

No. 4546

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**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, CANADA, JAPAN  
and UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS**

**Interim Convention (with schedule) on conservation of  
North Pacific fur seals. Signed at Washington, on  
9 February 1957**

*Official texts: English, Japanese and Russian.*

*Registered by the United States of America on 30 October 1958.*

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**ÉTATS-UNIS D'AMÉRIQUE, CANADA, JAPON  
et UNION DES RÉPUBLIQUES SOCIALISTES  
SOVIÉTIQUES**

**Convention intérimaire (avec annexe) sur la conservation  
des phoques à fourrure du Pacifique nord. Signée à  
Washington, le 9 février 1957**

*Textes officiels anglais, japonais et russe.*

*Enregistrée par les États-Unis d'Amérique le 30 octobre 1958.*

No. 4546. INTERIM CONVENTION<sup>1</sup> BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, CANADA, JAPAN AND THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS ON CONSERVATION OF NORTH PACIFIC FUR SEALS. SIGNED AT WASHINGTON, ON 9 FEBRUARY 1957

The Governments of Canada, Japan, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and the United States of America,

Desiring to take effective measures towards achieving the maximum sustainable productivity of the fur seal resources of the North Pacific Ocean so that the fur seal populations can be brought to and maintained at the levels which will provide the greatest harvest year after year, with due regard to their relation to the productivity of other living marine resources of the area,

Recognizing that in order to determine such measures it is necessary to conduct adequate scientific research on the said resources, and

Desiring to provide for international cooperation in achieving these objectives,

Agree as follows :

*Article I*

1. The term “ pelagic sealing ” is hereby defined for the purposes of this Convention as meaning the killing, taking, or hunting in any manner whatsoever of fur seals at sea.

2. The words “ each year ”, “ annual ” and “ annually ” as used hereinafter refer to Convention year, that is, the year beginning on the date of entry into force of the Convention.

3. Nothing in this Convention shall be deemed to affect in any way the position of the Parties in regard to the limits of territorial waters or to the jurisdiction over fisheries.

<sup>1</sup> In accordance with article XIII (3), the Convention came into force on 14 October 1957 the date of deposit of the fourth instrument of ratification, and, upon its entry into force, paragraphs 1 and 2 of article IX of the Convention became effective retroactively from 1 June 1956. The instruments of ratification were deposited with the Government of the United States of America by the following States on the dates indicated :

United States of America . . . . .	16 September 1957	Japan . . . . .	20 September 1957
Canada . . . . .	16 September 1957	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics . . . . .	14 October 1957

*Article II*

1. In order to realize the objectives of this Convention, the Parties agree to coordinate necessary scientific research programs and to cooperate in investigating the fur seal resources of the North Pacific Ocean to determine :

- (a) what measures may be necessary to make possible the maximum sustainable productivity of the fur seal resources so that the fur seal populations can be brought to and maintained at the levels which will provide the greatest harvest year after year; and
- (b) what the relationship is between fur seals and other living marine resources and whether fur seals have detrimental effects on other living marine resources substantially exploited by any of the Parties and, if so, to what extent.

2. The research referred to in the preceding paragraph shall include studies of the following subjects :

- (a) size of each fur seal herd and its age and sex composition;
- (b) natural mortality of the different age groups and recruitment of young to each age or size class at present and subsequent population levels;
- (c) with regard to each of the herds, the effect upon the magnitude of recruitment of variations in the size and the age and sex composition of the annual kill;
- (d) migration routes of fur seals and their wintering areas;
- (e) numbers of seals from each herd found on the migration routes and in wintering areas and their ages and sexes;
- (f) extent to which the food habits of fur seals affect commercial fish catches and the damage fur seals inflict on fishing gear; and
- (g) other subjects involved in achieving the objectives of the Convention, as determined by the Commission established under Article V, paragraph 1.

3. In furtherance of the research referred to in this Article, each of the Parties agrees to carry out, each year after the entry into force of the Convention, the programs set forth in the Schedule<sup>1</sup> annexed to the Convention with any modifications thereof made pursuant to Article V, paragraph 3. The said Schedule, together with any such modifications, shall be considered an integral part of this Convention.

