

# A painter in the Bering Sea: Henry Wood Elliott and the northern fur seal

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**ABSTRACT.** Henry Wood Elliott (1846–1930), a U.S. Treasury official assigned to monitor the harvest of northern fur seals on the Pribilof Islands in the 1870s, became a self-taught expert on, and defender of, the species. His careful documentation of the seals' breeding behaviour, and of their commercial harvest, complemented by hundreds of detailed and evocative watercolours, provides a unique record of this once abundant species and the lucrative industry that revolved around it. Elliott's outspoken lobbying on behalf of the seals' protection is often credited with saving the species from extinction. His paintings of the seals, the seal harvest, and life on the Pribilof Islands in the second half of the nineteenth century constitute an unmatched historical record of this remote region.

Elliott was able to witness two full breeding seasons (and harvesting) of the fur seals during his initial stay on the Pribilofs from April 1872 to October 1873. He returned to the islands to conduct a follow-up census of the seals, on behalf of the U.S. Government, in the summer of 1874. He traveled there unofficially and at his own expense in 1876. His fourth trip to the Pribilofs was in the spring of 1890 (again on behalf of the U.S. Department of the Treasury), in response to news of a dramatic decline of the seal populations. In April, 1891, because of his public revelation of mismanagement of the fur seal harvest, Elliott was fired by the Treasury. He continued his tireless lobbying on behalf of the fur seals as a private citizen for the rest of his life. He visited the Pribilofs for the last time on behalf of the House Committee on Expenditures in the Department of Commerce and Labor in the summer of 1913. Born in Cleveland Ohio on November 13, 1846, Elliott died in Seattle Washington on May 25, 1930.

## A posting to the Pribilof Islands

In the decades following the American Civil War, when some of the country's most promising young painters and writers were traveling to Europe in search of cultural inspiration, companionship, and the beautiful light of the Mediterranean, one Cleveland-born artist took a decidedly different path. Henry Wood Elliott (1846–1930), a naturalist and conservationist with an interest in architecture and a natural talent for rendering landscapes in watercolour, decided to focus his artistic energy on a small cluster of islands in the Bering Sea some 300 miles off the coast of Alaska, where he managed to secure an obscure patronage job with the United States government (Fig. 1).

Elliott's unusual destination boasted no museums, art galleries or music halls, and offered little or none of the artistic ambiance that attracted so many of his contemporaries to Europe. In their place, it offered a tiny human population, an inhospitable landscape, appalling weather, and what Elliott lovingly described as 'one of the most marvelous exhibitions of massed animal-life that is known to man' (Elliott 1886: 188–189). The centrepiece of that wild exhibition, and the subject that would preoccupy Elliott for the rest of his life, was the largest breeding colony of northern fur seals in the world. Had Elliott joined his contemporaries painting landscapes in Italy or France, or writing about provincial life along the Mediterranean coast, he would certainly have had a more comfortable life and might have achieved greater artistic recognition from his own generation. By choosing to devote his energies to the Pribilof Islands instead, Elliott managed to create a more significant legacy by

documenting a little-known part of the world and helping to save a once abundant species from extinction.

When Elliott was posted to the Pribilof Islands in 1872 at the age of 26, he was already an experienced topographic artist with an impressive resume. For the past decade he had served sporadically as a clerk and artist for Joseph Henry, the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, and for the Assistant Secretary (and later Secretary) of the institution, Spencer Fullerton Baird. On their recommendation, Elliott had been included in a number of important expeditions which had established his reputation as a competent draftsman and someone who could endure the challenges of field-work without complaint. His trailblazing role as a conservationist was one he would develop on his own.

## Elliott's previous experience in travel and topographic drawing

Elliott made his first trip to Alaska in 1864 on behalf of the Collins Overland (later Western Union) Telegraph Company, as the youngest member of an expedition charged with surveying the North American part of a proposed telegraph route to Russia by way of the Bering Sea. The project, which was abandoned in 1866 when a rival company successfully laid a cable across the Atlantic, gave Elliott a rigorous introduction not only to Alaska, but to the unexplored wilds of British Columbia and the Yukon Territory as well. It also allowed him to develop his untrained artistic talent and test his tolerance for personal hardship. Elliott ended this two year experience with a grueling canoe journey from Sitka (then still under Russian control) to Victoria, B.C., a distance of



Fig. 1. Henry Wood Elliott was 26 when this picture was taken in San Francisco, 7 March 1872, just before he sailed for the Pribilof Islands. He would devote the rest of his life to documenting and protecting the northern fur seal. Photo courtesy of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History.

