

A comparison of the result of this season with that of 1897 shows that this year 35 vessels aggregated 27,452 seal skins, as against 29,392 skins for the fleet of 1897, which numbered 41 vessels. This demonstrates an increased catch per vessel this season over last year of, in round numbers, 67 seal skins. The catch by shore Indians in canoes is, of course, eliminated in both cases in arriving at these figures, but to complete the Canadian take for both years, we have only to add the Indian coast catch for 1897, 1,018 skins, and that for 1898, 1,100 skins, making the total result for the former year, 30,410, and for the latter, 28,552 seal skins.

It will also be observed that while 31 vessels, operating on the North American coast in 1897, secured 5,082 seal skins, a like number of vessels operating in the same waters in 1898 secured 9,646 skins. There were, however, in 1897, taken in Asiatic waters, 8,703 skins, whereas, in 1898, the only vessel which exploited those waters was rewarded by but 410 skins.

In 1897 the product of the Behring Sea season to 25 vessels was 15,607, while, in 1898, the 27 vessels which are shown to have sealed in the waters of that sea, secured an aggregate of 16,943 seal skins.

On the whole, it can fairly be said that, so far as the past two seasons are concerned, there is practically no change in the industry.

It is reported that the sealers have extended their spring voyages farther south than formerly, and that, as a consequence, they have met with considerable success, which may account, in some degree, for the largely increased coast catch for 1898.

One interesting feature of the season is that no fewer than five sealing schooners report having secured among their catch seal skins which, to all appearances, bear the brands which, for the past three years have been placed upon the seals by the authorities on the Pribylov Islands. These vessels are: "City of San Diego," one branded seal; "Hatzic," two branded seals; "Ocean Rover," one branded seal; "Otto," one branded seal; "Victoria," one branded seal.

The success of this expedient is not very apparent, when it is considered that the net result of the two seasons' branding operations shows a capture of six branded seals, out of a total take of about 30,000 of these animals at sea, but it would be unfair to draw any deductions from these facts until the number, age and sex of seals branded on the Pribylov Islands each season is known.

As in previous seasons, the sealers report the seals plentiful, but becoming more wary and difficult to secure. This is but natural, considering their constant pursuit by the sealers and the disturbance caused by patrolling steamships for a number of years past.

The weather is reported to have been bad for the Behring Sea season, the earlier part being marked by unusual fogs and rains, and the latter part by the prevalence of generally bad weather and gales.

By reference to the statistical abstract above given, it will be seen that the number of white men employed on the sealing fleet of 35 vessels was 330, and the number of Indians, 673. In 1897 the numbers employed in 41 vessels were 495 whites and 587 Indians. The tendency is more and more to employ Indians instead of white men, on the ground of economy.

PATROL.

The United States Government seems to have taken no part whatever, during 1898, in the patrol of the Behring Sea and North Pacific Ocean, as regards pelagic sealing, leaving that duty entirely to Her Britannic Majesty's Government, who entrusted this work to Her Majesty's ships "Amphion," "Icarus" and "Pheasant," with the result that one sealing schooner was seized, as explained under another heading.

SEIZURE.

The Canadian sealing schooner "Otto," Captain Gosse, was seized by Capt. Finnis, of H.M.S. "Amphion," in Behring Sea on the 10th September, 1898, for an infraction of