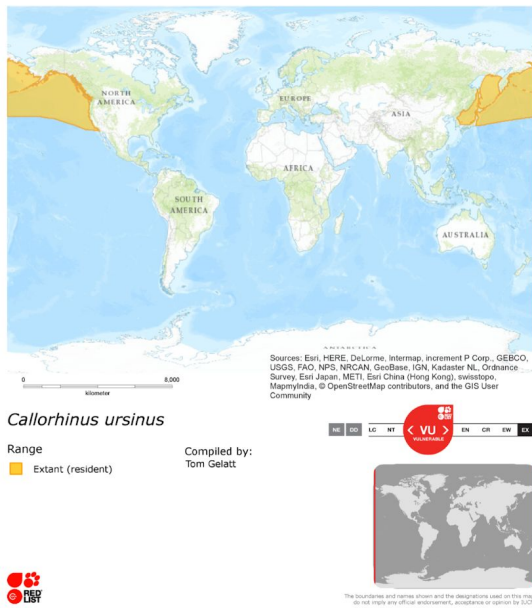


The Northern Fur Seal, also known by its binomial name “*Callorhinus ursinus*”, is the only extant species within the genus *Callorhinus*. It is also known by several names in First Nations languages, examples of those are “Hlaaquudax”, “Laaquadex”, and “Algax”, all names for the northern fur seal in the Western, Eastern, and Commander Island dialects of the Unangan/Aleut language.

### Distribution Map



© The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species: *Callorhinus ursinus* – published in 2015.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2015-4.RLTS.T3590A45224953.en>

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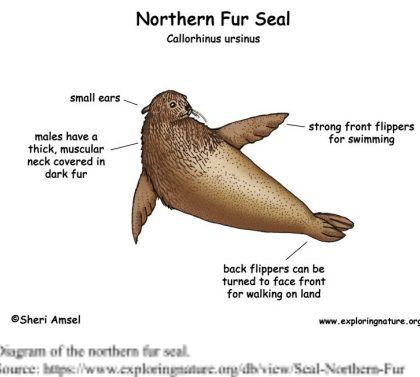
Distribution map of *Callorhinus ursinus*.  
 Source: <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/3590/45224953>.

### Habitat

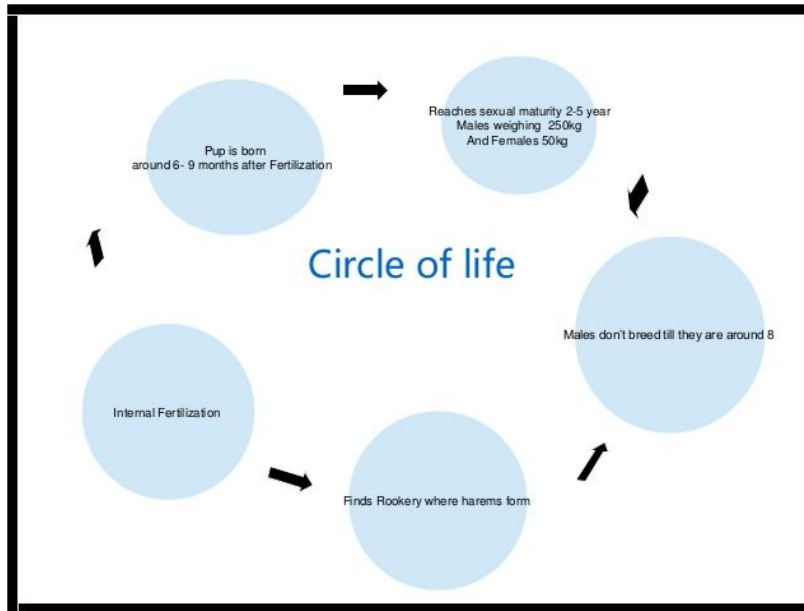
Northern Fur Seals are a highly pelagic, solitary, and nocturnal species residing in the waters of the North Pacific Ocean, Bering Sea, Sea of Okhotsk and Sea of Japan. They can be found from northern Baja California, Mexico, and offshore across the Pacific to northern Honshu, Japan. The southern limit of their distribution at sea extend across to the 35th parallel north. In the past, the vast majority of the northern fur seal population bred on the Pribilof Islands, with substantial numbers breeding on the Commander Islands.

### Surface Anatomy & Reproduction

Northern fur seals have a small head accompanied by a very short snout and overall very dense fur. Their flippers however, are the longest in the *Otariidae* family, hind flippers measuring as much of a quarter of their total body length, while their fore flippers are strong enough to walk or run. As a result of the species’ extreme dimorphism, adult males can measure as large as 2.1m in length and weigh 270kg while adult females only measure 1.5m and 50kg or more. Northern fur seals become sexually mature at three to five years at which time



females can give birth to one pup per year for most of the rest of their lives, although there have been recorded cases of females having been fertilized as young as two years old at times of rapid population growth on Tyuleny Island with pregnancy rates of 80%. Male seals can live up to 18 years while females can live up to 27 years.



The method of reproduction that northern fur seals use is sexual reproduction. They are polygynous and bulls will control a territory occupied by 1-100 females, the average harem size being about 40 females. When females are looking for a mate, they will disregard the male and only take the land in consideration. Males will defend their territory from other males but they will usually not engage in violence. A male will continue to stay in their claimed territory for several years even if no female visits.

Reproductive cycle diagram of the northern fur seal. Source: [www.slideshare.net/BriannaHitchcock/northern-fur-seal-an-endangered-species](http://www.slideshare.net/BriannaHitchcock/northern-fur-seal-an-endangered-species)

The diet of a northern fur seal differs with geographic area and time of year. Northern fur seals are carnivores described to be generalist foragers that exploit opportunities when presented, consuming a range of midwater shelf fish and squid species. They have a variety of prey to consume with 14 species of fish and 6 species of squid having been identified as primary prey with a stomach content analysis. Of those, walleye pollock is the predominant prey of the northern fur seals that hunt over the Bering Sea shelf. Northern fur seals hunting in off-shelf waters and over the slope consume greater quantities of fish and squid species. Studies done indicate that northern fur seals hunt in colony-specific areas, while land sites are used for resting and breeding. Some of its natural predators are sharks and steller sea lions, both of which feed on them.



Walleye pollock (*Gadus chalcogrammus*), a common prey for northern fur seals that forage in the Bering Sea. Source: [www.adfg.alaska.gov](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov).

First Nations have been hunting for over 4000 years, using the flesh and fat for food and its dense fur for clothing.

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