725 miles. He noted on a reproduction of one of the paintings he made during that trip that it rained continuously for the entire 21 days he was on the water (notes on picture inscribed 'Sitka: June 14, 1874', Shalkop 1982: 10, 40). Fortunately, most of his art work survived the expedition. Some of his line drawings were later used to illustrate William Dall's landmark book *Alaska and its Resources* (1870).

Elliott next was invited to assist the geographer Ferdinand V. Hayden on a series of U.S. Geological Survey expeditions to Colorado, Wyoming, Utah and New Mexico. During three separate trips, from 1869 to 1871, he made hundreds of sketches of the western landscape and its topographic eccentricities. His 'profiles, sections and other illustrations' were used to illustrate the official reports of the expeditions which were published in 1872, the same year he secured his post on the Pribilofs.

Traveling and working with Elliott on the 1871 Hayden survey were two well-known American artists: the landscape painter Thomas Moran, and the photographer William Henry Jackson. The powerful images of nature's wonders created by these men played an important public role in convincing Congress to establish Yellowstone National Park, and may have inspired Elliott's later use of his own artistic talents on behalf of conservation in Alaska.

### Monitoring the fur seal harvest

Officially, Elliott's assignment on the 'Seal Islands', as the Pribilofs were often called, was to monitor the large-scale commercial harvest of fur seals that took place there each summer. This was an extremely important enterprise, not just for the economic stability of the newly established Alaska Territory, but also for the United States government, whose treasury relied on the tax revenue generated by the coveted pelts. At the time of his arrival, the Pribilof fur seal harvest was being conducted by the Alaska Commercial Company (A.C.C.), a private corporation to which the U.S. government (in 1870) had granted a twenty-year lease to conduct this lucrative trade. By law, the A.C.C. had the exclusive right to collect, prepare, and ship 100,000 seal pelts from the Pribilofs each year, with 75,000 pelts coming from the larger island of St. Paul, and 25,000 from St. George. It was Elliott's responsibility, as an Assistant Treasury Agent, to see that the U.S. Treasury was receiving its proper share of tax revenue from the furs harvested, and that the harvest was carried out in a way that would not threaten the long-term health of the seal population. The concern here was purely financial. If the herds were over-hunted, the government would lose a reliable source of income. Elliott's training as a naturalist and sympathy for the animals were quite unusual among Treasury agents. Given the isolation of the islands and the brutal nature of the harvest, it was not a job that many people would have wanted, but for Elliott it was an assignment rife with exciting possibilities.

Shortly after his arrival on the islands, with the encouragement of his Washington friend and sponsor Spencer Baird, the young naturalist undertook a comprehensive study of the fur seals and their harvest, the first of its kind ever made. In a subsequent publication (1886), Elliott noted that although

... the acquisition of these pelagic peltries had engaged thousands of men, and that millions of dollars had been employed in capturing, dressing, and selling fur-seal skins during the hundred years just passed by; nevertheless, from the time of Steller, away back as far as 1751, up to the beginning of the last decade, the scientific world actually knew nothing definite in regard to the life history of this valuable animal (Elliott 1886:189, 1898 Vol 3: 3).

Elliott would rectify this dearth of knowledge with an exhaustive written and visual study of the seals and their harvest. In so doing he would also create a valuable record of the people with whom he lived and worked on the Pribilofs at a time when they still maintained many of their traditional ways of life (See cover illustration).

### Recording life on the Pribilofs

During his nineteen month stay in the Pribilofs (April 1872 to October, 1873), Elliott was given the use of a government-owned house in St. Paul, the larger of

two permanent settlements on the islands. The town consisted of eighty families who lived in as many wood frame houses which Elliott described as ‘snug’ and ‘lined with tarred paper, painted, furnished with a stove, with out-houses, etc., complete’ (Elliott 1886: 232). These had been built by the Alaska Commercial Company to replace the ‘damp, dark, and exceedingly filthy’ semi-subterranean stone and sod-roofed houses called ‘barrabkies’ in which the islanders had lived prior to the Pribilofs’ transfer to United States control and the subsequent leasing of its fur trade by the A.C.C. (Elliott 1886: 232). Elliott described the improvement of living conditions made possible by these new houses as ‘marvellous’ and considered the living conditions and appearance of the town of St. Paul ‘fully equal to the average presentation of any one of our small eastern [U.S.] towns,’ despite the stench of 75,000 decomposing seal carcasses from the nearby killing fields (Elliott 1886: 233, 351). ‘There is no misery, no downcast, dejected, suffering humanity here to-day,’ he assured his friends at home (Elliott 1886: 233).

