

No Permanent Harm on Amchitka, AEC Claims

Washington

The Atomic Energy Commission said yesterday that preliminary lab tests indicate this month's underground nuclear blast on Alaska's Amchitka Island was a success and apparently caused "no permanent harm" to animal or plant life.

The AEC said, however, that there was some temporary damage.

Before the blast, opponents expressed fear damage might be great and widespread.

The agency said that in the aftermath of the November 6 explosion it found:

- The bodies of 14 dead sea otters, with autopsies indicating that at least 12 died from effects of the blast. Two injured otters and two abandoned otter pups also were sighted and presumed to have died, the AEC said.

- Four dead seals, all apparent victims of the blast.

- Hundreds of dead fish.

- Sixteen dead birds, all but one of them killed by the blast.

- "Three of four" bald eagle nesting sites along the Bering Coast and two on the Pacific Coast destroyed. One nesting site on each coast "appears unstable and subject to weather damage."

The AEC said, however, that "it is not believed that the losses will affect the population." No dead eagles have been found, it said.

The AEC also said there are fewer otters in the Bering Sea near the island, where the water "is muddied for some distance out because of siltration from turf falls."

The otter population around other areas of the island appeared about normal.

The agency said preliminary tests at its Lawrence Livermore Laboratory south of San Francisco indicated that the test yielded "the desired information."

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