4. Each Party agrees to provide the Commission annually with information on :

- (a) number of black pups tagged for each breeding area;
- (b) number of fur seals, by sex and estimated age, taken at sea and on each breeding area; and
- (c) tagged seals recovered on land and at sea;

<sup>1</sup> See p. 146 of this volume.

and, so far as is practicable, other information pertinent to scientific research which the Commission may request.

5. The Parties further agree to provide for the exchange of scientific personnel; each such exchange shall be subject to mutual consent of the Parties directly concerned.

6. The Parties agree to use for the scientific pelagic research provided for in this Article only government-owned or government-chartered vessels operating under strict control of their respective authorities. Each Party shall communicate to the other Parties the names and descriptions of vessels which are to be used for pelagic research.

### *Article III*

In order to realize the purposes of the Convention, including the carrying out of the coordinated and cooperative research, each Party agrees to prohibit pelagic sealing, except as provided in Article II, paragraph 3 and the Schedule, in the Pacific Ocean north of the 30th parallel of north latitude including the seas of Bering, Okhotsk, and Japan by any person or vessel subject to its jurisdiction.

### *Article IV*

1. Each Party shall bear the expense of its own research. Title to sealskins taken during the research shall vest in the Party conducting such research.

2. If the total number of seals of the Commander Islands breeding grounds decreases and falls below 50,000 head, according to data in official records, then commercial killing of seals and apportionment of skins may be suspended by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics until the number of seals exceeds 50,000 head. This provision also applies to the fur seal herd of Robben Island, if the population of that herd becomes less than 50,000 head.

3. The Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics upon suspending such sealing shall so inform the other Parties. In this case the Commission shall determine whether or not to reduce the level of or to suspend completely the pelagic sealing for scientific purposes in the Western Pacific Ocean during the period of the said suspension.

4. The Commission may, subsequent to the second year of operation of the Convention, modify the floor figure set forth in paragraph 2 of this Article in accordance with its findings based upon scientific data received by it; and if any such modifications are made, paragraph 2 of this Article shall be considered amended accordingly. The Commission shall notify each Party of every such amendment and of the effective date thereof.

*Article V*

1. The Parties agree to establish the North Pacific Fur Seal Commission to be composed of one member from each Party.

2. The duties of the Commission shall be to :

- (a) formulate and coordinate research programs designed to achieve the objectives set forth in Article II, paragraph 1;
- (b) recommend these coordinated research programs to the respective Parties for implementation;
- (c) study the data obtained from the implementation of such coordinated research programs;
- (d) recommend appropriate measures to the Parties on the basis of the findings obtained from the implementation of such coordinated research programs, including measures regarding the size and the sex and age composition of the seasonal commercial kill from a herd; and
- (e) recommend to the Parties at the end of the fifth year after entry into force of this Convention and, if the Convention is continued under the provisions of Article XIII, paragraph 4, at a later year, the methods of sealing best suited to achieve the objectives of this Convention; the above-mentioned later year shall be fixed by the Parties at the meeting early in the sixth year provided for in Article XI.

3. The Commission may, subsequent to the first year of operation of the Convention, modify in accordance with its scientific findings the research programs set forth in the Schedule and, if any such modifications are made, the Schedule shall be considered amended accordingly. The Commission shall notify each Party of every such amendment and of the effective date thereof.

4. Each Party shall have one vote. Decisions and recommendations shall be made by unanimous vote. With respect to any recommendations regarding the size and the sex and age composition of the seasonal commercial kill from a herd, only those Parties sharing in the sealskins from that herd under the provisions of Article IX, paragraph 1 shall vote.

5. The Commission shall elect from its members a Chairman and other necessary officials and shall adopt rules of procedure for the conduct of its work.

6. The Commission shall hold an annual meeting at such time and place as it may decide. Additional meetings shall be held when requested by two or more members of the Commission. The time and place of the first meeting shall be determined by agreement among the Parties.

7. The expenses of each member of the Commission shall be paid by his own Government. Such joint expenses as may be incurred by the Commission shall be defrayed by the Parties by equal contributions. Each Party shall also contribute to the Commission annually an amount equivalent to the value of the sealskins it confiscates under the provisions of Article VI, paragraph 5.