Elliott clearly enjoyed the Pribilofs, and in all of his official reports and subsequent writings he maintained a positive attitude toward the islands and their inhabitants. He even credited the islands’ cold, wet climate with the positive reduction of the putrid stench that ‘wafted . . . hourly, day in and out, from decaying seal-flesh, viscera, and blubber’ from the beaches that lay in close proximity to the islands’ two principal settlements (Elliott 1886: 351). He waxed eloquent about the Pribilofs’ beautiful wildflowers, rare birds, and unusual diet. He especially liked the taste of fried sea lion and fur seals under the age of three. But he also conceded, at least indirectly, that working conditions on the wind-swept islands were extremely challenging. He found the long, dark months of winter (from early November until the end of April) particularly trying. ‘It is the wind that tortures and cripples out-door exercise there,’ he recalled:

It is blowing, blowing, from every point of the compass, at all times; it is an everlasting succession of furious gales, laden with snow and sleety spiculae . . . Without being cold enough to suffer, one is literally confined and chained to his room from December until April by this Aeolian tension. I remember very well that, during the winter of 1872–73, I was watching, with all the impatience which a man in full health and tired of confinement can possess, every opportunity to seize upon quiet intervals between the storms, in which I could make short trips along those tracks over which I was habituated to walk during the summer; but in all that hyemal season I got out but three times, and then only by the exertion of great physical energy. One day in March, for example, the velocity of the wind at St. Paul, recorded by one of the Signal-Service anemometers, was at the rate of 88 miles per hour, with as low a temperature as –4 degrees! This particular wind-storm, with snow, blew at such



Fig. 2. (Colour online) ‘Parade ground (of the fur seal pups)’ St. Paul Island, October 1872; University Museum, University of Alaska, Fairbanks; UA 482-1 AB.

a velocity for six days without an hour’s cessation, while the natives passed from house to house crawling on all fours. No man could stand up against it, and no man wanted to (Elliott 1886: 196, 1898: 11).

Given such oppressive conditions, it is remarkable that Elliott produced so many beautiful watercolours during his time on the Pribilofs. Although he created at least one painting showing himself on the beach with a large portfolio of watercolours in hand (Fig. 2), he undoubtedly worked more often in the protection of his house using pencil field sketches as the bases for his delicate paintings. He created other watercolours of the islands and their inhabitants years later in the comfort of his Cleveland home.

The long periods of darkness, buffeting wind storms and almost perpetual drizzle that Elliott experienced on the Pribilofs made him revel in the few fleeting moments ‘when the sun breaks out through the fog, and bathes the dripping, water-soaked hills and flats of the island in its hot flood of light’ (Elliott 1886: 197). Capturing such effects, the young artist managed to evoke an almost spiritual quality in his paintings (see, for example, ‘Fur seals hauling at Southwest Point’) (Fig. 3).

Elliott’s fascination with light and his new-found sensitivity to weather conditions added to his appreciation of the dramatic cloud formations that often appeared above his Bering Sea home:

Speaking of the stormy weather brings to my mind the beautiful, varied, and impressive nephelological display in the heavens overhead here during October and November. I may say, without exaggeration, that the cloud-effects which I have witnessed from the bluffs of this little island [St. Paul], at this season of the year, surpass anything that I had ever seen before . . . No other spot on earth can boast of a more striking and brilliant cloud display (Elliott 1886: 198, 1898: 12).





Fig. 3. (Colour online) 'Fur seals hauling at Southwest Point' St. Paul Island, July 1872; Cleveland Museum of Natural History; FA 63.

