends to respect sites and artifacts.



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 8808, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.