8. The Commission shall submit an annual report of its activities to the Parties.

9. The Commission may from time to time make recommendations to the Parties on any matter which relates to the fur seal resources or to the administration of the Commission.

#### *Article VI*

In order to implement the provisions of Article III, the Parties agree as follows :

1. When a duly authorized official of any of the Parties has reasonable cause to believe that any vessel outfitted for the harvesting of living marine resources and subject to the jurisdiction of any of the Parties is offending against the prohibition of pelagic sealing as provided for by Article III, he may, except within the territorial waters of another State, board and search such vessel. Such official shall carry a special certificate issued by the competent authorities of his Government and drawn up in the English, Japanese, and Russian languages which shall be exhibited to the master of the vessel upon request.

2. When the official after searching a vessel continues to have reasonable cause to believe that the vessel or any person on board thereof is offending against the prohibition, he may seize or arrest such vessel or person. In that case, the Party to which the official belongs shall as soon as possible notify the Party having jurisdiction over the vessel or person of such arrest or seizure and shall deliver the vessel or person as promptly as practicable to the authorized officials of the Party having jurisdiction over the vessel or person at a place to be agreed upon by both Parties; provided, however, that when the Party receiving notification cannot immediately accept delivery of the vessel or person, the Party which gives such notification may, upon request of the other Party, keep the vessel or person under surveillance within its own territory, under the conditions agreed upon by both Parties.

3. The authorities of the Party to which such person or vessel belongs alone shall have jurisdiction to try any case arising under Article III and this Article and to impose penalties in connection therewith.

4. The witnesses or their testimony and other proofs necessary to establish the offense, so far as they are under the control of any of the Parties, shall be furnished with all reasonable promptness to the authorities of the Party having jurisdiction to try the case.

5. Sealskins discovered on seized vessels shall be subject to confiscation on the decision of the court or other authorities of the Party under whose jurisdiction the trial of a case takes place.

6. Full details of punitive measures applied to offenders against the prohibition shall be communicated to the other Parties not later than three months after the application of the penalty.

#### *Article VII*

The provisions of this Convention shall not apply to Indians, Ainos, Aleuts, or Eskimos dwelling on the coast of the waters mentioned in Article III, who carry on pelagic sealing in canoes not transported by or used in connection with other vessels, and propelled entirely by oars, paddles, or sails, and manned by not more than five persons each, in the way hitherto practiced and without the use of firearms; provided that such hunters are not in the employment of other persons or under contract to deliver the skins to any person.

#### *Article VIII*

1. Each Party agrees that no person or vessel shall be permitted to use any of its ports or harbors or any part of its territory for any purpose designed to violate the prohibition set forth in Article III.

2. Each Party also agrees to prohibit the importation and delivery into and the traffic within its territories of skins of fur seals taken in the area of the North Pacific Ocean mentioned in Article III, except only those taken by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics or the United States of America on rookeries, those taken at sea for research purposes in accordance with the Schedule, those taken under the provisions of Article VII, those confiscated under the provisions of Article VI, paragraph 5, and those inadvertently captured which are taken possession of by a Party; provided, however, that all such excepted skins shall be officially marked and duly certified by the authorities of the Party concerned.

#### *Article IX*

1. The respective Parties agree that, of the total number of sealskins taken commercially each season on land, there shall at the end of the season be delivered a percentage of the gross in number and value thereof as follows :

By the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics . . .	{	to Canada	15 per cent
		to Japan	15 per cent
By the United States of America . . . . .	{	to Canada	15 per cent
		to Japan	15 per cent

2. Each Party agrees to deliver such sealskins to an authorized agent of the recipient Party at the place of taking, or at some other place mutually agreed upon by such Parties.