#### Documenting the fur seal

In May, 1872, just two months after his arrival on the Pribilofs, Elliott confided in a letter to Spencer Baird that he was contemplating becoming a full time artist as soon as he completed his government assignment on the islands (Morris 2001: 35–36). 'I have already made such progress with the management of color during the past winter,' he wrote, 'that I do not fear entering into competition with the best of our artists (Elliott 1872; Morris 2001: 36). While still in the government's employ and on the Pribilofs, however, he devoted most, if not all, of his artistic abilities to chronicling the life-cycle of the fur seal and the phenomenon of the seal harvest. The extensive notations that accompany each of his pictures suggest that he intended them as accurate visual records of specific places and activities, rather than purely artistic creations (Fig. 4). His hundreds of detailed drawings, paintings, and associated documentation constitute an historic record that is rare in maritime history (Shalkop 1982: 54–56).

#### Elliott expands his scope

Had Elliott left only his visual record of island scenery, the fur seal life-cycle, or the fur seal harvest, he would deserve a prominent place in the history of science and art, but Elliott's interest went further. He seems to have

studied every aspect of life on the islands, both wild and domestic, with an eye to ultimately sharing his discoveries with the outside world. In this effort he was undoubtedly helped by a Saint Paul resident of Russian and Aleut ancestry named Aleksandra Aleksandrovna Milovidova, whom he met on his first arrival in April, 1872 and married less than four months later (Shalkop 1982: 11–12, 20). He and his wife eventually separated, but only after they had created a family of ten children.

Elliott was a careful observer and a gifted communicator. Through his art, his writing, and his many oral presentations to the U.S. Congress, he soon established himself as the national authority on both the northern fur seal and the Pribilof Islands. His credibility on these subjects came from the depth and breadth of his knowledge, which he achieved not just by his first-hand experiences on the islands, but by steeping himself fully in the islands' history as well. By the end of his stay on the islands, Elliott probably knew more about the Pribilofs than any person alive. They may have been considered 'among the most insignificant landmarks' in the Bering Sea by some, but for Elliott, the Pribilofs were places of 'immense pecuniary and biological value' with a commercial harvest 'without a parallel in the history of human enterprise' (Elliott 1886: 194, 189).

Most of the world was unaware of the Pribilof Islands or the wild abundance they supported until the



Fig. 4. (Colour online) 'Rounding up' St. Paul Island, July 1872 (painted in 1891); Carnegie Museum of Natural History, M. Graham Netting Animal Portrait Collection, Series 2, No. 3.

Russian explorer Gavriil L. Pribylov and his crew stumbled upon their storm-lashed shores in July 1786. The warm, lustrous fur coats of sea otters brought back by Pribylov's officers and crew fetched high prices in the fur trade. It was a desire for otter fur that encouraged Russian traders to return to the Pribilofs, but it was the abundance of breeding fur seals that ultimately sustained their attention. Now identified by the scientific name *Callorhinus ursinus*, the seals were known locally as 'sea dogs,' 'sea cats' and 'sea bears' in early writings.

By all accounts, the Russian fur traders, or 'promyshlenniki,' were an exceedingly rough and brutal lot, often capturing native Aleuts and forcing them to drive, kill and skin the seals on their behalf. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the promyshlenniki forced some of their long-suffering conscripts to settle on the islands in order to facilitate the annual harvest of pelts (Jones 1980). It was the descendants of these people that Elliott came to know, and whose lives he recorded while living on the Pribilofs.

#### A sustainable harvest

By the time the Russian government sold the Pribilof Islands (along with the rest of Alaska) to the United States in 1867, it is estimated that more than 2.5 million fur seals had been killed for their pelts (Baker 1957: 6; Riley 1961: 2). This lucrative trade was one of several factors contributing to America's interest in acquiring Alaska from Rus-

sia in the years following the Civil War. Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, arguing on behalf of Alaska's purchase in 1867, speculated that Russian profits on seal skins from the Pribilofs between 1817 and 1838 alone might have exceeded 85 million rubles, or about \$63 million (Sumner 1867: 38). Such proceeds, and the prospects of similar profits in the future, dwarfed the mere \$7.2 million paid by the United States for the acquisition of all of Alaska.

Just three years after the Pribilofs came under American protection, and two years before Elliott traveled there, the Alaskan explorer William Dall (with whom Elliott had worked on the Western Union Telegraph Expedition) observed that:

The fur trade is the only branch of industry which has been fully developed in Alaska and all others have been forgotten in the enormous profits which have attended its successful prosecution . . . From a pecuniary point of view it is at present the most important business in the territory (Dall 1870:489).

During Elliott's first stay on the islands (1872–1873) the American-employed harvesters he had come to observe were following the time-honoured Russian practice of harvesting only non-breeding males of the species by herding them away from the breeding colony and dispatching them with clubs (Figs 5). By taking only these animals (the so-called 'holluschickie') and not any





Fig. 5. 'Killing fur seals near the village of St. Paul' July 1872; University of Alaska Museum, UA 482-4 AB.

of the animals involved with reproduction, the sealers were confident that they could maintain a healthy, self-sustaining herd. Elliott agreed, writing in his official report:

I have no hesitation in saying, quite confidently, that under the present rules and regulations governing the sealing interests on these islands, the increase or diminution of the seal life thereon will amount to nothing in the future; that the seals will exist, as they do exist, in all time to come at about the same number and condition recorded in this monograph (Elliott 1898: 109).

#### Fur seals in crisis

After thoroughly documenting both the fur seals and their harvest over two breeding seasons, Elliott left the Pribilofs in the autumn of 1873, convinced that the sealing industry was in good hands and that the breeding and harvest would go on steadily forever. His view was reinforced when he returned the following summer to update his census of the fur seal population for the Treasury Department. Unfortunately, unbeknownst to Elliott, in the years following his tenure as a harvest inspector, external pressures for larger profits encouraged more indiscriminate killing than had been permitted under the original harvesting guidelines. Subsequent inspectors may not have had Elliott's deep knowledge of fur seal biology, or may have been encouraged to turn a blind eye to what was happening. Whichever the case, as time went on, the abundant herds that had so impressed Elliott began to decline.

To make matters worse, fur traders from elsewhere, seeing the lucrative nature of the business, began to make unauthorised harvests of their own. Banned by U.S. law from harvesting seals on the Pribilofs, Russian, Canadian and Japanese sealers hunted in the international

waters than surrounded the islands (Fig. 6). The animals they killed were often breeding, pregnant, and/or nursing females. Their deaths thus compounded the negative impact on the Pribilof herds. Elliott had noted this form of harvest (called 'pelagic' sealing) on a limited scale during his time as an inspector. His successors recorded its dramatic increase in the following decades (from 4,367 pelagic pelts reported in 1868 to 73,394 in 1892). Because of the inefficiencies of pelagic sealing, where as many as nine out of ten seals killed by the pelagic hunters sank before their bodies could be recovered for skinning, the impact of this illegal trade was devastating to the seals' population (Geiger 1975: 8).

At home in Cleveland, where he and his wife were raising their family on a commercial fruit farm that had once belonged to his father, Elliott continued to paint and write about Alaska. Surprisingly, although he still had friends and family living and working on the Pribilofs, his own brother-in-law serving as 'first chief' in the sealing drive of 1889, Elliott appears to have been unaware of the deteriorating situation there (Shalkop 1982: 12). Perhaps he preferred to believe official reports to anecdotal ones. Perhaps he didn't want to believe that his own confident predictions about the health of the herds of a decade and a half before had been wrong. In any case, in the autumn of 1889 he received shocking news from James Goff, the newly appointed Treasury Agent for the Pribilofs. In marked contrast to the reports of his predecessors, Goff stated that the seal populations were in catastrophic decline (Goff 1898: 215).

#### Elliott returns to the Pribilofs

Treasury Department officials in Washington were equally stunned by this news and became fearful of a pending collapse of the industry. They asked Elliott to return to the Pribilofs on their behalf the following summer to give an objective assessment of the situation



Fig. 6. (Colour online) 'The pelagic sealer at work' 1890s; Carnegie Museum of Natural History, M. Graham Netting Animal Portrait Collection, Series 1, No. 22.

on the ground. To his dismay, Elliott found that what Goff had said was true. Representatives of the North American Commercial Company (NACC), the new lessees of the Seal Islands, had authorised the killing of cows, pups, and bachelors indiscriminately in order to keep up their peltry quotas as the overall herd size diminished. Elliott estimated the total seal population in 1890 to be only one quarter the size they had been when he had studied them just sixteen years before.