3. In order more equitable to divide the direct and indirect costs of pelagic research in the Western Pacific Ocean, it is agreed :

- (a) that in any year in which commercial killing is carried out for both the Commander and Robben Islands herds and pelagic research in that area is carried on at a level of 2,000 or more seals :
- (1) Canada and Japan will forego the delivery of the sealskins by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as set forth in paragraph 1 of this Article; and
  - (2) the United States of America will increase its delivery to Canada and Japan as set forth in paragraph 1 of this Article by a total of 375 sealskins to each of these Parties;
- (b) that in any year in which commercial killing is carried out for one only of the Commander or Robben Islands herds and pelagic research in that area is carried on at a level of 1,000 or more seals :
- (1) Canada and Japan will forego the delivery of the sealskins by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as set forth in paragraph 1 of this Article; and
  - (2) the United States of America will increase its delivery to Canada and Japan as set forth in paragraph 1 of this Article by a total of 188 sealskins to each of these Parties.

#### *Article X*

1. Each Party agrees to enact and enforce such legislation as may be necessary to guarantee the observance of this Convention and to make effective its provisions with appropriate penalties for violation thereof.

2. The Parties further agree to cooperate with each other in taking such measures as may be appropriate to carry out the purposes of this Convention, including the prohibition of pelagic sealing as provided for by Article III.

#### *Article XI*

The Parties agree to meet early in the sixth year of this Convention and, if the Convention is continued under the provisions of Article XIII, paragraph 4, to meet again at a later year, to consider the recommendations of the Commission made in accordance with Article V, paragraph 2 (e) and to determine what further agreements may be desirable in order to achieve the maximum sustainable productivity of the North Pacific fur seal herds. The above-mentioned later year shall be fixed by the Parties at the meeting early in the sixth year.

#### *Article XII*

Should any Party consider that the obligations of Article II, paragraphs 3, 4, or 5 or any other obligation undertaken by the Parties is not being carried out



and notify the other Parties to that effect, all the Parties shall, within three months of the receipt of such notification, meet to consult together on the need for and nature of remedial measures. In the event that such consultation shall not lead to agreement as to the need for and nature of remedial measures, any Party may give written notice to the other Parties of intention to terminate the Convention and, notwithstanding the provisions of Article XIII, paragraph 4, the Convention shall thereupon terminate as to all the Parties nine months from the date of such notice.

### *Article XIII*

1. This Convention shall be ratified and the instruments of ratification deposited with the Government of the United States of America as soon as practicable.

2. The Government of the United States of America shall notify the other signatory Governments of ratifications deposited.

3. This Convention shall enter into force on the date of the deposit of the fourth instrument of ratification, and upon such entry into force Article IX, paragraphs 1 and 2, shall be deemed to have been operative from June 1, 1956, provided that the Parties shall have, from the date of signing, maintained under their internal law the prohibition and effective prevention of pelagic sealing by all persons and vessels subject to their respective jurisdictions.

4. The present Convention shall continue in force for six years and thereafter until the entry into force of a new or revised fur seal convention between the Parties, or until the expiration of one year after such period of six years, whichever may be the earlier; provided, however, that it may continue in force for a further period if the Parties so decide at the meeting early in the sixth year provided for in Article XI.

5. The original of this Convention shall be deposited with the Government of the United States of America, which shall communicate certified copies thereof to each of the Governments signatory to the Convention.

## SCHEDULE

1. The United States of America each year during the first four years shall tag 50,000 black pups on the Pribilof Islands.
  2. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics each year during the first four years shall tag 25 per cent of the black pups on the Commander Islands and 25 per cent of the black pups on Robben Island.
  3. In the event that pelagic sealing should be suspended for one or more years under the provisions of Article IV, paragraph 3, the tagging of black pups shall continue at the mentioned rates for a comparable number of years.
  4. The United States of America each year shall take at sea for research purposes in the Eastern Pacific Ocean between 1,250 and 1,750 seals.
  5. Canada each year shall take at sea for research purposes in the Eastern Pacific Ocean between 500 and 750 seals.
  6. Japan shall take at sea in the Western Pacific Ocean :
    - (a) annually in the first and second years of pelagic research between 2,750 and 3,250 seals;
    - (b) annually during the remaining four years of pelagic research between 1,400 and 1,600 seals.
  7. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics shall take at sea in the Western Pacific Ocean :
    - (a) annually in the first and second years of pelagic research between 750 and 1,250 seals;
    - (b) annually during the remaining four years of pelagic research between 400 and 600 seals.
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