Recognising that the existing trends would ultimately doom the fur seals to extinction, Elliott and Goff ordered an immediate end to that year's harvest, then drafted a set of guidelines to better control the harvest and help restore the populations to their earlier size and vigour. To their outrage and great frustration, these proposals were blocked by the Harrison administration, whose Secretary of State, James G. Blaine, and others, had close ties to the NACC. (Geiger 1975: 8–12). Goff was immediately removed from the Seal Islands and reassigned by the government to a remote border post where he could have no further say on sealing policies (Geiger 1975: 10). Elliott, now back in Washington, was asked by Blaine to suppress his fur seal report while the government pursued 'secret' negotiations with Canada (by way of the British embassy) to control pelagic sealing. In fact, Blaine and his associates were working on secret arrangements of an altogether different nature with the NACC. Instead of continuing the ban on killing, as Goff and Elliott had recommended, Blaine secretly agreed to increase the NACC's harvest quota from 100,000 to 125,000 seals for the 1891 season. When Elliott discovered what was going on and revealed it to the press, his consulting contract

with the Treasury Department was abruptly terminated (Geiger 1975: 10). Fortunately, there was such public outrage over the incident that Blaine was forced to retract his offer to the NACC and begin negotiations with the Canadians in better faith than he had before.

#### A campaign for conservation

For the next ten years, as international negotiations dragged on, Elliott doggedly lobbied Congress, and anyone who would listen, to address the seal's precipitous decline. While his increasingly abrasive personality sometimes pushed people the other way, the merit of his cause eventually drew allies to his side. At Elliott's request, the Campfire Club of America (a conservation group) and its influential president, William Hornaday, director of the New York Zoological Society, took up the cause and helped raise the public profile of the issue. Their efforts were enhanced when the railroad magnate Edward H. Harriman took an influential party of scientists and conservationists to the Pribilof Islands as part of a larger trip to Alaska and the Bering Sea in the summer of 1899. Harriman's expedition members included the nature writer John Burroughs, the Scottish conservationist and Sierra Club founder John Muir, the Alaskan explorer William Dall (with whom Elliott had traveled on his first trip to Alaska in 1864), the bird artist Louis Agassiz Fuertes, the photographer Edward C. Curtis, and the influential director of the U.S. Biological Survey C. Hart Merriam. Also included in Harriman's party was the crusading conservationist George Bird Grinnell, a founder of the National Audubon Society who, on his

return from Alaska, wrote extensive articles about the plight of the fur seals in *Forest and Stream* magazine, of which he was the editor (Peck 2005).

Several international conferences on the fur seal crisis and public pressure stimulated by the press eventually brought about the changes necessary to save the fur seals from extinction.

The NACC lost its harvesting lease when it expired in 1910, and the Federal government took control of all sealing on the Pribilofs. In 1911 the United States, Great Britain (for Canada), Russia, and Japan agreed to the first international treaty for the protection of wildlife ever written (Dorsey 1998). In it, land hunting of the fur seals was once again tightly regulated and pelagic sealing was banned completely. To further protect the delicate balance of life on and around the Pribilofs, all hunting of the highly endangered sea otter was prohibited (Shalkop 1982: 15).

### Recovery and decline

In the ensuing years, as fashions changed, the demand for seal fur diminished. The northern fur seal population throughout the Pribilofs slowly recovered to a healthy, sustainable size. All commercial sealing was ended on St. George in 1972 and on St. Paul in 1984. Today, a small number of seals are harvested by Pribilof Islands residents for their own use, but the seals' greatest value lies in their draw for tourists.

Sadly, despite the historic recovery of their population and the carefully controlled conservation policies now in place, the fur seals of the Pribilofs are once again in danger. This time, the risk is not from excessive hunting, but seems to be being caused by a serious decline in local food supplies due to excessive commercial fishing in the Bering Sea. One recent report suggests that the northern fur seal population may have fallen by more than 50% over the last 50 years (Stolzenburg 2004).

### A Pribilof legacy

Despite his important contribution to the survival of the northern fur seal, Elliott's role as their crusading protector has faded into relative obscurity. His hundreds of paintings, dispersed to museums throughout the United States and Canada, have remained little appreciated until recent years. In 2001 (ninety years after the signing of the North Pacific Fur Seal Treaty), the University of Alaska

Museum in Fairbanks organised an exhibition of Elliott's work, the first since 1982 (Morris 2001; Shalkop 1982). It is hoped that some day a suitable and lasting memorial can be erected in Alaska to celebrate the contributions of this remarkable artist and pioneering conservationist who devoted his life to the wild and human inhabitants of the Pribilof Islands.

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